

Army Plays Key Role In Developing Iraqi Free Market Economy

Iraqi Business Center Prepares Iraqi Citizens To Take Advantage Of Economic Opportunities

(NAPSA)—As the cloud of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship has been lifted from the face of Iraq, Iraqi citizens are gradually adjusting to life in a free and democratic society, complete with personal freedoms and new economic opportunities.

American soldiers are helping this transition in several areas, such as reconstruction of local villages, rehabilitation of the educational system and implementation of modern technological advances. Specifically, U.S. Army soldiers, relying on their Army training and civilian careers, are well positioned to help lead this effort, based on their previous mission experience in Bosnia/Kosovo as a part of Task Force Falcon and in Panama as a part of Operation Just Cause.

Soldiers, primarily from the Army Reserve, are helping Iraqi citizens transition to a free-market economy in which business opportunity and entrepreneurship thrive. In the post-Saddam era, there are numerous business opportunities for Iraqi citizens, including reconstruction projects, foreign investments and subcontracting opportunities. Currently, the majority of opportunities lie with the United States Army, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and state-owned ministries and enterprises.

To aid this effort, Army Reserve soldiers are using their unique background, of both Army training and civilian careers, to work with local Iraqi citizens to help develop working business relationships and succeed in this post-Saddam era. Army Reserve Civil Affairs soldiers, who serve as both warriors and diplomats, are a key factor in this economic transition,



The U.S. Army is playing a vital role in the Iraqi transition to a free-market economy.

interacting with local civilians and building lasting relationships with Iraqis.

One such soldier is Army Reserve Sgt. Glenn Corliss, a member of the 353rd Civil Affairs Brigade, who left his job as a private equity analyst on Wall Street after September 11th to join the Army to help the economic development of Iraq. During his 15-month deployment, Corliss worked as an economic advisor to the Iraq Ministry of Industry and Minerals (MIM), where he supported the reorganization of the Oil-for-Food program and coordinated long-term private sector investments for MIM businesses. Despite inherent obstacles in the transition to a free-market economy, Corliss believes that significant progress is being made that will help Iraq establish itself as an economic power in the region.

"Rebuilding the Iraqi economy after 30 years of dictatorship is a long, difficult process," he says. "But we're making great strides and moving in the right direction."

In addition to his work at the

MIM, Corliss served as an advisor at the Iraqi Business Centers (IBC) in Baghdad, which is a network of business centers throughout Iraq designed to help build alliances between Iraqi companies and international investments. These business centers, located in major Iraqi economic hubs of Baghdad, Kirkuk, Basrah and Nineveh, assist Iraqi citizens interested in exploring private-sector trade and teach them how to market themselves to potential business partners while also providing a database of qualified Iraqi companies seeking subcontracting work for reconstruction jobs. These business centers are a key element in the foundation of Iraq's future success in the international business community.

At the Baghdad Business Center, Corliss served as an economic advisor for the rehabilitation of Iraq's educational system, working specifically on a needs assessment plan for Iraqi universities with a resulting \$2 million in materials raised to help repair and modernize Iraqi schools. Additionally, while at the Baghdad Business Center, Corliss developed and launched an entrepreneurship training program that will teach more than 5,000 Iraqi citizens how to start their own businesses, further continuing the advance of the free-market economy in Iraq.

"We've had some wonderful successes, rebuilding educational initiatives and both small and large businesses," continued Corliss. "Iraqis are really starting to embrace their freedom and are realizing the enormous opportunities of a free economy."

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