



Training the Iraqi Air Force

Lessons from a U.S. C-130 Advisory Mission

Michael Bauer

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Front cover: An Iraqi Air Force C-130 flies over the Great Ziggurat of Ur, located near Ali Air Base in southern Iraq. Courtesy of Michael Bauer/U.S. Air Force.

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Acronyms

AEG	Air Expeditionary Group	ECL	English comprehension level
AETC	Air Education and Training Command	EDA	Excess Defense Articles
AEW	Air Expeditionary Wing	FMS	Foreign Military Sales
AFSOC	Air Force Special Operations Command	GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
AMC	Air Mobility Command	HHQ	Higher Headquarters
AST	Advisory Support Team	IIG	Iraqi Interim Government
AWOL	absent without leave	IMAR	Iraqi Military Academy al-Rustamiyah
BMT	basic military training	IPT	Integrated Product Team
CAFTT	Coalition Air Force Transition Team	IqAF	Iraqi Air Force
CAT I	Category I	JOC	Joint Operations Center
CAT II	Category II	MEOC	Middle East Orientation Course
CBAT	Common Battlefield Airmen Training	MiTTs	Military Transition Teams
CENTAF	Central Command Air Forces	MNSTC-I	Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq
CENTCOM	United States Central Command	MOD	Minister of Defense
CIWC	Contemporary Insurgents Warfare course	NAMAB	New al-Muthana Air Base
CMATT-A	Coalition Military Advisory Transition Team-Air	NCO	noncommissioned officer
COIN	counterinsurgency	OPCON	operational control
CONUS	continental United States	OTS	Officer Training School
DIT	Dynamics of Terrorism	SAF/IA	Deputy Undersecretary of the Air Force for International Affairs
DLI	Defense Language Institute	SOS	Special Operations Squadron
EAS	Expeditionary Airlift Squadron	TO	Technical Order
EBH	equivalent baseline hours	USAFSOS	U.S. Air Force Special Operations School

Introduction

IN JANUARY 2005, the U.S. Air Force deployed an Advisory Support Team (AST) of thirty-five C-130 operations and maintenance instructors to train Iraqi airmen how to fly and maintain three C-130 aircraft gifted by the United States. As the largest of the initial advisory efforts, it represented a significant first step in rebuilding the Iraqi Air Force (IqAF) and paved the way for future aviation advisory programs. Initially, advisors believed the requirement to conduct initial aircrew training in a combat zone would present the greatest challenge. To their surprise, the differences between the U.S. advisors and the Iraqi airmen had the greatest effect on the mission.

During the first year, the differences in language, culture, and living conditions created challenges relating to language barriers, centralized authority, poor warrant officer qualifications, and reduced training schedules. Each of these factors affected mission progress and was likely exacerbated by the fact that U.S. advisors did not speak Arabic, had no experience training foreign forces, and received limited cultural training.

Although it may surprise some, demand for qualified combat aviation advisors has outstripped capacity for years.¹ Moreover, operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have increased demand, widened the gap, and forced the Air Force to task general-purpose forces to fill almost all Iraqi aviation advisor billets. In an effort to assist general-purpose forces filling advisor billets, this paper attempts to analyze why C-130 advisory mission challenges developed and to formulate lessons learned.

This endeavor is especially timely given the Central Command Air Forces (CENTAF) vision for developing IqAF airpower over the next two years. Specifically, CENTAF has developed a comprehensive plan to build Iraqi airpower that aggressively pursues a 200 percent increase in IqAF personnel and aircraft and calls for an associated 300 percent increase in U.S. Air Force advisors.² CENTAF's Coalition Air Force Transition Team (CAFTT) recently briefed the plan to an Air Force integrated product team (IPT) whose charter was to apply Headquarters Air Force and major command expertise to assist CENTAF in achieving its goal.³ As part of the overall effort, the IPT's theater and continental United States (CONUS) training teams were given the responsibility for developing plans to establish Iraqi flight and technical training schools as well as a dedicated predeployment training center to better prepare general-purpose forces for advisor duties.

The two training teams relied on previous briefings, personnel familiar with the mission, and trips to Iraq to build training timelines, establish course recommendations, and anticipate problems. This paper provides the first source of documented lessons learned from a previous Iraq advisory mission and goes a step further by applying those lessons to formulate recommendations on how each team could improve its current implementation plans. A review of previous predeployment advisory efforts and analysis of air force advisor expertise also contribute to recommendations regarding the final location of the predeployment training center.

1. Col. Norman J. Brozenick, *Another Way to Fight: Combat Aviation Operations* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, 2002), p. 48; Maj. Thomas D. McCarthy, *National Security for the 21st Century: The Air Force and Foreign Internal Defense* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, 2004), p. 77; Jerome W. Klingaman, "Transforming CAA: Issues and Initiatives," in *Vantages Points: The Use of Air & Space Power in Counterinsurgency Operations and the Global War on Terrorism*, Proceeding of the 2005 Air and Space Power Strategy Conference (Alexandria, Va.: Institute of Defense Analysis, 2005), p. 82; and Maj. Richard D. Newton, *Reinventing the Wheel: Structure Air Forces for Foreign Internal Defense* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, 1991), p. 18.
2. *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, November 2006, submitted to Congress pursuant to Section 9010 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act 2007, Public Law 109-289, pp. 45–46; *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, March 2007, submitted to Congress pursuant to Section 9010 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act 2007, Public Law 109-289, p. 42; *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, June 2007, submitted to Congress pursuant to Section 9010 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act 2007, Public Law 109-289, pp. 42–43; and Bruce Lemkin, deputy undersecretary, Air Force International Affairs, "Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan Integrated Product Team Final Report" (briefing), March 8, 2007, slide 22.
3. Lemkin, "Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan," slide 6.

The purpose of this paper is threefold: present a historical record of the Iraq C-130 AST mission; provide an analysis of challenges and lessons learned from the C-130 mission; and develop recommendations to enhance advisor preparation and efforts included in the CENTAF proposal. In achieving this goal, the paper reviews how the Iraq C-130 AST mission was established;

addresses the language, cultural, and environmental challenges and lessons learned; provides an overview of the CENTAF proposal to develop Iraqi airpower; and finally, recommends a predeployment training course of action, early steps CAFTT can take to enhance the success of its Iraq flight-training mission, and refinements to proposed officer and enlisted training pipelines.

Establishing an Iraqi C-130 Advisory Mission

THE INITIAL NEED to police more than 3,500 miles of border, monitor national assets, deploy security forces, and airlift senior government officials led to the rebuilding of the IqAF.¹ Given the mission requirements, initial efforts focused on acquiring surveillance aircraft, fixed-winged transportation, and rotary lift. This chapter focuses on the acquisition of C-130 aircraft for the IqAF and establishment of the Advisory Support Team mission. As background, the discussion begins with the Iraqi request and U.S. actions to identify C-130 aircraft, initial funding, and advisors. It concludes with a review of command relationships and establishment of CAFTT to provide an initial understanding of existing chains of command and the organizations responsible for the operations of aviation advisors in Iraq.

The Requirement

On June 28, 2004, Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) assumed authority for the governance of Iraq from the Coalition Provincial Authority and Ambassador Paul Bremer. In the near term, Allawi faced the daunting task of unifying a shattered Iraq and garnering support for upcoming governmental elections and a constitutional referendum. The pending national elections would play out on the world stage and become an important measure of progress in Iraq and U.S. success in the region.

In carrying out his duties and spreading his unity message, Allawi was often forced to travel by air to avoid the insurgent threat. Because the IqAF did not possess any passenger aircraft, Allawi had to rely on U.S. military C-130 aircraft for transportation. The situation presented a problem because the U.S. C-130s with American flags prominently displayed on the tail

hindered IIG legitimacy efforts and stood in stark contrast to Allawi's proclamations of an independent Iraq. Recognizing the contradiction, in mid-October 2004 the IIG requested C-130 aircraft of its own from U.S. leaders.² Moreover, the IIG wanted to accept delivery of the aircraft before the upcoming January 30, 2005, governmental elections, which created a short ninety-day timeline to complete the transaction.³

Identifying Aircraft and Funding Support

The Office of the Deputy Undersecretary of the Air Force for International Affairs (SAF/IA) is responsible for coordinating and liaising with all interested parties on the sale of Air Force equipment to foreign governments and was assigned the task of meeting the IIG request.⁴ The specific responsibility for conducting the day-to-day coordination for the Iraq C-130 transfer was given to Col. John McCain, chief of the Gulf Cooperation Council Division. Given the short timeline, Colonel McCain quickly dismissed any thought of trying to execute and fund a full Foreign Military Sales (FMS) case through normal channels. As an alternative, he quickly formed a C-130 transfer team of experts from Headquarters Air Force, Air Force Security Assistance Center, Air Mobility Command (AMC), Warner Robins Air Logistics Center, Air Force Security Assistance Training Squadron, Air Education and Training Command's International Affairs Office, United States Central Command (CENTCOM), CENTAF, and Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I).⁵ The C-130 transfer team was able to simultaneously work the multitude of issues required for the transfer and completed the deal. Colonel McCain credited the high priority given to the request

1. J. Pepper Bryars, "Development of the Iraqi Air Force," News Release Coalition Provincial Authority, April 17, 2004. Available online (www.cpa-iraq.org/pressreleases/20040417_air_force.html).
2. Col. John M. McCain, "Genesis for the New Iraqi Air Force: Security Assistance in Action," *DISAM Journal of International Security Assistance Management* 28, no. 1 (Fall 2005), p. 26.
3. Ibid.
4. Deputy Undersecretary of the Air Force for International Affairs, "Guiding Principles." Available online (www.safia.hq.af.mil/internet/Index.htm).
5. McCain, "Genesis for the New Iraqi Air Force," p. 26.

by senior leaders and open dialogue within the transfer team as the key factors enabling them to quickly identify and fund initial support for three C-130 aircraft.⁶

Three C-130E aircraft. The first step in the process was finding available C-130 aircraft. The team was hoping to use the Foreign Assistance Act and Excess Defense Articles (EDA) program to transfer the aircraft at no cost.⁷ Following a review of its inventory, the Air Force was able to declare three of its C-130 E-model aircraft as excess and available for transfer.⁸ On December 17, 2004, SAF/IA notified Congress of the pending transfers and received approval four days later to send aircraft 62-1839, 62-1826, and 63-7826 through an EDA grant to Iraq at no cost.⁹

Since the average age of the active-duty C-130 fleet is 42 years, the fact that all three aircraft identified for transfer were built between 1962 and 1963 should not be a surprise.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Air Force made an effort to provide aircraft with relatively few equivalent baseline hours (EBH) compared with other C-130s in the same production years (see figure 1).

Equivalent baseline hours are important because aerospace engineers use EBH, not actual airframe hours, to determine when to inspect the C-130 wing boxes for cracks, institute flight restrictions, and ground the aircraft. The propensity for cracks in C-130 wing boxes has led the C-130 System Program Office at Warner Robins Air Logistics Center to recommend flight restrictions on aircraft exceeding 38,000 EBH. The recommended flight restrictions render the aircraft combat ineffective and limit their use to training and some peacetime missions.¹¹ When the aircraft reach 45,000 EBH, they are grounded and no longer flyable.

Figure 1. Aircraft Flight Hours

IRAQI TAIL NUMBERS	AIRFRAME	EQUIVALENT BASELINE (RANK*)
301 (62-1839)	25,075 hours	31,700 hours (44)
302 (62-1826)	23,500 hours	29,185 hours (26)
303 (63-7826)	20,150 hours	25,600 hours (2)

*Ranking of the 138 1962–1963 C-130s in the U.S. Air Force inventory with 1 having the least and 138 having the most EBH. *Source:* Peter J. Christianson, engineer, Warner Robins Air Logistics Center, Georgia, email to the author, March 17, 2005. Flight hours are based on February 2005 data.

Assuming the IqAF would accept the same recommendations, the transfer team needed to look at the potential life span of the identified aircraft. The transfer team assumed the aircraft would average approximately 500 EBH a year, which provided at least ten years of use before any restrictions and more than twenty years before the grounding of the first aircraft.¹² Given the no-cost transfer of the aircraft, the team deemed these life spans acceptable.

Initial funding. The transfer team was not as fortunate when searching for low-cost options to fund support equipment and replacement parts for the three aircraft. Only a small number of aircraft parts were available through the EDA program, and aircraft support equipment was short even within the U.S. Air Force. Consequently, SAF/IA needed to find another funding source to bridge the gap between delivery of the aircraft and the time needed to execute and obtain Iraqi funding for a full FMS support case, which SAF/IA estimated as April 2005.¹³

In the short term, funding for spare parts was critical to provide replacement engines and other parts to keep the Iraqi aircraft in the air pending the final FMS case.

6. Ibid, p. 27.

7. Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "Program Definition for the Excess Defense Articles." Available online (www.dsca.osd.mil/programs/eda/progdef.htm).

8. McCain, "Genesis for the New Iraqi Air Force," p. 27.

9. Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "Excess Defense Articles Search." Available online (www.dsca.osd.mil/programs/eda/results.asp).

10. Statement of Lt. Gen. Donald Hoffman, military deputy, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Air Force Airlift, and Tanker Programs, *Hearing before the Subcommittee on Air and Land Forces of the House Armed Services Committee*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., March 7, 2007, p. 5.

11. Ibid., p. 7.

12. Lt. Col. Peter Higgins, flight commander, Iraq C-130 Military Transition Team, email to author, February 7, 2007. According to IqAF data from January 2005 to January 2007, the aircraft have actually averaged approximately 400 hours a year.

13. McCain, "Genesis for the New Iraqi Air Force," p. 26.

Initial funding was also important to accelerate the ordering and purchase of support equipment. Aircraft generators, all-terrain forklifts, maintenance stands, and tow vehicles are just a few examples of equipment that can take more than a year to obtain from purchase to delivery. The sooner funding was secured and orders placed, the sooner equipment would begin arriving in theater and on-loan equipment could be returned to U.S. units.

The search for a funding source eventually led the transfer team to the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, which assumed responsibility for training all Iraqi security forces after the departure of the Coalition Provincial Authority. The MNSTC-I mission was to “organize, train, equip, and mentor Iraqi security forces, in order to support Iraq’s ultimate goal of a unified, stable, and democratic Iraq.”¹⁴ It was also responsible for allocating the initial \$5.8 billion Congress provided for training and equipping Iraqi security forces.¹⁵ Because the IqAF C-130 mission fell into the category of security forces training, MNSTC-I agreed to provide \$45 million of initial funding to bridge the gap.¹⁶ The initial funding proved instrumental in enabling uninterrupted operations during the first year because the funding gap proved much larger than initial estimates, with Iraq not funding the follow-on FMS support case until December 18, 2005.¹⁷

Selecting Iraq C-130 Aviation Advisors

As SAF/IA and the C-130 transfer team coordinated for delivery of the aircraft and support funding, they were also working closely with CENTAF to define the requirements for training Iraqi airmen. The team recognized a group of advisors was needed simultaneously to fly Iraqi aircraft in support of Iraqi airlift requests and to train Iraqi airmen to assume the mission. After consulting C-130 experts and working with the transfer

team, CENTAF’s Request for Forces identified thirty-five aviation advisor positions (figure 2).

CENTAF also requested four additional billets to support AST operations: director, Iraq C-130 program manager, based in Baghdad and working in the MNSTC-I Coalition Military Advisory Transition Team-Air (CMATT-A) for a 180-day tour; C-130 squadron commander, commanding 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron (EAS) and AST for a 365-day tour; 6th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) aviation advisor, assigned with AST for a 180-day tour; and cryptologist (active-duty interpreter), assigned with AST for a 180-day tour. Unfortunately, the Air Force was unable to fill the last two positions, and the AST never received 6th SOS or air force linguistic support during the mission.

C-130 general-purpose forces. After receiving the CENTAF Request for Forces, the Air and Space Expeditionary Force Center tasked AMC and 18th Air Force to work with Air Education and Training Command (AETC) to identify individuals to fill the AST billets. AMC offered a pool of instructors with recent Iraq combat experience and AETC provided instructors with experience conducting C-130 initial and mission-qualification training required for the mission. Each of the commands requested volunteers for a short-notice deployment to Iraq to train Iraqi airmen. After receiving names from both commands, 18th Air Force was able to select a very experienced group of C-130 operations and maintenance instructors (see figure 3).

Although the selected advisors were C-130 experts, they were not specifically qualified or trained to advise foreign aviation forces. The Air Force maintains only a small cadre of 110 trained and qualified combat aviation advisors in the 6th SOS to assist, train, and advise foreign forces.¹⁸ They are regionally organized,

14. *Building Iraqi Security Forces*, Hearings before the Subcommittee on National Security Emerging Threats, and International Relations of the House Committee on Government Reform, 109th Cong., 1st sess., March 14, 2005, Serial no. 109-19.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *United States of America Letter of Agreement Y7-D-AAA*, Public Law 108-106 (January 14, 2005).

17. Coalition Air Force Transition Team Situation Report, December 20, 2005.

18. Lt. Col. Daniel Grillone, Commander, 6th Special Operations Squadron, interview by author, November 8, 2006.

Figure 2. Iraqi C-130 Request for Forces

DUTY POSITION	NUMBER OF PERSONNEL	TOUR LENGTH (DAYS)
AST flight commander/C-130 evaluator pilot	1	365
C-130 maintenance officer	1	365
C-130 evaluator/instructor pilots	4	180
C-130 evaluator/instructor flight engineers	4	180
C-130 evaluator/instructor navigators	4	180
C-130 evaluator/instructor loadmasters	4	180
Aircrew life-support craftsman	1	180
Air transportation craftsman	1	180
Aerospace maintenance superintendent	1	180
Production superintendent	1	180
Supply management craftsman	1	180
C-130 maintenance crew chief	3	180
Aerospace propulsion craftsman	1	180
Aircraft hydraulic system craftsman	1	180
Electrical/environmental system craftsman	1	180
Communication, navigation, mission craftsman	1	180
C-130 instrument and flight control craftsman	1	180
Electronic warfare craftsman	1	180
Crew chief/quality assurance	1	180
Support section noncommissioned officer (NCO)	1	180
Debrief/maintenance operations center	1	180

culturally astute, and possess the necessary language skills to execute combat aviation advisor missions.¹⁹ Unfortunately, the initial aircrew training requirement was outside their mission focus area. As stated by Thomas McCarthy in *The Air Force and Foreign Internal Defense*, “the current Air Force structure of

only one combat aviation advisor squadron is not well suited to performing basic flight training and, instead, concentrates on advancing the tactical skills of existing air forces.”²⁰ More important, the size and length of the Iraqi C-130 advisory mission exceeded 6th SOS’s capacity.

19. Col. Norman J. Brozenick, *Another Way to Fight: Combat Aviation Operations* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, 2002), p. viii.

20. Maj. Thomas D. McCarthy, *National Security for the 21st Century: The Air Force and Foreign Internal Defense* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, 2004), p. 62.

Figure 3. Advisory Support Team Summary

DUTY POSITION	RANK					COMMAND		YEARS OF SERVICE
	CAPTAIN	SMS	MSG	TSG	SSG	AMC	AETC	
Flight commander							1	16
Pilots						2	2	14.25
Navigators	3					2	2	8.5
Flight engineers			4			2	2	17.25
Loadmasters			3	1		4		18
Aircrew life support			1			1		16
Maintenance officer						1		12
Maintenance superintendent		1				1		23
Production superintendent			1			1		20
Maintenance crew chiefs				3		2	1	14.6
Quality assurance			1				1	19
Support section NCO			1			1		20
Debrief operations center				1		1		16
Maintenance craftsmen			5	2	1	7	1	16
Total	3	1	16	7	1	25	10	16.47

Note: SMS = senior master sergeant; MSG = master sergeant; TSG = technical sergeant; SSG = staff sergeant.

The U.S. Special Operations Command has taken initial steps to address the combat aviation advisor shortfall by announcing a 120-billet increase.²¹ Still, the increase will do little to reduce the assignment of general-purpose forces to fill advisor billets, which are projected to exceed 600 in Iraq and Afghanistan alone.²² Because 6th SOS advisors were unavailable, the Air Force had to sacrifice expertise in training foreign forces for expertise in accomplishing the C-130 mission.

In an attempt to impart some just-in-time advisor training, 18th Air Force was able to schedule an abbre-

viated three-day Middle East Orientation Course (MEOC) at the U.S. Air Force Special Operations School (USAFSOS) at Hurlburt Field, Florida. During the course, the AST received a quick review of Iraqi history, origins and differences of Shiite and Sunni religions, Arabic naming nomenclature, and Arabic civilian cultural norms and sensitivities. The AST was also able to meet with combat aviation advisors from the 6th SOS for a two-hour discussion on training foreign forces. A complete discussion of predeployment advisor training and future concepts is reserved for a later chapter.

21. Statement of Vice Adm. Eric T. Olson, deputy commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, "Capabilities and Force Structure of the United States Special Operations Command to More Effectively Combat Terrorism," *Hearing before the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities of the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 109th Cong., 1st sess., April 5, 2006, p. 13.

22. Bruce Lemkin, deputy undersecretary, Air Force International Affairs, "Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan Integrated Product Team Final Report" (briefing), March 8, 2007, slide 9.

Immediately following the three days of training, the AST deployed to Iraq; the aircrews flew the aircraft selected for transfer, and the rest of the advisors boarded a commercial aircraft and arrived the following day. Once in country, the advisors were briefed on command relationships.

Command Relationships

In coordination with CENTAF and, more specifically, Brig. Gen. Mark Zamzow, the director of mobility forces, a plan was conceived to bed down the AST and new Iraqi C-130 squadron at Ali Base, Iraq. Iraqi Squadron 23's permanent base, New al-Muthana Air Base (NAMAB), at Baghdad International Airport, was still under construction and the local threat was too high for conducting initial flight training. Located in Shiite-dominated southern Iraq and approximately thirty miles west of Nasariyah, Ali Base was a much more permissive training environment and contained the infrastructure to support training operations.

The centerpiece of General Zamzow's plan was to colocate the Iraqi squadron with an existing U.S. C-130 squadron. The 777th EAS of four aircraft and associated operations and maintenance personnel had recently moved from Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan to help reduce the number of U.S. Army convoys on the treacherous Iraqi roads. The only change CENTAF officials chose to make before Squadron 23's arrival was to swap the unit flying 1990s C-130 H3-models with a unit flying 1960s C-130 E-model aircraft. The change aligned parts and maintenance specialties, but more important, demonstrated that U.S. squadrons were flying similar 1962–1963 C-130 aircraft.

Colocating the AST mission with an existing C-130 squadron provided many benefits. The U.S. squadron provided the AST with all the necessary tactics, communication, aviation resource management, computer, supply, administrative, and infrastructure support to train the Iraqis and fly operational missions. As Iraqi capabilities came online, they would assume the various functions. Another important step in enabling immediate training operations was the addition of a second four-ship maintenance package under the U.S. squadron to maintain the additional three Iraqi

C-130 aircraft on the ramp. This change enabled the AST and Iraqi aircrew to fly Iraqi aircraft maintained and supported by U.S. personnel and equipment. As Iraqi maintenance personnel completed their initial classroom instruction, they would begin taking over flight-line duties and the additional U.S. maintenance personnel would return to their home stations.

The command relationships for the AST and Iraqi squadron were straightforward, as illustrated in figure 4.

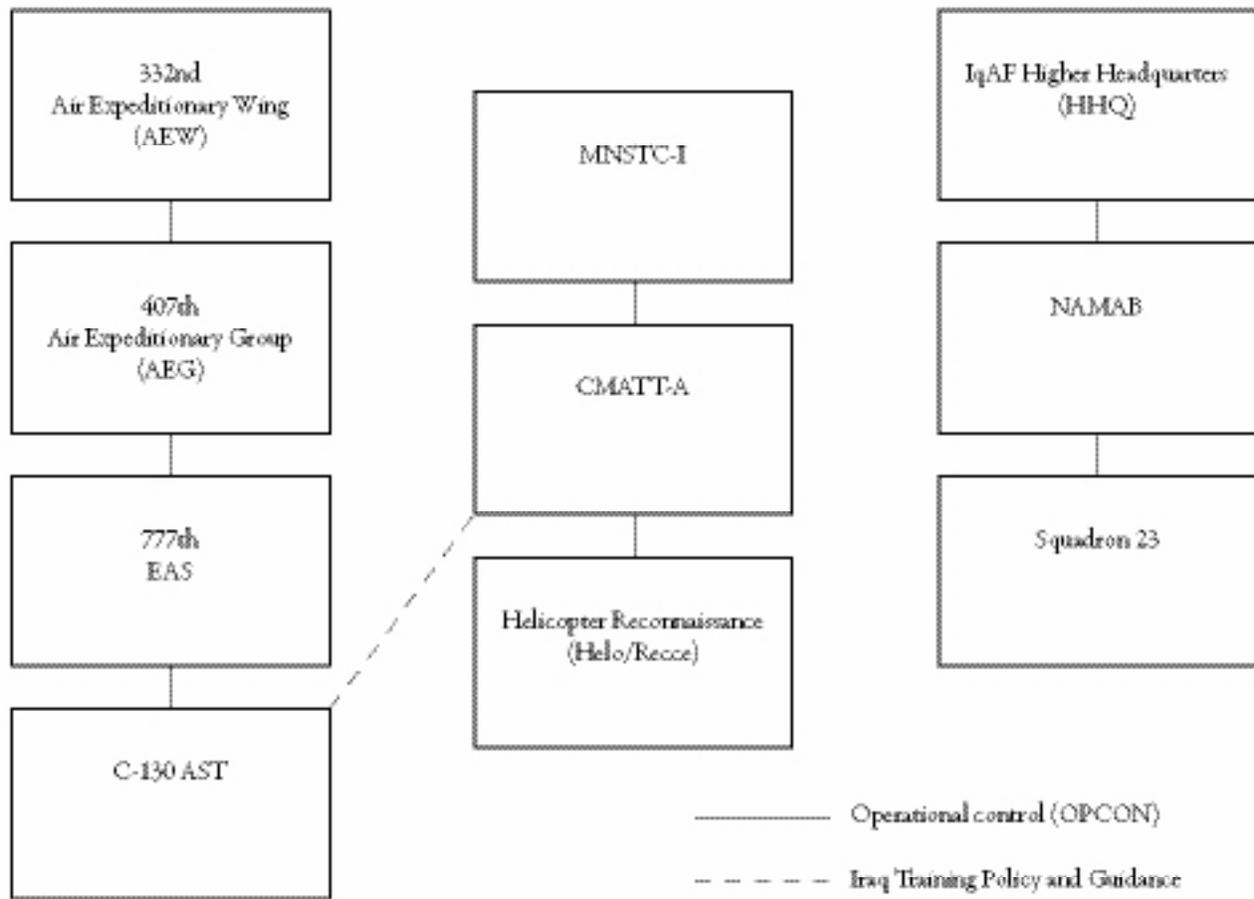
As depicted, the AST would reside within the 777th EAS, and CENTAF would maintain operational control (OPCON) through its U.S. units in Iraq. MNSTC-I through CMATT-A would provide all training policy and guidance in Iraq and maintain OPCON over the other ASTs in Iraq. Squadron 23 remained within its Iraqi chain of command through the base commander at NAMAB to the IqAF Higher Headquarters (HHQ). Appropriately, the U.S. instructors as advisors were not in the Iraqi airmen's chain of command.

Coalition Air Force Transition Team

Before discussing the AST mission, it is important to introduce the Coalition Air Force Transition Team. CAFTT did not exist through much of the first year of AST training, but stood up in November 2005 following a CENTAF operational assessment of advisory operations in Iraq. The impetus of the operational assessment was a request from the IqAF chief of staff to then U.S. Air Force chief of staff, General John Jumper, for additional assistance in rebuilding Iraq's air force. Although never stated, the crash of an Iraqi Comp Air 7SLX and the deaths of an AST advisor pilot, an Iraqi copilot, and three U.S. special operations personnel likely contributed to the assessment as well.

The CENTAF assessment team came away with several findings and recommendations to improve operations of advisors in Iraq. Foremost, they determined the advisory support teams lacked a clear chain of command. Unlike the C-130 AST, the helicopter and reconnaissance (Recce) ASTs were loosely OPCON'd to MNSTC-I through CMATT-A and not associated with any of the command organizations on the bases from which they operated. Furthermore, the

Figure 4. Command Relationships



assessment team determined the overall air force advisory mission lacked a clearly defined end state or significant presence at the army-centric MNSTC-I. The team’s primary recommendation at the conclusion of the assessment was to establish an air force organization that would oversee and provide a single focus to IqAF advisory operations. Subsequently, all the ASTs were placed under CAFTT with an air force brigadier general leading the organization and establishing policy and guidance for air force advisors in Iraq.

Since its inception, CAFTT has assumed responsibility for the overall execution and planning of the IqAF advisory program. In this capacity, it has inserted

strategic advisors at the IqAF HHQ and assumed responsibility for predeployment training of advisors. Both of these initiatives were important improvements and are discussed in greater detail later in the paper. CAFTT is also the lead CENTAF organization for proposing how to build Iraqi airpower. As the IPT completes its initial efforts, CAFTT will be responsible for executing the approved plan and making the necessary adjustments to ensure success. With a clear understanding of the requirement, advisors, and organizations involved, this paper now turns to an examination of the problems encountered by the AST in its first year of training Iraqi airmen.

Language, Culture, and Insurgent Challenges

ON JANUARY 14, 2005, the AST instructors and Iraqi airmen met at the C-130 transfer ceremony at Ali Base, Iraq. Other than flying and maintaining aircraft, the AST instructors and Iraqi airmen had little in common. The Iraqis came from a different culture, their air force was in the process of rebuilding, and their country was being torn apart by insurgency. The latter two factors, coupled with the AST's unfamiliarity with Arab culture and inexperience in training foreign forces, likely exaggerated existing differences and created unexpected effects on training. Moreover, the AST's tendency to re-create the IqAF in the U.S. Air Force's image led to the implementation of processes and standards that were often incompatible with the Iraqi hierarchical structure and individual capabilities.

This chapter discusses AST issues of language, centralized authority, poor warrant officer qualifications, and reduced training schedules together with associated lessons learned for each. Where applicable, a discussion of Arab culture is included to offer a possible explanation for the behavior and an indication of possibly similar behavior in the future. Where culture biases were not present, the author attempted to provide alternative explanations gleaned from conversations with Iraqi leaders and squadron members during the year of training. Several of the examples included are firsthand author accounts; however, an effort was made to footnote supporting documentation when available and applicable to the discussion.

Squadron 23 Airmen

Background information on the Iraqi airmen is an important starting place for this discussion. They were operations and maintenance personnel and arrived in two groups for training. The first group of 21 operations and 45 maintenance personnel arrived in January;

the second group of 20 operations and 23 maintenance personnel arrived in June. Attrition reduced the total number to 96 for various reasons, including concerns of security, family, rank, health, or family connections with insurgents.¹

Qualifications. Operations personnel included pilots, navigators, flight engineers, loadmasters, and life support technicians. Maintenance was made up of an officer-in-charge, superintendent, production supervisors, crew chiefs, quality assurance, support section specialists, operations center specialists, propulsion craftsmen, avionics craftsmen, electronic and environmental craftsmen, electronic countermeasures craftsmen, hydraulic systems craftsmen, nondestructive inspection craftsmen, air transportation craftsmen, and supply management craftsmen.

All Squadron 23 personnel were previous members of the IqAF with operations and maintenance experience in flying and maintaining mobility IL-76, An-12, An-24, and An-26 aircraft or executive Falcon and Jetstar aircraft. They had been contacted by a senior IqAF officer and asked to join the new air force.² The senior officer's opinion was the only vetting mechanism for personnel returning to the air force.

Rank. All of the enlisted personnel entered the new air force at the highest enlisted rank of warrant officer. The majority of officers entered the air force as majors and captains, but in June 2005, all Iraqi officers were promoted to lieutenant colonel or their previous IqAF rank, whichever was lower.³ In the author's opinion, the reason for maximizing the rank structure was to provide the highest salaries possible for those coming back into the air force. In the end, most personnel entered or were quickly promoted to the highest rank they would likely achieve in the new air force.

1. Lt. Col. Michael Bauer, commander, 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, "CENTAF Leadership Brief," October 21, 2005, slide 8.
2. Colonel Samir, commander, Squadron 23, interview by author, February 12, 2007.
3. C-130 Advisory Support Team Situation Report, June 19, 2005.

Age. The Iraqi airmen were much older than their AST instructors. The IqAF did not bring in many recruits after the 1991 Gulf War, resulting in very few personnel less than thirty years of age in the new air force. The majority of operations personnel were in their mid- to late forties with some reaching into their fifties. The youngest pilot, navigator, and flight engineer were thirty-nine, thirty-seven, and twenty-seven, respectively.⁴ In maintenance, the youngest individual was twenty-nine, with the majority of personnel in their late thirties to mid-forties.⁵

Religious sects. The Shiite and Sunni mix of the squadron was approximately 55/45 with a higher percentage of Sunni officers and higher percentage of Shiite enlisted.⁶ The AST witnessed very little tension or coordination difficulties between the different sects. What the team did witness was limited to enlisted personnel from the various sects not studying together or helping each other with learning the material.⁷ Overall, sectarian differences did not significantly affect training and are not addressed in this paper.

Language abilities. With respect to language capabilities, most Iraqi officers could understand enough English to exchange ideas. In contrast, none of the enlisted personnel could read or speak English at a sufficient level for the exchange of concepts in a training environment. The resulting language barrier was one of the primary factors affecting training timelines and mission effectiveness.

Language Barriers

Language differences are an obvious obstacle to training, advising, and mentoring foreign aviation forces and must be considered for every mission. In this case, the AST and C-130 transfer team anticipated the

language differences and had a plan to acquire interpreters and conduct English-language training with Defense Language Institute (DLI) instructors. What the AST failed to anticipate was the challenges of executing both programs.

Interpreters. In an ideal world with no time constraints, Iraqi airmen would attend an English-language course and have a firm grasp of English before starting aviation instruction—the typical path for foreign students attending formal training courses in the United States. Those not scoring high enough on the language aptitude test attend additional training at a DLI facility to raise their score before proceeding to formal training.⁸ Unfortunately, the short mission timeline eliminated this sequential option, and interpreters were needed to conduct simultaneous aircraft instruction and English-language training.

Unable to obtain interpreters through the Air Force, the AST turned to Titan Corporation. Titan was awarded a five-year \$4.6 billion contract to provide linguistic support to U.S. forces and supplied Category II (CAT II) and Category I (CAT I) interpreters to assist U.S. operations.⁹ CAT II interpreters were U.S. citizens with “Secret” clearances and received salaries in excess of \$100,000 a year. CAT I interpreters were local Iraqi personnel hired by Titan and received about \$500 a month. MNSTC-I managed the overall Titan contract for Iraqi security force advisory operations, and the AST was able to validate and receive funding for two CAT II and four CAT I interpreters.

Problems surfaced right away, when Squadron 23 refused to consider or interview local interpreters.¹⁰ Insurgent activity was increasing, and highly publicized attacks on Iraqi police and army recruits were

4. Bauer, “CENTAF Leadership Brief,” slide 14.

5. Ibid.

6. Samir, interview.

7. Lt. Col. Roger Redwood, AST flight commander January 2005–January 2006, interview by author, February 10, 2007.

8. Dawn Moore, chief, Nonresident Operations Branch, Defense Language Institute, interview by author, February 6, 2007.

9. Joel Millman and Gina Chon, “Lost in Translation: Iraq’s Injured ‘Terps,’” *Wall Street Journal*, January 18, 2007, p. A1.

10. C-130 Advisory Support Team Situation Report, January 26, 2006.

fueling Squadron 23 concerns.¹¹ Consequently, they were immediately suspicious of local interpreters they did not know and whom they feared might pass information to local insurgents. In particular, Iraqi airmen were concerned interpreters could pass on work/leave schedules or the names of personnel in the squadron and put their families at risk.

The AST began reviewing other options but saw little chance of completing the mission without local interpreters. In operations, instructors could use Iraqi officers to translate during pilot, navigator, and loadmaster training, but none of the flight engineers or life-support personnel understood English well enough to translate. For maintenance, the commander and production supervisor spoke limited English and could continue their training, but two CAT II interpreters could not effectively cover the training requirements in the remaining ten maintenance specialty areas.

Nevertheless, the AST concluded that forcing the Iraqi airmen to accept local translators without a vetting process to assuage their concerns would be difficult and perhaps immoral. Sadly, no process existed to conduct an Iraqi civilian background check, and investigative services could not go into town and begin asking questions without highlighting an interpreter as working for the U.S. military. If discovered, local interpreters faced real dangers and threats to their families.¹² Out of options, the AST forwarded the issue and bleak estimates to CMATT-A and MNSTC-I for direction.

MNSTC-I recognized the problem as an Iraqi issue and pushed it to the IqAF HHQ for resolution. Training slowed to a crawl as the issue worked its way through the Iraqi chain of command to the Iraq air

force chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Kamal. General Kamal reviewed the requirement, understood the lack of alternatives, and directed the squadron to accept local interpreters and begin training.¹³ The AST then asked the Iraqi base commander, Brig. Gen. Kareem, to conduct the interviews and select four local interpreters from Titan. The AST received four local interpreters, started training, and is unaware of any incident of a local interpreter passing information to insurgents.

English-language program. Although hiring interpreters was challenging, it was not the driving factor behind establishing an English-language course. The fundamental U.S. maintenance practice of reading a step in the Technical Order (TO) and then doing the step required Iraqi maintenance personnel to read English-only TOs.¹⁴ Previously, Iraqi maintenance personnel simply memorized the necessary steps for each procedure and did not reference aircraft manuals while conducting maintenance.¹⁵

Memorization was a part of Arab culture and a carryover from the primary education system, which entailed a rigid teaching style and reliance on rote memorization.¹⁶ A previous RAND report cites Islam as the basis for these Arab education practices:

In Islam, knowledge is given by Allah, and teaching methods used in religious schools have been adopted by secular schools as well. Knowledge is not generally regarded as a product of human reason and thus subject to expansion and interpretation; rather it is a gift one captures and with which one is adorned. Cause and effect relationships are not stressed. Memorization and imitations are the primary learning methods.¹⁷

11. Steve Fainaru, "Blast at Iraqi Recruiting Center Kills 21 as Insurgency Mounts," *Washington Post*, February 9, 2005 (available online at www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A7110-2005Feb8.html); Warzer Jaff and Robert F. Worth, "Blast Kills 122 at Iraqi Clinic in Attack on Security Recruits," *New York Times*, March 2, 2005 (available online at www-tech.mit.edu/V125/N9/long2_99w.html).

12. Testimony of Sami, former translator for the U.S. military, *Hearing before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on "The Plight of Iraqi Refugees,"* 110th Cong., 1st sess., January 17, 2007. A former Iraqi interpreter testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee regarding the horrific attempts made on his life after insurgents discovered he was working for the U.S. Army near Mosul, Iraq.

13. C-130 Advisory Support Team Situation Report, February 9, 2005.

14. Air Force Instruction (AFI) 21-101, *Aircraft and Equipment Maintenance Management*, June 29, 2006, p. 19.

15. Major Shamel, chief maintenance officer, Squadron 23, interview by author, February 12, 2007.

16. Kenneth M. Pollack, "The Influence of Arab Culture on Arab Military Effectiveness" (PhD diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1996), p. 61.

17. Anthony Pascal, Michael Kennedy, and Steven Rosen, *Men and Arms in the Middle East: The Human Factor in Military Modernization*, RAND Report R-2460-NA (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1979), p. 25.

Despite this proclivity for memorization and an amazing capacity in some cases, the AST believed the U.S. practice of referencing the TO for each step was the best method for ensuring safe and consistent maintenance procedures and demanded compliance from its students.

The English-language training requirement was not a surprise, and the C-130 transfer team had already coordinated with DLI for instructors. To teach the proper number of classes, DLI settled on deploying four instructors at a time. During the first year, DLI sent a total of eleven instructors; all were volunteers, and none spoke Arabic. DLI does not require its English instructors to speak a foreign language and actually discourages those that can from speaking to their students in their native language.¹⁸

DLI does not have a reading-comprehension-only course and brought the course taught in United States, which consists of a comprehensive curriculum of basic grammar and vocabulary in reading, listening, speaking, and writing.¹⁹ To the AST's dismay, the comprehensive language program consumed half of all training time. Students began attending half-day classes every day and eventually transitioned to full-day classes every other day as they advanced to flight-line training. The time requirements for the English-language training forced the AST instructors to extend initial training timeline estimates of six to nine months to twelve to eighteen months.²⁰ A doubling of training time was certainly a concern, but poor warrant officer progress in learning English was an even bigger concern.

After ten months of language training, none of the warrant officers was scoring above forty, or grade school, on their English comprehension levels (ECLs). For comparison, formal training courses in the United States require ECLs of sixty-five to eighty-five to begin

training.²¹ According to DLI training guidelines, Iraqis scoring under twenty-nine on initial language screening should have progressed to a score of seventy-five after thirty-six weeks of training (figure 5).

In fact, fifty-eight of seventy-nine students showed no progress, regression, or invalid scores for suspected cheating by the proctor.²² Regrettably, DLI estimates are based on total immersion and a minimum of thirty hours of language training each week, both of which were unrealistic expectations in the training environment at the time.²³

Although no single reason explains the poor warrant officer performance, the AST believed a lack of consequences, embrace of past procedures, maturity, inconsistent training schedules, and a lack of commitment all played a role. The IqAF chief of staff, deputy chief of staff, and other HHQ leaders continually expressed the importance of learning English during base visits. Yet they failed to implement a reward or accountability program for students in English-language training. This lack of incentive or accountability provided little motivation for students to assert themselves in class. Some Iraqis believed they would simply go back to memorizing the procedures after the AST departed. For others in their mid-forties who had difficulty reading and writing their own language, learning a new language was an admittedly difficult task. In addition, the half-day and every-other-day class schedules coupled with extended five- to ten-day breaks prevented the necessary amount of consistent exposure to learn a new language. Finally, the Iraqis resisted and ignored any attempts to institute English-only rules in the workplace or living areas.

All of these factors contributed to poor performance in a program that consumed 50 percent of all training time. AST maintenance instructors could not

18. Moore, interview.

19. Judith Geerke, Curriculum Development, Defense Language Institute, interview by author, February 6, 2007.

20. C-130 Advisory Support Team Situation Report, July 8, 2005.

21. Defense Language Institute English Language Center, *English Language Training Support for Security Assistance Offices FY 06-07* (Lackland AFB, Tex.: U.S. Air Force, 2005), p. 4.

22. Cumulative language tests scores of September 2005 testing compared to initial testing of each student.

23. DLI English Language Center, *English Language Training Support for Security Assistance Offices FY 06-07*, p. 15. One week of training equals thirty hours of instruction, and the testing is not designed to discriminate within scores ranging from 0 to 29. Based on DLI English Language Center experience, the average student will progress from zero proficiency to a level of thirty in about fifteen weeks. The test is of no value in tracking growth during this period.

Figure 5. DLI Program Guidelines for Training Weeks Given Specified ECLs

	TO GRADUATE WITH AN ECL OF						
	60	65	70	75	80	85	90
IF ECL IS	THEN PROGRAM TRAINING FOR THE FOLLOWING NUMBER OF WEEKS:						
29 or less	29	31	33	36	43	55	69
30 to 34	14	16	18	21	28	40	54
35 to 39	12	14	16	19	26	38	52
40 to 44	9	11	13	16	23	35	49
45 to 49	6	8	10	13	20	32	6
50 to 54	4	6	8	11	18	30	44
55 to 59	2	3	5	8	15	27	41
60 to 64		2	4	7	14	26	40
65 to 69			2	5	12	24	38
70 to 74				4	11	23	37
75 to 79					6	18	32
80 to 84						11	25
85 to 90							12

Source: Defense Language Institute English Language Center, *English Language Training Support for Security Assistance Offices FY 06-07* (Lackland AFB, Tex.: U.S. Air Force, October 1, 2005), p. 15.

certify Iraqi warrant officers as fully qualified until they could read the TOs. Thus, the AST completed the first year of training behind schedule and with a growing concern that the Iraqi airmen could remain in training status indefinitely.

Lessons learned. The AST challenge in hiring and vetting local interpreters highlights the need for assigning advisors with the requisite language skills to accomplish the mission. Still, Air Force efforts to increase language skills are a distant reality, and advisors will continue to confront language barriers when training foreign forces. Moreover, local interpreters are becoming increasingly important as demand for military and CAT II interpreters continues to outpace supply in Iraq. Thus, advisors must consider how best to bring local interpreters into Iraqi training operations.

If the use of local interpreters becomes necessary, advisors should allow the Iraqi unit to interview and select the individuals. This procedure enables the Iraqi commander to participate in the process and take ownership of the hiring. It also provides an opportunity for Iraqi leadership to express concerns about certain individuals before the hiring takes place. In most cases, Iraqi personnel are the ones at risk and should be a part of the hiring process.

Although vetting is still a problem, a lie-detector test may provide a potential solution. In an insurgency, counterintelligence forces are likely to possess the capability to administer a lie-detector test to check informant information. On three separate occasions, the AST with Iraqi squadron commander approval used lie detectors to question Squadron 23 personnel exhibiting suspicious behavior. Although not foolproof, a

lie-detector test offers a potential means of vetting a possible hire and assuaging concerns.

For English-language training, many lessons exist for future missions. First, English-language training consumes vast amounts of training time. Second, every effort should be made to conduct language training before commencing any aviation or specialty training. If simultaneous training is required, advisors and planners should anticipate nearly a doubling in normal training timelines. Third, DLI training estimates are not accurate for simultaneous training in which the minimum training times and full immersion are not possible. Finally, DLI should develop a reading-comprehension-only program to provide advisors with an accelerated language alternative for countries transitioning to U.S. aircraft for the first time.

For execution, Iraqi leadership support and student motivation are essential elements of a successful English-language program. Because of a lack of demonstrated internal motivation, this training requires implementation of some type of reward or accountability system to encourage student performance. Iraqi leadership must also establish and enforce a consistent training schedule with minimal breaks to allow the uninterrupted and intensive learning environment necessary for language training.

A final discussion on AST inquiries into translating TOs is also appropriate because translation would eliminate the stated need for English-language training. The Warner Robins Air Logistics Center's Iraq program manager stated that the United States had never translated TOs for any country.²⁴ The process was expensive, and money was not allocated in the Iraq C-130 program. Security assistance officers in Baghdad were familiar with other countries that had translated training manuals and TOs on their own but cautioned that those efforts were often abandoned because of high costs or resulted in TOs being outdated because subsequent changes were not translated or translated infrequently.

The author confirmed similar results in a December 2006 interview with Col. Selahattin Ibas, a visiting fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy at the time and now an operations group commander at Turkey's largest flight-training base. During the interview, Colonel Ibas described how Turkey abandoned its initial efforts to translate T-37 and T-38 TOs because of the high cost and a determination that teaching its personnel English provided a greater return on investment. Therefore, although translation appears to be an attractive alternative to difficult English training, the author was unable to find a successful case of a foreign country consistently translating aviation publications.

Centralized Authority

Many regional experts would not be surprised to hear the AST encountered centralized authority and deference to authority when training the IqAF. Arab militaries are traditionally hierarchical with authority and decisionmaking limited to a few key leadership positions. At the same time, Arab subordinate commanders have been known to defer to this authority, remain passive, and make few decisions on their own. Luckily, these military traits are at least complementary, because subordinates accept centralization of authority and are often most comfortable in these structures.

Although these traits are not exclusive to Arab forces, the importance of family in Arab culture promotes the manifestation of these traits in Arab militaries.²⁵ The family is the center of Arab society, and fathers expect "respect and unquestioning compliance with their instructions."²⁶ The level of deference to a father's authority can surprise those unfamiliar with the culture. Even grown sons are known to defer to their fathers on important decisions affecting their own families.²⁷

In the military, these cultural traits result in a few key leaders making most of the decisions, while

24. Maj. Gerald R. McCray, AST maintenance officer January 2005–February 2006, interview by author, March 12, 2007.

25. Pollack, "The Influence of Arab Culture on Arab Military Effectiveness," pp. 51–56.

26. Derek Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society, 1945–1990*, 3rd ed. (London: Harper Collins Academic, 1991), p. 166, and Halim Barakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture and State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 23.

27. Pollack, "The Influence of Arab Culture on Arab Military Effectiveness," p. 65.

subordinates wait patiently for a response. In “Armies of Snow and Armies of Sand,” Michael Eisenstadt and Kenneth Pollack capture the essence of this predicament:

Arab culture adheres to the notion that change and action should come from the top of a hierarchy and be transmitted downward, that subordinates should not exercise much independent judgment, that creative approaches are generally to be avoided, and that power should be concentrated in the hands of those at the top of the hierarchy.²⁸

This dynamic was foreign to AST instructors who grew up in a military that encouraged initiative, innovation, and delegation of authority to the lowest level possible. Consequently, the AST was continually frustrated with the slow decisionmaking process and inability to move forward on several issues.

Almost every issue had to be raised to HHQ for resolution. To make matters worse, HHQ was overwhelmed with the responsibilities of rebuilding the air force and had little time to address tactical-level issues, a fact that was confirmed when HHQ told the Squadron 23 commander to quit raising so many issues because HHQ was already too busy.²⁹ Subsequently, the squadron commander became very selective in the issues he raised. Despite this selectivity, a response was not guaranteed. In the end, each of these factors made a slow hierarchical decisionmaking structure even slower and hindered AST progress.

The AST further complicated matters through attempts to instill U.S. processes into an Iraqi military culture it does not fully understand. AST initiatives to increase flexibility and responsiveness of the Iraqi airlift system were simply incompatible with the hierarchical structure and often failed to achieve desired results. The following examples highlight a few incidents of centralized authority and its effect on C-130 operations, and include a discussion on how the initial

air force advisors’ focus at the squadron level was inappropriate for advising this type of structure.

Squadron positions. For any squadron to run smoothly, a sound organizational structure with competent leadership in each functional area is essential. Although relatively straightforward, this process was extremely slow in an air force attempting to rebuild. Three months of coordination with squadron leadership, HHQ, and CMATT-A were required before Squadron 23 received an approved organizational structure.³⁰ After receiving the squadron structure, the AST quickly realized the squadron commander had no authority to determine who would fill each position and was waiting for HHQ direction.

A potentially inconvenient delay became an issue when the HHQ failed to fill many important squadron positions. HHQ did designate the deputy commander and operations officer to clarify who was in command when the squadron commander was absent, but the functional areas of training, scheduling, planning, safety, intelligence, and cooperation and follow-up all remained unfilled. Without formal job assignments, scheduling, training, and planning were haphazard and accomplished by whoever was designated to be in the office that day.

The AST built functional continuity books, but the Iraqis resisted providing inputs or investing time in positions they were not assigned. This reality affected the AST’s ability to build collaborative processes and use a train-the-trainer concept for squadron functional areas. In the end, the AST was able to make significant progress in flight training but little measurable progress in functional area duties necessary for long-term squadron success.

Flights outside Iraq. The IqAF hierarchal structure also affected approval, funding, and personnel selections for Squadron 23 flights outside Iraq. The IqAF

28. Michael J. Eisenstadt and Kenneth M. Pollack, “The Armies of Snow and Armies of Sand: The Impact of Soviet Military Doctrine on Arab Militaries,” *Middle East Journal* 55, no. 4 (Autumn 2001), p. 575.

29. Samir, interview.

30. Redwood, interview, and Lt. Col. Terry Parson, CMATT-A C-130 program manager January–June 2005, email to author, March 21, 2005.

chief of staff retained approval and funding authority for all flights. This situation was not unreasonable given the small size of the air force and the limited number of flights outside the country. Nevertheless, the requirement to obtain General Kamal's approval hampered AST efforts to institute a responsive airlift request and execution system.

The unpredictable nature of Iraqi diplomatic relations with neighboring countries and poor planning often led to short-notice airlift requests by senior Iraqi officials. In response, the AST implemented an electronic airlift request process, transmitted from the requester to the HHQ Joint Operations Center (JOC) for approval. The intent was to provide request standardization, HHQ visibility for all non-training flights, and hopefully, quicker approval and responsive airlift to senior officials. While the process achieved the first two goals, it failed to accelerate the overall approval process. First, the JOC was often hesitant to contact General Kamal after duty hours, which eliminated approval of next-day flights after 1600 local time. Second, General Kamal usurped the entire initiative by instituting a requirement for the CMATT-A C-130 program manager to brief him on the funding request for all flights outside Iraq.³¹

Funding was important because personal or government credit cards were nonexistent and Iraqi personnel needed cash up front to pay for hotels, food, and landing fees. An accurate estimate of required funding was complicated by a lack of established per diem and lodging rates or planning factors for possible maintenance delays. This lack of standards created differing opinions on required funding and often led to haggling over finding cheaper hotels and putting multiple crewmembers in a single room.³² Ultimately, the approval process devolved into the program manager making multiple trips to General Kamal's office over the course of several days before reaching an agreement and receiving approval for any mission outside Iraq.³³

To make matters worse, a Squadron 23 member had to travel to the International Zone, wait for General Kamal's decision, and then arrange for transportation back to Ali Base with several thousand dollars of cash for each trip. The AST and Squadron 23 tried to solve the money transportation problem by suggesting the HHQ allow them to retain funding at the squadron level. Ali Base had a secure safe, and Squadron 23 agreed to carry only the approved amount, keep receipts, and provide copies to the HHQ on a monthly basis.³⁴ Unfortunately, General Kamal refused to consider an option allowing the squadron to control large sums of money, and the dangerous process of transporting cash continued.

The HHQ further influenced squadron flights by attempting to designate which operations and maintenance personnel went on each trip. The HHQ considered trips outside the country a type of reward or gift for squadron members. Regrettably, HHQ selections disregarded what personnel might receive the best training and were often tied to family or tribe.³⁵ Predictably, the squadron commander was unwilling to challenge HHQ inputs, and several excellent training opportunities were lost throughout the year.

Uniform issues. The centralization of authority and hierarchical decisionmaking was not limited to Squadron 23. On seemingly trivial decisions even General Kamal had to seek approval from the Minister of Defense (MOD) staff. For example, Squadron 23 members initially wore a hodgepodge of old IqAF uniforms, uniforms issued for recent Jordanian training, and civilian clothes. In an effort to present a more professional image and encourage unit cohesion, the AST coordinated with HHQ to issue three sets of new uniforms to each member.

The issue was raised to the HHQ A-4 for processing and not surprisingly, he raised the issue to General Kamal. The fact that General Kamal sent the request

31. Lt. Col. Herbert Philips, CMATT-A C-130 program manager July–December 2005, interview by author, February 9, 2007.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. C-130 Advisory Support Team Situation Report, April 28, 2005.

35. Redwood, interview.

Figure 6. Iraqi Air Force Advisor Allocation

BASE	IRAQI UNIT	AIRCRAFT TYPE	HHQ	SQUADRON
MNSTC-I	IqAF CoS	Not applicable	1	
CMATT-A	Not applicable	Not applicable	5	
Ali	Squadron 23	C-130s		35
Kirkuk	Squadron 3	Comp Air 7SLX		1
Basra	Squadron 70	CH-2000, SB7L-360		1
Taji	Squadrons 2 and 12	UH-1, Jet Rangers		3
TOTAL			6	40

to the MOD staff for final approval before issuing uniforms to personnel already in the air force was a surprise.³⁶ Although an extreme example for a simple decision, it is indicative of hundreds of HHQ decisions that squadron-level advisors felt helpless to influence or assist.

Misalignment of advisor focus. Given the centralization of authority typical of Arab forces, the initial focus of advisors at the tactical level was inappropriate and unable to effectively influence or assist senior leaders in early IqAF development. Because the majority of issues were raised to the HHQ, squadron-level advisors were unable to assist, advise, or mentor senior leaders on potential solutions.

Figure 6 provides an overview of IqAF advisor allocation in early 2005. The HHQ advisory effort was limited to a British air commodore (O-6) serving as executive assistant to General Kamal and the five members of CMATT-A. In fact, CMATT-A personnel were not tasked as IqAF advisors, but coordination with HHQ often led to CMATT-A personnel advising Iraqi staff on courses of action and needed decisions. However, CMATT-A offices were across the International Zone from the HHQ, which enabled only part-time interaction. Clearly, one full-time and five part-time advisors were inadequate

to mentor an inexperienced air staff attempting to rebuild an air force.

The CENTAF Operational Assessment Team came to a similar conclusion and identified the lack of strategic advisors as affecting overall IqAF advisory mission effectiveness. To remedy the situation, CAFTT diverted inbound air force personnel to advisor positions on the air staff. An advisor was matched to A-1 Personnel, A-2 Intelligence, A-3 Operations, A-4 Logistics, A-6 Communications, and A-8 Finance; A-5 Plans and A-7 Training remained unfilled through January 2006.³⁷

What did the strategic advisors find as they reported to their new positions? Most found a void in functional area plans or vision as the biggest deficiency. General Kamal's executive assistant and CMATT-A had worked with HHQ to develop a strategic vision for near-, medium-, and long-term goals. Yet no associated plans or benchmarks existed for achieving these ends in each directorate. Thus, initial efforts of strategic advisors were dedicated to working with their Iraqi counterparts to formulate a plan to shape functional priorities and ability to track progress.

The advisors also worked to establish basic functional processes within each directorate. The A-1 advisor began working with the Iraqi A-1 to align Army Modified Tables of Organization and Equipment to

36. CMSgt. Darrell McKinney, Iraqi Air Force A-4 advisor September 2005–January 2006, interview by author, February 2, 2007.

37. Coalition Air Force Transition Team, Weekly Activity Report, January 10, 2006.

air force requirements and establish personnel authorizations for each squadron.³⁸ Similarly, the A-4 advisor began developing vehicle authorizations and attempting to establish a distribution system to include storage, inventory, issue, and accountability.³⁹ The A-3 advisor invested time drafting and publishing instructions to provide HHQ-level guidance for flying operations, training, and safety.⁴⁰ The A-6 advisor initiated a review of IqAF communications requirements and discovered the army construction plan failed to consider many air force facilities.⁴¹ She then worked with the Iraqi A-6 and the army to insert IqAF requirements into the overall plan and construction contracts. Finally, the A-8 advisor instituted a consistent salary disbursement plan, reimbursement system for travel, and an acquisition section to oversee the mounting purchases.⁴²

The strategic advisors also increased the effectiveness of tactical advisors. As Iraqi squadron leadership raised issues through its chain of command, strategic advisors could confirm the issue was at the directorate and provide feedback on potential responses. The strategic advisor also provided insight and advice to squadron advisors on HHQ priorities and how best to raise issues. The squadron advisors could then advise Iraq squadron leadership and improve their effectiveness in getting the equipment and answers they needed. Moreover, strategic advisors could articulate the merits of squadron-level initiatives and garner senior leader support. Sadly, squadron-level advisor efforts struggled for ten months without the enabling support of strategic advisors or establishment of fundamental processes required to run an air force.

Lessons learned. Centralized authority and deference to authority were both strong traits in the IqAF. Both are common in Arab militaries, stem from a cultural bias, and should be anticipated by future advisory missions. Advisors in these environments must mold

expectations and institute processes consistent with the existing hierarchical structure. If delegation of authority is necessary, advisors must convince senior leaders of its merit and expect restrictions on lower-level authorities. In the short term, advisors must learn to work within the hierarchical system and institute incremental change. As Iraqi leaders gain confidence in advisors' recommendations and lower-echelon commanders, advisors can introduce more-flexible procedures requiring even more delegation of authority.

Advisors must also understand how the centralization of authority slows down the decisionmaking process. They must help anticipate potential issues and encourage commanders to raise them as soon as possible. Advisors must also assist commanders with formulating an interim plan as requests are being considered. Finally, advisors must have patience and endure the slow pace of decisionmaking within the IqAF. This practice may be difficult, but pushing lower-level commanders on issues they do not control is counterproductive and only highlights their lack of authority.

Regarding deference to authority, advisors must realize how little authority tactical-level commanders actually possess. They must be careful not to push tactical-level commanders to make decisions outside their authority. First, subordinate commanders are already uncomfortable making many decisions, given the previous military culture. Second, if a commander is harshly rebuked after following an advisor's advice, his initial apprehension will be reinforced and he may become resentful and unwilling to heed future suggestions. In these cases, progress is slowed even more because the advisor must begin rebuilding the commander's trust and confidence. Thus, it is important to understand who has what authority and to advise commanders accordingly.

Similarly, strategic advisors must encourage senior leaders to provide clear guidance to subordinates. Guidance can take many forms, but written guidance

38. Lt. Col. John T. Demboski, Iraqi A-1 advisor October 2005–February 2006, interview by author, February 2, 2007.

39. McKinney, interview by author.

40. Lt. Col. Jerald G. Oliver, Iraqi A-3 advisor September 2005–February 2006, interview by author, February 15, 2007.

41. Lt. Col. Christine Gramlich, Iraqi A-6 advisor October 2005–February 2006, interview by author, February 6, 2007.

42. Maj. Yuanthony C. McCree, Iraqi A-8 advisor September 2005–March 2006, interview by author, February 2, 2007.

or regulations are best in a hierarchical structure. Written guidance is concrete, undisputable, and bolsters a subordinate commander's confidence to make decisions where in the past he might have hesitated. Clear guidance also enhances advisors' understanding of what issues to work on at the squadron level, what issues should be raised to HHQ, and what initiatives are impractical. It also builds a box for subordinate commander authority and creates a comfort zone for action. The goal is to create a clear understanding of how to proceed when a lower-level commander is confronted with an issue.

Finally, strategic advisors are absolutely essential in advising hierarchical organizations. The cultural tendencies for centralization of authority and deference to authority are too strong and unlikely to change in the first few years. As a result, advisory efforts must focus more, or at least as much, at the strategic level. This effort means having a sufficient number of strategic advisors to assist the personnel making the vast majority of decisions. Ideally, advisory efforts should focus exclusively on higher echelons until the vision, goals, programs, and guidance are established. When those are in place, squadron-level advisors can initiate their efforts to increase tactical-level capabilities and effectiveness.

If operational realities prevent a phased approach, the U.S. Air Force must ensure it has a sufficient number of strategic advisors supporting and enabling tactical-level efforts from the beginning. In hierarchical structures, the need for advisors at the decisionmaking level cannot be overstated, and a failure to properly align advisory support will limit short-term success and prevent long-term sustainability of tactical efforts.

Poor Warrant Officer Qualifications

The U.S. military is blessed with a highly educated and motivated noncommissioned officer (NCO) force. NCOs are capable of assuming high levels of

responsibility and often take the initiative to get things done. In contrast, Iraq never attempted to build a similar competency in its warrant officer or enlisted force.

In general, Iraqi warrant officers are poorly educated, given little responsibility, and expected to do what they are told and little else.⁴³ Anthony Cordesman and Abraham Wagner, in *The Lessons of Modern War*, described Iraq's military as one that "lacked experienced and highly trained NCOs and which relied on junior officers as substitutes for well-trained career NCOs, thereby forging a gap between officer and enlisted personnel."⁴⁴ Norvell De Atkine also lamented the lack of an NCO corps in Arab militaries in "Why Arabs Lose Wars," asserting the lack of NCO leadership in Arab militaries has led to poor technical knowledge and training of enlisted forces.⁴⁵

The AST experience draws similar conclusions because the team found significant differences between U.S. NCO and Iraqi warrant officer capabilities and motivation. The previous Iraqi military culture did not expect and failed to prepare its warrant officers to lead or take responsibility for technical aspects of the mission. Because Iraq did not appreciate the benefits of a strong warrant officer force and viewed them as a labor pool, the country failed to invest in enlisted education or professionalism programs. Consequently, warrant officers tended to wait around until someone told them what to do rather than take the initiative and do things on their own. They also struggled with the critical thinking necessary to troubleshoot problems in the aircraft or on the flight line.⁴⁶ The following discussion of warrant officer performance as flight engineers and maintenance personnel underscores the need to carefully consider where to place warrant officers in future squadron structures.

Flight engineer responsibilities. In contrast to a U.S. squadron, Squadron 23 had both officer and enlisted flight engineers. The first group consisted of one

43. Brig. Gen. Kareem, commander, New al-Muthana Air Base, discussions with author throughout 2005.

44. Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War Volume 4: The Gulf War* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, Inc., 1996), p. 24.

45. Norvell De Atkine, "Why Arabs Lose Wars," *Middle East Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (December 1999), p. 27.

46. Redwood, interview.

officer, who quit the program after four months, and three warrant officers. A second group of four officers was slated to arrive in June. Previously, Iraqi flight engineers simply ensured switches were in the correct position to allow the pilot to start the engines, run the fuel, and fly the aircraft. Thus, the pilot was the aircraft systems expert and the flight engineer was relegated to flipping switches. In the United States, the pilot has a good understanding of aircraft systems and performance data, but the flight engineer is the expert and responsible for having an in-depth knowledge of both.

For training, the AST flight engineers made the decision to align Iraqi aircrew responsibilities with U.S. standards. Therefore, Iraqi engineers were instructed to be the C-130 aircraft system experts and assist the pilot in troubleshooting system malfunctions. In an emergency, the pilot needed to have confidence in the flight engineer's expertise to help determine a proper course of action, especially because pilots were also being trained to the U.S. standard of relying on the flight engineer as the aircraft systems expert.

For performance data, the flight engineers needed to know how to get outside air temperature, airfield altitude, pressure altitude, airfield length, aircraft weight, load weight, and so forth to determine various aircraft speeds, distances, and capabilities. Accurate performance data are absolutely essential to safe aircraft operations, and a miscalculation could be fatal in extreme cases. Squadron 23's mission of flying senior Iraqi officials across the Middle East and Europe made flight engineers' understanding of how to calculate and interpret performance data across a wide range of conditions even more critical.

Flight engineer training woes. The Iraqi flight engineers received extensive training before AST arrival. Previous training included three months of C-130 aircraft systems and flight training in Jordan and two weeks of aircraft systems training, flight simulators, and a flight at Little Rock Air Force Base in the United States. Still, the AST had to start from the beginning after warrant officers' knowledge indicated they had retained very little from this initial training. The AST flight engineers instituted a program of intensive one-

on-one instruction in aircraft systems and performance data as well as in-flight instruction two to three times per week.

After ten months of training, the warrant officers still had significant difficulty or were incapable of learning the material, retaining the information, or consistently performing in the aircraft. In comparison, officers from the second group were becoming fully qualified after a mere four months of training. The AST flight engineers were concerned language might be the reason warrant officers were not advancing and began using Iraqi officers from the second group to train and instruct the struggling warrant officers. Using this method, they were able to qualify one warrant officer after more than a year of training; however, the other two still failed to progress and were eventually removed from flight engineer training.

At this point, the AST considered two options. It could revert to the previous Iraqi standard and require the pilot to become the aircraft systems expert or limit flight engineer duties to officers only. The first option would allow the flight engineers to revert to simply flipping switches and most likely lead to a higher number of warrant officers' qualifying for the position. The strongest argument against this option was the complexity of the C-130 compared to the Antonov aircraft previously in the Iraqi inventory. The C-130 has multiple and redundant systems, especially when looking at hydraulics and electrics: the C-130 has three hydraulic systems compared to one generally found on Antonov and Ilyushin aircraft.

This additional complexity and number of systems increased the amount of information a C-130 systems expert had to retain and led the AST to conclude that expecting a pilot to be the expert in flying the aircraft, knowing aircraft systems, and calculating the performance data was unrealistic. As a result, the AST settled on the second option of accepting only officers as C-130 flight engineers. This practice would allow the division of responsibilities, and Iraqi officers had proven themselves capable of assuming flight engineers' duties. Subsequently, the AST forwarded a recommendation to the IqAF HHQ to assign only officers to future C-130 flight engineer positions.

Iraqi maintenance supervisors. After reviewing previous Iraqi officer and warrant officer roles, the high number of officers assigned to maintenance, and the potential difficulty of putting warrant officers in leadership positions, the AST maintenance officer decided not to align warrant officers with traditional NCO maintenance positions. He was concerned warrant officers would be incapable of supervising flight-line operations, directing personnel actions, setting timelines, approving airworthiness of the aircraft, or ensuring work was completed according to standards.⁴⁷ Therefore, he assigned officers to all production supervisor and quality assurance positions in addition to putting an officer in charge of supply and air transportation.

In a recent interview, the AST maintenance officer assessed that he had made the right decision.⁴⁸ He pointed to the problems in operations with flight engineers and his observation of warrant officers' performance throughout the year. The warrant officers in maintenance repeatedly demonstrated a lack of desire to take charge, make decisions, or direct the work of others.⁴⁹ Additionally, the fact that warrant officers often refused to follow directions from officers made the likelihood of following orders from another warrant officer highly unlikely.

In his assessment, warrant officer capabilities and Iraqi military culture would need to change before warrant officers could effectively assume leadership positions.⁵⁰ The Iraqi chief of maintenance agreed with the assertion that warrant officers were unfit for leadership positions and doubted they would ever effectively carry out leadership responsibilities in the squadron.⁵¹ This attitude is just one more indication of the difficult task advisors will face in transitioning more responsibility to warrant officers in the IqAF.

Lessons learned. A lack of education, professionalization, or leadership roles has produced a warrant officer force incapable of assuming many of the duties

assigned to senior enlisted personnel in the United States. First, advisors should expect warrant officers to possess a high school equivalent education at best. Second, their education relied heavily on rote memorization and imitation, and the majority is unprepared for or incapable of the consistent critical thinking required to troubleshoot complex operational or maintenance problems. Consequently, advisors cannot simply align warrant officers and senior enlisted positions in the United States and expect the same results.

Furthermore, the lack of professional education or previous leadership experience has created a warrant officer force with little understanding of or motivation to take responsibility or initiative. More important, the lack of previous experience or education has left many incapable of assuming leadership responsibilities. A strong military tradition of using junior officers in technical leadership positions has also limited warrant officer technical competency. As a result, junior officers are best prepared to assume current technical leadership positions until such time as warrant officers are properly selected, educated, and trained to assume leadership roles in technical fields.

In the end, the C-130 experience indicates advisors are going to have a difficult time overcoming a lack of desire among warrant officers to assume greater leadership roles and lack of confidence by Iraqi officers that warrant officers are capable of assuming greater leadership roles. No appreciation exists for the potential benefits of a strong warrant officer force and any effort to transition warrant officers to leadership positions will be a slow process, requiring education across the entire force and motivation of future warrant officer leaders.

Reduced Training Days

Iraqi aircrew and maintenance qualification timelines and continuity depended on the number of available training days. This paper has already discussed the allocation of 50 percent of all training time to English.

47. Maj. Gerald McCray, AST maintenance officer January 2005–February 2006, interview by author, March 12, 2007.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Shamel, interview.

This section addresses the shrinking number of training days caused by reduced training schedules coupled with liberal leave and personnel absent without leave (AWOL). A discussion of potential Iraqi justifications for the reduced schedule is also included to educate future advisors about Iraqi concerns and justifications of the problem.

Even before training started, differences existed in work schedule expectations. The U.S. military in almost every instance is likely perceived by foreign forces as working too hard and too long. In Iraq, the situation was exaggerated even more because the advisors were deployed to a combat zone, had few distractions, and were ready to work seven days a week. In contrast, Iraqi airmen had many competing demands and a difficult time overcoming the effect of war and insurgent activity on completing the simplest task.

During the training period, the Iraqis lived with the AST in tent city and returned home only during their off days. For work schedules, the Iraqi army had an established training standard of twenty-one days on and seven days off. After a few weeks, the AST adopted this same standard and associated training timelines. From the beginning, the Iraqis believed the twenty-one and seven schedule was too much, and by the end of the first year, the maintenance schedule was eventually reduced to ten days on and five days off. The operations personnel, who were mostly qualified and only required to keep a minimum number of personnel from each crew position available, were working even less, with an eleven days on and eleven days off schedule at best. Moreover, Squadron 23's observation of all Muslim and Iraqi holidays reduced available training days even more.

The problem of reduced training days was compounded even further by individuals on leave or AWOL. The press is full of stories describing how the new Iraqi army is plagued with reduced manning levels,

liberal leave policies, or personnel simply not reporting for work.⁵² A Center for Naval Analyses report stated: "The average Iraqi soldier takes over 100 days of leave per year. Although he must do so in order to provide for his family, these absences reduce combat strength and often result in soldiers going AWOL... As a result, the number of soldiers present for duty is at least 25 percent lower than reported strength."⁵³ Not surprisingly, Squadron 23 suffered from the same affliction. Missing training days became so rampant the AST maintenance officer produced a five-month report documenting the extent of the problem. The report covered maintenance personnel only but provides a snapshot of the overall problem and is indicative of the entire training period. From June 6 to November 18, 2005, maintenance personnel were AWOL 217 days, granted 614 training days of additional leave, and missed another 182 days for meetings at HHQ.⁵⁴ In the final summary, Iraqi maintenance personnel missed 1,013 of 7,070 available training days or a total of 14 percent of all training. The missed training days ranged from returning to work a day late to missing entire ten- to fifteen-day work periods.⁵⁵ Missing a ten- to fifteen-day work period equates to twenty to twenty-five days of training unavailability when off days are considered. When students miss almost a month of training at a time, progress in English or technical training is difficult to achieve.

The missing students also had a ripple effect on the other students in their aviation specialty. Upon a student's return, the instructor had to secure one of the limited interpreters to conduct one-on-one instruction. Because interpreter availability was limited to aviation specialty class time, one-on-one instruction was often done at the expense of the overall class; after-hours instruction was generally not an option because local interpreters had to return home before dark. Ultimately, the choice was not either-or and resulted in

52. Michael R. Gordon, "News Analysis: Iraq Army Quandary," *New York Times*, October 24, 2006, p. 1.

53. Henry J. Kenny, *Strengthening an Embattled Nation: A Strategy for Contending with Three Wars in Iraq* (Monterey, Calif.: Center for Naval Analyses, 2006), p. 6. The last sentence is cited in the report as coming from Greg Jaffe, "Problems Afflict U.S. Army Program to Advise Iraqis," *Wall Street Journal*, October 18, 2006. The source in the *Wall Street Journal* article is listed as "U.S. military officials."

54. McCray, interview.

55. Coalition Air Force Transition Team Situation Report, November 28, 2005.

absent students lagging behind and slower overall class progression.

Causes and justifications. The following discussion of potential causes and justifications relies on AST opinions and numerous author discussions with the squadron and base commanders regarding this issue. Some AST personnel believed Iraqis were simply unwilling to work and wanted to stay home with their families. Despite the importance of families in Arab culture, they perceived laziness as the motivating factor.

A review of Arab culture does find some experts asserting that the fatalistic view of everything as God's will leads to a work ethic that many Westerners find disconcerting. Sania Hamady in *Temperament and Character of the Arabs* asserts the following: "It is simply a matter of fact that this idea of the omnipresence of divine action, besides making the Muslim peculiarly inclined to refer events to God, has tended to make him inert. If one has been lazy and negligent, it is always consoling to think that it was so ordained and could not be helped."⁵⁶ Raphael Patai comes to a similar conclusion in his book *The Arab Mind*, stating, "Fatalism engenders an attitude of passivity and the disinclination to undertake efforts to change or improve things."⁵⁷

In contrast, Halim Barakat in *The Arab World* argues against Hamady's and Patai's conclusion and cites numerous passages regarding free will from the Quran and Arab proverbs. Consequently, he rejects any assertion that Arabs are lazy or that a connection to fatalism exists.⁵⁸ Kenneth Pollack found so many conflicting views on whether fatalism led to apathy or laziness in his research that he chose not to include it as a cultural trait in his discussion of the effect of Arab culture on military effectiveness.⁵⁹ Given the disagreement among experts, this author can draw no definitive conclusions of a cultural bias, but laziness was a perception held by many after working with the Iraqis.

From the Iraqi perspective, the reduced training schedule was justified by many other factors. The first justification evolved from differing perceptions of the urgency of training timelines and the importance of the mission. The IqAF HHQ never established a target date for full qualification of Squadron 23 personnel. From Squadron 23's point of view, the pace of training should be similar to the Monday–Friday training schedule of a student in the United States rather than the twenty-one and seven schedule they were following. This attitude was reinforced by the five-day work schedule that prevailed at IqAF HHQ despite the ongoing insurgent activity.

When the AST tried to argue the merits of the mission, the Iraqis were unconvinced their mission contributed to stability in Iraq. Furthermore, their qualifications were not affecting the level of C-130 support to Iraqi forces. A quicker qualification would only reduce the number of AST personnel on the crew and conducting maintenance; it would not increase the number of available C-130 missions to support Iraqi requests. Thus, the presence of U.S. personnel flying and maintaining Iraqi aircraft created its own disincentive for quicker Iraqi qualifications.

Family responsibilities also provided a strong incentive for increased time off. The advanced age of squadron members equated to large family obligations back home. If a brother was killed, members had the additional burden of taking care of his family. The fact that some warrant officers had more than one wife further complicated family responsibilities. Nevertheless, when Iraqi airmen proclaimed they were needed at home to make decisions or things would not get done, at least some cultural truth lay behind their claims. Finally, as explained below, the insurgency increased the complexity and time requirements of existing family responsibilities.

In a peaceful Arab society, the father would carry out almost all the duties outside the home. In Baghdad,

56. Sania Hamady, *Temperament and Character of the Arabs* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1960), p. 213.

57. Raphael Patai, *The Arab Mind* (New York: Columbia Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), p. 153.

58. Halim Barakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture and State* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 191–194.

59. Pollack, "The Influence of Arab Culture on Arab Military Effectiveness," pp. 46–47.

where the majority of the squadron members lived, indiscriminate bombing and high crime rates complicated the accomplishment of even simple duties. The banking system had collapsed; bills had to be paid in person; and squadron members had to wait in long lines for fuel to heat homes, run generators, and power vehicles. Even food shopping was treacherous because markets were a favorite target of insurgents. Because of the chaos, fathers were more reluctant to pass these duties to older sons, and most family members chose simply to stay at home. Things simply did not get done unless squadron members were home and able to accomplish these tasks.

The AST had little understanding of a failed banking system and inability to handle business through checks and the mail. Ironically, most AST members were paying their bills from Iraq though electronic banking and automatic billing. For Iraqis even to get paid, they had to go to HHQ in Baghdad, receive their salaries in cash, and hand deliver it to their families. What might take a U.S. airman minutes to accomplish could take an Iraqi airman an entire day. In this environment, nothing was easy, everything took time, and the Iraqis' advanced age only increased their responsibilities. Consequently, the Iraqis continually insisted on more time at home to get things done, and the AST, having little understanding of the realities in Baghdad, often deferred to their judgment.

In more-candid discussions, Iraqis also pointed to the lack of a merit-based system as encouraging less time at work. The IqAF of the past and present was not a meritocracy, and military promotions and positions were often based on family or tribal ties. This situation is not an anomaly in the Arab world and is generally accepted as standard practice within the military. The influence of family ties was evident when a new navigator, whose father was an influential sheikh in Baghdad, was promoted from major to colonel after only a few

days in the squadron and designated the deputy base commander. That everyone was already at their highest rank further reduced the motivation to work harder or longer hours.

All of these factors contributed to Iraqi efforts to reduce training days and extend training timelines. The preceding discussion gives some of the expressed motivations for the reduced schedules, but only the Iraqis know the real reasons, which likely varied from individual to individual. For the AST, training days were being reduced, and neither the Iraqi squadron leadership nor HHQ showed any concern over the slow progress or lengthening U.S. commitment.

Lessons learned. The challenges of reduced training days were many and produced multiple lessons learned. First, training schedules and benchmarks must be set and agreed to by the United States and IqAF HHQ before initiating any training. Ideally, the Iraqi leadership has the best understanding of everyday life and should set training schedules to meet agreed-upon timelines. Second, advisors must work with HHQ to limit leave during training periods. Third, Iraqi leadership must hold its own personnel accountable to prevent a few individuals from negatively affecting the progress of the entire mission. An established training schedule with minimal interruptions enables both countries to measure progress and prevents extended commitments of U.S. advisors and trainers.

Equally, advisors must understand the operating and living environment in Iraq and the fact that competing demands may lead to reduced schedules. These realities make it that much more important to work with the Iraqis to strike a balance between effective use of deployed advisor time and Iraqi requirements. As the paper begins to discuss CAFTT plans to build Iraqi airpower, the training schedule should be a joint decision, decided early, and change only because of mission factors.

Iraqi Airpower

THE PREVIOUS TWO chapters discussed initial C-130 advisory efforts in Iraq. This chapter transitions to recent CENTAF proposals and air force planning efforts to rapidly develop Iraqi airpower over the next two years. Specifically, this section provides a general overview of the proposed increases in IqAF personnel, aircraft, and advisors and a more detailed discussion of predeployment training of advisors, establishment of a flight-training squadron, and technical training pipelines. Although efforts to develop Iraqi airpower are still evolving, this discussion is limited to actions proposed before summer 2007.

Building Airpower in Iraq

Since its inception in November 2005, the Coalition Air Force Transition Team has spearheaded and managed several initiatives to improve IqAF operations. Over the past two years, CAFTT has increased in size to 115 personnel and provided assistance across IqAF HHQ staff, operations, and training.¹ This pace of measured growth will explode over the next two years as CAFTT implements a plan to rapidly build IqAF capacity and capability.

In January 2007, the CAFTT commanding general presented his commander's intent to a headquarters air force integrated product team led by the Office of the Deputy Undersecretary of the Air Force for International Affairs:

Introduce and sustain western influence in the Iraqi Air Force through a combination of training, advising,

and mentoring both in and out of the country. Build an Objective Force capable of conducting air operations across the entire spectrum of the COIN [counterinsurgency] fight with a sustainable force structure while laying a solid foundation for future IqAF growth.²

A comprehensive plan of impressive IqAF growth to meet the commander's intent was also presented to the IPT. The plan for growth is outlined in Department of Defense quarterly reports to Congress titled *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*. These reports document a concentrated accession effort to grow IqAF personnel from 1,000 personnel to well over 3,000 and to increase the Iraqi aircraft fleet from 27 aircraft to over 81 in the next few years (figure 7).³

As the Iraqi Minister of Defense considers the acquisition of additional aircraft, the potential for even greater growth in the number of aircraft is likely. Specifically, the IqAF is considering the King Air 350 for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance and Cessna 172 as a flight-training platform.⁴

To provide effective assistance at this critical juncture in IqAF development and growth, CAFTT is recommending a 300 percent increase in U.S. Air Force advisors.⁵ CAFTT is already in the process of increasing the number of advisors to 200 by May 2007 and has a final goal of more than 400 by June 2008.⁶ The primary growth occurs in new mission areas of flight training, technical training, and counterinsurgency. CAFTT staff and strategic advisors

1. Maj. Andrew J. Radke, personnel/manpower, Coalition Air Force Transition Team Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, email to author, January 21, 2007.
2. Col. Sharon L. Holmes, chief, Middle East/Africa Division, Office of the Deputy Undersecretary of the Air Force for International Affairs, memorandum of record, January 26, 2007, p. 1.
3. *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, November 2006, submitted to Congress pursuant to Section 9010 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act 2007, Public Law 109-289, pp. 45–46; and *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, June 2007, submitted to Congress pursuant to Section 9010 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act 2007, Public Law 109-289, pp. 42–43.
4. "Media Roundtable with Brigadier General Stephen L. Hoog, USA, Director of the Air Component Coordination Element, Multinational Force-Iraq," Federal News Service, Washington, D.C., March 12, 2007, p. 4; and Briefing, "Acquisition Strategies to Support Iraqi Air Force Security Assistance Programs," January 30, 2007, slide 3.
5. Bruce Lemkin, deputy undersecretary, Air Force International Affairs, "Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan Integrated Product Team Final Report" (briefing), March 8, 2007, slide 22.
6. Col. Phillip M. Senna, Air Education and Training Command, A3R Briefing, "CAFTT Pre-Deployment Training: Theater Training Team Panel 29 Jan–6 Feb 07," slide 3.

Figure 7. Planned Iraqi Aircraft Growth

AIRCRAFT	CURRENT	PLANNED
C-130	3	6
Seeker	2	2
Ch 2000	8	8
Cessna 208	0	4
Jet Ranger	5	5
Huey II	5	16
Mi-17	4	28
Casa 12-400	0	12
TOTAL	27	81

Source: U.S. Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, November 2006, p. 42; *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, March 2007, pp. 45–46; and *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, June 2007, pp. 42–43.

are also increased to provide improved oversight and HHQ assistance.

In harnessing expertise and support from Headquarters Air Force and the other major commands, the IPT organized into separate teams focused in five areas: CONUS training, theater training, forces planning, acquisition strategy, and programming. For discussion purposes, this paper focuses on the CONUS and theater training initiatives as directly related to operations of aviation advisors and most applicable to the previous C-130 mission discussion. The CONUS training team focused on designing predeployment training for advisors as a critical aspect of preparing general-purpose advisors for missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The theater training group focused on establishing the flight-training capability and training pipelines to prepare Iraqi officers and warrants for required specialties. By focusing in these areas, the paper presents issues and recommendations that are applicable to the entire CAFTT proposal.

Advisor Predeployment Training

Predeployment training has been an issue since C-130 AST training was limited to an abbreviated Middle East Orientation Course in early 2005. A full discussion of the evolution in predeployment training was reserved for this section to provide a comprehensive discussion of the growth in the program and the proposed way ahead.

Initial predeployment training. In addition to its previous findings, the CENTAF Operational Assessment Team identified the lack of a dedicated predeployment training program for general-purpose forces as limiting the success of air force advisors in Iraq. Once established, CAFTT assumed ownership of the predeployment training process and coordinated with CENTAF, USAFSOS, and Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) to develop a more robust and effective program.

The initial collaboration produced a thirty-one-day course that paralleled the forty-five-day training course army Military Transition Teams (MiTTs) received at Fort Riley, Kansas.⁷ The course encompassed mission essential training tasks focused in three areas:

- **Mission.** CENTAF/MNSTC-I/CAFTT command and control and mission; IqAF organization; coalition air and ground operations; mission planning, combat aviation advisory operations; counter-insurgency theory; military decisionmaking process; security assistance process; MiTT lessons learned.
- **Cultural.** Arabic language familiarization; Iraqi culture to include the Iraqi view of Iraq and the Iraqi view of the United States/coalition.
- **Combat skills.** DOD force protection level I; AK-47 familiarization; CENTCOM high risk of capture/isolation, level-C survival, evasion, resistance, and escape (SERE); forward operating base operations; convoy procedures; shoot and move procedures.⁸

7. Lt. Col. Wesley W. Long, director, chief, Offensive Operations, 609th Combat Operations Squadron, Staff Summary Sheet, "USCENTAF Aviation Military Transition Team (MiTT) Academic Course Support Request," September 21, 2007.

8. Ibid.

While USAFSOS and DLI were responsible for the cultural training tasks, CAFTT, AFSOC, and 6th SOS assumed the lead in the mission and combat skills training blocks. The course was conducted from July 9 to August 19, 2006, and hosted approximately 100 of the 115 advisors scheduled to deploy to Iraq in late 2006. Overall, the program was a huge improvement, but few programs get it 100 percent right the first time.

The following feedback comes from an informal survey taken by the CAFTT chief of training and formal interviews by the author.⁹ The predeployment training included USAFSOS's MEOC, Contemporary Insurgents Warfare course (CIWC), and Dynamics of Terrorism (DIT) course. The DIT course was specifically scheduled and tailored for training advisors for Iraq. Conversely, MEOC and CIWC were previously scheduled USAFSOS curriculum courses containing students not involved in the advisory mission that USAFSOS opened up to the U.S. advisors headed to Iraq.

In feedback, MEOC and DIT were both well received and considered very informative and applicable to the mission. In contrast, CIWC, taught last, received less-favorable comments because of the level of repetition from the previous two courses and a perceived lack of applicability to the air force advisory mission. Repetition is the unavoidable by-product of a nondedicated course and something CAFTT should consider in future. Regarding applicability, a survey of advisors at their midtour point should provide a more accurate measure of CWIC applicability to advisory operations. However, air force advisors need to understand the insurgent and counterinsurgency strategies being used in Iraq to advise the IqAF on how best to support these operations.

The DLI Arabic Language Familiarization course taught over five half-days also received mixed reviews. Most advisors believed the course provided good

information on general greetings and numbers but could be relayed through handouts rather than dedicated class time.¹⁰ Although language is an important aspect of training foreign forces, predeployment training is simply too late to impart any meaningful level of Arabic-language training. Just-in-time training cannot overcome this obstacle.

In regard to mission briefings, the information imparted was found to be informative and applicable, but a more experienced presenter and broader representation of advisors would improve the overall course. The majority of the briefings were provided by a single individual very familiar with the overall program but with limited experience as an IqAF advisor. Moreover, advisors believed representatives with experience in operations, maintenance, base operating support, and technical training would provide a broader perspective and clearer expectations of the issues in each area. Furthermore, breakout sessions could focus the discussion on specific issues and concerns for each specialty.

The combat skills training provided by 6th SOS was very intense and structured toward special operations-type missions. Typically, a 6th SOS advisor team deploys as a self-sufficient small group to a foreign country and is responsible for its own security and protection. In contrast, Iraq aviation advisors are based on forward operating bases with robust layers of security for which advisors are not responsible. Unlike army advisors, air force advisors are not interacting with the Iraqi population or exposed to many of the same dangers. Consequently, much of the shoot, move, and communicate training was not applicable to their specific environment. Some personnel found the weapons and convoy training beneficial; a more in-depth review and feedback from personnel in the field is necessary to draw final conclusions on the applicability of each training module. CAFTT understood this was a first effort and is continually refining its training and preparation of advisors.

9. The areas of concern and feedback come from two general sources: Col. Gary W. Kirk, Iraq A-7 training advisor, Coalition Air Force Transition Team, interview by author, January 5, 2007; individual feedback through interviews by author with six other C-130 MiTT members who attended the training.

10. Kirk, interview.

Proposed predeployment training. The potential growth of Iraq advisors validated the need for a permanent solution for predeployment training for advisors. Additionally, CENTAF completed an operational assessment of Afghanistan, found similar deficiencies, and proposed a similar plan to increase Afghanistan advisors to 150 persons over the next two years.¹¹ As a result, the IPT was tasked to design a predeployment training program capable of providing training for approximately 600 advisors a year.

To meet this requirement, the IPT approved a four-tier concept managed by an AETC detachment, which leverages the Common Battlefield Airmen Training (CBAT) initiative with additional air advisor and aircraft familiarization training.¹²

The Tier 1 basic military training (BMT) is included only to indicate airmen graduating after November 2006 may have already received instruction in some of the combat skills areas required for advisor billets.¹³ Advisors would not attend portions of BMT for combat skills training.

Tier 2 provides combat skills training at CBAT. CBAT is an evolving initiative first introduced by then secretary of the air force James Roche in 2004 to establish a dedicated training center for conducting common combat skills training for all battlefield airmen.¹⁴ Today, the initiative is focused away from battlefield airmen and toward career fields not traditionally taught combat skills but who are now in need of these skills because of deployments into hostile environments. The most obvious example is transportation specialists receiving training at the Basic Combat Convoy course in preparation for convoy duties in Iraq. Traditionally, these airmen drove forklifts and trucks inside the wire,

but more and more, they are being called upon to operate outside the wire in support of combat operations and need combat skills to accomplish their missions.¹⁵

Currently, AETC wants to establish the training center in Tennessee, Georgia, or Louisiana and is coordinating with Headquarters Air Force on who should attend the combat skills training courses.¹⁶ In addition to combat skills training for personnel assigned to hostile areas, personnel selected for certain career fields will proceed from BMT to CBAT before entering specialty training. CBAT is expected to be fully operational in 2010 with a throughput of more than 14,000 students a year.¹⁷ In the meantime, a bridge course is under development to meet current requirements. Ultimately, CBAT will institutionalize air force combat training at a single location and instill a combat ethos in future airmen operating on the battlefield.

The IPT-designed predeployment plan inserts advisors into applicable CBAT courses as part of their combat skills training. Under this plan, air force advisors would receive applicable battlefield training in courses designed to impart similar skills to other specialties. The IPT asserted the use of CBAT will “minimize costs and training time by targeting the right people for the right training and eliminate the need to duplicate training programs that already exist.”¹⁸

For Tier 3 training, the AETC detachment will provide the necessary mission, cultural, and combat skills training not included in the CBAT course, preferably at a collocated facility.¹⁹ Thus, the AETC detachment would assume responsibility for the cultural and mission training previously led by USAF-SOS and CAFTT. Similar to CBAT, Tier 3 training

11. Lemkin, “Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan,” slide 11.

12. *Ibid.*, slide 9.

13. CMSgt. Steve Sargent, U.S. Air Force Basic Military Training Superintendent, discussion with author, March 16, 2007.

14. David A. Jablonski, “Secretary Reveals Future Systems at AFA Symposium” *Air Force Print News*, February 13, 2004. Available online (www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123006983).

15. Donna Miles, “Air Force Provides Convoy Security for Army, Marines in Iraq,” American Forces Press Service, February 8, 2005. Available online (www.defenselink.mil/news/Feb2005/n02082005_2005020801.html).

16. Lt. Col. John M. Bukowinski, chief, Technical Training Division, Air Education and Training Command, discussion with author, March 15, 2007.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Memorandum for AETC A2/3 from AETC/A3R/AETC A3F, 2AF/DO, USAF BMT Superintendent, “Coalition Air Force Transition Team In-Country Visit,” February 26, 2007, p. 6.

19. Lemkin, “Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan,” slide 9.

will be tailored to the specific requirements of each advisor billet.

Tier 4 training will consist of familiarization training for advisors selected to train and advise Iraqi and Afghan personnel in aircraft not found in the U.S. Air Force inventory. Clearly, the majority of current and proposed Iraqi aircraft do not exist in the U.S. Air Force inventory, and the Afghan air corps is currently flying AN-32s, AN-26s, Mi-17s, and Mi-35s.²⁰ The AETC detachment will manage contracts to provide both aircrew and maintenance familiarization training in required aircraft. The contracts and locations of the familiarization training are still under consideration.

According to the IPT overview slide, predeployment training time will vary according to advisor billet requirements but could approximate eighty days for operations and maintenance advisors requiring familiarization training. Predeployment training time is an important consideration because it is in addition to the 365-day tour for advisors. Because advisors are coming from general-purpose career fields, their predeployment training and one-year tours come at the expense of core specialty duties.

The establishment of the predeployment training program for advisors came with a two-year \$15 million price tag, for which the air force chief of staff approved release of Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) funding for 2007–2008.²¹ GWOT funding expires in 2008; therefore, AETC will work with Headquarters Air Force to insert 2009–2010 program costs with associated offsets into the Air Force Program Objective Memorandum.²² AETC will also begin developing courseware for the top two tiers of training, coordinating with CAFTT to identify required training for each advisor billet, and finalizing facility and personnel requirements for the AETC detachment.

Alternative predeployment training option. During the review process, the IPT also considered the establishment of an Expeditionary Air Advisor Training Center, which would manage, tailor, and teach all required predeployment training.²³ The center would provide baseline training for all advisors in weapons qualification, convoy operations, combat lifesaving, cultural awareness, language skills, survival, contemporary insurgent warfare, combat aviation advisor fundamentals, and theater command and control.²⁴ The center would also be responsible for providing specific training on aircraft and maintenance for advisors tasked to train in nonstandard aircraft.²⁵

In this option, the training center did not leverage or use another organization to teach any of its courses. The primary location under consideration was the Hurlburt Field area to take advantage of expertise at USAFSOS and 6th SOS. Initial rough estimates priced this option at \$10 million a year.²⁶ The higher price tag and duplication of combat skills courses already taught at CBAT made this option less attractive.²⁷ A more detailed comparison of the two options is included in the recommendations section.

Theater Training

With the predeployment training plan approved, it is time to look at training inside Iraq. Theater training is critical to building a foundation for future IqAF sustainability. The flight-training squadron enables the production of new pilots to replace an existing pilot force in their mid-forties. CAFTT is also in the process of extensive training-pipeline development, in what it calls the critical path to IqAF self-sufficiency. The technical and professional training pipelines are the foundation for creating young officers and developing leaders with technical expertise within the warrant

20. Staff Sergeant Carlos Diaz, "U.S. Forces Mentor Afghan Air Corp to 'Stand on Own,'" Air Force Link, April 13, 2007. Available online (www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123048709).

21. Lemkin, "Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan," slide 11.

22. Author's notes, Office of the Deputy Undersecretary of the Air Force for International Affairs, Building Airpower in Iraq and Afghanistan IPT meeting, March 1, 2007.

23. Senna, "CAFTT Pre-Deployment Training: Theater Training Team Panel 29 Jan–6 Feb 07," slide 8.

24. Ibid., slide 5.

25. Ibid., slide 8.

26. Author's notes, March 1, 2007.

27. AETC A2/3 to AETC/A3R memorandum, p. 6.

Figure 8. Proposed Advisor Training Program

Tier 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aircraft Qualification Training or Maintenance Familiarization Training 	>	30 Training Days Temporary Duty (TDY)
Tier 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Air Advisor Training or Air Advisor Support Training 	>	20 Training Days Interim TDY
Tier 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Weapons Training ■ Tactical Field Operations ■ Land Navigation ■ Self-Defense and Individual Combative Skills ■ Physical Fitness Training ■ Combat Water Survival ■ Battlefield Medical 	>	20 Training Days at CBAT
Tier 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Integrated Base Defense ■ Combat Lifesaving ■ M-16 Handling and Maintenance 	>	Currently 24.5 Training Hours at BMT

Source: Bruce Lemkin, deputy undersecretary, Air Force International Affairs, “Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan Integrated Product Team Final Report” (briefing), March 8, 2007, slide 9.

officer force. Both initiatives are essential elements in Iraq’s ability to maintain growth and ensure a competent force in the future.

This section discusses initial plans to establish a flight-training squadron and then reviews proposed training pipelines for an Iraqi pilot candidate and warrant officer selected to assume a maintenance supervisor position.

Iraqi flight training. CAFTT is moving forward with establishing fixed- and rotary-wing flight schools with a combined graduation rate of 100 pilots per year.²⁸ Advisors will teach Iraqi instructor pilots how to conduct basic pilot training, ground training, documentation, evaluations, and scheduling and how to track progress. As the Iraqi instructor pilots become qualified, U.S. advisors and Iraqi pilots will conduct joint

training. When the squadron is sufficiently manned and experienced, the mission will be handed over to the Iraqis to sustain.

The fixed-wing school consists of training in Cessna 172 and 208 aircraft, and the rotary-wing school will provide training in Jet Ranger and Huey II helicopters.²⁹ The U.S. advisors will receive instructor training on these aircraft in the United States and then train selected Iraqi instructor pilots at an Iraqi flight-training center.³⁰ Similar to Jordanian flight schools, instruction will be provided in English.³¹ As a result, pilot candidates will filter through a training pipeline with English-language training and begin flight training in late 2007.

Pilot candidate pipeline. A new recruit has two options to enter the IqAF and become a pilot candidate.

28. AETC A2/3 to AETC/A3R memorandum, p. 4.

29. Briefing, “Acquisition Strategies to Support Iraqi Air Force Security Assistance Programs,” January 30, 2007, slide 3.

30. Col. Phillip M. Senna, Air Education and Training Command, A3R Briefing, “IqAF Training School (IqAFTS) CONUS OCR Support Update,” January 24, 2007, slides 41–42.

31. *Ibid.*, slide 41.

Figure 9. Iraqi Pilot Training Pipeline

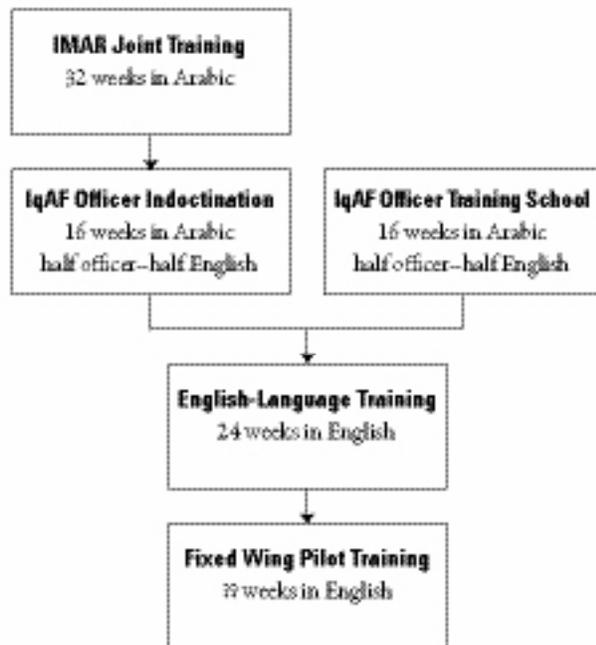


Figure 10. Maintenance Supervisor Pipeline



week, full-time English-language program. Upon achieving the designated English-language test score of seventy-five, the pilot candidate would proceed to primary flight training.³⁵ Figure 9 provides a graphic depiction of the two separate tracks, number of training weeks, and various training modules. The total number of weeks required for pilot training is still under consideration and discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Warrant officer maintenance supervisor pipeline.

A warrant officer selected to become a maintenance supervisor for a unit with English-only TOs follows a track similar to that of a pilot candidate. Currently, warrant officers assigned to the Warrant Officer Training School would attend class with junior officers going through OTS. Correspondingly, warrant officers would attend professional training for half the day and English-language training the other half. Upon completion, warrant officers would attend the English-language training for twenty-four weeks, followed by more-specific maintenance specialty training. After completing all three phases of training, the warrant

The first option is to attend the Iraqi Military Academy al-Rustamiyah (IMAR). IMAR is a joint military academy and attended by members from all three of Iraq’s service branches. IMAR conducts all training in Arabic and lasts approximately thirty-two weeks.³² Upon graduation, an air force officer attends an IqAF officer indoctrination course lasting sixteen weeks. For the indoctrination course, the IPT proposed dedicating half the day to air force fundamentals and the other half to English-language training.³³

A two-year university student has the option of entering the IqAF as a new recruit by attending the IqAF Officer Training School (OTS). It is taught in Arabic, lasts sixteen weeks, and is similar to the indoctrination course planned for a half-day of officer training and half-day of English-language training.³⁴ Immediately following OTS or indoctrination training for IMAR graduates, both enter a twenty-four-

32. Ibid., slide 36.
 33. Ibid., slide 38.
 34. Ibid., slide 37.
 35. Ibid.

officer would report to the unit for any unit-specific training requirements.

In summary, the proposal to aggressively develop Iraqi airpower is under way. The IPT has selected a predeployment training program, received funding for the next two years, and selected AETC as the process

owner. CAFTT is also setting the stage for fixed- and rotary-wing flight training inside Iraq and developing officer and enlisted training pipelines to prepare Iraqi personnel for future roles. As the programs get started, CAFTT must determine the necessary steps to ensure program success.

Recommendations

THE IRAQ C-130 AST mission provides insights into advisor needs and presents lessons learned for the proposed development of Iraqi airpower. The air force must first prepare advisors for their mission and then prepare the Iraqi environment for effective training and advising operations. As public opinion and government commitment to Iraq waiver, establishment of flight-training squadron and training pipelines programs will be critical in enabling Iraqi self-sufficiency; they are something the air force needs to get right the first time. This chapter takes lessons learned from the C-130 mission and predeployment training to present recommendations regarding the proposed advisor training and early steps CAFTT can take to ensure constructive establishment of the flight-training squadron. The chapter concludes with recommendations on refining the pilot candidate and warrant officer pipelines for best results.

Predeployment Training

CAFTT and CENTAF have built a solid foundation for predeployment training and turned to the air force for a permanent solution. The air force IPT recommended an AETC detachment colocated with the CBAT facility to provide tailored predeployment training for future advisors. The new program provides a single AETC process owner to manage and coordinate advisor predeployment training and properly eliminates the requirement from the war fighter.

A single AETC process owner focused solely on advisor training provides many benefits. First, course managers and instructors have the singular responsibility of developing advisor training for Iraq or Afghanistan. Second, instructors focused solely on advisor missions are more likely to demand immediate feedback, make improvements to the courses, and pursue mid-tour feedback from advisors in the field. Third, their narrow focus will enable them to stay in contact with personnel in each country and adjust curriculum to

changing conditions on the ground. Finally, constant contact with theater advisors will help them identify the right personnel with pertinent experience to invite back as speakers for follow-on advisor training.

The air force should fill the AETC detachment with personnel completing advisors' tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, which will ensure resident expertise and credibility within the training facility. Ideally, follow-on instructors or program managers should be identified before even deploying for their advisor tours. Knowledge of a follow-on assignment to the training center for advisors will enable them to glean as much information as possible during their tours and bring an informed perspective back to the detachment.

For training, the previous CAFTT program and proposed courses listed with each proposal are an outstanding start, and a dedicated facility will further refine course content and selection. Current feedback clearly indicates a language course simply consumes valuable predeployment training time, and handouts of common greetings and specific military phrases are sufficient. A final recommendation is to include a cross-cultural communication course in the training. The current curriculum provides a good understanding of Iraqi and Afghan culture, but an understanding of U.S. culture is just as important. A cross-cultural communication course enlightens advisors on potential biases they bring to the mission and helps them recognize why they perceive things a certain way and how to avoid mirror imaging. Advisor success is predicated on understanding the foreign force, but advisors must understand themselves as well.¹

Take another look. Overall, the IPT program addresses the mission, cultural, and combat skills requirements for advisor training. It also provides economies of scale and minimizes some costs through the use of CBAT combat skills courses. However, using CBAT courses limits the ability to tailor combat skills

1. Col. Maxie MacFarland, "Military Culture Education," *Military Review* (March–April 2005), p. 64.

training, sacrifices flexibility, increases overall training time, and focuses synergy in the wrong area.

By using CBAT, AETC eliminated the expense of developing duplicate combat skills courses but limited its ability to tailor courses to advisors' requirements. Using convoy training as an example, advisors spend the vast majority of their time on forward operating bases with robust security. At times, they may need to ride in a convoy, but they are unlikely to be responsible for organizing, driving, or protecting the convoy. Consequently, advisors need some familiarity with convoy operations, but the new program sacrifices the ability to tailor the CBAT convoy course to meet advisor-only requirements.

Course scheduling could also become a problem. In the extreme, an advisor could require only two CBAT courses taught on day one and day twenty of training, necessitating a twenty-day temporary duty assignment for two courses. The AETC detachment could fill the free time with air advisor courses, but it loses some flexibility in course scheduling and length of training. As discussed, the AETC detachment should consider minimizing the predeployment training time to maximize availability for home-station duties.

Most important, colocating the advisor training with CBAT leverages combat skills training but fails to build synergy in the important cultural and mission areas. Although combat skills training can enhance advisor awareness and ability to survive, it does little to prepare general-purpose aviation advisors for the challenges and responsibilities of advising Iraqi and Afghan aviation forces. For long-term effectiveness, the air force should consider mission and cultural training as directly affecting advisor success and among the most important aspects of predeployment training.

In this vein, the alternative option of building an Expeditionary Air Advisor Training Center, especially in the Hurlburt Field area, is more appropriate and offers many benefits. Specifically, Hurlburt Field contains the 6th SOS with its combat aviation advisors and USAFSOS with its curriculum addressing many of the cultural and theater needs of advisory operations.

A permanent training facility would certainly benefit from the resident expertise at both organizations. Synergy comes from the availability of local experts and ability of advisor training center instructors and course managers to audit training at those organizations and adapt best practices to their own mission. Each facility could also benefit from increased access to invited experts to other organizations. In this alternative, the training center would be colocated at the epicenter of advisory operations and could play an important role in preparing advisors for their missions and assisting combat aviation advisor growth.

A Hurlburt Field location also benefits from economies of scale in its aircraft operations and maintenance familiarization training. Afghanistan and Iraq both fly Mi-17 helicopters and the Afghan air corps is still using AN-32s for presidential support. Both of these aircraft are currently maintained through contracts with 6th SOS and located at Hurlburt Field. Although they are needed for 6th SOS training, potential cost savings exist in contracting for access to existing aircraft or additional aircraft at a location where the aircraft already are in use; 6th SOS could also benefit from reciprocal access to other aircraft types contracted for Iraq and Afghanistan advisor familiarization training. This access would increase 6th SOS exposure to foreign and commercial aircraft and create economies of scale with multiple users of a single contract.

Where applicable, 6th SOS personnel could attend courses and training with general-purpose advisors as part of their six- to eight-month mission-ready training program. As 6th SOS doubles its capacity, training requirements will increase and a local training center for advisors could provide an additional avenue to accelerate qualifications. Compared to the proposed CBAT locations, a Hurlburt Field facility is also more likely to offer a single temporary duty location for all three tiers of training, which equates to reduced travel costs.

Finally, General North, commander of Central Command Air Forces, at the end of the March 8, 2007, IPT briefing stressed, "Training must be tailored for each specific mission."² He was expounding

2. Author's notes, "Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan Integrated Product Team Final Report," video teleconference, March 8, 2007.

upon comments from Afghanistan Provincial Reconstruction Team members complaining about predeployment training focused on Iraq and not applicable to the different operating environment in Afghanistan. This same caution should be applied to the predeployment advisor training program and lead decisionmakers to the conclusion that only a dedicated training center conducting all aspects of training could achieve this goal.

Building an Iraqi Flight-Training Squadron

As advisor preparations are improving, the stage must be set for success in Iraq as well. As CAFTT establishes the flight-training squadron, a review of lessons learned from the C-130 mission highlights issues CAFTT should address early in program development. If these issues are properly addressed, the flying squadron can avoid or mitigate many of the challenges confronted by C-130 advisors and concentrate on more important training issues. Most important, CAFTT has already taken the essential first step of increasing the number of personnel assigned to CAFTT staff and HHQ advisor positions. The increase enables CAFTT to dedicate a sufficient number of personnel to influence early development of this new capability and encourage the IqAF HHQ to establish certain policies and guidelines before training starts.

Organizational structure and functional leaders. CAFTT should encourage the HHQ to assign an Iraqi program manager or program office within the Flying Operations Directorate of A-7 Training to oversee all flight training. Subsequently, CAFTT should assign a specific advisor to this HHQ functional area to assist in resolving issues and developing flight-training policy and guidance.

The CAFTT advisor can then advise and assist the HHQ in establishing an organizational structure for the flight-training squadrons, hiring the right individuals for instructor duties, and stressing the importance of assigning functional leaders as soon as possible. Ideally, HHQ should assign Iraqi instructor pilots to the squadron and simultaneously designate their functional

positions within the organization. An established organizational structure with assigned functional leaders will also accelerate process development and training progress.

Through early development of a squadron structure and functional leaders, advisors will be able to initiate a train-the-trainer program for flight instruction and functional duties. Early assignment of functional duties will compel Iraqi personnel to participate in a collaborative process to build needed functional products and tasks. This process is especially important in a flight-training squadron where training, documentation, and scheduling are important aspects of an efficient and effective pilot production program.

Iraqi personnel selections. As the IqAF begins assigning personnel to the flight-training squadron, CAFTT should attempt to work with the HHQ to select the right individuals for the mission. Because the flight-training course will be taught in English, CAFTT should insist instructor candidates test and complete any required language training before starting instructor upgrade. When the Iraqi instructor candidate arrives in the squadron, 100 percent of the available training time should be dedicated to preparation for the flight-training mission.

For Iraqi maintenance personnel, CAFTT should work with HHQ to build a maintenance capability with junior officers initially assigned to leadership positions traditionally held by NCOs in the United States. Junior officers are better prepared to fill these roles, and the organization will need effective leadership in these positions to ensure appropriate processes and standards are established. As warrant officers complete the proposed maintenance supervisor training, the IqAF can transition them into leadership positions with junior officers serving as unit instructors.

Because the training aircraft are all manufactured by U.S. companies, the TOs and maintenance manuals will be in English. Therefore, maintenance personnel should also be required to obtain a specified ECL and complete all language training before initiating aviation maintenance training. Given the anticipated lower starting levels for most warrant officers and enlisted

personnel, language training in maintenance is likely to take longer than language training for the instructor pilots and should begin immediately. This training is an excellent opportunity for CAFTT to work with DLI to implement a reading-comprehension-only course to accelerate qualification for the initial cadre in each of the new flight-training squadrons.

Training timelines and schedules. CAFTT must further advise the HHQ to establish training timelines and associated training schedules before starting actual training. Similar to U.S. operations, the first step in determining the number of training days required to complete the program will be based on several factors: the number of syllabus flights required; maximum number of students per class; maximum number of aircraft and sorties per day; maximum number of aircraft that can be safely airborne in the training airspace; and maximum number of sorties the airfield, daylight, and weather permit.³ IqAF HHQ must also determine what Muslim and Iraqi holidays pilot training students will observe and the level of training during Ramadan. After consideration of all of these factors, the HHQ and CAFTT can estimate the number of training days required. At this point, the HHQ must make the important determination of what training schedule to establish for pilot training students. When the training schedule is established, the HHQ can calculate the number of weeks needed for the entire program.

CAFTT should strongly encourage the HHQ to publish the overall training timeline and student schedule in a flight-training regulation or instruction. First, it establishes a student work schedule and eliminates any doubt about the number of training days. Second, it provides a baseline to track student progress. Third, the student schedule will drive the Iraqi instructors' schedule and force them to make adjustments if students fall behind. Fourth, convincing the Iraqis to establish standards before the program begins and then holding them accountable is easier than trying to develop standards during mission execution.

Finally, HHQ should establish a leave policy for all training programs. It should limit student leave to emergencies only and set a limit to the number of instructors on leave to help maintain a consistent training schedule and capability.

Decision authorities. CAFTT, initial squadron advisors, IqAF HHQ, and Iraqi squadron leadership also need to work together to delineate decision authorities up front. The delineation should determine the decision authority for sensitive student-pilot issues. In a hierarchical organization, the C-130 AST saw reluctance on the part of Iraqi instructors to fail a student on a particular flight. Specifying the authority at the instructor, squadron commander, or HHQ level will delineate who has the authority and allow advisors to mentor the instructors according to HHQ desires.

HHQ should also specify who has authority to wash someone back a class or remove a student from the program for lack of progress and what supporting documentation is required. CAFTT should be careful about recommending that these decisions reside at the squadron level because political sensitivities will likely make the squadron commander incapable of making or unwilling to make the right decision in most cases.

These are just some of the initial steps CAFTT can take to set the foundation for success. They eliminate administrative decisions that consume vast amounts of training time and distract from the primary mission. Any decision removed from the table of negotiation and discussion will benefit advisors and enable them to focus on training Iraqis to assume the overall flight-training mission.

Training Pipelines

The training pipelines are the second critical aspect of ensuring IqAF self-sustainment across all levels of the force. Therefore, ensuring the training pipelines are properly focused on needed training and constructed in a manner to effectively teach the required material in the minimum amount of time is important. This

3. Brig. Gen. Mark Zamzow, director of operations, Air Education and Training Command, "International Flying Training" (briefing), November 8, 2006, slide 4.

section provides recommendations to refine the two training pipelines based on C-130 lessons learned.

Pilot candidate pipeline. The pilot candidate pipeline provides acceptable tracks for obtaining the number of candidates needed for the flight-training program. However, a few changes and stipulations should be inserted into the program to make it more effective. First, CAFTT should eliminate the combination of indoctrination and OTS training with English-language training. The DLI English-language program requires an intensive learning environment and full immersion. Conducting training in Arabic for half the day dilutes English-language training, interferes with air force professional education, and presents a less than ideal learning environment for both. Additionally, the C-130 mission provided ample proof that half-day English programs have a difficult time producing the desired English proficiency results.

As an alternative, indoctrination and OTS should be reduced to eight-week programs dedicated exclusively to learning the necessary skills to be a junior officer. The remaining eight weeks should shift to the English-language portion of the training and constitute a thirty-two-week program. Using the DLI standards from figure 5, this arrangement would allow students scoring an ECL less than twenty-nine to reach a score of sixty-five to seventy in the allotted time and all other starting scores to easily exceed the required ECL of seventy-five. In accordance with DLI standards, a full thirty-six-week course is required for students scoring less than twenty-nine to reach an ECL score of seventy-five. Given the difficult training environment, a full thirty-six-week course presents a more realistic chance of achieving the desired graduation rate.

As in the recommendations for flight training, CAFTT should encourage the IqAF HHQ to establish student training schedules beforehand. The schedules should provide for at least the minimum of thirty hours of language training each week. New cadets attending English-language training at NAMAB are

adhering to a six-day-on and one-day-off schedule, receiving six hours of English each day, and showing good progress at the six-week point.⁴ If CAFTT can convince the HHQ to codify this six-and-one schedule for thirty-six weeks of English training, the schedule would establish the best opportunity for achieving the desired score in the allotted time regardless of the starting ECL. Meanwhile, DLI should begin tracking student progress to either confirm existing DLI estimates or create new baselines for training in Iraq to assist CAFTT in developing future training program estimates.

CAFTT should work with HHQ program managers to ensure ECL scores are a prerequisite for entering the flight-training program. A process of testing every eight weeks with target scores could track progress. If a student failed to achieve a target score on two consecutive tests, he should be able to wash back one class. If the student is unable to achieve the ECL of seventy-five at the completion of training with the second class, he should be removed from pilot training consideration and assigned to another IqAF duty not requiring English proficiency. This testing process would motivate the student and provide a process to measure progress throughout the program with known benchmarks and consequences.

Maintenance supervisor pipeline. The maintenance supervisor pipeline also needs further refinement and definition to ensure effective training. All of the recommendations regarding English training for the pilot candidates apply to warrant officer training as well. If the C-130 advisor experience is an accurate depiction of all warrant officers, they may lack sufficient motivation to complete training and achieve the target ECL score. To increase motivation for warrant officers demonstrating leadership potential, CAFTT should recommend the IqAF institute a bonus system similar to language pay in the United States military for those achieving and maintaining English proficiency. Money is a universal motivator, may provide the proper

4. Beverly Hall, supervisor of English-language program, Defense Language Institute, New al-Muthana Air Base, email to author, February 13, 2007.

incentive, and compensates personnel for obtaining a needed skill within the air force.

CAFTT should also monitor the courseware provided for the warrant officer training school portion of the pipeline. The ultimate goal should be to transition warrant officers from simple followers to active followers and eventually leaders within the IqAF. To this end, the training must completely redefine warrant officer duties, expectations, and responsibilities in the new IqAF. The training must ingrain a sense of purpose and confidence in the warrant officer force to take charge in their areas of responsibilities. Junior officers should receive similar indoctrination on warrant officer responsibilities, the importance of delegating responsibility, and the benefits of relying on warrant officers' expertise. If at all possible, Iraqi warrant officers should teach these courses to reinforce their new leadership role.

In building leaders, training warrant officers along side junior officers is appropriate—both need the same leadership skills to be successful. The combined training should contribute to building respect between the two groups as well. The training should also include courses and exercises on critical thinking to fill the gap in their primary school education. Critical thinking is absolutely essential in working through the multitude of challenges and decisions confronting a maintenance

supervisor. Furthermore, warrant officers capable of critical thinking are more capable of contributing to future development and improvements within the air force as a whole.

The hardest part of making a transition to a more professional warrant officer force with increased responsibilities will be convincing warrant officers in the field that this is the right course. During Iraqi C-130 training, any warrant officer attempting to take charge or show initiative was quickly confronted with a lack of cooperation from the other warrant officers. Senior and midlevel officers will also need convincing before they will have the confidence to delegate new responsibilities and authorities to qualified warrants.

For these reasons, the advisors must work with the various indoctrination programs and HHQ to ensure only those capable of assuming responsibilities and leading other enlisted personnel are allowed to graduate and assume leadership positions in Iraqi squadrons. If Iraqis fail to eliminate warrant officers incapable of leadership roles, the initiative to transition technical expertise and enlisted leadership from junior officers to warrant officers will fail. Warrant officers will be incapable of demonstrating expertise or leadership, and senior officers will lose faith in future graduates. Ultimately, CAFTT must work with the HHQ to enforce standards if they have any hope of a successful transition.

Conclusion

A REVIEW OF THE C-130 advisory mission highlighted the unique challenges of advisory missions in Iraq caused by the differences in language, culture, and living environment. Through this process, the paper identified expected challenges for future advisory missions and generated clear recommendations for predeployment advisor and theater training plans. The implementation of these initial steps will certainly mitigate and avoid known issues and provide a solid foundation for near- and long-term Iraqi program and advisor success.

The SAF/IA IPT has made its decision and acquired GWOT funding for a dedicated training center for advisors collocated with the CBAT. Yet the loss in training timeline flexibility, combat skills course tailoring, and synergy with AFSOC units are identifiable drawbacks to the selected course of action. While the final CBAT location is still under consideration, AETC should take the initiative and proceed with a site survey of the Hurlburt Field area to determine the feasibility of an Expeditionary Air Advisor Training Center and explore the long-term benefits of collocating a training center with 6th SOS and USAFSOS in potential synergies and economies of scale.

An Expeditionary Air Advisor Training Center could tailor each advisor course; draw on local expertise in mission, cultural, and combat skills; adjust overall training timelines; and best meet the needs of the war fighter and home-station commanders. The fact that funding is already secured and AETC is moving forward creates a limited window for a change. AETC must act now to reevaluate the final IPT decision to avoid sunk costs and locking the air force into the CBAT option. For general-purpose forces assigned to execute the difficult Iraq advisor mission, the most effective training option should override minimal cost savings and limited redundant training.

In addition to predeployment training, CAFTT can increase the likelihood of advisors' success through early coordination with the IqAF HHQ and

implementation of the recommended flight-training policy and guidance initiatives. Establishing guidance and policy early removes those issues from discussion and allows the advisors, Iraqi instructors, and HHQ to focus on issues affecting squadron operations and student progression. The established standards create a self-imposed timeline, which advisors can use to encourage Iraqi compliance with existing decisions and training schedules.

For training pipelines, the recommended changes are simple and should increase the number of candidates completing the training and available for pilot training or maintenance supervisor positions. English-language training with its required test score will be the biggest stumbling block for all training pipelines. However, thirty-six weeks of English-only language training with set benchmarks and the ability to track progress should create the proper learning environment and motivation to achieve the desired ECL score. Again, the most important factor in achieving success is an IqAF HHQ committed to a consistent and intensive training schedule with a solid accountability system. The IqAF must also maintain standards and graduate only qualified personnel or the entire system will fail to achieve the desired results and the chance for self-sufficiency will be lost.

Challenges always exist when training and advising foreign forces, but proper preparation of air force advisors and understanding of the foreign force's military culture and unique operating environment are keys to success. As CENTAF moves forward with building Iraqi airpower and expanding the air force role in Iraq, it must continually assess conditions on the ground and make the necessary changes for improvement. It should also begin requiring mission commanders to compile comprehensive lessons learned at the end of their tours to build a solid database for future planning efforts. The air force has tremendous expertise and manpower and, coupled with proper understanding and sufficient timeline, will be effective in building and sustaining Iraqi airpower for years to come.

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