Creating Shortages of Human Assets

The most valuable resources of any organization are, without a doubt, its human resources. Even the most well-designed and well-funded organization cannot properly function without the proper types of people in proper quantities. Put simply, unless a militant group can, for the purposes of fighting or operating equipment, either recruit people themselves or outsource people from private companies, all combat operations will stop. The organization must have not only the proper number of people but they must also have the proper skill sets to perform necessary functions with enough quality to ensure that their efforts are useful to the mission. In contrast, a force that has skilled individuals dedicated to a cause, in having few supplies will find resourceful methods to continue to defend their cause. Mercenaries fighting for the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, though with little capital with which to acquire combat supplies, have proven to be very resourceful in their strategies by using cheap, common supplies. Their ability to turn even broken objects and refuse into devastating weaponry such as IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices) and EFPs ( Explosively Formed Penetrators) is evidence of a great level of skill and resourcefulness among combatants that have little besides skill and resourcefulness with which to fight. Like other forms of resources, the availability of human resources can be manipulated by altering the conditions of the labor market. The exact impact that this will have and the approach that must be taken to accomplish this depends greatly on which sector of the labor market one targets.

The labor market is broken up into divisions of skill level. Skilled labor includes jobs that take highly specialized knowledge or ability. This can include computer programmers, medical professionals, engineers, and other positions that require extended training. It also includes some very experienced masons, welders, farmers, and similar
trade skills after reaching the level of a master craftsman in their trade. Unskilled workers may have a great amount of ability and experience but the job that they perform does not necessarily require specialized knowledge. These jobs may include cashiers, janitorial, basic assembly line manufacturing, farm labor, and other such positions that can be learned in a matter of days or weeks. Semi-skilled workers are somewhere in the middle and include many jobs in construction, laboratories, office jobs, and a variety of assistance positions. The primary variation between these categories of positions is the amount of critical thinking and adaptive application of knowledge and skill that is used on a daily basis.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (http://hdr.undp.org), in a traditional job market people are typically categorized into the various levels of skill requirements in their job based primarily on their level of formal education. Unskilled and semi-skilled positions are composed primarily with people who have either no formal education, have completed primary school (including everything before a high school education), or have an incomplete secondary education. Skilled positions are filled primarily by those who have completed a postsecondary education at some college or university. Skilled rural and skilled public sector jobs attract a vast minority of people at all skill levels by nature of there being a smaller supply of these positions compared to the other labor sectors, giving way to the potential to alter the proportions. To interpret the data in another way, this means that as individuals gradually achieve higher levels of education, they will also have gradually higher probability of obtaining a skilled position rather than an unskilled or semi-skilled position. This is important in knowing exactly how to target different skill sectors of the labor economy as well as the impact that alterations in each skill sector will have.

For example, one who paves cement to make a road is considered an unskilled worker. Though their job may take a considerable amount of ability to be done correctly and in a timely manner, the processes by which the job is completed are very basic and one’s lifetime is spent not in learning a great number of complexities but, rather, achieving a high level of accuracy and speed in only a few basic operations. In contrast, the individual who formulates and prepares the concrete is considered semi-skilled. Though the actual act of mixing the ingredients of the concrete does not take a great amount of skill, this individual must continue to stay informed about the possible formulations and compositions of an aggregate, perhaps working to develop their own using research into the properties of various minerals. Finally,