



## REACHING OUT: Partnering with Iraqi Media

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PHOTO: Iraqi media interviewing local physicians returning to work at the medical clinic in Salman Pak, Iraq, 23 October 2007. (U.S. Army, SGT Ibrahim Masoud)

**S**INCE THE BEGINNING of combat operations in Iraq in March 2003, the media have disseminated countless war-related stories and articles of interest, reaching not only American citizens and military families in the United States but also an international community interested in gauging the coalition's progress. The public's desire for information about the war wavers, but bad news consistently generates attention. The American media embedded with military units strives to capture and portray events as they occur. Although sensational events arouse public interest, those less dramatic, but potentially more important, go mostly unnoticed. Such neglected stories do not involve spectacular insurgent attacks, human suffering, or infrastructure degradation. According to CNN international correspondent Nic Robertson, "There is an awful lot of what might be construed as bad news here [in Iraq], but it is the dominant information. It is the prevailing information."<sup>1</sup> However, in many cases, "less-than-worthy-of-attention" events have a profound effect on the perceptions, attitudes, behavior, and allegiances of the most influential audience involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), the Iraqi people. Iraqi citizens are closest to the truth at the proverbial "tip-of-the-spear" of unfolding events. In their eyes, the government of Iraq (GOI) and the coalition are either making improvements and progress or destroying what little the Iraqis had.

Influencing Iraqis is central to managing a favorable outcome in this war. Putting an Iraqi face on news to help counter anti-GOI or anti-coalition propaganda will ultimately be necessary to attain the best outcomes. Having Iraqis produce and report news stories is the best vehicle for eliminating culture and language barriers in communication. News important to improving a public spirit thereby gains a measure of instant credibility that coalition information operations and reporting cannot impart. Using native news reporters will increase chances of acceptance by the Iraqi population by relaying credible stories of progress that can resonate favorably through communities. Media communication to Iraqis by Iraqis thus has the potential to sway even the most stubborn of anti-GOI and anti-coalition critics, strengthening resolve and commitment to resist terrorism.

Unfortunately, other than using limited psychological operations (PSYOP) resources and capabilities, the GOI and the coalition have allotted scant attention, effort, and capital to communicating with Iraqis. To make progress in the

information war, the coalition needs to involve the Iraqi media. In this regard, two central issues must be addressed: providing security to the Iraqi media and, more important, facilitating their access to the most relevant stories of interest. If the coalition continues to overlook these two fundamental issues, the insurgents will remain the most influential group affecting Iraqi beliefs and behavior.

## Breaking the Paradigm

Although pundits could debate whether Iraqi reporters have the same status as international media, the country's credentialed correspondents clearly lack the clout and respect their international or American counterparts possess. All too often, Iraqi media are an afterthought.

Importantly, most coalition commanders have no appreciation for the potential benefits of including Iraqi reporters in daily battlefield circulations. They also probably do not feel comfortable doing so. The language barrier and the resource-intensive need for media escorts and translators make it easier to exclude Iraqis when planning media operations. Thus, Iraqi media have had little opportunity to provide relevant news about coalition and GOI actions. Altering this situation requires careful thought and changes to the status quo.

How is the coalition communicating with local Iraqis? For the most part, the coalition uses PSYOP assets to deliver its messages; however, information distribution is surgical, limited in duration and scope. The coalition often disperses printed media such as leaflets, posters, handbills, and billboards using tactical-level face-to-face engagements. It also uses radio broadcasts. Although these means are adequate to get a message out, Iraqi citizens know the information's origin and often question its legitimacy, credibility, and intent. This natural skepticism especially affects Iraqis who are ambivalent toward the coalition and GOI and who have not denounced foreign influences, sectarian militias, and other groups opposed to the occupation.

Using PSYOP assets to reach this more skeptical audience raises the issue of credibility. Public Affairs (PA) ideally would be the primary way of reaching this sector because it focuses primarily on informing audiences, not manipulating them.<sup>2</sup> Units use PSYOP themes and messages, on the other hand, to achieve—euphemistically speaking—a

specific influencing effect. Psychological operations target selected audiences with information, whether the audiences are insurgents, local nationals, or others.<sup>3</sup> Unlike public affairs, PSYOP is a sales pitch by definition, designed to induce or reinforce specific favorable attitudes and behavior. Thus, its effectiveness depends on how well its purveyors finesse it and on the audience's willingness to buy into a message easily recognized as tendentious.<sup>4</sup> The inherently manipulative PSYOP process, over time, reaches a point of diminishing returns. Inducement requires not just a persuasive message but also a credible source.

Moreover, repetitive exhortations limit PSYOP ability to influence the population at large. After five years of PSYOP in Iraq, Iraqi citizens have become desensitized to repeated themes and messages advocating GOI unity, reconciliation, no safe haven for insurgents, and intelligence reporting. Today, the coalition's PSYOP avowals have become so cloying they no longer possess any credibility. One wonders at what point they actually become counterproductive.

Meanwhile, Iraqis are frustrated by the lack of timely and accurate information. They want immediate access to news, not coalition sales pitches. They find it aggravating to have outdated information foisted on them from Iraqi media sources, especially when it merely recaps American or international news already reported. The best way to break this paradigm is for the coalition to support and use the Iraqi media.

## Challenges Facing the Iraqi Media

The perception of Iraqi media ineffectiveness comes not from poor media skills. Their problems are more a matter of their past and present status and the conditions under which they operate today. During Saddam's reign, few news outlets existed, and those that did were government sanctioned, funded, and operated. The news they reported was all pro-government, and attempts to disseminate any facts or images contrary to the government's version of events could mean early and final retirement.

Once the coalition removed these barriers, a plethora of free media outlets emerged to produce abundant information, some of it unbiased. The counterinsurgency became the sole focus of these



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**Interviews with IA soldiers on checkpoints near the town of Tuwaythah, formerly an al-Qaeda safe haven, 8 August 2007.**

newly formed media outlets. However, as Iraq's security environment deteriorated, working for an Iraqi media outlet became one of the most dangerous jobs in the world. Estimates indicate 118 media deaths and over 300 media casualties in Iraq since March 2003, many the result of assassinations.<sup>5</sup>

Despite recent coalition and Iraqi security forces (ISF) successes, working for the Iraqi media remains dangerous. Terrorists target Iraqi media correspondents solely because they report stories of hope and progress inimical to insurgent purposes. If an Iraqi reporter were supporting the insurgency, he would simply make up stories in the safety of his dwelling, but any correspondent braving danger to work a story opposing the insurgency and terror tactics is at risk. Most Iraqi reporters die trying to convey to the world the rampant suffering of their people. Fox News Channel's Jerry Burke notes the ordinary dangers facing all correspondents: "The media has a very difficult job. We have to cover some aspect of the story so we cover what we can cover without getting our anchors and our reporters blown up."<sup>6</sup>

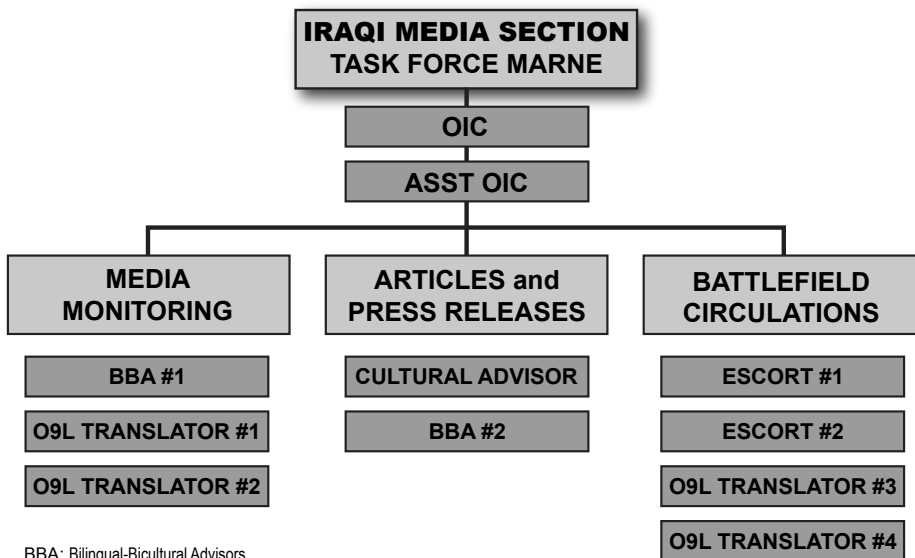
In addition to the danger, Iraqis face coalition discrimination. In discussions with Iraqi journalists, Task Force Marne PAOs learned that many are perturbed over experiences they have had working with the coalition. They perceive that they are

not given the same opportunities as American or international media correspondents. Native correspondents have difficulties registering and obtaining media credentials. Furthermore, the coalition has done very little to include Iraqi media in its daily battle rhythm. The amount of attention and access the coalition gives to American and international media operating in Iraq on any given day far exceeds that given the Iraqi media. U.S. and international journalists, though fewer in number, possess better funding, logistics, and reach-back capability to their home stations. Iraqi media crews cannot compete in these areas.

Although Iraqi correspondents are under appreciated, Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) has resourced a staff section in the international zone to fulfill coalition requests for Iraqi media embeds. The section, the Iraqi media engagement team (IMET), is the operational link between Iraqi media and coalition forces. The three-person team is a component of MNF-I's larger Combined Press Information Center, which supports American and international media.<sup>7</sup> The IMET supports every unit below corps level requesting embedded Iraqi media. However, fulfilling such requests is often problematic. With priority of support primarily to MNF-I and Multi-National Corps-Iraq, scheduling events for multiple multi-national division-level customers remains difficult.

## **Task Force Marne's Media Initiatives**

Task Force Marne established an Iraqi media section (IMS) to capitalize on Iraqi media capabilities and the advantages of using them. The section consists of 11 personnel working in three departments—battlefield circulation, articles and press releases, and media monitoring (see figure). In a departure from current Joint and Army doctrine, the IMS does not work for the public affairs officer. Instead, it falls under the direction and oversight of the effects coordinator (ECOORD). This



**Figure 1. Iraqi media section organization.**

non-doctrinal alignment allows the public affairs detachment to focus on internal and American audiences, and gives the effects staff responsible for PSYOP another influencing tool. However, having staff coordination responsibility for IMS relations with the Iraqi media does not entail a PSYOP mission role. This relationship creates the potential to moderate PSYOP with better coordination and synchronization of themes and messages. The IMS link to PSYOP is based strictly on the fact that it has the same target audience.<sup>8</sup> It bears repeating that the IMS mission remains the core public affairs mission—informing.

**Staff separation and effectiveness.** Having the effects and PA elements concentrate on separate audiences better focuses the command’s influencing and informing efforts to support the strategic communications plan as well as the non-lethal targeting process. During non-lethal targeting working group sessions, the ECOORD prioritizes and synchronizes the Iraqi media section’s efforts with those of all other non-lethal contributors, including information operations, public affairs, civil military operations (governance and economics), Iraqi advisory task force, and the staff judge advocate (rule of law).

During a division strategic communications conference, the commanding general of Task Force Marne, Major General Rick Lynch, noted, “Targeting the American audience is a PA responsibility, and targeting the Iraqi audience is an effects responsibility.” Having worked as the MNF-I

strategic effects coordinator for General George W. Casey during OIF III, Lynch experienced the benefits of partnering effects with Iraqi media. By separating the Iraqi media from PA, Lynch established clear lanes of responsibility based on his experiences working with these different audiences. Moreover, because current Army doctrine emphasizes that the decisive counter-insurgency battle is for the people’s minds, having effects staff responsible for coordinating engage-

ment with Iraqi media greatly enhances PSYOP thematic relevance.<sup>9</sup>

This novel, non-doctrinal approach has worked well for Task Force Marne. As of this writing, the IMS has conducted 38 battlefield circulations with Iraqi media crews, and it has translated over 300 “good-news” articles into Arabic and disseminated them. Market penetration for IMS-translated articles remains at just over 50 percent. Battlefield circulations average over 98 percent.

Although the IMS is separate from PA, the same standards apply; relationships between the IMS and the Iraqi media depend on professionalism, credibility, and trust.

**Battlefield interaction and monitoring.** The IMS began as a two-person operation that focused solely on Pan-Arab media monitoring, also referred to as open source intelligence. Army military occupational specialty O9L Soldiers handled the media monitoring function to obtain atmospherics (information on what the media was reporting on the coalition) and to identify any particular trends. Having current insights on Pan-Arab and Iraqi sentiments and perceptions of the coalition helps commanders validate or adjust the division’s strategic communications plan.<sup>10</sup>

With the addition of two personnel, the IMS expanded its mission to include developing, translating, and disseminating coalition-related stories to Iraqi media outlets. Starting with seven radio stations, eight television stations, and 13 newspaper

outlets, the media section quickly established itself as a credible source for timely articles and information. As it continued to disseminate its stories to its Iraqi media contacts, more journalists became aware of the value of the information the IMS provided. Today, the IMS has contacts with 11 radio stations, 13 television stations, 27 newspaper outlets, and a host of media websites.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the media section signed an exclusive contract with the popular *Al-Sabah* newspaper.<sup>12</sup> The contract guarantees that “high priority” Task Force Marne stories of tactical and operational importance are disseminated to a large segment of the public. The IMS regularly receives requests for interviews, military information, updates to developing stories of interest, and occasional thank-you notes. Articles are published with full Task Force Marne attribution, leading to frequent unsolicited tips from concerned citizens on insurgent activity.<sup>13</sup> Although the IMS currently does not have the staff or equipment to accommodate television interviews, cross-talk and the leveraging of the division’s organic PA capabilities adequately accomplishes the mission.

To interact with the Iraqi media effectively, the IMS had to understand local organizational dynamics. Significant cultural and language barriers were only two of many challenges. Iraqi media personnel are no less demanding than American or interna-

tional media. They expect the same level of professionalism, cooperation, treatment, and courtesies. Knowing their concerns and quickly handling any issues that arise can make the difference between a good media event and a complaint. To lessen the likelihood of mishap during a media event, the IMS employs military escorts and linguists to accompany Iraqi media crews to ensure coalition forces treat the crews fairly and with respect and keep them on schedule, focused on the mission, and out of harm’s way.

Coordinating the logistics of battlefield circulations is another major IMS challenge. Battlefield circulations are resource-intensive; however, the payoff in media penetration is tremendous.<sup>14</sup> Freedom of movement is currently limited throughout most of Iraq, and getting Iraqi media crews out to stories that the coalition wants highlighted is no small feat. Aircraft delays and tight security measures at the International Zone, last minute changes to missions, and occasional media cancellations frustrate and inconvenience Iraqi journalists and IMS escorts. Using rotary-wing assets is the preferred and safest method for transporting media crews on battlefield circulations; however, at times, ground convoys become a necessity. In either case, having detailed back-up plans usually alleviates much of the stress of change while on the go. A typical battlefield circulation entails

IMS escorts and translators flying from Camp Victory to the International Zone in Baghdad to link up with the Iraqi media crew.<sup>15</sup> From there, the team continues air travel to the forward operating base closest to the event. The requesting maneuver unit sends a personal security detachment to provide ground movement to the event. The mission is not complete until the IMS safely escorts the media crew back to the International Zone and they return to Camp Victory.

For example, the IMS conducted a successful battlefield circulation in al-Rashida, a small town southwest of Baghdad, which had been an Al-Qaeda safe



U.S. Army, CPT Matthew Lindsey

**Iraqi media interviewing former displaced citizens returning to their homes near the town of Lutifiyah.**

haven. The local Sunni population had grown tired of Al-Qaeda militants roaming the area, attacking coalition forces along Route Malibu, intimidating peaceful citizens, and committing heinous crimes. The townspeople banded together and formed a concerned citizens' group that operated checkpoints at several key intersections and kept watch over their neighborhoods day and night. Within a short period, the citizens' group forced Al-Qaeda out of the area. Since then, Al-Qaeda has had no significant presence or activity in al-Rashida or along that portion of Route Malibu. The IMS felt it important to capture this "good-news" story because it highlighted the positive effect that citizens' groups had on preventing terrorism and securing neighborhoods. The battlefield circulation also allayed Shia neighbors' fears that the coalition was arming Sunni concerned citizens' groups. Task Force Marne also felt this story would encourage the Shia population to develop its own groups to help fight Shia extremism. Having Iraqi reporters tell this "success" story underscored the importance of having an Iraqi face on important messages supporting coalition efforts.

The IMS escorted *al-Iraqiya* and *al-Fayhaa* television crews to the site, where they conducted interviews with group leaders and citizens. The segments aired for several days on Iraqi television.

The stories depicted Iraqi citizens taking a stand against criminals and securing their neighborhoods. The battlefield circulation was so influential that *al-Fayhaa* produced a 15-minute special program on concerned citizens' groups, which aired the following week. To keep the momentum going in the press, the IMS published several articles on the event and disseminated them to its Iraqi media contacts. Numerous Iraqi print and Internet outlets picked up the stories, indicating a significant public interest in such groups. Since the airing of the special segment, other citizens' groups around al-Rashida have sprouted. Today, concerned citizens' group membership totals 8,000 persons. Leaders from 2d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, happily reported a dramatic decrease in insurgent-type activity as a result of the citizen's actions within its operating environment.

One of the greatest benefits of a battlefield circulation is putting an Iraqi face on the story; an Iraqi reporter talking to fellow Iraqis has a much greater effect on the Iraqi psyche than if a coalition reporter told the story. Having local government ministers or representatives present during the planning of the media event and during the event itself dramatically increases the interview's impact. To ensure success, a goal of the IMS is to establish relationships of trust with the Iraqi media; however,

this is a slow and long-term process. The vast majority of first-time Iraqi media journalists with whom the media section works have little experience interacting with coalition forces.<sup>16</sup> Iraqis are constantly forming and refining their opinions of the coalition and its interaction with the populace. For this reason, the IMS and its escorts have to do whatever is necessary to make the Iraqi media representative's initial experience a positive one. Maintaining a media crew's level of enthusiasm, optimism, and dedication about providing a valuable service to Iraq is paramount to winning the war of images.

Another important factor during the coordination phase is providing the designated media crews with as



U.S. Army, CPT Matthew Lindsey

Interview with concerned citizens at their new group headquarters near the town of al-Rashida, 27 December 2007.

much information about the upcoming mission as possible. Of course, operations security (OPSEC) measures are part of each media event to ensure the safety of both Iraqi journalists and coalition Soldiers.<sup>17</sup> When the IMS informs Iraqi media representatives what to expect, they are less likely to get upset if the mission's parameters change. The key to success is to remain optimistic and flexible in communicating and developing the battlefield circulation plan.

**Enlisting the experts' help.** The IMS could not function without the dedicated support of its four O9 Lima translators. These Soldiers are the workhorses of the section and support all three IMS departments. At times, the O9 Limas perform multiple tasks simultaneously, serving as translators on a battlefield circulation in the morning, spending the afternoon coordinating events by phone with the Iraqi media, and translating articles in the evening. Their insights into streamlining processes have contributed immeasurably to the IMS's overall success.

In addition, the IMS acquired an Iraqi cultural advisor to help members better understand cultural, religious, and ethnic differences that affect working relationships. The cultural advisor interacts directly with the various media outlets, acts as the IMS's initial face, and reviews all stories and transcripts for proper translation and cultural sensitivities. Having an Iraqi cultural advisor communicating directly with the Iraqi media establishes the IMS's credibility and increases the media's willingness to partner on future events.

In addition to the cultural advisor and the four Army O9 Limas, the IMS hired two bi-lingual, bi-cultural advisors to write and translate articles and serve as media analysts. The advisors ensure that the tone and substance of articles resonate acceptably with the target audience.

Some English words, phrases, and titles simply do not translate into Arabic. Failure to recognize these subtle linguistic nuances has caused friction and misunderstanding in the past. As an example, the term "foreign fighters" generated considerable negative feedback from the IMS's readership because the vast majority of Iraqis think the term refers to the coalition as well as to cross-border insurgents. Hence the obvious friction.<sup>18</sup> Storywriters and the cultural advisor have helped limit such

linguistic imprecision and have ameliorated effects of the coalition's idiosyncratic expressions.

The IMS staff is also adept at preparing articles so the audience better understands a story's intent. By emphasizing what Iraqis find most interesting, the IMS increases market penetration and acceptance. Although many coalition operations revolve around rebuilding and providing essential services, the IMS does not overly publicize these acts.<sup>19</sup> Iraqis understand the coalition is here to assist the GOI and its population, but they do not necessarily want the U.S. to remind them about it repeatedly. The fine point of this relationship is that the core PA function of informing enhances the core PSYOP function of influencing. The IMS sensitivity to informing thereby helps moderate the PSYOP mission of influencing. Such sensitivity does not cynically mask the heavy hand of PSYOP. Rather, it makes the honest effort to make the truth known.

In addition, when PA articles mention units and Soldiers by name, the IMS filters that information for better meaningful translation and simplicity. Given the target audience, providing specific details pertinent to Soldiers and their backgrounds is extraneous to IMS focus.<sup>20</sup> The U.S. military's goals are to portray accurately the coalition's efforts. Extraneous detail can only muddle that effort.

**Teamwork and communication.** The IMS does not operate autonomously from within the division headquarters. It works with each of the brigade combat team (BCT) ECOORDs to identify events worthy of media coverage. However, the IMS sometimes plans events based on division-level input. This practice remains an exception, not the norm. The BCT ECOORDs synchronize planning efforts with each of their maneuver battalions and nominate events for Iraqi media coverage. Once approved by the BCT commander, ECOORDs develop a detailed concept of the operation plan (CONOP) and submit it to the IMS for scheduling. Typical events planned for and covered by Iraqi media include school openings, combined medical engagements, civil project completions, and community leader interviews. If the IMS receives multiple CONOPs that request media for the same day, it prioritizes the requests based on significance and supportability.<sup>21</sup> The IMS carefully reviews each BCT's battlefield circulation request because the process to allocate media to particular events is

complicated. With careful coordination, Iraqi media crews are able to capitalize on other newsworthy opportunities, interview concerned citizens and tribal leaders, and cover extemporaneous community events. Currently, the IMS can support two battlefield circulations per day.<sup>22</sup>

**Cultural and political limiting factors.** Working closely with the Iraqi media engagement team, the IMS has to consider religious factors before assigning Iraqi media crews. Sunni reporters may not feel comfortable entering a Shia community or covering a Shia event and vice versa. Security requirements do not allow disclosure of exact locations prior to the events, and the IMS works diligently with the engagement team to accommodate religious sensitivities and concerns. Iraqi correspondents with opposing religious affiliations sometimes choose to cancel the day of an event if they find it coincides with a religious holiday or observance. This forbearance prevents potential friction. Such scheduling changes occur especially during Islamic religious holidays, including the month of Ramadan.<sup>23</sup> In addition, some journalists perceive some areas as simply too dangerous and will not support certain missions under any circumstances. Examples of areas that have frightened off Iraqi media are former Al-Qaeda sanctuaries, areas with high levels of criminal activities, and areas with high numbers of extremist militias.

## Continuing Progress

The future holds much promise for continued growth for the IMS. However, its expansion depends largely on two factors: changing coalition perceptions of Iraqi media at the company through brigade-level, and increasing the fidelity of deliberate media planning. Commanders should embrace the reality that Iraqi media are a powerful, influential tool because they have inherent credibility as informing agents possessing sincere motives.

Commanders need to consciously avoid jaundiced perceptions of the Iraqi media as a second-rate, unfriendly, or uneconomical presence. Iraqi media can be a force-multiplier. Coalition forces should treat Iraqi media crews with respect on a par with American or international counterparts. Once

the coalition recognizes the value and potential of the Iraqi media, the IMS can better use and align its limited resources to support high-yield events.

The IMS is currently considering hiring independent Iraqi correspondents and developing a sustainable network of informed journalists. Using informal media facilitators will significantly reduce the expenditure of IMS resources for translators and escorts and decrease the time required to provide Iraqi media coverage on the battlefield.

Developing an external IMS webpage is another initiative that has merit. The IMS hopes to create an online venue and repository for all its articles and media alerts on a par with many Arab media online sites. Public access to articles will allow the Iraqi populace to gauge forward momentum in Iraq.

The IMS also plans to offer a mobile media-credentialing program to expedite vetting and registering of potential Iraqi journalists. Currently, only the Combined Press Information Center provides this service, which is often problematic and time-consuming. Having the IMS take on this function will reduce information center's involvement and spare Iraqi reporters the long traveling distances to the International Zone. Moreover, the IMS will have more Iraqi media contacts to dispatch on future battlefield circulations.

As the coalition shifts its focus from security to governance and economics, the need to cooperate with the Iraqi media will acquire new importance. Having a credible, capable mechanism that publicizes GOI and coalition force successes with media authenticity will enhance rebuilding efforts. The IMS has demonstrated the benefit of partnering with the Iraqi media to this end. Reaching the populace with credible information has led to results that would be impossible to achieve via PSYOP assets alone.

Market penetration and continuous dissemination of stories by the Iraqi media will enhance the local population's awareness of the GOI and coalition's labors. Stories of reconstruction, partnership, and progress show Iraqis that there is more transpiring in Iraq than combating insurgents. Through continued partnership with the Iraqi media, the IMS is increasing the level of optimism throughout Task Force Marne's area of operations.<sup>24</sup> **MR**



## NOTES

1. Mark Memmott, "Reporters in Iraq under fire there, and from critics," *USA Today*, 22 March 2006.

2. Refer to Joint Publication (JP) 3-61, *Public Affairs* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office [GPO], 9 May 2005), Chapter 2, "Public Affairs Responsibilities."

3. Refer to Field Manual (FM) 3-13, *Information Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, 28 November 2003), Chapter 2, "Information Operations Elements and Related Activities, Psychological Operations."

4. Refer to JP 3-13, *Information Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, 13 February 2006), Chapter 2, "Core, Supporting, and Related Information Operations, Psychological Operations."

5. For more information on media casualties since the coalition's occupation in Iraq, see "Casualties of the Iraq War," <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualties\\_of\\_the\\_conflict\\_in\\_Iraq\\_since\\_2003](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualties_of_the_conflict_in_Iraq_since_2003)>.

6. Memmott.

7. For additional information on the MNF-I Combined Press Information Center, visit <[www.mnf-iraq.com](http://www.mnf-iraq.com)>.

8. The deconfliction of Iraqi media section (IMS) written products and PSYOP themes and messages is under the direction of the G7. In order to keep IMS and PSYOP efforts separated, the G7 utilizes the current operations element to synchronize efforts to maximize desired target audience effects.

9. For more information on the synchronization of information operations along all other logical lines of operation, refer to FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: GPO, 15 December 2006), Chapter 1, "Some of the best weapons for counter-insurgents do not shoot."

10. Negative perceptions and fictitious or inaccurate reporting could indicate flaws in the plan and the need for modifications.

11. IMS media monitoring statistics report 50 percent of articles, 100 percent of media alerts, and one or more Iraqi/Pan-Arab media outlets picked up 98 percent of battlefield circulations. Figures could actually be higher for articles and battlefield circulations, but cannot be verified due to limited media monitoring capabilities. Because larger Pan-Arab companies outside Iraq own many of the local Iraqi media outlets, the IMS has far-reaching market penetration.

12. The *Al-Sabah* newspaper is primarily a government of Iraq affiliated paper with no specific sectarian affiliation. Its readership of approximately 60,000 is concentrated in Baghdad and in the Southern Belts. Both Sunni and Shia accept the paper as being truthful. The paper is published daily and costs about 35 cents U.S.

There is an English section on the newspaper's website. For more information, visit <[www.alsabah.com/English.html](http://www.alsabah.com/English.html)>.

13. All actionable intelligence obtained by the IMS is transferred to the G2 section for immediate analysis and action.

14. Battlefield circulations have a 98 percent media penetration rate; one or more media outlets air the event.

15. The Iraqi media engagement team provides Iraqi media crews with transportation from the Combined Press Information Center to Landing Zone Washington.

16. The high turnover rate with journalists in Iraq is due primarily to the numerous threats and the lack of security in many areas. Many journalists find that the stress and hours can be demanding and therefore pursue other employment.

17. Operations security, one of the five core elements of IO as listed in FM 3-13, is a critical element in the coordination and planning phases of battlefield circulations. Although the Iraqi media desires as much information up-front, the IMS, according to SOP, does not disclose the location of the event prior to their arrival at the landing zone. This ensures no information leaks that could potentially lead to an insurgent attack.

18. Also, local citizen misinterpretations may originate from PSYOP products. The same level of scrutiny of terms used with written articles is also required for the production of PSYOP messages and themes.

19. In order for articles to resonate favorably with the Iraqis, they are written as modestly as possible and without too much coalition "back-patting."

20. Coalition force unit identifiers and/or mottos seldom translate into Arabic or are not appropriate for the audience. An example is the Cavalry Troop called the "Assassins." Translating this into Arabic and disseminating this to the Iraqi populace would cause some concern. For IMS purposes, the term "assassin" would be changed to "a coalition troop."

21. If more requests occur than available media crews, the IMS supports the ones that will yield the greatest non-lethal effects payoff.

22. Battlefield circulations require one escort and one translator. The IMS currently has two available captains and two translators (MOS, O9L) to conduct battlefield circulations. In rare cases where IMS is over-tasked, the brigade combat team's leadership can provide escorts and translators to conduct the battlefield circulation.

23. The IMS ensures it provides religiously sensitive meals, if needed, and always respects religious observances.

24. The increasing level of freedom of maneuver or "permissiveness" for coalition forces is indicative of increasing stability.

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