

# LOOKING THE OTHER WAY

**Situation:** A senior field grade officer, well respected and recently promised a command, was deployed to Iraq to assist in working with contractors charged with training the Iraqi army. It was during the early stages of the war, when more and more Americans were questioning reconstruction efforts, corruption amongst the Iraqi police, and the allegations involving the misallocations of American funding to the large number of contracting companies. Furthermore, nobody was quite sure of the dynamics involving the relationship between contractors and the military i.e. did they fall under our chain of command?

After some months, LTC V (the senior officer) noted discrepancies in accounting on the transfer of small arms and money going to the contractors and the Iraqis: there seemed to be little, if any, oversight on who received the small arms and how the Iraqis and the contractors were spending the enormous amounts of money. Additionally, LTC V noticed some contractors were not following prescribed guidelines in training the Iraqi police. LTC V surfaced his findings to his immediate superior Colonel Keith and explained no system existed to track money being spent. LTC V further explained the new Iraqi police were not ready to operate on their own and that the contractors received thousands of dollars of funding with no way to identify how it was being spent. Colonel Keith informed LTC V he would look into the matter but not to surface the concerns to anybody else because the issue could cause extreme embarrassment to the Army and Iraqi police.

A few weeks later, Colonel Keith did not get back to LTC V and seemed to be avoiding him. The situation with the unaccounted for weapons and money had not changed, in fact, it had worsened. One night, LTC V went to Colonel Keith's office and asked him if he had arrived at a solution to remedy the situation. Colonel Keith exploded. He loudly informed LTC V he should stay in his lane, not concern himself with how money was being spent by the contractors, and not concern himself with where and to who the small arms were being directed. The contractors not being properly trained or ready to help stand up the Iraqi army was also not in LTC V's lane. Colonel Keith ended the one-way conversation by telling LTC V as far as he was concerned, the matter was a non-issue. At that point, LTC V informed Colonel Keith he intended to report the allegations of payoffs, incapacity of the contractors to accomplish the mission and lack of oversight regarding the distribution of small arms to the Iraqis up the chain of command and to the Inspector General, if needed.

On paper, LTC V's efforts were paying results: Iraqi police were graduating, the contractors were still in country, and money was flowing. The problem was LTC V understood the police were not meeting the requirements to serve. Nobody seemed to control what the contracts did or how they operated (did they fall under UCMJ?), and no one could account for the distribution of arms and money. What should LTC V do in this situation and at what risk?

## REFLECTION...

LTC V could have said nothing and re-deployed with his career intact. Instead, he spoke up and rankled the chain of command at a time when any further bad press regarding operations in Iraq might prove to be embarrassing. Within a week, LTC V was relieved of his duties and sent home. LTC V's career was over. Col. Keith finished his tour in Iraq and remained in uniform. However, the allegations made their way into the mainstream press. The training of the Iraqi police was altered, questionable contractors were forced out of the country, and it was discovered the lack of accountability regarding the distribution of small arms created a climate where they found themselves in Turkey and among the Iraqi populace. All of this was reported by a major media outlet in America.

The role of the major participant in the scenario: LTC V: In charge of overseeing the training and standing up of the Iraqi police. Col. Keith: LTC V's superior.

Ethical dilemma at the time of the incident: LTC V placed his loyalty to the Army and country over his own career progression: he saw what appeared to be a cover-up and risked his career in reporting his suspicions.

Rules/Laws that apply: UCMJ and Oath of Office: I, \_\_\_\_\_ (SSAN), having been appointed an officer in the Army of the United States, as indicated above in the grade of \_\_\_\_\_ do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservations or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter; So help me God." (DA Form 71, 1 August 1959, for officers.)

At what point did you say "Enough Is Enough"? When and how did you take action? LTC V, in researching the transfer of money and lack of oversight regarding the contractors, training requirements and transport of weapons decided to take action. He notified his superior officer but was met with an unsympathetic ear.

Conflict or tension of the 7 Army Values? How did you resolve those conflicts? Loyalty to country overruled loyalty to the chain of command. In LTC V's eyes what was happening was wrong. LTC V was more interested in protecting his integrity and the honor of the institution in which he served (the Army) then he was with his own career progression.

Consideration of Other COAs and the 2nd And 3rd order effects: Had LTC V gone forward with his accusations, then the "progress" in training the Iraqis might have changed. It was no secret the Iraqi people did not trust their own police and instead relied on the Iraqi and American Army. The people saw the Iraqi police as corrupt. The relationship with the contractors might have ended which could have interrupted the training. However, a new contract with a different company could have been established. The unaccounted for weapons remained unaccounted for until they started finding their way on the Iraqi streets.

How did you get the courage to take the "harder right? Understanding the charge of an Army officer and placing faith in the system that things would right themselves.