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The purpose of this research was to explain my experience as the Non-Government Organization (NGO) Coordinator during a military deployment to Baghdad Iraq from October 2004 to June 2005. I was assigned to the 353rd Civil Affairs Command (U.S. Army) located inside the Green Zone in Baghdad. My specific military unit was the National Iraqi Assistance Center (NIAC) and was located inside of the Baghdad Convention Center. I was responsible for the NGO Coordination Section of the NIAC where I provided funding information to the Iraqi NGO leaders who I legitimated. In my role as the NGO Coordinator, I interacted with the NGO Coordination Section staff and Iraqi NGO leaders. I also interacted with representatives from support agencies such as the United States Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and international NGOs. In this thesis are twelve case studies of Iraqi NGO leaders. I analyzed my role as the NGO Coordinator using role theory and symbolic interaction theory. I collected the data from personal notes made during the deployment, discussions with fellow soldiers, local Iraqis, representatives of various support agencies and from historical research conducted after the deployment.

INTERACTIONS WITH IRAQI NON-GOVERNMENT  
ORGANIZATIONS

by

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Approved by

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Committee Chair

To my husband and kids who have heard me talk about this project for years. This endeavor could not have been possible without your love during the many interruptions and challenges. Also, to the soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice and are unable to tell their own stories of their experience in Iraq.

APPROVAL PAGE

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

I was stationed in Baghdad, Iraq from October 2004 to June 2005. I was assigned to the 353rd Civil Affairs Command. My title was Non-Government Organization (NGO) Coordinator. The 353rd Civil Affairs Command headquarters was located inside the Green Zone in Baghdad. The 353<sup>rd</sup> Civil Affairs Command was a civil affairs unit. The mission of civil affairs was to gain the "hearts and minds" of the local populace. My specific military unit was the National Iraqi Assistance Center (NIAC) and was located inside of the Baghdad Convention Center.

In this thesis, I analyze my observations of the Iraqi NGO leaders and the members of the NGO Coordination Section of the NIAC, as well as my interactions with them as the NGO Coordinator. I explain these observations using role theory and symbolic interaction theory. I collected the data from personal notes made during the deployment, discussions with fellow soldiers, local Iraqis, members of various organizations and from historical research conducted after the deployment.

A multi-national Coalition crossed the border into Iraq in March, 2003, marking the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). The official mission of OIF was to disarm Iraq of alleged weapons of mass destruction, end Saddam Hussein's alleged support for terrorism, free the people of Iraq, and rebuild the country.

Iraq is approximately twice the size of the state of Idaho totaling 432,162 sq km of land. The population of Iraq is approximately 30 million with 75-80 percent Arab, 15-20 percent Kurdish, and 5 percent Turkoman, Assyrian or other. Sunnis, the second largest religious sect in Iraq but the largest worldwide, make up 32-37 percent of the Iraqi population. The Shia religious sect makes up 60-65 percent of Iraq's population. The Sunnis, however, had dominated the country under Saddam Hussein.



Efforts to work with the local population began even while the war was already underway. Iraqis frequently approached coalition military commanders regarding their needs, forcing commanders to address these needs while still fighting the war only a few blocks away (Fontenot, Degen, and Tohn 2005:254). Soldiers had expected to be greeted as liberators (Fontenot, Degen, and Tohn 2005:413) but instead were faced with factional disagreements among Iraqis and difficult tasks such as restoring basic services (Fontenot, Degen, and Tohn 2005:254). As the war wound down, they also organized Iraqis and helped them form local governments through councils and town meetings.

During the early stages of the war, funds for reconstruction in Iraq were available through the Iraqi Relief and Reconstruction Funds (IRRF 1 and 2), the Iraqi Security Forces Fund, the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP), and the Economic Support Fund. According to Bowen (2009: 238), reconstruction projects were divided into five types: public infrastructure; quick-impact, high-visibility; democracy building; transitional stabilization; and capacity building. The projects included school reconstruction, establishing internet cafes, computer classes, medical services, assistance to widows and unemployed civilians, and humanitarian assistance to the poor or dislocated civilians.

During this initial phase, U.S. military commanders had the discretion to utilize CERP funds to re-establish basic services, such as electricity sewage, water, and communication. Commanders focused on improving school buildings, reestablishing local governments, reestablishing police and fire departments, and building community centers with the goal of training community members in new skills, such as sewing and computer training. The National Iraqi Assistance Center military commander also had the discretion to utilize Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds. These funds were primarily utilized to fund projects through local Iraqi NGOs that had been established as a result of the NGO training at the NGO Coordination Section. The Department of State, USAID and international NGOs also provided funds to Iraqi NGOs.

Iraqis were trained by the Coalition to establish NGOs because prior to the war, there had been no civil society in Iraq. Civil society is defined as the realm outside of the state or market and is commonly referred to as the third sector in which people organize themselves to pursue their interests and provide services (Edwards 2004: 20). It is the network between the family and the state in which organizations, such as Non-Government Organizations, are formed to create change (Edwards 2004: 20). NGOs are not-for-profit, self-governing, and private or grassroots organizations (Aall, Miltenberger, Weiss 2008: 89) that work towards providing services, encouraging social change, increasing political participation, conflict resolution, and solving social problems. Some focus on economic development, human rights, environmental protection, establishing democratic communities or rebuilding the communities' infrastructure (Aall, Miltenberger, Weiss, 2008: 94).

It is often difficult to determine an exact number of NGOs due to their fluid nature, and Iraqi NGOs were also difficult to count due to the security situation. The most common goals of Iraqi NGOs included re-establishing electricity, assisting the poor, rebuilding schools, facilitating access to health care, working toward ensuring human rights, women's rights, and children's rights, teaching democracy and even participation in writing a constitution. Many of the Iraqis involved with the NGOs spoke English, as Baghdad is the area of Iraq with the highest concentration of people with higher education. According to the NIAC Iraqis, English was taught to the brightest students in the Baghdad schools and was the most sought after language. English speaking Iraqis who approached Coalition soldiers not only formed NGOs but were hired as interpreters by the Coalition, as well as by the Department of State, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and international NGOs.

The National Iraqi Assistance Center (NIAC), where I worked, was first established as a civil military operations center (CMOC) by the United States Army during the initial invasion of Iraq in March 2003. CMOCs are centers created in and around military operations by civil affairs military units. The purpose of these centers is to provide the military commanders with a perspective on non-military factors such as civil structures, religious and civil organizations,

available resources for the Army's use in the surrounding communities, and people and events in their area of operations (Field Manual 3-05.401 2003: 1-1). Soldiers at civil military operations centers help identify resources and facilities which can support the military commanders in accomplishing their combat missions. CMOCs are also responsible for collaborating with international NGOs, regional and local NGOs, the United States Department of State, and the United States Agency for International Development, members of the local community, and members of the local government to help the local population.

Beginning in October 2004, the National Iraqi Assistance Center, originally established as a civil military operations center to assist Iraqis was located at the Baghdad Convention Center. Staff from the Coalition headquarters, international NGOs, the Department of State, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Coalition soldiers, Iraqi soldiers, contractors, and civilians (including Iraqi civilians) lived and worked inside the Green Zone. The bombing of the UN headquarters within the Green Zone in the summer of 2003 caused some elements of the international community to move and work in Amman, Jordan and Kuwait City. The United Nations (UN) element, for example, moved to Amman but maintained a small contingent in Iraq. Other international NGOs maintained their presence in Iraqi through local Iraqis working for them. These Iraqis, as well as local NGOs leaders and representatives, maintained a low profile and conducted a lot of their work "underground" due to the fear of assassinations, kidnappings, and intimidation by insurgents. The work and the people traffic inside the Green Zone intensified because it was a safe area. The Green Zone comprised approximately four square miles. Access to the Green Zone was controlled by the Coalition. The Coalition was also responsible for the overall security in the Green Zone which made it one of the safest places in Iraq.

In addition to the NGO Coordination Section, where I worked, the National Iraqi Assistance Center provided a variety of services to local Iraqis including medical assistance, employment services, information about detainees, compensation for damages caused by Coalition forces to personal property, and a variety of types of humanitarian assistance. The

National Iraqi Assistance Center was led by a U.S. Army Colonel who was responsible for seven U.S. Army soldiers, one Polish soldier, two Iraqi-American contractors, who worked as interpreters, and over 30 contracted local Iraqi interpreters. NIAC Iraqi staff members were initially hired as interpreters. As the soldiers became familiar with the skills of the Iraqis hired, some of them were given additional responsibilities. The local Iraqis hired had different levels of fluency in English and computer and internet knowledge. According to the American interpreters and soldiers previously assigned to the NIAC, these skills improved over time. As a result, the Iraqi staff members were very involved in the NIAC's mission when I arrived in Iraq. Each NIAC section was operated by a U.S. Army soldier and an Iraqi contractor. The purpose of having a soldier in charge with an Iraqi counterpart was to ensure each section was working towards the Coalition's goals while at the same time gain the trust and confidence of the local population through working with local Iraqis.

The NGO Coordination Section consisted of six to eight Iraqis, with me as the Coalition supervisor. It was formed shortly after the war started to provide training, funding, and coordination for Iraqi NGOs. Iraqi NGOs were created under the direction of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), the interim government after the invasion. Civil affairs units and international NGOs worked closely with members of the Coalition Provisional Authority to establish Iraqi NGOs. In addition to the NGO Coordination Section, organizations such as Department of State, USAID, and international NGOs funded and trained Iraqis to establish NGO's. The NGO Coordination Section soldiers and staff worked with these organizations to hold training conferences and workshops to train Iraqis in proposal writing, with the goal of receiving funding for their organizations. By the time of my arrival to Iraq, the Iraqi staff members of my section were well acquainted with Coalition soldiers, representatives of the USAID, Department of State, and international NGOs.

As security concerns increased in Iraq, funding organizations and Coalition commanders came to believe that Iraqi NGOs were, in some cases, fronts for terrorist organizations. The continued insurgency also created distrust of Iraqi NGOs among representatives of international

NGOs, the Department of State, and USAID. NGOs therefore had to be vetted or legitimized to continue to receive funding. The NGO Coordination Section established the NGO registration process for Iraqi NGOs in Baghdad after the war began. In the summer of 2004, the NGO registration was moved to the Iraq's Ministry of Planning. According to Edwards, NGO registration formalizes the organization (2004: 23). Registered NGOs were formally recognized by the newly formed Iraqi government. However, regardless of the Ministry of Planning's NGO registration, Iraqi NGOs continued to register at the National Iraqi Assistance Center (NIAC) NGO Coordination Section. During my tenure as the NGO Coordinator from October 2004 to June 2005, as registration with the NGO Coordination Section had become a source of legitimation for the Iraqi NGOs.

Regardless of the lack of direct funding, by the time I arrived in Iraq, the NIAC was a hub of information, where representatives of international NGOs, the Department of State, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) sought legitimate NGOs to fund. According to the NIAC commander, the previous commanders had funds available to spend on reconstruction efforts at their discretion. These funds are called the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) and are a resource for civil affair units to help accomplish their missions. In the case of the NIAC, the previous commanders had utilized this resource to fund Iraqi NGO projects at their discretion. By the arrival of the current NIAC commander, these funds were no longer available to him. Regardless of this, the NIAC continued to be the safest place for Iraqi NGO leaders to meet, network, share information, and coordinate with the representatives of the support agencies,

Access to the Green Zone and the Baghdad Convention Center required valid identification. Badge applications for frequent visitors to the Green Zone were signed by high ranking officers, including the NIAC commander. When a badge application required signature by the NIAC commander, he relied on those of us who dealt with local Iraqis for recommendations. Many of the frequent visitors to the NIAC were members of NGOs looking for funding, training, and others were simply attending meetings. As a result, the majority of badge

applications required the NGO Coordination Section's vetting. As the NGO Coordinator, I became part of the badge application vetting process. To receive a Green Zone access badge meant the individual was considered legitimate. The NGO registration and the badge application process were thus both ways in which I legitimated NGO leaders.

Working directly with Iraqi NGO leaders, representatives of the international NGOs, Department of State, USAID, the American interpreters and the Iraqi staff was an important and complex process. The data collected throughout the deployment and after provide a unique opportunity to analyze this complex process. In the following chapters, I use role and symbolic interaction theory to analyze my interactions as the NGO Coordinator with the NGO leaders and the members of the NGO Coordination Section. In Chapter II, I review relevant aspects of role and symbolic interactionist theory. In Chapter III, I explain the research methods used. In Chapter IV, I describe twelve Iraqi NGO case studies. From these case studies, I take examples to analyze and explain my role and my interactions with others in Chapter V.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORY

In this Chapter, I explain key theoretical concepts of role theory and symbolic interactionist theory that I will use to analyze my data. Also included in this chapter are the research questions I intend to answer in Chapter V.

#### Role Theory

There are various definitions of the concepts of role theory which can cause confusion (Biddle 2001), but there is no doubt the main concept in role theory is role. A role is defined as patterned behavior exhibited by people in a particular social situation (Biddle 2001). The concept was adapted from the terminology of the theater (Giddens 2009: 293). According to Biddle (2001):

. . .role theorists tend to share a basic vocabulary, an interest in the fact that human behavior is . . . associated with the social position of the actor, and the assumption that behavior is generated (in part) by expectations that are held by the actor and others (Biddle 2001: 2416)

Roles are strongly influenced by role expectations. Role expectations are a set of behaviors expected to be performed by an individual holding a specific position. For example, the role of a teacher has a set of expected behaviors different from the role of doctor. Most people play more than one role. A police officer, for example, may also be a father, a team coach, a colleague, and a neighbor. Each role has duties, rights, and expectations which are socially defined. The collection of roles that any one person plays is called his or her role set.

The individuals who expect certain behaviors from a role player, or focal person, are called role senders. Role senders provide signs or make indications to the focal person by providing the following (Katz and Kahn: 1978: 191):

...instructions about preferred behavior and behaviors to be avoided, information about rewards and penalties contingent on role performance, and evaluations of current performance in relation to role expectations.

A teacher, for example, has various role senders which include her students, the parents of her students, her colleagues, and school administrators.

The role of the NGO Coordinator consisted of a number of behaviors expected to fulfill different duties and responsibilities. My first research question is what behaviors were expected and who were the role senders expecting these behaviors?

A focal person can experience intra-role or inter-role conflict. Intra-role conflict is experienced by a focal person when the behaviors expected by various role senders conflict with one another. Inter-role conflict occurs when an individual has conflicting expectations associated with different roles (Lynch 2007: 379). The expectations cause conflict when the multiple roles overlap.

Focal persons can manage role conflict with different coping strategies. Lynch uses the example of communication technology where an individual can “adapt, discard, overlap, and switch focus among multiple social roles, often in the space of a few minutes and regardless of the social setting” (Lynch 2007: 380). Shumate and Fulk explain the coping strategy of individuals who work at home. The coping strategy used consisted of changing their spatial location (2004: 61). The individual experienced conflict between their role as a parent with home responsibilities and his or her role as a worker, which required a certain level of production. To experience less role conflict, the individual changed his or her work arrangement at home. He or she moved away from family traffic, worked in a personal office with a door but did close the door. House gives another example of spatial separation by describing a secretary assigned to work for two men (1970: 59). In this case, the conflict was reduced by assigning her to a pool of secretaries where the work from the two men was funneled through a supervisor. Another strategy is making a choice between the expectations creating conflict for the focal person. The decision about which choice to make is based on “the legitimacy of the directions received” and



the “the perception of sanctions” (House 1970: 59). An individual’s personality and past experiences will influence his or her decision when faced with these choices. A young driver with friends in his or her car may obey traffic signals even when the eager friends want her to violate traffic laws to more quickly arrive at their destination. The young driver may have experienced the consequences of violating traffic laws by receiving a citation or the sanction may have included a reprimand from a parent. The young driver prefers to deal with the scolding of her friends than a citation or reprimand.

As the NGO Coordinator, I experienced different role conflicts. My second research question is what kind of role conflicts did I experience and how did I resolve them?

Role ambiguity occurs when an individual does not know what the expectations of his or her role as understood by others (Tidd, McIntyre, Friedman 2004: 366-367). According to Miles, role ambiguity can lead to job tension and issues of self confidence in role performance (1977: 22). Role ambiguity can be reduced by obtaining feedback or input from others more clearly indicating what behavior is appropriate (Rizzo, House, Lirtzman 1970: 156). A new parent may experience role ambiguity when his or her baby is crying. The parent may not have learned that the baby tugging at his or her ear may be experiencing an ear infection. The parent will consider him or herself a bad parent yet he or she only lacked knowledge; he or she may not necessarily be viewed as a bad parent by others.

I experienced role ambiguity when I was unsure of the behavior as the NGO Coordinator expected by my superiors. The role of the NGO Coordinator was not written in a standard form as other job descriptions in the military. My third research question is how did I resolve the role ambiguity experienced?

A boundary role exists when an individual who plays a role in one organization is required to interact with individuals both inside and outside of his or her organization in the course of performing his or her tasks. According to Organ, two important functions of a boundary role are representation and negotiation (1971: 525). An individual in a boundary role influences the views of others in regards to his or her organization by the manner in which he or she complies with

their organization's norms. If he or she does not comply with the organization's norms, he or she is not representing the organization well. For example, a sloppy military recruiter may cause others to believe the military as a whole has lost its pride in a "clean cut" appearance.

The negotiation function of a boundary role is important for this role because the individual in this role must accept the outsider's goals, values or aspirations, must creatively influence the outsider, and must negotiate with members of his or her own organization to fulfill boundary role tasks. Using the example of the military recruiter, if there is a high recruiting goal, the recruiter may tend to be more lenient in the type of recruits he or she seeks out. In some cases, the recruiter may pursue a candidate who is overweight by military standards. The recruiter must creatively influence the recruit by suggesting a nutritional plan and fitness program. If the recruit makes progress, the recruiter can convince his or her superior that the recruit is worth the wait until he or she is in weight compliance.

The functions of representation and negotiation frequently create role conflict for those who play boundary roles (Organ 1971: 525), and persons who play boundary roles are found to experience more role conflict than persons in other roles. Role conflict experienced by boundary role persons can be reduced by increasing their distance from role senders (Miles 1977: 22). The military recruiter can limit the information provided to his or her superior regarding the overweight recruit until the recruit meets the weight standard. This will reduce the role conflict experienced by the recruiter.

Boundary role persons may also experience issues of commitment and integration into their organization. For example, a salesperson may identify more with contacts outside of his or her organization and set unattainable delivery dates, which, in turn, cause problems for his or her organization.

Boundary role persons must exercise discretion, but this can sometimes be difficult due to the power boundary role persons can accrue. The power of persons in boundary roles comes from the external connections and support the individuals in a boundary role receive from others outside of their home organization. This power is independent of their role within their

organization (Scott and Davis 2007: 190). For example, a salesperson who has the loyalty of customers can take these customers with them if the salesperson moves to another company.

The NGO Coordinator role required me to interact with individuals outside of the NGO Coordination Section. I was required to represent the NIAC commander, the military, and the NGO Coordination Section. However, I was also expected to form good working relationships with the NGO leaders I worked with and with representatives from the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and international NGOs. My fourth research question is how did I play my boundary role, and with which organizations was I playing the boundary role?

### Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interaction theory looks at how the interactions among individuals and groups are based on the meanings attributed to symbols by the actors in an interaction setting (Hughey 2008: 935). It also examines how social actors, through interactions, align their action with the actions of others. This alignment makes it possible for them to fit together their lines of action and conduct successful interaction.

The Thomas theorem states “if people define things as real, they are real in their consequences” (Altheide 2000: 2). That is, people act in accordance with their own interpretations of the social world around them, not in response to some objectively existing reality that they all see in the same way. This theorem points to a key concept of symbolic interaction theory, the definition of the situation. A person’s acts are shaped by how he or she views a situation. A person’s definition of situation contains several components: ideas about his or her roles, the roles of others, his or her goals and the goals of others, and their self image.

An individual has an idea of what his or her role is when entering an interaction and of the roles of others. For example, when an individual enters a meeting in a conference room at a corporation, he or she will define the situation differently than if he or she enters a dining room for a Thanksgiving dinner. In both situations, the individual has an idea of his or her goals as well as

an idea of the goals of others. According to symbolic interactionists, humans can see themselves as objects. Self-image is one's idea of what one is like. It comes from stepping outside of oneself to form a picture of what one is like. Self-esteem is an important aspect of self-image. An individual who has a poor image of him or herself, for example, may be less prone to communicate effectively in a meeting.

Information used by individuals to define the situation is mostly derived from culture and past experience. If a guest sits at the head of the dinner table in the US, this may create an uncomfortable situation for everyone. In a different culture, seating the guest at the head of the table may be the appropriate and expected practice. In future similar situations, the guest may ask where he or she should be seated instead of just taking a seat based on his or her own definition of the situation. This experience allows the individual to define the situation as others and behave appropriately.

Participating in interaction thus requires what symbolic interactionists call taking the role of the other. That is, people in an interaction system try to imagine how others see that situation and use this information to guide their own actions. Individuals create a plan or scenario for their interaction based on their definition of the situation. This is called creating a line of action. For example, an employee asking a supervisor for a day off must adequately define the situation and anticipate the supervisor's reaction to the request. To do so, the employee must be able to imagine how the request will be viewed by the supervisor and construct her line of action. The employee might use family as an excuse if family is important to the supervisor. If from past experience the employee knows education is important, the employee might say he or she has a class or study group meeting and must miss work to attend.

Problems arise when the situation is defined differently by the individuals in an interaction. If an individual defines a situation in a different manner than expected by the other, the individuals he or she is interacting with can become upset and end the interaction. When an individual enters a situation, he or she may try to avoid such conflicts by trying to influence others to define the situation in the same way, which will make interaction go more smoothly. One way

to do this is by trying to get others to see you as you would like to be seen, the so-called presentation of self. A young rookie police officer, for example, may approach an individual who has violated a law. The individual and the police officer know that a law was violated and a corrective action will result. If the rookie police officer does not present himself with confidence, regardless of his inexperience and youthful appearance, the individual being approached may choose to not take him as seriously as he would an older veteran police officer, which will lead to problems in the interaction.

According to Mead, the most influential symbolic interactionist (Stryker 1980: 33), the definition given to language and symbols leads to behavior adjustments in interactions with others. Individuals construct their own line of action and may not act as the other anticipated. In the example of the employee requesting time off, the supervisor may interact in a different manner than she anticipated. The supervisor may be pushed for production and disregard family or education or any other circumstance the employee is able to present. To reach his or her goal, the employee will modify his or her definition of the situation. The employee's ideas about the supervisor's goals will change, the employee's goals may change and the employee may change their self image. The employee is thus forced to make behavior adjustments during the interaction to reach his or her goals.

As the focal person makes adjustments to his or her line of actions, others are doing the same. If they succeed, then the interaction proceeds and they successfully fit together their lines of action. The definitions of the situation become more similar and everyone reaches at least part of their goals. In the example above, the rookie police officer and the individual who violated the law might not define the situation in a similar manner. The police officer wants to be taken seriously but may know from past experiences that his youthful appearance negatively impacts his credibility. The police officer may behave professionally, authoritatively, and confident when communicating with the individual. This may indicate to the offender that the youthful looking officer is serious and prepared to give a citation if the offender does not respond appropriately.

The individual may adjust his behavior to that of being cooperative and apologetic to get on the police officer's good side. This is an example of fitting together lines of action.

There are often difficulties in aligning lines of action or fitting together lines of action. Fitting together lines of action can be difficult if individuals start with different definitions of the situation. For example, an Arab man may not shake the hand of a female during a business transaction as he would that of a male due to his religious belief to not touch a female who is not of close familial relation. This may be interpreted as offensive to the female, yet the male still wants to conduct business. If the female is unaware of the religious belief or holds the belief that this religiously based act does not apply to business transactions, the individuals will have a difficult time arriving at a similar definition of the situation. The same holds true if the male does not realize he may offend the female by not treating her equal or the same as a businessman. To arrive at the similar definition of the situation and avoid problems during interactions, lines of action must fit together. Individuals may need to compromise their beliefs, roles, and expected outcomes to arrive at a similar definition of the situation.

In my role as the NGO Coordinator, I had to ensure the NGO Section accomplished his or her mission of training and providing information to NGO leaders. My last research questions are: how did I define the situation as the NGO Coordinator and how did I construct and align my lines of action with the NGO leaders, the NGO Coordination Section staff members, and the American interpreter to accomplish the training, provide information and determine which NGO leaders I legitimated? The following chapter describes the research methods used to collect the data for this thesis.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODS

The data analyzed in this thesis come from empirical observations, interviews and historical research about the setting where I worked. The empirical observations, the primary data source, were made by me as a soldier deployed to Baghdad, Iraq from October 2004 to June 2005. The informal interviews were conducted during my time in Baghdad and shortly after my return to the United States. Historical information was also gathered during my time in Baghdad and after my return to the United States. The data collected were analyzed using a qualitative approach guided by role theory and symbolic interaction theory.

#### The Setting

As the NGO Coordinator, I had day-to-day interactions with the Iraqi staff of the NGO Coordination Center and with representatives of Iraqi NGOs, international NGOs, the Department of State, United States Agency for International Development, other staff members from the National Iraqi Assistance Center and fellow Coalition soldiers. A regular day consisted of arriving at the Baghdad Convention Center and making ourselves available to Iraqis who entered the National Iraqi Assistance Center for a variety of types of assistance. Iraqi NGO leaders and representatives were directed to me by the NGO Coordination Section staff or one of the American interpreters. The NGO Coordination Section staff screened the NGO leaders before bringing them to my desk. The screening consisted of determining what type of assistance they needed. If the NGO Coordination Section staff members were unable to assist the NGO leaders, the NGO leaders were brought to me.

The NGO Coordination Section staff and I held a weekly meeting at the NIAC. The meeting was facilitated by the Iraqi staff and included Iraqi NGOs, me, and select representatives of international NGOs, other military units, Department of State, and USAID. The purpose of the

meeting was to share information and experiences, to coordinate upcoming events such as the Iraqi elections, coordinate humanitarian assistance after combat operations, share information regarding openings of community type centers, and to introduce newly invited members. A second weekly meeting was held at the NIAC and facilitated by representatives from the Department of State. The NGO Coordination Section staff members and I attended. Some of the same representatives who attended the meeting facilitated by the NGO Coordination Section staff also attended this meeting. The focus of this meeting was primarily Department of State children, women and health issues initiatives.

Other unscheduled meetings occurred with representatives of international NGOs, USAID, and Department of State who were seeking dependable, legitimate Iraqi NGOs to fund and work with. Members of these organizations also depended on the information from the NGO database maintained by the NGO Coordination Section staff. The NGO Coordination Section staff members and I also provided the members of these organizations with ideas about what the Iraqi communities needed based on information we gathered from NGO leaders and Iraqis who came to the National Iraqi Assistance Center for assistance. Representatives of the Department of State, international NGOs, and the USAID visited the NIAC to provide the NGO Coordination Section staff and me with updates on new initiatives and strategies for the growth of civil society.

#### Data Gathering

According to Lofland and Lofland (1995):

...participant observation refers to the process in which an investigator establishes and sustains a many-sided and relatively long term relationship with a human association in its natural setting for the purpose of developing a scientific understanding of that association.

The length of the deployment and the long hours I spent at the NIAC and at the NGO Coordination Section allowed me an extended period for observation. I arrived in a setting where roles and relationships had previously been established, where I could become involved in



relatively long term working relationships with the Iraqi staff members and leaders of the Iraqi NGOs. Frequent visits with representatives from Department of State, USAID, international NGOs gave me the opportunity to gather information from a variety of other sources. In my role as the NGO Coordinator, I had the opportunity to attend many formal and informal meetings and to meet with individuals on a one-on-one basis, with and without an interpreter. To keep track of meetings and information, I maintained a daily log and calendar of events. I also maintained copies of briefings and information provided by staff of the Department of State, USAID and international NGOs. In the evenings, I kept a personal log where I documented my personal thoughts and observations. In short, I had very good opportunities to engage in participant observation under favorable conditions.

I also conducted hundreds of unstructured, impromptu unstructured interviews. Lofland and Lofland (18:1995) define unstructured interviewing as:

...a guided observation whose goal is to elicit from the interviewee (usually referred to as the 'informant') rich, detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis.

At first, I mainly sought information relevant to my duties and the duties of members of the NGO Coordination Section staff members, representatives of the Department of State, USAID and international NGOs. I sought to clarify and understand the working relationships among these organizations, the NGO Coordination Section staff, and me. This understanding became especially critical, especially after I recognized the need to legitimate the NGO leaders for representatives of the funding organizations. As a result of this information gathering, it became evident there was an opportunity for sociological analysis.

According to Babbie (113:1986), "...introspection is a useful form of exploratory research." By looking at our own actions and thoughts after an experience or event, we can gain insights into what occurred. My introspection began during the deployment as I was trying to understand the working relationships among the various actors. After returning from deployment, I continued writing notes about my observations and interviews and tried to understand what I

had experienced. The writing brought out events which, at the time, had not seemed critical due to the routine nature of each day. I researched material written about the preparation for the Iraq war and the first years of the war which created additional opportunities for introspection and retrospection. I had discussions with various individuals after the deployment to include professors, soldiers and representatives of international NGOs and Department of State to further understand what I had experienced. Further meetings and discussions with professors brought to light the opportunity to write a thesis based on my deployment experience.

A weakness in the data collection method is the limited or lack of background information when I entered the setting. Understanding the setting before arriving could have guided the impromptu interviews. I was unfamiliar with the Iraqi culture except for the minimal cultural training I received prior to deployment. Not having a complete understanding of the culture may have prevented me from interpreting their actions and behaviors accurately.

Another bias in the data collection method could have occurred as a result of my preconceived notions and stereotypes. My perspective was affected by mistrust of anything unfamiliar to me and the war stories I had heard from other soldiers prior to my deployment. Although I tried to be fair and consistent with Iraqis I came in contact with, I constantly feared some were sympathetic to the insurgency especially those individuals with which I needed an interpreter to communicate. As a soldier entering a combat zone, my focus was to whatever job was required to defeat the enemy, but I was surprised to learn I was instead going to work towards helping Iraqis rebuild their country through non-government organizations. The following chapter describes twelve Iraqi NGO case studies which will be analyzed in the last chapter with role theory and symbolic interactionist theory.

## CHAPTER IV

### CASE STUDIES

This chapter contains twelve case studies of Iraqi Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in existence in Baghdad, Iraq between October 2004 to June 2005.

#### Case Study #1 - Iraqi Assistance Center Outside of the Green Zone NGO

One of the NIAC Iraqi staff members established an NGO outside of the Green Zone before I arrived in Iraq. According to the NGO Coordination Section staff, the NGO was an information center set up very similarly to the National Iraqi Assistance Center (NIAC). The NGO provided Internet training and proposal writing training. The NGO leader had a staff, several computers, and a building in very good condition according to Iraqi standards. The NGO leader was a young female who, according to the NGO Coordination Section staff members, learned English and computer skills from Coalition members. The NGO leader wore casual clothes and as many Muslim conservative women in Iraq, always covering her arms, legs, and wore a veil. She was very familiar with American culture, the Coalition, Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, international NGOs and other Iraqi NGOs. Several documents in the NIAC files indicated she coordinated and conducted NGO training. According to the NGO leader, she maintained communication with representatives of the Department of State she had met at the beginning of the war. She knew many of the representatives of the Iraqi interim government as well as the personnel at the Ministry of Planning. The NGO was registered at the Ministry of Planning and at the NGO Coordination Center. Funding for the organization, according to the NGO Coordination Section staff members, was provided through the payments for information and services, which were charged to Iraqis for assistance at this NGO. Although I had no documented confirmation the NGO leader had previously received

funding from the Coalition during the beginning of the war, I believed she did given her level of participation with the Coalition and other organizations. She acquired buildings inside the Green Zone from the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) during the early part of the war. She used the buildings as residences for her and her extended family.

I became aware of the NGO leader through the NGO Coordination Section staff members several months after I arrived in Iraq. When I learned about the NGO leader, I was surprised they had not previously shared this information. I was informed of her after the NGO leader attended a regional NGO meeting and denied any connection to the Coalition. This information came back to the NIAC staff through other NGO leaders. This act of denial infuriated some of the NGO Coordination Section staff members. At the time it was unclear to me why they would be upset, as some staff members had informed me on other occasions they denied any connection to the Coalition for security reasons. They did not like the NGO leader's attitude and thought she was arrogant. According to them, she had a successful organization. I believed they were envious because the NGO leader could probably sustain herself and her organization without the employment at the NIAC.

Shortly after I was informed of the NGO leader's conference attendance, I met with the NGO leader and asked her about the conference. The NGO leader informed me that members of the IO who hosted the conference invited her to the conference. She informed me that funding information was provided and several Iraqi NGOs she knew had attended. Besides this information, it was difficult to acquire detailed information from her. I did not ask her why she claimed to not have any connection with the Coalition because I anticipated she would use security as her concern or deny she said it. I also did not ask her why she had not informed me she was an NGO leader.

As the NGO Coordinator, I was confused as to why she had not shared any of this information with me. In her employment at the National Iraqi Assistance Center, the NGO leader worked on various issues. Sometimes the issues included working with the NGO Coordination Section, but she was not always helpful. At the time I made this observation, I dismissed it,

believing she simply did not want to share her knowledge, as knowledge can be power. Although I also thought she was arrogant compared to other Iraqi staff members, I did not originally distrust her. The lack of informing me about her NGO and her participation in the NGO conference created distrust.

I concluded she maintained her employment at the NIAC because it gave her easier access to the representatives of the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, international NGOs, other Iraqi NGOs and the Iraqi interim government representatives. As an employee of the NIAC, she had a badge which allowed her quicker access to the Green Zone compared to other Iraqis. She could also maintain quicker access for her vehicle as she lived inside the Green Zone. Her expectation of me as the NGO Coordinator was that I continue to provide her access to the Green Zone.

I brought my concerns to the National Iraqi Assistance Center commander. He did not seem surprised or interested in what I had learned and he took no action. The NIAC Director liked her because he knew some of the Coalition soldiers she had previously met and worked with at the NIAC. They recommended the NGO leader as a very good worker and enthusiastic person who wanted to make Iraq better.

Regardless of her reported success as an NGO leader, I did not legitimate this NGO leader's organization because she did not share information with me as the NGO Coordinator. Not legitimizing the NGO leader only restricted her from receiving funding information quickly as she knew many individuals who could provide her the information. I did not include her in NGO meetings nor did I provide her funding information from representatives of the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, or international NGOs. I also ensured the NGO Coordination Section staff was aware of my decision.

## Case Study #2 - Business Women NGO

A former Iraqi business woman established an NGO in cooperation with a group of Iraqi women who were also former business owners or were interested in establishing a business. The NGO was registered at the NGO Coordination Section and during my deployment completed the NGO registration at the Iraqi Ministry of Planning. This NGO provided business training, computer training, and Internet training for women. Although the list of accomplishments was extensive and the accomplishments themselves were diverse in comparison to other NGO CVs, her NGO's accomplishments were considered legitimate by many fellow NGO leaders and the NGO Coordination Section staff members. The NGO leader focus included coordinating trips outside of Iraq for individuals requiring medical procedures not available in Iraq. The NGO leader spoke English with a heavy accent but did not require the assistance of an interpreter. She appeared very confident and dressed in western style business clothes without a veil. According to the NGO Coordination Section staff members, this NGO leader was well connected in Baghdad and very familiar with Iraq. The NGO leader was able to support her NGO's activities with funding from a business established within the Green Zone. The business was a place where Iraqi crafts were sold and was established with the financial support of the Department of State before my arrival to Iraq. According to the NGO leader, the business, although small, was successful and its profits were utilized to fund the NGO's activities.

The NGO Coordination Section staff considered the NGO leader to be legitimate and wanted to ensure I legitimized her organization as well. The NGO Coordination Section staff brought the NGO leader to my desk the first time she came to the NIAC after my arrival in Iraq. After this initial introduction, she still stopped by the NGO Coordination Section in accordance with the NIAC process but always stopped by to see me, even if it was just to greet me. The NGO leader came to update us on her activities and to introduce representatives from international organization to the NGO Coordination section staff if she believed the NGO Coordination Section staff could benefit from them in the future. The NGO Coordination Section

staff and I included her in all meetings and shared any funding information or new projects by international NGOs.

The NGO leader shared information, but I believe she did this to maintain her good standing with the Department of State and to maintain her access to the Green Zone. During a Department of State NGO meeting I was invited to attend outside of the National Iraqi Assistance Center, I was surprised to see the Business NGO leader in attendance. I was unaware she would be in attendance and surprised, the representative of the Department of State did not inform me she would be present as he had regarding other individuals at the meeting. Based on this experience and what I had learned about the NGO leader thus far, I conclude that the NGO leader only required legitimation from me as the NGO Coordinator for continued access to the Green Zone. She understood that providing the NGO Coordination Section and me information regarding other organizations she would maintain an open dialogue regardless of whether she had any good news to share about her organization. She was not seeking funding information, as she already had a funding source but needed to ensure I knew she was an individual who was truly working towards helping Iraqi society.

### Case Study #3 - Christian NGO

A third NGO was created by a young Christian lady. According to her, her office was located in her apartment. This NGO leader's organizations provided computer training, Internet training, sewing classes and literacy classes with the goal of helping women become self sufficient. According to the NGO leader, a number of volunteers worked with her. It was unknown to me whether the center was open to only Christian women or to Muslim women as well. Members of the NGO Coordination Section staff brought the NGO leader to meet with me. The NGO leader did not speak Arabic very well. She used two names for security reasons. She was of English descent but born and raised in Iraq. The NGO volunteers who came to the NIAC with the NGO leader, had English last names. They dressed casually in business pants and western style clothing. They were of fair complexion compared to other Iraqis. None of these

women wore veils when they came into the Green Zone. According to the NGO leader, the young ladies were educated. The NGO leader was fluent in English although, had a unique accent compared to other Iraqis. The NGO volunteers, although not at the same level as the NGO leader, were also fluent in English. I legitimated the NGO leader because she appeared to be working towards improving Iraqi society. The NGO Coordination Section staff and I invited the NGO leader to NGO meetings at the National Iraqi Assistance Center.

The NGO leader received funding from an international NGO during my deployment. After receiving funding, the NGO leader came to the NGO Coordination Section for assistance with the Ministry of Planning, as the NGO leader was having difficulty finalizing her Ministry of Planning registration. The registration was required to set up her NGO bank account. The NGO Coordination Section staff believed she was having difficulty with the Ministry due to her Christian background. After the NGO Coordination Section staff called the Ministry of Planning, the NGO leader was able to finalize her registration and set up her bank account. The NGO leader was persistent in getting her organization known by the Department of State. I facilitated a meeting between the NGO leader and the Department of State representative for women's affairs. The information provided during this meeting was exploited by the Department of State and used for a classified report on women's issues in Iraq. During my time in Iraq, this was the only time I coordinated an individual meeting with the Department of State for an NGO leader.

Whenever she had the opportunity, the NGO leader discussed Christian issues whether it was during NGO meetings or during one on one conversations with me. Based on these discussions it appeared she focused more on Christian issues than women's issues. During one on one discussion with her I also learned she wanted to leave Iraq because she felt it was not safe for Christians. I believe the NGO leader focused on women's issues because she learned this was a major focus for the Coalition in improving Iraqi society and it could serve as her avenue to meet representatives from the Department of State and find an opportunity to leave Iraqi through a relationship with them.



#### Case Study #4 - Women's Shelter NGO

A fourth NGO, known as the women's shelter, was the only one of its type in the Green Zone. The purpose of the women's shelter was to assist battered women. The NGO Coordination Section staff informed me the NGO leader had been recruited to work for the Coalition as an interpreter during the initial part of the war. The NGO leader was educated, very fluent in English and dressed in business attire. He received NGO training at the NIAC and his was one of the first NGOs established in Baghdad after the war began. During 2003, the NGO leader was employed by the Department of State and worked for them throughout and beyond my time in Iraq. The NGO leader worked inside the U.S. Embassy located within the Green Zone. The NGO leader was very knowledgeable about Baghdad, the war and the work being done by the Coalition, Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and international NGOs. The NGO leader had established a working and personal relationship with representatives of the Coalition, Department of State, USAID and international NGOs who had worked or had served in Iraq. The women's shelter was established with funding provided by a civil affairs military commander during the beginning of the war. The NGO leader received funding from international NGOs to furnish the centers and received funding from the U.S. Embassy souvenir shop for day to day operations. The souvenir shop funding was provided at the discretion of a U.S. General's secretary. It is unknown how this NGO was selected for the funding. The NGO building was acquired by the NGO leader through the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). The NGO leader was one of the first NGOs to receive a building from the CPA. These buildings were formerly Saddam Hussein's regime buildings or private homes of his regime members. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs provided social workers to assist in the care of the women at the shelter. The NGO was registered at the NIAC NGO Coordination section as well as the Ministry of Planning.

The NGO leader immediately established a working relationship with the National Iraqi Assistance Center commander and me shortly after our arrival in Iraq. This NGO leader seldom

attended NGO meetings but was a frequent visitor to the NIAC and the NGO Coordination section. Soldiers and Iraqis of the NIAC knew him and appeared to respect him. The NGO leader was informative and frequently exchanged information with the NGO Coordination section staff and me regarding international NGO conferences and events throughout Baghdad and in surrounding areas.

The NGO leader knew that although he had the backing of his employer, the Department of State, he still needed to maintain a working relationship with the soldiers should any unexpected issue arise. Towards the end of my deployment, the Iraqi government was recovering buildings given to Iraqis by the Coalition Provisional Authority. The NGO leader, Ministry staff and women were evicted from both centers. The NGO leader was persistent in gaining the assistance and backing from several international NGOs and Department of State to retain the buildings but was unsuccessful. When the Iraqi Police were ready to evict the NGO leader, the Ministry staff and the women at the shelter, the NGO leader called the NIAC commander and me. The NIAC commander, other NIAC soldiers, NGO Coordination Section staff and I attempted to assist with no success. The NIAC commander believed the building would be acquired by the Iraqi government but wanted to ensure that the NGO leader, the Ministry staff or the women at the shelter were not arrested. Regardless of the Iraqi government's ability to acquire the buildings, the presence of the Coalition soldiers ensured no further action was taken against the NGO leader, the Ministry staff or the women at the shelter. The NGO leader was able to keep the furniture and all items in the buildings excluding the buildings themselves.

I legitimated the NGO because the NGO leader was providing what we, the Coalition, believed to be an important service to Iraqi society. Given the combat environment we were in, the sensitive nature of the women's shelter was bound to create issues for the NGO leader; the assistance to Iraqi women by a source outside of their own family is not viewed favorably by the family towards the women. The NGO leader's relationship with the NIAC was essential for his safety, his employment with the Department of State, and the NGO's funding from the Embassy

souvenir shop. The NGO leader maintained a good relationship with me as the NGO Coordinator because I was a part of the Coalition. As part of the Coalition, he knew we would provide him protection especially because of his employment with the Department of State. This NGO leader already had full access to the Green Zone due to his employment with the Department of State but he understood that if he maintained a good working relationship with me, his NGO would continue in good standing and he could continue to receive the souvenir shop funding.

As the NGO Coordinator, I did not have to provide protection for any other NGO leader or interfere with respect to their resources. I did enjoy talking to this NGO leader because he as an interesting person. He was taking Spanish classes at Baghdad University, was highly thought of by the Department of State representatives, traveled to the United States for Department of State conferences and had attended a soldier's wedding in the state of Tennessee.

#### Case Study #5 - Agriculture NGO

A westernized Iraqi gentleman created an NGO with the assistance of his daughter and an Iraqi lady who had studied agriculture in the United States. The NGO leader's goal was to develop farm land and growing produce which would help rebuild communities through agricultural jobs. The NGO leader worked closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Civil Affairs teams focused on agriculture. The NGO leader was regional and was trying to expand to other potential arable areas with the assistance of the Coalition, particularly through the assistance of the civil affairs agricultural team officer in charge. The NGO leader had knowledge of Iraq as a whole and was familiar with western culture. The NGO leader and the women of his staff wore western style business clothes. The women wore veils. Regardless of the use of veils, which indicated a strong tie to their Muslim beliefs and religion, the NGO leader and his staff did not appear to be restricted by cultural values, as the NGO leader openly relied on the women of his staff. He relied on his American educated NGO staff member due to her agricultural background and on his daughter as an interpreter

The NGO leader was first brought to my desk by an NGO Coordination Section staff member. The civil affairs agriculture team officer in charge was also present at the National Iraqi Assistance Center and started to talk to the Agriculture NGO leader as if he knew him. The officer in charge spent a couple of visits with me after this asking me questions about what I was doing with NGOs and explaining his relationship with the Agriculture NGO leader. I learned from the civil affairs agriculture team officer in charge that the Agriculture NGO leader was not seeking funds from the NGO Coordination section as other NGO leaders but rather other resources such as Coalition support and protection, as the NGO leader expanded his activities to other areas of Iraq.

During subsequent visits to the NIAC, the NGO leader and his entourage made it to my desk regardless of whether they had already met with the NGO Coordination Section staff. If the NIAC commander was available, he met with the NGO leader. Sometimes the NIAC commander's schedule did not allow for a meeting, but the NGO leader ensured he met with me regardless of the NIAC commander's availability. When the NGO leader and his entourage approached my desk, they were very formal in their greeting. I knew the NGO leader was expecting me to stop whatever I was doing and assist him or visit with him whenever he approached my desk. The civil affairs agriculture team officer in charge would eventually show up every time the NGO leader came to the NIAC. I was not aware of when these meetings were supposed to occur, but it was obviously coordinated. The officer in charge never asked me to be a hostess, but whenever the NGO leader and his staff showed up, the NGO Coordination Section staff and I ensured we hosted the NGO leader's visit. I was more accommodating to this NGO leader and his staff in comparison to others.

The Agriculture NGO leader was afforded legitimacy by the civil affairs agriculture team officer in charge who outranked me. This officer was also a long time friend of the NIAC commander who was another civil affairs officer. Both officers had served together for a number of years and knew each other well. Because of this, regardless of the NGO Coordination Section staff's recommendation or my own, the NGO was going to continue to be afforded legitimacy and

receive special attention from me. The NGO leader did not require to be legitimated by me as the NGO Coordinator, but the NGO leader was respectful, as he still had to show respect and be a team player if he was going to maintain the special status and relationship he had with the civil affairs agriculture team officer in charge.

#### Case Study #6 - Human Rights NGO

An Iraqi lawyer established a Human Rights NGO during the beginning of the war. The purpose of the NGO was to heal the wounds of the past caused by Saddam Hussein's regime. The NGO leader believed the wounds needed to be healed before Iraqis could be helped. This NGO's way of healing Iraq was to make it green again by planting a tree for every Iraqi lost under Saddam Hussein's regime. The NGO leader did not have a sense of urgency, as she believed healing could only occur over a long period of time. The NGO leader viewed the goal of her NGO as a long term project and commitment. The NGO leader was fluent in English and dressed in casual business attire without a veil. The NGO leader had very good communication skills, was confident and appeared very comfortable when speaking in front of a group. Based on the NGO leader's appearance, the manner in which she dressed and the manner in which she spoke of the Iraqi-American communities, I believed she was an Iraqi-American. The NGO leader was familiar with the damage done by Saddam Hussein's regime throughout Iraq. She was knowledgeable about Iraqi history, as well as the social and economic issues in Iraq. It was unknown where the NGO leader received training but the NGO leader was very familiar with other Human Rights NGOs in Baghdad. The NGO leader received funds from an international NGO located in the United States and Iraqi-American communities. According to the NGO leader, the Iraqi-American communities contributed to her funding because they also needed healing. During the NGO leader's visits to the National Iraqi Assistance Center, she made the NGO Coordination section staff and me aware that her organization needed additional funding.

The NGO leader appeared to know the right focus to get the attention of the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and international

NGOs: human rights. During my deployment, the Department of State created a team composed of representatives from the Department of State, USAID, international NGOs, and civil affairs soldiers to create or re-create the Department of State's focus and strategy to address human rights issues in Iraq. I was invited to be a part of these meetings, which gave me a special insight into how the organizations viewed human rights. The Iraqi Human Rights NGOs were legitimated by representatives from the Department of State, USAID and international NGOs due to the perceived difficulty of their work in a combat zone and the past abuses suffered by Iraqis under Saddam's regime.

I legitimated the NGO based on the NGO leader's Human Rights focus. This was an important topic in Iraq, and I believed the NGO leader would eventually receive additional funding. Although I believed her goal to be unrealistic and unattainable, if she did acquire funding, she could create jobs in different parts of Iraq, at least temporarily, which would help Iraqi society. She was invited to NGO meets at the National Iraqi Assistance Center and frequently attended them.

#### Case Study #7 - Women's Rights NGO

A few weeks before the end of my deployment, two young ladies came to the NGO Coordination section because they were interested in establishing an NGO with the purpose of increasing women's literacy and assisting women in learning a skill for employment. The two young ladies were seeking training, information, and funding. According to the NGO Coordination Section staff members, the two young ladies were educated. They dressed very casual with no veils, and appeared to be young college students. One of the young ladies had limited English skills. The NGO leader who could speak limited English did not hesitate to inform me that they wanted to start an NGO and work towards helping women. As the NGO Coordination Section staff members explained the training they could provide, both young ladies seemed very interested and eager. Although the two young ladies appeared to be very inexperienced in

establishing an organization, the NGO Coordination Section staff members seemed to have faith in their potential to be successful.

The NGO Coordination Section staff brought the inexperienced NGO leaders to my attention because they needed to be legitimated. I suspected the NGO Coordination Section staff members might have known these young ladies or they might have also been related to them based on their familiarity when talking with them. I also believed the NGO Coordination Section staff thought they would be successful because their desired focus was women's issues, which were an important issue for the Department of State and international NGOs. I legitimated the NGO leaders because they appeared to truly aspire to improve Iraqi society. They appeared to have the right focus based on the questions they asked. I ensured the young NGO leaders were invited to NGO meetings, had the necessary registration information and received the funding information which was available at that time.

#### Case Study #8 - Americanized NGO

The Americanized NGO leader was Iraqi but had lived in the United States for several years. The NGO leader spoke English very well. The NGO leader could easily pass for a well dressed State Department officer due to his American style business suits and well groomed appearance. The NGO leader's level of formal education or NGO training was unknown to me. According to the NGO Coordination section staff, the NGO leader was very familiar with the Coalition and NGO activities in Baghdad.

I met the NGO leader for the first time when he came to the National Iraqi Assistance Center to discuss and request assistance in finding funding for several projects. Upon his arrival to the NIAC for the meeting, I was introduced to him, but he was asked to wait. The NGO Coordination Section staff members and I were unavailable at the appointed time. This type of unavailability was a normal occurrence, as it was difficult to keep timely appointments given the challenges of entering the Green Zone, the difficulty of managing the sometimes unexpected influx of Iraqis into the NIAC, the unscheduled visits of new NGOs, the unexpected absences of

Iraqi staff members, mortar attacks or suicide bombers, etc. Although the NGO Coordination Section staff tried to maintain a schedule, aside from the cultural difference of time and the challenges presented above, we all understood and worked around these circumstances.

The NGO Coordination Section staff informed me the NGO leader was indignant and insulted that we would not stop all activities and meet with him at the appointed time. He indicated to the NGO Coordination Section staff members that he was not functioning under “Iraqi time” but rather “American time” and we should do the same. I was annoyed by his mannerisms and unrealistic expectations and somewhat embarrassed that he would act in this manner especially when he was trying to be “American.” The NGO leader’s indignant departure from the NIAC did not affect the manner in which I continued to manage my appointments and that of the NGO Coordination Section.

I was unaware of the NGO leader’s purpose for his organization, but I believed the NGO leader’s need for funding was legitimate. I did not legitimate the NGO leader. His behavior was unprofessional, and he was challenging my authority by telling my staff they lacked time management. According to the NGO Coordination Section staff members, they provided the NGO leader information in meetings with him outside of the Green Zone. Although the information was probably helpful to the NGO leader, he did not have the same access to international NGOs as he would have had at the NIAC with my legitimation.

#### Case Study #9 - Fallujah NGO

The Fallujah NGO provided humanitarian assistance, such as blankets, food, school supplies and other items as needed to individuals in Fallujah and the surrounding areas affected by the war. The NGO leader was Sunni and originally from Fallujah. The NGO leader had previously depended on the assistance of another organization, which was internationally known, to enter Fallujah. The other organization was entering Fallujah with the Coalition’s permission as a result of the convoy request process which had been created by the National Iraqi Assistance Center commander, another Coalition civil affairs officer, and me as the NGO Coordinator. This



process was created to screen NGOs entering Fallujah, as the Marines had previously experienced insurgents traveling in ambulances. The transportation and travel request process was a way to ensure NGOs were validated as trustworthy and did not present a threat to the Coalition soldiers and Marines. All NGOs were required to provide the names, dates, number and types of vehicles and the type of humanitarian assistance he or she was planning to take into Fallujah. The NGO leader had previously provided this information to the other organization, but when the NGO leader traveled with the other organization, the representative from that organization would leave the NGO leader outside of checkpoints. The other organization's representative would enter Fallujah with all of the humanitarian assistance items. The NGO leader did not like being left outside. He wanted to enter Fallujah and be recognized by his community as assisting.

During his initial visits to the NIAC, the NGO leader had met with the NGO Coordination Section staff. According to the NGO leader, the Iraqi staff members did not assist him. He continued to visit the NIAC and was eventually introduced to me by the American interpreter. According to the American interpreter, she believed the NGO Coordination Section staff, who were Shia, ignored the NGO leader's requests for assistance because he was Sunni and from Fallujah. The NGO leader assumed the same to be true. Through the assistance of the American interpreter, the NGO leader explained he did not require financial support but simply wanted access into Fallujah.

I legitimated the NGO leader and made the NGO Coordination Section staff aware of this. The information he provided for convoy requests into Fallujah was always accurate and could be confirmed with the checkpoints. The NGO leader also provided information such as pictures about Fallujah and pointed out buildings, businesses, and areas he believed needed humanitarian assistance. He was familiar with Fallujah and served as a conduit of information for the National Iraqi Assistance Center, the Coalition, representatives of the Department of State and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The NGO leader was very important to the medical effort by a Coalition medical unit going into Fallujah. Once the Coalition

medical unit was inside Fallujah, the NGO leader linked up with the medical unit and provided as many medical supplies as he could. The NGO leader appeared to be legitimately focused on taking care of the people in Fallujah regardless of what the Iraqi staff members or other non-Sunni thought of him. I invited him to NGO meetings and ensured we provided him the same updates we did to other NGO leaders.

I ensured the NGO Coordination Section staff understood that their lack of assistance to the NGO leader when he first came to the NIAC was unacceptable. Although the NGO Coordination Section staff worked with him after this, the interactions were awkward as it was obvious by their gestures and reactions that their working relationship with him and their acknowledgement of him were superficial. One of the NGO Coordination Section staff members assisted me when the American interpreter was unavailable. During these interactions, the NGO leader appeared annoyed with them. I did not understand Arabic, but it was evident their interaction was not as pleasant as it was with me or the American interpreter. The NGO leader and the Iraqi staff members never had a confrontation but it was evident cultural values and traditions were in play by the dislike they showed towards each other.

#### Case Study #10 – Regional NGO

The Regional NGO was a reputable organization in the Arab world. This organization provided humanitarian assistance to Iraqis in various parts of the country. During my deployment, the NGO representative in Baghdad was focused on providing assistance to Fallujah. The NGO representative was very flamboyant and fluent in his speaking and English writing. He wore a business suit and although invited to National Iraqi Assistance Center NGO meetings, he did not attend. He wanted to deal with the Coalition members and paid little attention to the Iraqi staff. The majority of his visits occurred in the evening, when local Iraqis had gone home for the day. This NGO representative was also not very liked by the Iraqi staff. They found his flamboyant behavior annoying. The other Coalition members in the National Iraqi Assistance Center did not appear to like interacting with him either.

According to the NIAC Director, my role was to ensure the NGO representative was treated respectfully and given full attention due to the Regional NGO Director's easy access to international media. The Regional NGO was not trusted by the Coalition soldiers at the military checkpoints leading into Fallujah because according to the soldiers, the ambulances utilized by the Regional NGO had been reported to have Freedom Fighters or insurgents and weapons. When the soldiers inspected the ambulances, the Freedom Fighters shot at the soldiers. The NGO leader, who was the NGO representatives' superior, was very verbal in his dislike of this mistrust. The NGO representative was tasked by him to address any concerns and provide the necessary information for humanitarian assistant convoys entering Fallujah.

The Regional NGO representative did not require legitimation from me as the NGO Coordinator. The NGO leader and representative were afforded legitimacy given their regional and international status and recognition. The NGO representative expected vetting for safe passage to Fallujah. I ensured his requests for passage into Fallujah were completed in a timely manner and personally visited the transportation coordination office to ensure there were no issues. I always stressed the importance of providing accurate information especially when he had last minute changes in his convoys. I believe the NGO representative provided true humanitarian assistance to Iraq but, I also believe, I had no choice but to assist him if we did not want an international incident. I ensured the NGO Coordination Section staff was aware of the NGO representative's visits but did not require them to be involved in the process of assisting him with convoy requests. I handled the NGO representative in this manner because I wanted to ensure the interactions were positive and did not cause problems for the Coalition.

#### Case Study #11 - Kurdish Doctor NGO

A National Iraqi Assistance Center Iraqi staff member established an NGO. The purpose of the NGO was to serve as an orphanage for boys. The orphanage provided food, shelter and education. According to the Iraqi NIAC staff member, who was also the NGO leader, he had a staff composed of all males and was located in a building outside of the Green Zone. The NGO

leader was the NIAC Medical Section Iraqi team leader. The NGO leader had worked with the Coalition at the NIAC for at least one Coalition rotation before my arrival in Iraq. The NGO leader was Kurdish, dressed in a business suit and had limited English skills. He behaved professionally and was not hesitant to communicate regardless of his language barrier. The NGO leader claimed to be a doctor. The Iraqi staff did not believe he was a doctor, but they believed he had a formal education. The NGO leader was well known by other Iraqi NGO leaders and political leaders who frequently attended political meetings at the Convention Center. The NGO leader was also well known by Kurdish Iraqis who came to the NIAC. The NGO leader sought funding information for the orphanage from the NGO Coordination Section staff and me. He frequently brought pictures of different events at the orphanage and claimed the orphanage was doing great things in helping boys. The NGO leader also attempted to attend NGO meetings and conferences at the NIAC.

The NGO Coordination Section staff did not trust the NGO leader, and alleged that NGO leader charged Iraqis for information when they came to the NIAC Medical Section. NGO Coordination Section staff and other section staff members believed the NGO leader kept these funds for personal use and also utilized the funds to support the activities of the orphanage. The NGO Coordination Section staff was suspicious of the NGO leader's activities because the orphanage pictures only showed men and young boys with no women staff members. The American interpreter informed me that previous Coalition members assigned to the NIAC had similar concerns with the NGO leader. NIAC staff members expressed their concerns to me as well as claimed to have witnessed the NGO leader charge Iraqis for information. NIAC staff members frequently expressed their concern and ridiculed the self-proclaimed doctor. Coalition members at the NIAC also ridiculed the self-proclaimed doctor and made jokes about the NGO leader's lack of medical knowledge. Although the NIAC staff did not trust him, the NGO leader was treated as part of the team. I believe he was included because the Iraqi staff members knew he was recognized by many, including the individuals affiliated with the political process in Iraq and they were not absolutely sure retribution would occur by him at some point. Additionally, the

same Iraqi staff members had expressed their concerns about the NGO leader to the past and current NIAC commander, which did not result in any type of disciplinary action.

The NGO leader, in accordance with the Iraqi perception of Americans, believed Americans were supportive of all youth activities and always sought the well being of children. I believe this was the reason why he thought I would provide him funding. The NGO leader's persistence was perceived by me as arrogance, as he believed I would eventually give in if he showed me pictures. I also believed he was arrogant based on the interactions I observed between the other staff members of the Medical Section and him.

The NIAC commander indicated he did not pursue the allegations of the NGO leader charging local Iraqis for information in his capacity as the NIAC Iraqi Medical Section team leader because he believed it would be difficult to prove. The NIAC commander ignored the allegations that the boy orphanage was a cover to utilize the boys for illegal or indentured slave activities. The NIAC commander did not acknowledge my requests to dismiss the doctor as he had dismissed other NIAC staff members for misconduct or believed misconduct. I believe the NIAC commander's inaction was also due to the NGO leader's political and social clout. Regardless of the NIAC commander's inaction, I did not legitimate the NGO leader's organization because of the concerns expressed. This prevented him from gaining funding information or being included in NGO meetings and conferences.

#### Case Study #12 - Art NGO

The Art NGO provided training for women in the areas of politics, democracy, art, crafts, computer training and anti-violence. The NGO's purpose was to educate Iraqi women to participate politically in society. The NGO was established by two individuals: an Iraqi male artist and a Syrian female who lived in Iraq. It was unknown to me where they worked, but their CV listed various training activities. According to the NGO leaders, this organization was grass roots and made up of volunteers. The NGO leaders were not interested in politics but rather in organizing women to be involved in the political process. The NGO leaders did not speak

English. It is unknown if they had a formal education, but they communicated very well and appeared focused in accomplishing their goals. Both dressed in western style business attire. The female did not wear a veil and wore pant suits. The NGO leaders were not well known among the politicians who attended political meetings and gatherings at the convention center but were familiar and involved with the art community in Baghdad. The NGO leaders sought training and funding from the NGO Coordination Section.

I legitimated the NGO leaders because they genuinely appeared to be working towards helping Iraqi society. The American interpreter and I coordinated the selling of their art at such places as the Department of State sponsored conferences, at the Coalition contracting office, at the U.S. Embassy souvenir shop, and other areas inside the Green Zone. The art selling exposed them and their cause to representatives of the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, international NGOs and fellow NGO leaders. The NGO leader were invited to attend the National Iraqi Assistance Center NGO meetings with the hopes of finding direct funding to support their activities, possibly partner with other NGO leaders, as well as attract more volunteers.

Although the NGO Coordination Section staff assisted the NGO leaders, their efforts did not appear as proactive and eager as their assistance to other NGO leaders. Members of the NGO Coordination Section staff made it clear to me that they did not like translating for the Art NGO leaders because they did not trust them. The NGO Coordination Section staff indicated there was mistrust because the female NGO leader was Syrian. One of the NGO Coordination Section staff members appeared annoyed whenever she observed the Art NGO founders arrive at the NIAC. During her interactions with them, she spoke primarily to the male and demonstrated a level of arrogance towards him. She seldom spoke or translated for the female.

I ensured the NGO Coordination Section staff was aware I did not like the manner in which they treated the female NGO leader. The American interpreter assisted as much as possible and appeared to enjoy the interaction with the Art NGO leaders. The American interpreter believed the NGO leaders were trustworthy and should not be treated differently

because one of them was foreign born. During their visits to the NIAC, I made time to meet with them to ensure the NGO Coordination Section staff provided them any new and useful information.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS

In this final chapter, I will answer the questions presented in the theory chapter, or Chapter II, of this thesis. When I first arrived in Baghdad, my title seemed self explanatory but the two words “NGO Coordinator” did not describe the different types of non-government organizations or the different type of coordination required to accomplish the mission of training and assisting individuals with legitimate goals with relevant funding information. I interacted with many individuals who had very different cultural and educational backgrounds, different beliefs of what Iraqi society needed during this time, different reasons for creating organizations to address these needs, and with individuals who had their own beliefs of how I needed to assist them.

In the following paragraphs I attempt to define the NGO Coordinator role with role theory and symbolic interactionist theory as explained in Chapter II by answering the following questions: (1) What behaviors were expected and who were the role senders expecting these behaviors?, (2) What kind of role conflicts did I experience and how did I resolve them?, (3) How did I resolve the role ambiguity experienced?, (4) How did I play my boundary role, and with which organizations was I playing the boundary role? (5) How did I define the situation as the NGO Coordinator and how did I construct and fit together my lines of action with the NGO leaders, the NGO Coordination Section staff members, and the American interpreter to accomplish the training, provide information and determine which NGO leaders I legitimated?

#### Role Expectations and Role Senders

There were several role senders in my role as the NGO Coordinator. The role senders were my superior officers, representatives from the support agencies, the NGO Coordination section staff members and the NGO leaders. The support agencies consisted of the Department



of State, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and international NGOs. The role senders had different expectations explained in the following paragraphs.

*Role Expectations from my Superior Officers*

As the NGO Coordinator, I was first and foremost a soldier who always had to be prepared in case of danger. My role as a soldier did not originate with the superior officers who I worked for in Baghdad but rather it is a role I was expected to fulfill since my commission as a United States Army officer in 1990. As a soldier I was expected to follow legal, ethical, and safe orders given to me by my superiors, be prepared to help or defend others, and be fair and humane.

In Iraq, I was a soldier assigned to the National Iraqi Assistance Center (NIAC) in the Baghdad Convention Center. The NIAC was a part of a larger entity which the United States military termed as the Coalition. In the role of a soldier at the NIAC, the expectations did not differ except for our location in a combat zone. Soldiers in a combat zone are expected to carry weapons at all times. In the case of the soldiers assigned to the NIAC, the weapon carried on a daily basis was a pistol. Although the soldiers in my unit were assigned two weapons, a rifle and a pistol, the rifle was stored and not visible to individuals visiting the NIAC. The reasoning for this was two-fold: there was little need to carry two weapons in a controlled and secured area as the NIAC and the smaller weapon did not get in the way when interacting with individuals in an office setting. This made it easy to distinguish National Iraqi Assistance Center soldiers from visiting soldiers, who carried a rifle and wore protective gear.

In the case of the Women's Shelter NGO, the NIAC commander had expectations of me as a soldier. The NIAC commander expected us to protect the NGO leader, his staff and the women of the shelter during the time when the Coalition Provisional Authority's (CPA) decided to retrieve building which were given to NGO leaders and other individuals during the beginning of the war. During the latter part of my deployment, the Iraqi government was recovering buildings given to Iraqis by the Coalition Provisional Authority. Although the Iraqi government was

functioning within their right, the eviction of the NGO leader, his staff and the women at the shelter was a concern to the National Iraqi Assistance Center commander. The NIAC commander ordered us to go to the NGOs location and ensure the eviction occurred without incident or arrests of the NGO leader, his staff or women of the shelter by the Iraqi Police. In this case, NIAC soldiers and I went to the Women's Shelter in full gear with both weapons. Fortunately, the Iraqi police were cooperative and allowed us to assist the NGO leader in removing his items from the buildings. The Iraqi police also allowed the staff and women who were in the shelter to depart without incident.

The NIAC commander expected me to inform him of problems, especially problems I was unable to resolve myself. In the case of the Iraqi Assistance Center outside of the Green Zone, I expressed my concerns to the NIAC commander regarding the NGO leader. Based on the information from other Iraqi staff members, the NGO leader who was also employed at the NIAC charged Iraqis for information and did not share NGO information with the Iraqi staff or me. The NIAC commander did not take any action against her, but I fulfilled my expectation of informing him of a problem.

Another expectation of me as the NGO Coordinator was to supervise the Iraqi staff of the NGO Coordination section. The Iraqi staff conducted Non-Government Organization (NGO) training and assisted me in facilitating NGO coordination meetings held at the National Iraqi Assistance Center. The NGO Coordination section staff kept me informed on the training they conducted. The training was provided on a need by need basis unlike the NGO meetings which occurred on a regular weekly schedule.

I was expected to facilitate coordination meetings with Iraqi NGO leaders and representatives from the supporting agencies, which included the Department of State, United States Agency for International Development, and international NGOs. The meetings were held twice a week with the translation assistance of the NGO Coordination section staff. The purpose of the meetings, in addition to coordination, included providing funding information from the support agencies to the Iraqi NGO leaders. I controlled the access of the Iraqi NGO leaders to

the meetings; I ensured NGO leaders who were working towards a legitimate goal were invited. I determined the legitimacy based on my own assessment after interacting with them as well as taking input from the NGO Coordination section into consideration.

The officer in charge of the civil affairs agriculture team was also my superior. This officer expected me to perform subordinate duties. In the example of the Agriculture NGO, the NGO leader came to the National Iraqi Assistance Center to meet with the officer in charge of the civil affairs agriculture team. While the NGO leader waited for the officer, the NGO leader met with me. I did not always have time to meet with the NGO leader but as a subordinate officer, I was expected to entertain the NGO leader and his entourage while they waited for the higher ranking officer.

#### *Role Expectations from the Support Agencies Representatives*

The support agencies I interacted with as the NGO Coordinator included the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and international Non-Government Organizations. Representatives of these agencies expected me to facilitate meetings at the National Iraqi Assistance Center as my predecessor had done. The support agencies' representatives expected me to inform them of the locations of the meetings, times of the meetings, provide translation support during the meetings, and ensure legitimate NGO leaders were present. They also expected me to share their funding information with the legitimate NGOs leaders and introduce them whenever the opportunity presented itself.

The support agency representatives sought legitimate NGO leaders who could help accomplish their agencies' goals. Representatives of these agencies also informed the NGO Coordination section staff and me of funding opportunities when they came to the National Iraqi Assistance Center and expected the information to be shared with legitimate NGO leaders.

In the case of the Christian NGO, I introduced the NGO leader to the Department of State's representative for Women's Affairs by the request of the NGO leader. Although the NGO leader frequently expressed her concerns regarding the troubles experienced by Iraqi Christians,

according to her, her NGO was focused on women's issues. After the introduction, the Department of State exploited the information the NGO leader provided regarding women's issues and used it for a classified report on women's issues in Iraq. The NGO leader received funding for her activities during my time in Iraq. I was unaware if the funding received was from the Department of State or another agency, but I believe her exposure to the Department of State representative helped her reach her funding goal. The Department of State representative was very appreciative of the connection to a legitimate NGO leader.

*Role Expectations from the NGO Coordination Section Staff*

NGO Coordination Section Iraqi staff made me aware of my role expectations as soon as I arrived in Iraq. They were the best source of information I had regarding the NGO activities of the soldiers previously assigned to the NIAC, the representatives of the support agencies, the NGO meetings and the assistance expected of me by Iraqi NGO leaders. Although many of them had been performing this job almost since the beginning of the war and had a very good understanding of what the job entailed, they knew I was their supervisor.

The staff expected me to resolve problems and provide them guidance regarding their job as the NGO Coordination section. In the case of the Iraqi Assistance Center outside of the Green Zone and the Kurdish doctor, the Iraqi staff informed me of their concerns regarding the actions of these NGO leaders. The concern was that the NGO leaders were charging Iraqis for information. The Iraqi staff believed this to be an unfair action and believed the only manner it would be resolved would be to bring it to their supervisor.

The NGO Coordination section Iraqi staff expected me to be fair and support democratic actions and appreciate attempts at American or western actions by Iraqis. One of the Iraqi staff members frequently had good ideas. When I did not agree with her ideas, she indicated to me I was not being democratic as the rest of the staff agreed with her. Another Iraqi staff member shared a novel he had read in one of his college English classes, talked about American movies and shared discussions he had with soldiers from one of his previous interpreter assignments

before he was employed at the National Iraqi Assistance Center. It was apparent the NGO Coordination section Iraqi staff more often brought NGO leaders to my desk who were dressed in west business attire. Additionally, most of the NGO leaders who were brought to my desk could communicate with me in English.

#### *Role Expectations from the Iraqi NGO Leaders*

The Iraqi NGO leaders expected me to provide funding information. I was expected to ensure the NGO leaders were aware of funding sources and the requirements to receive these funds. I ensured the funding information was communicated from the representatives of the support agencies during NGO meetings, during individual conversations with NGO leaders, and during individual conversations NGO leaders had with the NGO Coordination Section staff.

Another expectation of me by Iraqi NGO leaders was to legitimate their organization. The NGO leaders provided information regarding previously funded activities with the intent of showing me they had a successful organization. The NGO leaders also informed me of their goals which they believed to be in compliance with the supporting agencies current goals. The NGO leaders learned of the supporting agencies current goals during NGO meetings.

The NGO leaders also expected me to resolve issues. In the case of the Regional NGO, the NGO representative expected my assistance in processing and obtaining a convoy. The convoy requests were required as the Marines in Fallujah did not trust the members of this organization due to insurgents using ambulances with the Regional NGOs markings to pass through checkpoints. During the inspection of ambulances, the insurgents shot at Marines. Subsequent convoys were not allowed into Fallujah. The Regional NGO leader attracted international attention when he went to the international media to complain about the Marines stopping humanitarian assistance convoys into Fallujah. This created a sense of urgency among the Coalition to process the requests to ensure the Marines knew what type of humanitarian assistance was being transported, the number of vehicles in the convoy and the number of

individuals to include names. I spent a lot of time with the NGO representative assisting him after the Iraqi staff had gone home. I processed the convoy requests as needed.

### Challenges as the NGO Coordinator

As the NGO Coordinator, what kind of role conflicts did I experience and how did I resolve them? I experienced both intra-role and inter-role conflict. In the case of the Iraqi Assistance Center located outside of the Green Zone, I experienced inter-role conflict. The NGO Coordination section staff members informed me that the NGO leader, who was an employee of the National Iraqi Assistance Center, did not share information with the rest of the Iraqi staff. It was rumored she charged Iraqis for information, and she denied any connection with the Coalition during a regional NGO conference. The NGO Coordination section staff members expected me to resolve the issue of the perceived misbehavior of the NGO leader. I approached the NIAC commander with the concerns I had regarding the NGO leader, but he did not take any action against her. I believed the NIAC commander did not take any action against her because he knew some of the Coalition soldiers who had previously worked with her. The NGO leader had been employed by the NIAC since the beginning of the war. The soldiers who had previously worked with the NGO leader highly recommended the NGO leader and described her as a good worker, enthusiastic person, smart, aggressive, and proactive. The NIAC commander's lack of action indicated I was also supposed to take no action against this NGO leader as his subordinate, whether I agreed with his view or opinion of the NGO leader or not. I excluded the NGO leader from NGO meetings and funding information. In excluding the NGO leader from NGO meetings and funding information I was disobeying the NIAC commander and not performing in accordance to my role expectations of a soldier. I resolved the inter-role conflict based on my perception of sanctions. I chose to not disclose my disagreement of the NIAC commander's lack of action towards the NGO leader with him. I did this to avoid punishment I might receive by not following his lead. Not following his lead could be perceived as disobeying

an order. I also chose to not reveal my actions against the NGO leader as this could also be perceived as disobeying him.

In the case of the Kurdish doctor, I also experienced inter-role conflict as in the previous case study explained. According to Iraqi staff members, the Kurdish doctor was charging Iraqis for information when they came to the National Iraqi Assistance Center Medical Section. The Kurdish doctor had an NGO where he helped orphaned boys. The Iraqi staff found it odd the orphanage only had males working with the young boys and alluded to inappropriate behavior by the males at the orphanage. I informed the NIAC commander of these accusations but as in the case of the Iraqi Assistance Center outside of the Green Zone he took no action. I excluded the NGO leader from NGO meetings and funding information. I resolved my inter-role conflict based on my perception of sanctions. I chose to not disclose my disagreement of the NIAC commander's lack of action towards the Kurdish doctor with the NIAC commander. As in the case of the Iraqi Assistance Center outside of the Green Zone, I resolved my inter-role conflict in this manner to avoid punishment for not following my superior officer's lead. I also chose to not reveal my actions against the Kurdish doctor as this could also be perceived as disobeying the NIAC commander.

In the case of the Human Rights NGO, I experienced intra-role conflict because as the NGO Coordinator, I was expected to introduce legitimate NGO leaders to the representatives of the support agencies. During this time, the Department of State was very interested in Human Rights. The Human Rights NGO leader's intent was to help Iraqi society heal from the wounds of the past caused by Saddam Hussein's regime. The NGO leader believed the wounds needed to be healed before Iraqis could be helped. The NGO leader's way of healing Iraq was to make it green by planting trees. I did not want to legitimate the NGO leader because I believed the Human Rights NGO leader's goal of planting trees to heal the wounds of the Iraqis was a waste of time given so many other needs of Iraq at the time. Regardless of my belief, if the Department of State had funds for the NGO leader to meet their goal of improving Human Rights, I was expected to share the information with the NGO leader. I was also expected to introduce the

NGO leader to the Department of State representatives. I resolved this conflict by choosing to provide the information to the Department of State representative regardless of my doubts that planting trees would improve Human Rights in Iraq.

As the NGO Coordinator, I also experienced role ambiguity when I was unsure of the expected behaviors. How did I resolve the role ambiguity experienced? In the case of the Agriculture NGO, I experienced role ambiguity as the Agriculture NGO leader was not treated as an ordinary NGO leader. The NGO leader worked directly with a high ranking officer, he had previously traveled in military aircrafts across Iraq, and had a documented history of working with the military units deployed to Iraq before us. The first time I met the NGO leader, he was brought to my desk by an NGO Coordination Section staff member. The civil affairs agriculture team officer in charge was also present at the National Iraqi Assistance Center and started to talk to the Agriculture NGO as if he knew him. The role ambiguity I experienced was resolved by obtaining input from the civil affairs agriculture team officer in charge. After the NGO leader's initial visit, the officer in charge spent a couple of visits with me asking me questions about what I was doing with NGOs and explaining his relationship with the Agriculture NGO leader. I learned from the civil affairs agriculture team officer in charge that the Agriculture NGO leader was not seeking funds from the NGO Coordination section as other NGO leaders but rather other resources such as Coalition support and protection as the NGO leader expanded his activities to other areas of Iraq.

In the case of the Regional NGO, I also experienced role ambiguity because I was expected to treat the NGO representative very different than other NGO leaders. Additionally, any mishap with the NGO representative could create unwanted attention by the international media. As an inexperienced civil affairs officer, I was unsure how to avoid unwanted international media attention. I spent a lot of time with the NGO representative assisting him personally. My assistance to the NGO representative consisted of processing and obtaining convoy request for safe passage into Fallujah. This assistance occurred at the end of the day after all Iraqis went home from the NIAC. The NGO representative was very flamboyant, and the National Iraqi



Assistance Center Coalition staff and I did not like dealing him because of his need for special attention and his preference in scheduling meeting times. The NGO representative had a supervisor who was very involved in the success of humanitarian assistance items delivered into Fallujah after the incident with the Marines. The Marines in Fallujah did not trust the representatives of this organization due to insurgents using ambulances with the Regional NGOs markings to pass through checkpoints. During the inspection of ambulances, the insurgents shot at Marines. Subsequent convoys were not allowed into Fallujah. The Regional NGO leader attracted international attention when he went to the international media to complain about the Marines stopping humanitarian assistance convoys into Fallujah. This created a sense of urgency among the Coalition to process the requests to ensure the Marines knew what type of humanitarian assistance was being transported, the number of vehicles in the convoy and the number of individuals to include names. The NGO representative maintained his supervisor informed on the progress of my assistance to him. Although the NIAC commander was aware of the after hour visits and the potential international attention the NGO representative could create if he was unsatisfied with my assistance, I lacked guidance from him except to process the convoy requests. I resolved the role ambiguity by receiving input from the officer who I worked with on establishing the convoy request. He provided advice every time I processed a convoy request.

The NGO Coordinator role, as a boundary role, required me to interact with individuals outside of the National Iraqi Assistance Center and the NGO Coordination Section. How did I play my boundary role, and with which organizations was I playing the boundary role? The individuals I played a boundary role with were the Iraqi NGO leaders and representatives from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of State, and international NGOs. In the following paragraphs I answer the question regarding how I played my boundary role.

In the case of Iraqi NGO leaders, my role as the NGO Coordinator with the Regional NGO representative best represents a boundary role. In my role I had to represent and negotiate

with the Regional NGO representative. Regardless of my personal views of the Regional NGO representative's flamboyant behavior and special appointment time requirements, I had to behave professionally and be cooperative so as to not create an international media incident. I had to ensure the Regional NGO representative perceived and believed I was doing the best I could and working with a sense of urgency to process the convoy requests. There were instances he had incomplete lists of names. In these instances, I did not process the request until the information was complete. Although the NGO representative knew I had to process the convoy requests with a sense of urgency, I ensured he understood I would work with a sense of urgency as soon as I had all of the correct information. This is an example of the function of negotiation in a boundary role.

Another example of my boundary role as the NGO Coordinator with an Iraqi NGO leader is the case of the Fallujah NGO leader. I experienced issues of commitment with the Coalition when interacting with the NGO leader. I enjoyed working with the Fallujah NGO leader and ensured the convoy requests were processed separately from the Regional NGO representative's convoy requests. Although the Fallujah NGO leader was less likely to produce an international media incident, I took the time to assist him rather than negotiating with the Regional NGO representative to treat the Fallujah NGO fairly and ensure he received credit for providing humanitarian assistance to the people in Fallujah.

The United States Agency for International Development representative changed assignment during my time in Iraq. Upon his arrival, the new USAID representative was eager to learn who the different representatives from the support agencies were as well as what progress had been made in Iraq. I met the USAID representative when he came to the National Iraqi Assistance Center to meet me and the NGO Coordination Section staff. He invited me to a meeting, which I attended with one of my Iraqi staff members. During this meeting, he asked me to brief him and representatives of his staff and other support agencies on what I believed the needs of Iraqi society were based on my work with Iraqi NGOs. I explained my role, the role of the NGO Coordination Section, the National Iraqi Assistance Center, and the work of Iraqi NGO

leaders who came to the NIAC. As a representative of civil affairs and the Coalition, I had to be professional, cooperative and as informative as possible. As a result of this meeting, USAID representatives who were working on new initiatives or newly arrived in Iraq came to the NGO Coordination Section to receive information on Iraqi NGOs and the various projects these NGO leaders were seeking funding for. As the NGO Coordinator in a boundary role, I accrued power with this agency more than with other agencies. The NGO Coordination section at that time was viewed as a critical component of successful USAID missions in Iraq.

Upon my arrival in Iraq, one of the Department of State representatives introduced himself and offered assistance as I was learning my role as NGO Coordinator. He seldom attended NGO meetings at the National Iraqi Assistance Center and instead came to my desk and shared Department of State updates such as activities in other parts of Iraq, new initiatives, and new personnel changes. I also exchanged information with him and shared updates from NGO meetings, other Iraqi NGO leaders, the Coalition, the National Iraqi Assistance Center and information from other support agencies. This Department of State representative invited me to attend the Department of State Iraqi Human Rights Strategic Planning meeting. During the Human Rights meeting, I represented the Coalition and civil affairs. Attending these meetings gave me special insight into how the Department of State viewed and worked towards Human Rights in Iraq at that time. I shared as much information as I could. I was careful as to how I portrayed the Coalition and my views from the standpoint of being the NGO Coordinator. This boundary role experience caused some role ambiguity as I was inexperienced as a civil affairs officer. I resolved the boundary role ambiguity by ensuring I provided as accurate information as I could regarding my experience with Iraqi NGO leaders.

International NGO representatives had left Iraq due to security concerns during the summer prior to my arrival. During my time in Iraq, some returned. These international NGO representatives came to the NGO Coordination Section for updates regarding the NGO efforts in Iraq. They also provided information regarding their prior projects and working relationship with the Coalition. They shared information regarding new initiatives and opportunities for NGO

funding. I ensured I provided as much updated information to these representatives as possible. I also ensured the NGO Coordination Section staff and Iraqi NGO leaders were aware they had returned to Iraq. Interacting with representatives of international NGOs helped me accrue power. I had the power to share funding information at my discretion but instead was consistent and represented the Coalition in a professional manner as to not show favoritism with any of the international NGO or Iraqi NGO leaders.

### Accomplishing the Mission

In my role as the NGO Coordinator, I had to ensure the NGO Coordination Section staff members accomplished their mission of training and providing relevant information to legitimate NGO leaders. To accomplish this, I had to ensure they had the information needed, they knew which NGO leaders I legitimated, and I had to ensure they knew what types of problems they needed to bring to me. In the following paragraphs I will explain how I defined the situation as the NGO Coordinator and how I constructed and fit together my lines of action with the NGO Coordination Section staff members, the American interpreter and the Iraqi NGOs to accomplish my mission.

Before my arrival at the NGO Coordination Section, I defined the situation based on what I was trained to expect in a combat zone, what previously deployed soldiers told me about civil military operations in Baghdad, my knowledge of being a soldier, and my own personal experiences. Once I arrived at the National Iraqi Assistance Center (NIAC) I defined the situation based on the meanings I attributed to symbols I observed during my initial interactions. The symbols I observed were clothing, language, culture and gender.

### *Combat Zone*

The sense I felt as I came off the plane in Iraq at 3 A.M. was one I had not previously felt. The airfield was in a military compound. The surrounding area was built up and protected with barriers. I traveled with a handful of soldiers to four different airfields over two days before I

arrived in Baghdad. All of the compounds and areas I arrived at during this trip had the same type of barriers and appeared very protective.

The contingent of soldiers I traveled with were the last of the soldiers to arrive for this tour of civil affair soldiers. Because I was not a civil affairs soldier, the civil affairs decision makers were unsure where to place me. Rather than reassigning me or sending me to Iraq at a different time, the shortage in personnel caused them to be creative in the assignment and utilize everyone available.

I was assigned to the National Iraqi Assistance Center. The NIAC was located at the Baghdad Convention Center. The Convention Center was surrounded by cement barriers and individuals entering were screened physically and by a metal detector. As soldiers, we bypassed all of the screening. As we entered the Convention Center, Iraqis waiting in line always looked at us. I believe they wondered why they had to be screened to enter their Convention Center while we walked in so casually.

My work desk was located in an area away from the rest of the Iraqi staff. All of the soldiers assigned to the National Iraqi Assistance Center worked in this open area including the NIAC commander. As I entered the large room I realized we were sitting in a defense type position. Our desks all faced towards the middle of the large room with our backs to the walls. Except for one Iraqi staff member sitting at the entrance of the large room as a gate keeper, the rest of the Iraqi staff worked in different areas of the Convention Center away from the Coalition soldiers. I believe this set up was for two reasons: the Iraqis could help Iraqis without the intervention of the Coalition soldiers and also for our protection.

From the Iraqis' perspective, they were used to living in some level of fear or danger. They believed living outside of the Green Zone and working inside the Green Zone with the Coalition was dangerous. Their attitude appeared to be one of acceptance that danger was involved. They had lived in this environment since the beginning of the war and knew they could be accidentally involved in a shooting, killed by a bomb, or killed due to their employment with the Coalition. Previous to the war, some of them had lived in fear. The female Iraqi staff members

told stories of attending college at Baghdad University and being taken away by the men who worked for Saddam Hussein's sons. The Iraqi females claimed that if Saddam Hussein's sons spotted a girl at the university that they liked, they picked her up, raped her, and kept her as long as they wanted.

The Iraqi staff also knew that they could be accidentally hurt by Coalition troops. They heard stories from the Iraqi staff working in the National Iraqi Assistance Center's Compensation office about families being killed or homes destroyed. Regardless of these stories, the attitude continued as one of acceptance and "Enshala" or "god willing" we will stay safe. They also heard stories about soldiers intentionally hurting innocent Iraqis. The stories they told were graphic and believable. I felt obligated to defend the soldiers telling the Iraqis that not all soldiers were mature or culturally aware of how they were treating Iraqis. I also told them that many of us had limited experience with their custom, and traditions but I was sure their commanders were addressing the problems as best they could. I later learned that some of the Iraqi staff members were working with a civil affairs high ranking officer and creating cultural awareness training for soldiers as directed by one of the American Generals.

### *Clothing*

During my first few days in Baghdad, I observed hundreds of individuals coming in and out of the Convention Center. The Iraqi staff of the National Iraqi Assistance Center dressed differently than the rest of the Iraqis in the Convention Center. The NIAC Iraqi staff wore clothing which I consider casual or business casual in an American office environment. The Iraqi female staff members who wore a veil also wore casual business clothes even when the clothes included long sleeves and skirts. Other Iraqi females who came to the Convention Center dressed in a less affluent and traditional manner. They wore "abayas" which were long black dresses covering their arms and legs. They also wore a veil with the abaya whether it was black or a different color. The women who did not wear abayas wore a similar long dress and veil of more conservative colors. Compared to these women, the Iraqi female staff members wore much

brighter colors. I interpreted the female Iraqi staff choice of clothing as being less traditional and appropriate for an office environment.

As a soldier, I wore a military uniform which signified I was part of the invading force called the Coalition which was trying to help Iraq become a democratic nation. The soldiers of the NIAC, to include myself, had our name and rank clearly marked on our uniform. The wearing of the uniform identified us as the Coalition but more specifically identified us as American soldier. Iraqis understood that we, the Coalition, were committed to the mission we were assigned. During my interactions with the NGO Coordination section staff and the Iraqi NGO leaders, they came to understand that I was going to do the best job that I could.

An Iraqi-American contractor was assigned to the National Iraqi Assistance Center to work as an interpreter. She was part of the Coalition and worked with soldiers of the NIAC. She also wore a military uniform clearly marked with the word "Contractor." Based on my interactions with the American interpreter, the Iraqi staff understood she was considered "part of the team."

During the Christmas holiday celebration at the Convention Center, the NIAC soldiers and other soldiers attending were allowed to wear civilian clothes. Civil affair soldiers carried civilian clothing during deployments and military assignments. They were used to working with local civilians as they traveled to other countries for humanitarian assistance missions. I brought civilian clothing because it was listed in the deployment packing list but did not wear it during the celebration. Several other soldiers wore their uniform as I did. I believed it was important to attend the celebration, but I also believed it was important to wear my uniform. I believed that wearing the uniform helped me maintain my authority and distance especially as a female.

From the Iraqi's perspective, women who covered their arms and legs and wore veils were Muslim. They chose not to wear the abayas because they were less traditional and liked the western fashions. Women who didn't wear a veil simply chose not to wear it. Some of the NIAC Iraqi staff members who were Christian wore veils. According to them, they wore veils because they did not want to stand out as Christians. Another female Iraqi staff member

informed me that women who wore veils only removed them at home. This was the only time men were allowed to see their hair. The men were always family members.

### *Language and Culture*

The Iraqi staff members I interacted with during my initial days in Iraq all spoke English with an Iraqi accent. They used what I considered slang words such as “guys”, “jerk”, and “o.k.” In their manner of speaking to me, they seemed to be catering to me by using words they thought I would understand. They appeared to want me to believe they were one of us, a Coalition member, a part of the group, or “in the know.”

I was surprised by the fluency and speed in which the Iraqi staff members spoke English. According to the Iraqis, the smarter students in the Baghdad schools were taught English. The rest of the students also learned a foreign language but not by their choice or of their choice. I also learned that Iraqis with connections in Saddam Hussein’s government were able to study in Europe and the United States. A few of the Iraqi staff members claimed they learned English in school. Others learned English during their employment with the Coalition.

The American interpreter spoke English with an accent but regardless of her Iraqi accent, she spoke English in a more natural way without showing an effort to be “American.” She was Iraqi born but had lived in the U.S. for over 20 years. She was a middle aged blonde woman. As a Spanish speaker, I consider myself experienced in oral translations and believe I can make a fair assessment on the quality of oral translations. In observing the American interpreter during translations, I observed her comfort level in changing from one language to another, in this case Arabic and English. The translation seemed to flow smoothly. She was able to provide enough background information for me to understand the context of the subjects she was translating. Based on the interactions I had with Iraqis through her, it appeared by the flow of the conversation that she was also providing them enough information to understand my perspectives as well. Her translation skills led me to believe she was very familiar with both the Iraqi and American culture. I learned to rely on her for cultural explanations and advice. She



explained such things as greetings, the use of the hand over the heart, the traditional role of women, and the social changes in Iraq from her perspective over the years since the first Gulf War.

The Iraqi staff members also provided cultural information to me. Although we had several discussions regarding Iraqi customs and traditions, the Iraqi staff members did not ask me many American cultural questions except for questions about my complexion. To my surprise, the Iraqis behaved as if they had a very good understanding of the American culture. I explained my background, and they compared me to African Americans, meaning that I was American but part of a different ethnic group. The Iraqi staff members told me my complexion and features made me appear Iraqi. During the discussion we shared similarities of Spanish and Arabic words such as the Arabic word “Enshala” meaning God willing and the Spanish word “Ojala” meaning “hopefully” used with the same godly reference in the Mexican culture. Regardless of language and cultural similarities, I was viewed as an American. The Iraqis told me they assumed I was Christian. They assumed all Americans were Christian. This was a comment also made by others outside of the NIAC Iraqi staff.

### *Gender*

I knew women were not treated equally in Iraq. This was one of the cultural issues the military ensured we were aware of. I attended a women’s conference the third day I was in Iraq. There were hundreds of women present in the Convention Center’s auditorium. The issues discussed during the conference were women’s rights, problems experienced by widows, education, and employment. The audience was made up of primarily non-government organizations (NGOs) leaders and representatives. The tone of the conference was positive although I knew there a problem with addressing women issues in Iraq as there were armed guards at the entrance of every door. This indicated to me individual women present feared for their safety or the organizers of the conference believed the gathering of so many women could be in danger.

Based on the location of the armed guards, I chose to also be close to one of the entrances. The American interpreter and I sat at one of the main entrances. As the women entered, they looked at the American interpreter and me. At first they were confused and asked me in Arabic if I was the interpreter and the American interpreter was a soldier. The American interpreter politely informed them I was the soldier and she was my interpreter. At that point, they tended to ask her more questions about me and they told me I looked Iraqi. Every discussion was in Arabic, but before the interpreter informed what their questions were about I could tell by their body language they were somewhat amused with me or my presence.

The discussions in the conference were orderly, interesting and very informative. They gave me a good understanding of the status of women and the challenges they wanted to address. I was somewhat amazed at the number of women present who were dressed in business casual clothing, were educated and were taking this opportunity of the war as a chance to change the status of women. The appearance and demeanor of these women were much different than some of the other Iraqi women I had observed at the Convention Center who came in for assistance. They were much different also from the pictures of women which soldiers had shared with me before I came to Iraqi. The women at the conference, although some wore veils, walked confidently, looked straight into the eyes of the individuals they were talked with, and appeared to be very focused and passionate on what they were doing. My belief that women who wore veils were timid and submissive was proven wrong. The veil was a symbol of their religion, not necessarily their confidence and personality.

According to the Iraqi staff, Iraqi women were not treated equal to men especially in education. Many of the NIAC Iraqi female staff members were educated but they assured me this was unique to Baghdad but not the rest of Iraq.

The Iraqi staff explained why widows needed assistance. The years of war with Iran and the first Gulf War left many women without a husband. They were left to raise their children many times with limited help from family members. Divorce was a difficult thing. The government did

not always side with the women, especially if a male family member did not take responsibility for the female.

The Iraqi staff members were surprised, as they were with other female soldiers, that I was married and had left my children to come to Iraq. Several times I explained to them and to NGO leaders that I was a soldier by choice. I also explained that women, for the most part, were treated as equal to men in the United States.

One female Iraqi staff member told me that she had studied American history and the American women had just recently earned the right to vote. I was surprised she would say it was recent but she pointed out it was just the prior century. She indicated Iraqis were much more advanced as the new Iraqi constitution gave women the right to vote immediately.

#### *Interactions at the NGO Coordination Section*

During my first few days at the National Iraqi Assistance Center, the Iraqi staff members told me about themselves and about their jobs as the NGO Coordination section staff members. They explained their level of education, their ability to read and write in Arabic and English and their time employed by the Coalition as interpreters. They also explained how they had been given additional responsibilities and although their contract said they were interpreters they were much more than that. By their actions I also perceived they wanted to be viewed by me as experienced, intelligent and capable of doing their job.

The Iraqi staff also told me about my job. They wanted to ensure I defined their job as they did. They were employed by the Coalition and made more money than they previously did before the war. They needed assurance we could work together so they could maintain their employment. I listened to them as they shared information because I wanted to learn but I also wanted them to believe I was listening to how they wanted to do things. I wanted to be perceived as an understanding leader who was there to assist and continue the work of my predecessor rather than hamper progress. Although I understood my job, I was not sure which NGO leaders to legitimate. I learned to rely on the information provided by the NGO Coordination section staff,

the American interpreter and the information I gathered as a result of my interactions with the NGO leaders.

The Iraqi staff brought NGO leaders to my desk after they spoke to them in their office areas. This screening process was a line of action established by my predecessor. The NGO leaders brought to my desk spoke English or had their own interpreter with them. The NGO leaders were dressed in business attire, although not all of the females wore veils. The NGO leaders were educated and had very good communication skills. Because of the NGO leader's ability to communicate, I learned that most NGO leaders were seeking funding information, but the NGO leaders brought to my desk by the Iraqi staff might require additional or different assistance which the NGO Coordination section staff could not provide.

Some of the NGO leaders brought to my desk were successful before I arrived in Iraq. After I learned they were already established NGO leaders, I asked them why they came to the National Iraqi Assistance Center. I learned from the NGO leaders that some of them needed to be legitimated by me to receive or renew an ID card that would give them access to the Green Zone. This was the case for the Iraqi Assistance Center outside of the Green Zone and the Business Women NGO leader. Both NGO leaders had funding sources but required the access of the Green Zone.

In the case of the Iraqi Assistance Center outside of the Green Zone NGO leader, she already had access to the Green Zone due to her employment at the NIAC. The Iraqi staff had told me the NGO leader charged Iraqis for information and claimed she had no connection with the Coalition during a regional NGO conference. I expressed my concerns to the NIAC commander about the NGO leader. Although the NIAC commander took no action against her, I did not include the NGO leader in NGO meetings nor did I provide her funding information. Although the NGO leader had her own international NGO connections that could provide her funding information, the actions by me made her understand I did not like her actions the Iraqi staff members accused her of. My actions against the NGO leader also made the NGO

Coordination section staff understand that I took them seriously and that I did not tolerate untruthfulness.

In the case of the Business Women NGO, the NGO Coordination section staff brought her to my desk because they knew her background and believed she was a legitimate NGO leader. The NGO leader was able to speak to me in English and tell me about her organization. I assumed the NGO leader was seeking to be legitimated to receive funding information. During my interaction with the NGO leader I learned she had funding from a store inside the Green Zone. This NGO leader was not seeking funding but rather seeking to maintain her access to the Green Zone.

My definition of the situation was revised when the NGO leader attended a Department of State meeting, where I discovered she had a well established relationship with representatives from the Department of State. I understood NGO leaders were not always forthcoming with information. In this case, the NGO leader had key connections I was unaware of. During subsequent meetings and introductions with NGO leaders, I asked if they had any other connections with the support agencies such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of State or international NGOs.

The Kurdish NGO leader was employed at the NIAC. The NGO leader sought funding information. The Iraqi staff told me the Kurdish NGO leader in his capacity as the doctor in the Medical Section of the National Iraqi Assistance Center charged Iraqis for information. I brought this to the attention of the NIAC commander, but as in the case of the Iraqi Assistance Center outside of the Green Zone, he took no action. Regardless of the NIAC commander's inaction, I did not provide the NGO leader funding information, nor did I include him in NGO meetings. My actions once again followed the previous line of action in which I did not tolerate untruthfulness.

In the case of the Christian NGO leader, she required assistance from the NIAC to establish her NGO checking account. The Iraqi staff was able to contact the Ministry and assist her. The NGO leader also wanted to be introduced to the Department of State. I was able to introduce the NGO leader to the Department of State representative responsible for women's

affairs. I believe the Iraqi staff brought this NGO leader to me because the Iraqi staff knew women's issues were important to the Coalition and also because they thought I would be interested in meeting the NGO leader due to her passion for Christian issues.

In the case of the Women's Shelter NGO leader, the NGO leader required my legitimation to maintain a good standing with his employer, the Department of State. During my deployment, the NGO leader also required the assistance of the NIAC when he was being evicted from his NGO building. The NGO leader knew he would receive assistance from the NIAC because he knew women's issues were a priority for the Coalition. The Women's Shelter was the only one in the Green Zone and had successfully assisted battered women. The NGO leader did not follow the NGO Coordination section process of stopping in the Iraqi staff's office before coming to my desk. The NGO Coordination section staff understood he had a special status as an employee of Department of State. Although he was Iraqi, he was considered "part of the team" by the Iraqi staff. He did not require to be screened by the NGO Coordination section staff. Once again, my definition of the situation was redefined. I learned there were NGO leaders who had a special status and skipped the screening process established. I allowed this to continue to occur, as I believed that having the NGO leaders stop at the NGO Coordination section, without a need to would simply be wasting their time. The fitting together of this line of action between an NGO leader and me also occurred with the Agriculture NGO leader; he also had a special status and came straight to my desk.

The Agriculture NGO leader was brought to my desk by the NGO Coordination section staff. Although he met the NGO Coordination section staff first, it was with the purpose of having the Iraqi staff introduce him to me rather than screening him. In subsequent visits, the NGO leader came straight to my desk. The Agriculture NGO leader had a working relationship with the officer in charge of the civil affairs agriculture team. The Agriculture NGO leader did not seek funding information, but rather was seeking to expand his agriculture activities to other parts of Iraq. The NGO leader had a member on his NGO staff who had attended graduate school in the United States. His daughter served as his interpreter. Both women appeared to be key members

of his NGO staff, which indicated to me he valued them regardless of their gender. The NGO leader knew I was expected to host his entourage and him while he waited for the officer in charge of the civil affairs agriculture team to meet with him at the NIAC. Regardless of my subordinate role to the officer in charge, I did not perceive the Agriculture NGO leader treated me as such. The NGO leader knew I was going to entertain him and do what my superior officer expected me to do. During my interactions with him, he was respectful, polite and patient. I believe he saw and treated me as a Coalition soldier regardless of my gender.

In the case of the Human Rights NGO, the NGO leader had previously received funding and indicated she had been successfully working towards her goal. Her goal was to help Iraqis heal from the wounds created by Saddam Hussein's regime. She believed the healing needed to occur before the Iraqis could be helped in any other way. Her goal was to plant a tree for every individual killed by the regime. I believed the NGO leader's goal to be unattainable, but the NGO Coordination section staff brought her to me because they knew I was committed to the Coalition's mission. They understood human rights issues were important. The NGO leader was educated, spoke very good English and had previously received funding from Iraqi-American communities. I believed the NGO Coordination section staff brought her to my attention because they knew I would legitimate her and include her in NGO meetings.

The Women's Rights NGO leaders were a very different case. My definition of the situation was once again changed. In this case, the NGO leaders were very young women who did not speak very good English. They required the assistance of an interpreter and appeared to be very inexperienced. The Iraqi staff brought them to my attention because they saw potential in the young ladies. I had a difficult time legitimating the NGO leaders because of their youth and inexperience, but I believed them to be somewhat unrestrained due to the manner in which they dressed. They looked like American college students and did not wear veils. They seemed very positive. I had a difficult time believing their efforts would make an impact, but I chose to trust the recommendation of the Iraqi staff.

In the case of the Americanized NGO, regardless of the NGO leader's appearance, his ability to speak English and the purpose of his organization, I did not legitimize him. I called this NGO leader the Americanized NGO because he claimed to be from the United States. He looked like a Department of State official and carried himself in an arrogant manner. The Americanized NGO leader was insulted because I did not keep an appointment with him. My interaction with him was terminated because of this. The NGO leader defined the situation as one in which I would stop what I was doing and meet at the appointed time because that is the "American" way of doing things. I was insulted because I believed he was disrespectful in not understanding that the environment was a difficult one to keep schedules on time. Our lines of action did not fit together because I did not tolerate disrespect.

The NGO Coordination section staff members and the American interpreter learned I made the final decision on legitimation and what NGO leaders received funding information. Although I relied heavily on the recommendations of the NGO Coordination section staff members, they understood I was in charge. In the case of the Fallujah NGO and the Art NGO, my actions enforced this line of action.

In the case of the Art NGO leaders, the NGO Coordination staff did not bring them to my attention as they did other NGO leaders. Although the Iraqi staff and I had already fit together our lines of action as it pertained to legitimating NGO leaders, the Iraqi staff had to redefine the situation. The Art NGO leaders, although they dressed in a western style, they did not speak English and required an interpreter. Additionally, the female NGO leader was Syrian. In this case I learned the Iraqi staff did not like Syrians because they did not trust them. The Iraqi staff also learned they could send NGO leaders to my desk who required translation assistance, but if the American interpreter was unavailable, I expected the Iraqi staff to assist me. This change in the definition of the situation caused problems with the Iraqi staff. The Iraqi staff did not like helping the Art NGO leaders because of the female NGO leader's Syrian background. When the American interpreter was unavailable, the Iraqi staff was required to assist with the Art NGO leaders. The Iraqi staff member translating appeared annoyed and spoke to the male NGO



leader without addressing the female. I understood there was a problem and it was not due to gender. I ensured the Iraqi staff understood that everyone was supposed to be treated equally regardless of the Iraqi stereotypes.

The Iraqi staff behaved in a similar manner with the Fallujah NGO leader. The Fallujah NGO leader had visited the NIAC for assistance before I met him. The Iraqi staff did not assist him, but he was persistent in getting the help he wanted. The NGO leader continued to come to the NIAC until he met with me. The Fallujah NGO and the Regional NGO were providing much needed humanitarian assistance to the people in Fallujah. Due to security concerns, a convoy request process was established which required NGO information such as names, number of vehicles, and types of items being delivered into Fallujah. Upon arriving at the last checkpoint before entering Fallujah, the Regional NGO representative always made the Fallujah NGO leader wait outside of Fallujah. The Regional NGO representative would then enter Fallujah with all of the humanitarian assistance items. The Fallujah NGO leader wanted recognition from the people inside Fallujah and wanted to enter without the assistance of the Regional NGO. While talking with the Fallujah NGO leader for the first time, I learned the Iraqi staff had not assisted him during previous visits nor had they brought him to my attention. The Iraqi staff could claim they were following our line of action where they brought English speaking NGO leaders but instead they did not assist the Fallujah NGO leader because he was Sunni. The NIAC Iraqi staff was made up mostly of Shia who for centuries have been adversaries of the Sunni. After this incident, the Iraqi staff understood that they needed to assist the NGO leaders who were working towards improving Iraq not just those who they believed should be helped.

The Regional NGO representative also influenced my definition of the situation. I learned that my actions could affect the image of the Coalition through the international media. Representatives of the Regional NGO had been previously accused by soldiers of transporting insurgents into Fallujah in ambulances. The soldiers also claimed that when they opened the ambulances to be inspected, the insurgents shot at them. This caused the soldiers to stop one of the Regional NGO convoys into Fallujah, thus the creation of the convoy request process. When

the soldiers stopped one of the convoys, the Regional NGO Director contacted the international media. After the convoy request process was established, it allowed the Coalition and especially the soldiers the ability to coordinate the entrance of humanitarian assistance into Fallujah. I was expected to obtain all of the necessary information from the Regional NGO representative as accurately as I could to ensure the transportation of humanitarian assistance was successful. In this case, the NGO representative did not come to the NIAC during regular hours. I was not sure why this occurred, but I complied as necessary in fear he would claim we, as the Coalition, were uncooperative. I needed to ensure I was on my best and most professional behavior. I was successful in portraying the Coalition as cooperative. The Regional NGO Director sent me a personal email thanking me for my time and my efforts in helping his organization successfully help the people in Fallujah. I told the NIAC commander about the email and he had me forward it to him so that it could be reported up the chain of command in case the Regional NGO Director later claimed otherwise.

In the example of the Kurdish doctor, our lines of action did not fit together and the interaction, between the NGO leader and I, ended. The NGO leader had worked with the Coalition since the early part of the war. He understood the meaning given to the type of clothing he wore because he dressed in a business jacket with a tie. His English was very limited, but he did not use the help of an interpreter. I believe he did not utilize an interpreter because he wanted to be viewed as an educated English speaking individual. The interaction was frustrating for me due to the language barrier. At first, I was sympathetic to the NGO leader as I wanted to be fair and give all NGO leaders an opportunity to explain their goals. Regardless of the concerns brought to me by the Iraqi staff about the NGO leader, I spoke to the NGO leader and allowed him to tell me about his organization. During the meeting with the NGO leader, he told me he had an orphanage and needed financial assistance to keep the young boys in the orphanage. The NGO leader showed me pictures of the orphanage, and just as the Iraqi staff had informed me, there were no women in the pictures. I believed the NGO leader showed me pictures of the orphanage because many Iraqis believed Americans have a soft spot for children.

By showing me the pictures, I believe the NGO leader thought I would be more sympathetic to his cause of helping the young boys.

The NGO leader had observed me talking to young Iraqi people who came to the National Iraqi Assistance Center. It was well known among the NIAC staff there was a young boy who came to the NIAC with the need of a prosthetic device. When he came to the NIAC for assistance in coordinating his surgery through the NIAC medical section, he stopped by to speak with the American interpreter. Whenever I saw him talking to her, I greeted him and asked him how he was progressing. Everyone at the NIAC knew the young boy's story, including the doctor. The Iraqi staff also knew I enjoyed talking with him.

The NGO leader's pictures showed young boys between the ages of 6 to 16. The building in the picture was plain yet adequately furnished for Iraqi standards. There were adult men in many of the pictures. The men were in casual clothes, not the traditional Muslim clothing. The young boys were also dressed in casual clothes, not in traditional clothes. I asked the NGO leader who the adult males were and he indicated they were the NGO staff members who took care of the boys at the orphanage. After looking through the pictures, I handed them back to the NGO leader. He pushed the pictures back towards me as if he wanted me to keep them or at least keep looking at them. At this moment, I felt uncomfortable as the orphanage pictures verified the concerns of the Iraqi staff. Without revealing how uncomfortable I felt, I asked the NGO leader questions about the activities of the young boys, the previous funding, and what a regular day was like at the orphanage. The lack of interpreter made our communication difficult. I began to act frustrated, but to my surprise, he persistently continued to talk about the orphanage. I perceived his persistence as arrogance. I had previously observed his arrogant behavior during his interactions with the female Iraqi staff of the NIAC medical section. He expected the female Iraqi staff to do what he indicated even when he spoke to them in a disrespectful manner. Although I did not perceive the manner in which he was speaking to me disrespectful, he continued to speak as if I would eventually do as he wanted and provide him

funding information. I ended the conversation pretending I was busy and no longer had time to talk with him.

From the NGO leader's perspective, he believed that as an employee of the NIAC, he had more access to me than other NGO leaders. He believed he would gain funding information especially after having worked with the Coalition since the beginning of the war. The NGO leader was in good standing with the current NIAC commander and had a good working relationship with the previous NIAC commander. He had proven through his work at the NIAC that he was working towards the improvement of Iraqi society. He also believed he had a good reputation outside of the NIAC. During his employment with the NIAC, he had met several representatives from international NGOs who were focused on health issues. He also had the opportunity to work with representatives from the Department of State and the Ministry of Health. The interactions with the representative from the different support agencies gave him the opportunity to be familiar with the issues faced by Iraqi society.

Once the NGO leader understood I was responsible for vetting NGO leaders, he met with me. He was not aware of the concerns brought to me by the Iraqi staff member, but if he was aware, he more than likely disregarded them because he considered himself to be above the Iraqi staff. The NGO leader brought the information and pictures to me which he thought were necessary to convince me to help him. He tried to explain the purpose of his organization as best he could. He showed me the pictures and tried to answer my questions. He was not expecting me to be frustrated. He continued to be persistent until I ended the meeting.

The lines of action in this interaction did not fit together. The NGO leader was working towards improving Iraqi society and was previously funded to establish a non-government organization. He had access to the NIAC and had proven himself to the NIAC commanders as he was assigned as a section supervisor. Regardless of the NGO leader's behaviors and understanding of the symbols which were important to me as the NGO Coordinator, I ended the interaction because I did not believe the NGO leader was being truthful.

In the case of the Fallujah NGO leader, our lines of action did fit together. The Fallujah NGO leader had visited the NIAC for assistance. He followed the NIAC screening process and went to the NGO Coordination section. The Iraqi staff did not assist him. He came to the NIAC again and was told to speak with the American interpreter. The American interpreter brought the NGO leader to me and explained the situation which was occurring between the Fallujah NGO leader and the Regional NGO representative. I learned from the American interpreter that the Fallujah NGO leader and the Regional NGO representative were providing much needed humanitarian assistance to the people in Fallujah. The Regional NGO representative was following the convoy request process and included the Fallujah NGO leader's information. Once the humanitarian assistance reached the Fallujah checkpoints, the Regional NGO representative always made the Fallujah NGO leader wait outside of Fallujah. The Regional NGO representative would then enter Fallujah with all of the humanitarian assistance items. The Fallujah NGO leader wanted recognition from the people inside Fallujah and wanted to enter without the assistance of the Regional NGO.

The Fallujah NGO leader was very respectful during this interaction. The NGO leader waited for the American interpreter and me to finish our conversation. He also waited until the American interpreter was done talking before he added any additional information. He appeared to communicate directly and provided a lot of information to the American interpreter. During this first interaction, I ensured the NGO leader understood I would process the convoy request if he provided all of the necessary information. He indicated he understood and returned at a later date.

During the following visit to the NIAC, the NGO leader provided the necessary information for the convoy request. Although I trusted the NGO leader was going to travel into Fallujah according to the convoy request, I contacted soldiers at the checkpoints leading towards Fallujah to ensure they had the NGO leader's information. I also contacted them to ensure the NGO leader was traveling with the number of vehicles and individuals he indicated on the convoy

request. I was able to confirm that the NGO leader did not deviate from the information he provided on the convoy request.

On another occasion, the NGO leader indicated he had medical supplies he wanted to take into Fallujah. During his previous visit, he had visited an Army medical unit inside Fallujah. The officer, responsible for the medical unit, had informed the NGO leader of the type of medical supplies needed in Fallujah. The NGO leader showed me pictures of the officer and the building where the Army medical unit was located. Weeks later, the medical officer visited the NIAC and I was able to share the pictures provided by the NGO leader. The officer indicated the interaction with the NGO leader was very positive.

The NGO leader and I needed the assistance of the American interpreter to communicate. The NGO leader and I attempted to communicate several times while waiting for the American interpreter but we were unsuccessful as he did not speak English and I did not speak Arabic aside from a few phrases and words. We were only able to greet each other. During these limited interactions without the American interpreter, the NGO leader was still respectful and polite.

From the NGO leader's perspective, he had learned the Coalition members at the NIAC were helpful. He had been ignored by the NGO Coordination section staff but he was persistent because he knew he would eventually get to a Coalition member. He knew the Iraqi staff was not willing to assist him because he was Sunni and the staff was Shia. He informed the American interpreter of this concern. The American interpreter had also arrived at the same conclusion. The NGO leader understood from the American interpreter that I would assist him regardless of the language barrier and regardless of him being Sunni. The NGO leader attended NGO meetings and was aware the Iraqis made comments about him for being Sunni. He knew that regardless of their views on him being Sunni, I, as the Coalition, thought he needed to be present. He also believed I would expect respect from the other NGO leaders towards him.

The NGO leader believed I, as a member of the Coalition, would assist him because he understood Americans wanted to be fair and equal. He had a friend in the United States with

which he corresponded through email. His Arabic speaking American female friend had attended school in Iraq years before the war started. The NGO leader believed I would have a hard time believing he had an American female friend, so he showed one of the emails to the American interpreter and me. The email appeared to be legitimate.

Regardless of the inability to communicate without the assistance of an interpreter, the lines of action fit together in the case of the Fallujah NGO leader. The NGO leader was working towards improving Iraqi society. He did not require funding information or continued access to the Green Zone as other NGO leaders. He was not trusted by the NGO Coordination section staff members. I continued the interactions with the NGO leader because I believed he was trustworthy. The information he provided was true and although I never knew his political views or his thoughts regarding the Coalition's presence in Fallujah, he was respectful and did everything he needed to do to gain the access he needed to assist the people of Fallujah.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that soldiers are not fully aware of the impact their own meanings of symbols and actions during individual interactions can have on military missions. In the current manner of fighting wars, any soldier may be required to interact with local nationals regardless of age, rank, or gender. Soldiers who have limited or no experience with different cultures may also be required to interact with local nationals. Soldiers must have cultural awareness and understanding to accomplish their mission. Soldiers give meaning to symbols. The meanings given to symbols impact soldiers' interactions with individuals outside of the military.

The military leaders must continue to train soldiers to be culturally aware and knowledgeable. In addition to soldiers' different backgrounds, the challenge of training soldiers has increased as soldiers might have multiple deployments which have altered the meaning of symbols. Soldiers with one deployment give meaning to symbols differently than soldiers with several deployments. Soldiers also have different combat experiences and different types of interactions with local nationals which influence their meaning of symbols.

Additionally, technological changes and the speed at which information is available create a more challenging environment for leaders in the military. Military leaders must adjust the cultural awareness training and provide the most recent information for soldiers. The positive effect of the technological changes and speed at which information is available is the potential to define the situation more accurately before entering a setting.

Another example of a cultural challenge is trust. Iraqis did not trust soldiers after the reports of disrespect. Lack of trust was also experienced by soldiers. I experienced trust issues as the NGO Coordinator. Trust is a theme which was revealed throughout the case studies in



Chapter IV. I experienced a feeling of mistrust with the Kurdish NGO leader. I believed he was not being truthful about the orphanage but it was difficult to define why I felt this way. I imagined the NGO leader was hurting the boys in the orphanage rather than helping them. I did not have proof he was hurting the boys but the lack of females in the pictures of the orphanage caused concern and thus created a feeling of mistrust. I experienced trust with the Fallujah NGO leader. I was able to verify the information provided by the Fallujah NGO leader, but I trusted him before this occurred. Again, this was initially a feeling which I later rationalized.

Finally, the feeling of trust or mistrust needs to be further studied. As the NGO Coordinator the issue of trust was central in my ability to work effectively with the Iraqi staff and the Iraqi NGO leaders. The feeling of trust in the interactions I experienced made the line of action fit together. In the interactions where there was a lack of trust, the lines of action did not fit together, regardless of the presence of symbols such as the ability to speak English or the westernized professional appearance. Soldiers must be able to identify the feeling of trust quickly, especially in a combat situation for interactions to successfully exist.

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