

Early Regime Collapse

During the planning phase to begin the war in Iraq, the planners (eggheads) at Central Command (CENTCOM) developed several courses of action that the Coalition Forces could encounter. I don't remember all of them in detail, but most of them covered different nuances of how the Iraqi Army would fight us.

Fairly late in the planning process, a new course of action appeared. We were initially told that there was a remote chance that the entire Iraqi regime could collapse as soon as the invasion was underway. This "remote" course of action was called Early Regime Collapse (ERC). At first, we just reviewed our plans to ensure that we could account for massive amounts of prisoners if the Iraqi Army surrendered en masse.

Then the Army began issuing cards and handouts describing the procedures for organizing Iraqi infantry or tank battalion after they surrendered. We began developing our own courses of action that were predicated upon the Iraqi Army giving up. Before long, ERC became the de facto plan for the invasion of Iraq. I'm sure that there were exceptions, and most of the squads and platoons were ready to fight. At the higher level of brigades and divisions though, the Iraqi Army had all but surrendered before we even crossed the berm. I actually felt a little disappointed that the war was over...and I was still in Kuwait. War was a total bummer.

Once the invasion was underway, we didn't get into any huge firefights right away. But we didn't take any prisoners either. We saw lots of military aged males who were in civilian clothes, but no uniforms. What we would soon realize is that the Iraqi Regime wouldn't collapse like the CENTCOM planners thought. And they didn't fight us the way we thought they would. The fights in Nasiriyah and Hillah were indicators of things to come.

Why is any of this important? The simple mistake made during pre-invasion planning was developing a plan (a course of action) that centered on how the enemy would react. Leaders within the law enforcement community, specifically trainers, should heed the lesson here. In a violent struggle between men, there isn't a reliable way to predict the behavior of your assailant.

Think of how you currently train to deal with violent assault. Not how you think, or plan. How do you **train**? Do you train to read, assess, and act? To observe, orient, decide, then act? Or do you talk about the OODA loop, then train to fire a certain number of rounds at a paper target from a pre-determined distance from a static

position during daylight hours? If you think a gunfight unfolds like a choreographed Kabuki theater, you're setting yourself up for an expectation shortfall. You will be surprised and possibly killed because your attacker did not stand still and act like a paper target.

Do you train to confront active shooters? How did you develop your tactics? Do you believe that the "profile" of an active shooter or terrorist will determine how they react to law enforcement? Do you train your officers to solve tactical problems, or do you teach them techniques that they *will* use.

For years, teaching tactics ad nauseum from the latest "expert" was the norm. It's time to break from choreography and begin teaching principles-based realistic training. Law enforcement officers don't need to be taught what to think about a situation, they need to be taught how to think tactically and solve problems.

Don't be guilty of planning for Early Regime Collapse. There aren't any guarantees during a violent encounter. Jedburgh has developed the most innovative training programs available anywhere. Based on years of personal combat experience by Special Forces, our firearms training is firmly grounded in the realities of modern gunfighting.

Scott Watson
President, Jedburgh Corp
Scott.Watson@Jedburgh-USA.com

