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INTERVIEW #26

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Executive Summary

This interviewee was the team leader for Baghdad ePRT-2, one of the first 10 ePRTs, from April, 2007 – April, 2008. His team consisted of the leader, the deputy, one civil affairs officer, one bilingual-bicultural advisor (BBA) and five development specialists (one each in industry, governance, business development, economic development and city management). The environment in which the ePRT operated was relatively permissive, within the context of an on-going conflict, requiring military convoys for movement. The ePRT members were extremely busy, working 7 days a week; they were able to travel regularly to the three political districts for which they were responsible, attending district council meetings, meeting with NGOs, and supervising projects. The threat they faced was characterized as primarily coming from indirect fire from rogue elements of the Mahdi Army.

The interviewee describes the relationships with the military brigade as quite cordial. The ePRT, though only one of about eight units within the Effects Cell (the others including the public affairs, civil affairs, and anthropology units), was a very welcome addition to the brigade. Because of its novelty and because of the changeover of military personnel, the team leader did need to re-brief the new commander about the ePRT's role. Nonetheless, he describes a very positive attitude on the part of the military toward the ePRT and willingness to share any brigade resources they might need – translators, BBAs, etc. The built-in tension between the military's emphasis on short term, immediate results and the longer –term, development approach favored by the State Department and USAID was diffused by both sides constructively taking this cultural difference into account.

One of the most important activities of the ePRT was community reconciliation, trying to restore the torn fabric of Iraqi society. Although unsuccessful in arranging meetings with the party of Muqtada al-Sadr, the ePRT did meet with Dawa and Islamic Supreme Council in Iraq parties. The ePRT's on-going dialogue with representatives of the Sunni community, aimed at greater Sunni inclusion in the district councils, yielded tangible manifestations of the first steps in reconciliation: Iftar dinners were organized, under NGO auspices, that brought together neighbors who had not spoken to each other in years but who were able to be reminded of the peace and unity that once characterized their integrated neighborhoods.

The interviewee describes the panoply of projects that his small ePRT undertook. The ePRT worked collaboratively with some 10 – 12 small Iraqi NGOs which had sprung up in his districts on such projects as a center for Down's syndrome children, a women's sewing cooperative, and a program for widows, orphans and divorcees. The ePRT helped organize an association or rural sheiks and farmers to help them increase productivity and get crops to market. They also worked with the state-owned National Chemical and Plastics Industries to better merchandize and market their plastic bags, helping them put together a winning bid with KBR, the military's provider. This interviewee believes that the most significant accomplishments of his tenure are the investments made in human capital: the several hundred adults who received literacy training, the several hundred more who received small business training, plus the hundreds who benefited from grants and loans to start businesses. He believes the ePRT has helped strengthen the district councils' capacity to provide public services, and that the process of community reconciliation is underway. In sum, the ePRT is accomplishing its mission; at the same time, this interviewee believes, the experience of military and civilian personnel working so closely together is invaluable in providing a template for successful cooperation in future scenarios, be they "pandemics, famines, nation building or insurgencies."

Interview

Q: When were you in Iraq and in which EPRT did you work?

A: From April, 2007 through April, 2008. The EPRT, one of the first ten, was located on Baghdad's east side, with responsibility for three political districts, Karada, Rusafa, and 9 Nissan. I had the luxury of a full two-week overlap with my successor and of course he's taken over. The overlap is very helpful, as the learning curve is steep and much of what we do is unprecedented in the Foreign Service.

During the time I was there we were involved with two different military units switching on December 29, 2007. So, unlike the situation where you might have a unit from the same division, this was changing from one track to another entirely.

My EPRT was composed of eight individuals for most of the year. At the beginning we had nine. We had me as the State Department team leader, a USAID development advisor who was the deputy, then from the military we had a reservist who was the civil affairs officer, then we had a bicultural bilingual advisor.

In the beginning we had two BBAs (Bilingual, Bicultural Advisors). One left due to medical reasons. One left to transfer to a position in the Green Zone and then we received a replacement BBA in August, who happened to be a chemical engineer from the United Kingdom who grew up as a young boy in Baghdad.

Then we also had four development specialists: an industry specialist, a governance specialist, a business development specialist and a city management/planning specialist as well. And one of our team members also happened to serve as the administrator of the QRF Program, the Quick Response Funds.

Since that time we added one additional member. We added an economic development advisor who happened to transfer from another PRT in country. And we have a pending request for two additional staff members.

I asked for an additional governance specialist. We have three political districts. So we're unique in that regard.

And also I asked for a program manager, so we would have a central position, sort of a utility infielder, who does core administrative and managerial tasks, including reporting, analysis, data gathering and handling the Quick Response Fund program.

Q: When you got there, were these individuals or the positions, in place, or did you determine that you needed some of the specialties and obtained them during the course of the year you were there?

A: When I arrived on April 16, I, the civil affairs officer and our two BBAs were the only four who had arrived. We were joined about two weeks later by the USAID representative, who joined from another post in the Middle East; it is very fortunate that he and I both came from other Middle East posts, so we had background in Arab and Muslim cultures. We were joined in the following month by our development specialists.

So within thirty days we had the full team on board, but we sort of came in two phases which was normal for EPRTs and of course this is the very foundation level. We're just getting started.

Now as we came into the year 2008, as planned, we started to rotate out the DOD civilian employees and started to rotate in State Department contract employees. The notion was for each position to have an overlap and to rotate people in so that we did not lose all four at one time but rotate them in gradually. And to a large extent we've been successful with overlaps, whether it's through email or in person.

Q: I realize you are an embedded PRT, embedded with the brigade combat team and you alluded I think to two brigades, one that was there initially and then replaced by a different brigade. What difference did that make or how were they different, these two brigades?

A: I think the main difference was rebuilding relationships. We were well received by both brigades. Both brigades wanted to work with an EPRT. And of course we need to recall also that this is a novel experience for our DOD counterparts. When we did the exchange over to the second brigade we had to literally rebrief as to what the EPRT is, who we are, what we're doing and why, the logic behind the "three D" approach: development, diplomacy and defense; the whole of government, all of the instruments of national power approach.

This involved building new relationships with new people that had come in to replace the past brigade and for them to understand what we were doing and why and to join with us in updating the joint common plan, which is our joint planning document which we wrote in June of last year and which we update every ninety days.

So we also had the benefit that several members of the brigade came on a preliminary visit to the post. In December of last year again we also benefited by roughly a three week overlap between the two brigades, so they could see us in action, how we interacted with the brigade, how we worked on a day-to-day basis and we could work from that and that gave us quite an advantage.

Q: Was the brigade commander the main person that you were briefing and interacting with?

A: It's the brigade commander, who I was briefing and is my counterpart, same grade and same rank as myself. We had adjoining offices, which was very fortunate. He's the one that we coordinated with on a general basis.

On day-to-day, more specific matters, we would work with the Effects Cell Coordinator. This is the non-lethal branch of the command. This is civil-military operations writ large and this is the section which includes the civil affairs officer, the information officer, the public affairs officer, the human terrain team, the anthropologist, a local survey team and others who work in the same regard, all of whom take a non-kinetic approach to their work. They engage Iraqis and try to help rebuild their society and get past the conflict to restore a sense of normalcy at the level of the Iraqi family.

Q: You mentioned the anthropologist. I didn't hear him initially as part of the PRT, but was he also a part?

A: No. These are various groups within the Effects Cell, the Effects Cell being a large section, with perhaps eight units within it, the EPRT being one of those eight, the anthropologist another, public affairs/information another, the civil affairs officer yet another.

Q: On your team, though, you did have a civil affairs person? Was he military?

A: Yes, that's correct, a lieutenant colonel, a reservist, each time. We had one that came with us initially and then a second in the replacement cohort who replaced him. They had an overlap and both brought in the benefit of their previous experience, one being a nurse, for example, and the other having a background in agriculture and urban affairs.

Q: Now were you surprised that the brigade commander didn't seem to know, that you needed to tell him what the PRT was able to do or how it could be useful to him or brief him on what you were doing? Was it that he didn't really know something he should have known or was this so new that he didn't know?

A: It was so new. There have never been PRTs ever anywhere before, except for the ones in Afghanistan. He had seen us; he was part of the group that came in in early December. So since the other group had phased out by December 29th, many of the individuals we were involved with had a full three-week overlap.

We were growing in place, forming relationships with various elements of the brigade and finding ways to work together and understand what each other's goals are, so we could be mutually supportive.

No surprise whatsoever. In fact, one of the words I use which has gained a fair amount of coinage is the need to re-cement relationships over time.

Q: Particularly if you have to re-cement them with new individuals?

A: New individuals?

Q: The institutional relationship is there, but as you get a new commander who's a new individual, there will be a new relationship, I think.

A: Yes, which is why we rebriefed the EPRT, USAID and the Quick Response Funds, which was a new State pocket of money that we had which was actually quite new to us.

Q: You said you were working with three districts in Baghdad?

A: Yes.

Q: Could you describe the position of your PRT with respect to those three districts?

A: Okay, we were assigned three political districts which were quite divergent: 9 Nissan, Rusafa and Karada. 9 Nissan is the district in which we were located and that's the district immediately to the east of Sadr City. It's a district which is impoverished, which lacks a lot of water and sewer infrastructure, particularly in its northern parts. It has some agriculture along the Diyala River and has a fair industrial base, a couple of industrial park areas that we helped to develop. Its literacy rates are lower than other areas. But it's very mixed: Sunni, Shi'a, Christian.

The next area is Karada, which has the peninsula and the Zafaraniya area. It hosted a military base previously. It hosts the University of Baghdad, prime residential neighborhoods, but also some rural areas with agriculture along both the Tigris River and the Diyala River. It also has a couple of large industrial bases where state-owned enterprises are located, such as the state-owned leather company, the National Chemicals and Plastics Industries, the vegetable oil factory, a number of industries based there.

The last district is Rusafa, which is fairly compact, with a relatively high population density, the so-called downtown of Baghdad, immediately across the river from the Green Zone. This area has a number of the city's major markets. It has the historic district

along the Tigris River called the Abu Nuwas. It also has a number of the major government buildings, including several of the ministries.

Our task as an EPRT is to work as part of the counterinsurgency strategy to try to restore normalcy at the level of the Iraqi family. This included work in several distinct areas: local governance, essential social services, economic growth and development and community reconciliation.

When I say local governance, I mean the administration of the district council and their subcomponents, the neighborhood councils, also the so-called *Beladiyah*, which were the public works departments located within these boroughs of the city, to help them to develop their skills, their ability to work as a representative body, to upgrade the status of their meeting halls, to make them publicly accessible, to provide a meeting space, to jointly attend each others' meetings, to explain their roles to the community as a constituent relations function, to provide outreach and to hold elections to replace the members as the need came.

In addition to governance, essential social services refers to public works and infrastructure. This is everything from the sewer and water systems to electricity and fuel to health and education, the basics, the fundamentals of life, working with Iraqis to prioritize their projects needs, to plan projects, to get them funded and to implement them to improve the quality of life and support the economic base.

Economic growth and development emphasizes both economic growth, particularly in the number of jobs, but also to develop the economy across a broader range of sectors, thus creating a more diversified economy and a stronger base.

Then the last thing I mentioned was community reconciliation. This is trying to restore a sense of unity and peace at the neighborhood level, as opposed to national reconciliation. We were really working at the grassroots level and a lot of what we did had to do with creating a demand-driven process, so that people want economic development, improved governance, improvement in the way of life; they're willing to work towards that, willing to channel their energy and persuade officials who represent them to address their needs locally. This is quite different from the national level, which is from the top down. By working from the provincial level downward and the district level upward, the idea is to hopefully get them to mesh and to meet in the middle.

Q: Is that one of the prime divergences of the EPRTs, in that you're bubbling up from the neighborhood, sub-provincial level, as opposed to the PRTs that were working with provincial governments?

A: Absolutely. They work with a completely different set of stakeholders. PRTs, for example, work with ministries, city hall, the governor's office, a number of higher level officials, whereas we work with neighborhood and district councils, the public works department and NGOS, with other members of civil society in the community.

Q: You enumerated a lot of different areas where you were active. Could you choose one and take it as a case study, describing what the situation was when you arrived and how it evolved in the course of your tour there?

A: Well, there are certainly several. I'd like to touch on a couple, if I could.

When we did our joint common plan in the economic growth and development area, we set up a tripod of business, industry and agriculture. We had done a joint common assessment and a joint common plan and a joint implementation of our plan, the notion being to take advantage of what exists in our community and put that to work.

And we found that there was agriculture. Initially, we hadn't seen this, but the more we looked the more we found out that people are growing some cereals, some dates, raising some livestock and had tremendous potential for raising poultry, for example, in the areas adjacent to the Tigris and Diyala Rivers. So we formed an association of rural sheiks and farmers and tried to help them to increase their productivity, with the emphasis being on increasing rural incomes, increasing employment, vertical integration, and getting crops to market so that they can sell. When they get to market they sell very quickly. We observed that fresh fruits and vegetables are prized in the marketplace.

So we saw an unfolding development of the market as we were there; people were becoming more production oriented. But they did lack some inputs, and organization. I think that's an area where we helped facilitate and foster activities on their part. In other words, not doing it for them but doing it with them.

This included facilitating access to winter seed, so they could plant a wheat crop during the winter months, and getting agricultural plastic. Now they made these mini-greenhouses, about a yard off the ground, with arched plastic sheeting going along the field with moisture trapped underneath and it keeps insects and birds out, the idea being to increase productivity. And we also were able to provide some gravel, to improve some mud roads to gravel roads, to get the goods out.

Now the plastic we supplied to this agricultural association, which was only for members who were participating in this effort, was obtained from the local plastic industry. It's mostly in the public sector, but it has a substantial private sector component as well. They lacked for customers. We worked with them to try to merchandise and market their goods better. We were able to successfully get them to have a winning bid with our service provider for the coalition forces, for plastic bags. They were able to win a tender for those, thereby maintaining employment at the factory. Another product they were making was this agricultural sheeting. So we purchased it, providing a market for a good produced within the community. So you had one sector helping another sector.

The third sector was business and commerce and in that area we sponsored people to participate in small business training schools and to provide them with grants and loans that could be entrepreneurial start-ups.

Q: And the training schools, for example, existed already so that you just needed to recruit students to attend and also to pay for their tuition?

A: Well, there are a couple of different lines. One is vocational technology institutes and we have three within our immediate area. These are largely supported by USAID, but we did push people towards vocational training.

We did provide an adult literacy program in 9 Nissan, where education officials used unemployed teachers five evenings a week, two hours each evening, to train individuals in basic and intermediate Arabic. We started with about three hundred men. Then women demanded their own classes, so we increased the number of classes. We had seven hundred students in six schools in the evenings being taught by Iraqis.

We took a very hands-off approach. This was an Iraqi effort and we wanted to stay out of the way, but it was very popular. We realized that Iraq or Baghdad in particular was once very literate and the fact that rates had dropped off was a reflection on what had happened over the past several decades.

But when I said small business development course, that's a specific institute supported by USAID teaching entrepreneurial skills. That's a two-week course and it trains people in the very basics of marketing, inventory, pricing, how to meet customer demand, how to run a small business capably and that sort of thing.

Q: You mentioned the area of essential services. In the areas that you worked in, were they districts or neighborhoods?

A: Districts.

Q: How did essential services evolve during the time you were there? Were you able to get more electricity provided or more sewer treatment provided?

A: Actually, most of the public works infrastructure projects were already underway with the Army Corps of Engineers. So what we did was continue their work and try to address gaps or add value to existing projects. For example, the Army Corps of Engineers was working with the public works folks to put in sewer lines in 9 Nissan, because it was the most underserved of the three neighborhoods and we provided sewer compressors that cleared the lines of sediment.

What we tried to do was train the public works workers, so they had the proper vehicles, equipment, machinery and training, so they could take on more tasks and contract out less work and therefore become more self-sufficient. So we had people that we sent up to a special training course in heavy equipment operation, generator maintenance and the like to invest in their own capacity. It was capacity building.

In education, there were several schools where we did minor rehabilitation projects, where the water, sewage systems, and bathrooms needed to be replaced. A couple of

schools needed blackboards, desks, tables, bookcases, very basic things like that. In other cases we provided pens, pencils and plastic backpacks for students so they had basic supplies.

We also worked with several clinics which had fallen into disrepair and we had to fix them up; they needed to be restocked to meet the needs of people in that immediate neighborhood.

Q: What about electricity? In the past, we used to read in the press how many hours day electricity would be supplied in Baghdad. During the old regime it used to get quite a bit of electricity, I guess at the expense of the rest of the country. What was the situation in the sector where you were working?

A: Electricity continues to be a major problem. We often talk about the common denominators being electricity and water. I think we were more successful on the water side.

Regarding electricity, there are a number of problems caused by vandalism or destruction of the electric grid. Of course, you need generation, transmission and distribution, the three legs of electricity, which are tricky to maintain all at once.

We found that many people had simply given up on the electric grid. Anyone who had money was buying a generator. Those that did not would subscribe to a generator service in the immediate neighborhood that would provide electricity for a certain number of hours per day. So you'd often see what we called "spaghetti wiring." You would never touch a wire, of course, because you had no idea what was live. Of course, their concern then shifted from electricity to fuel to run the generator.

This is a long-term problem. Folks are working on it at the national level. I don't think there's that much we can do at the local level.

There is one power project that we worked on a bit, particularly my industrial specialist. He's an engineer and what he was working on was a pad-mount generator to provide electricity for about thirty small industries. When I say industry I really mean workshops and artisan shops, small-scale metalworking, welding, that sort of thing. We did have some involvement in a microgeneration center nearby, with the notion being that a second one was to be built elsewhere and we were planning a series of these micropower facilities, where people in a small industrial park could get access to bulk power.

Q: You called it a particular kind of generator. What was the name?

A: A pad-mount, meaning there's a cement slab and you put the generator down on top of it and you run it to power up to thirty small industries in the area.

Q: Would you build these on site, or you would buy them and just bring them in?

A: We built the pad and they would then bring in the generator and mount it on the pad with a crane. I forget how many megawatts it generates, but it's substantial.

Q: It seems to me that folks working in the PRTs are doing a lot of Peace Corps kind of work in a war zone and what you've described is consistent with what I would think Peace Corps activities might be. At the same time, we haven't really talked about what kind of threats you were under on a daily basis. Could you describe that?

A: Certainly, and I would agree it is very much like the Peace Corps -- I'm a former volunteer -- in that it involves community development, community organization.

We were in a hostile environment. We did take indirect fire quite frequently, meaning mortars and rockets, although at times we would have RPGs shot at the guard towers surrounding our base. It's a relatively small base in 9 Nissan. During spring and early summer, we had a fair number of indirect fire incidents. It would be not uncommon to have one a day. A siren would sound and we would seek shelter. If you're out in the open you lie flat, of course.

Q: And these are?

A: Mortars and rockets coming in, most typically. You could hear small arms fire and sometimes you could see tracers at night, but what we were really concerned about was what was coming down on us and that was mortar shells and rockets. We had a fair number of those and we took fatalities on the base two or three times.

Q: This would be on a daily basis, you would get one of these alerts?

A: I would say April, May, June, it was at least that. I recall seeing a graph where there were fourteen incidents of indirect fire per week, back during those months. Sometimes they fired a rocket or a mortar and it missed the base. It fell just outside the wall, but the siren still goes off, of course. Other times the siren went off and five, six, seven shells came in.

Q: And they were aiming at the base?

A: Absolutely.

Q: And when you left, would you say the number of these incidents was lower?

A: Yes, I would say so but I would offer by explanation that from around June to December, during the so-called "surge," which we're a part of, the incidents decreased all over the map, whether it's murders, kidnappings, assaults, indirect fire incidents, all of the indicators came down very gradually and very clearly on all of the charts during that half-year period. From December through February, I think it was relatively flat, but at a low level. Then on Easter Sunday at six a.m. they came in and the next two weeks were

very bad. Then it calmed down again and it remained fairly calm until the time that I left, which was the end of April.

Q: And who was behind these attacks?

A: The ones shooting the mortars and rockets were coming from the north, mainly from parts of 9 Nissan district, we assume shot by extremists connected to the Jaish al Mahdi, the military arm of Muqtada al-Sadr's party. Within the community, all during this time, there were IEDs and there were a couple of incidents of vehicle-borne IEDs or suicide vest IEDs which were not targeted at us. So there was violence within the community, but that which was directed on us came from these rogue elements of the Jaish al Mahdi.

Q: People who were not observing the ceasefire?

A: Exactly, they did not observe the cessation of hostilities from August last year and then renewed this past February. We did think that made quite a difference in the volume. The numbers after that did go down and we assumed those shooting after that were the so-called "rogue elements" or "special groups." They're extremists that weren't following the party line.

Q: When that occurred, did your base commander complain, or was there a mechanism to capture the people who were firing, or did we fire back at them?

A: Oh, absolutely. We do return fire, although that was minimized because of collateral damage to civilians, plus the fact that you can only shoot if you have a target and many times people that would shoot would have a rocket on a timer, for example. They weren't physically present when it was shot. By the time it takes to prepare to shoot back you don't know who's there.

Now that's not our PRT's effort. The brigade's efforts, as best I understand them, were to assiduously track all incoming attacks using very sophisticated instrumentation to determine where things came from, and to try to get patterns of this, to work with the Iraqi security forces to limit access to the areas from which they would typically shoot at us, to arrest and detain people who were caught with paraphernalia, rockets and mortars, to try to seize caches of armaments; they picked up quite a number of those.

There are some times when we shot back. There are some times when helicopters or other units were able to see them, were able to shoot them from above. Other times illumination rounds would light up areas, so that when coalition forces patrolled they could see them there.

Q: Illumination rounds?

A: Illumination rounds, shot from a mortar and with a parachute; they have a light that burns for about two and a half minutes or so. It's quite bright, so if our people or the

Iraqi security forces are out trying to apprehend these Jaish al Mahdi "rogue elements" they're able to see what they're doing better.

Q: As team leader, what would be your typical agenda for a day or for a week? Obviously you're deploying your personnel, but I'd like to get a sense of the many people you had to talk to and arrange activities with.

A: Every day was quite different from another, although on the days of the week we tend to have specific activities. For example, Monday was Karada day. I and several members of my team, the translator, for example, would go to Karada early. Some would attend the security meeting, not EPRT team members but others from the brigade might attend the security meeting. We would attend, for example, the women's and social affairs committee meeting. We would also meet with the members of the economic committee or others with whom we have projects underway to update them.

Typically there would be half a dozen people we would seek out and want to talk to. We'd want to compare notes with local officials on some things. We might want to talk to one of the sheiks about a reconciliation event.

We made very good use of our time and would attempt to talk to several different people and then attend the district council meeting itself, which had an agenda in Arabic and English. We'd have a translator so we would know what's going on in the meeting. Often I or one of my staff would address the meeting or would have a handout of some sort of information of value to them.

We would often visit a project site to see how the construction or the refitting of a building was going. On the base, we might have a briefing for a visitor, telling who we are and what we're doing. We had innumerable emails on four different systems.

Q: Four different systems? You had a couple military and a couple State Department systems?

A: Exactly. There might be a meeting of our group, talking about our QRF (Quick Response Fund) projects, to give each other a quick update on that. That might be continued over dinner to compare notes on how things were going and what was going to happen the next day. Typically the days were very long, going well into the late night hours.

Q: People have told me that essentially they worked around the clock. What was your experience there?

A: That's true. Hundred hour weeks were the norm for me. I certainly don't require that of team members, although their hours were well above and beyond the call of duty.

We referred to it as a "battle rhythm," meaning the scheduled events you work your way through during each week are your battle rhythm; the notion of recurring events and

preparing for future events. You very much get in this cycle where you're preparing for up-coming events, visits, a trip, a conference, a training, doing a presentation, three different district council meetings, maybe a water conference and maybe some other specialized group, two or three visitors mixed in, keeping up with paperwork, doing weekly and monthly and quarterly reports, and answering dozens of emails. So the hours go late very easily, but the workplace is collegial and we're there, brigade members are there and people are bouncing ideas off each other, exchanging information or asking questions or asking someone to advise on an issue or to clear on an issue, to sign a document, to vet a proposal. It goes very quickly.

There's not much separation of life. You sleep and you eat, but you're often eating with others and you're often talking shop. If you're wise you exercise. There's a chapel. There's a small store. There are very limited recreational opportunities, and it was unsafe to be outdoors much. But the time does go very fast and we did work seven days a week.

One gentleman on my team did observe the Sabbath. We all certainly respected that. But most everyone was in the office seven days a week and worked relatively long hours.

I think you were able to do that because you realized it was a one-year stint, that you did have R&Rs, but that the work was important and if you didn't do it, it wasn't going to get done. You also had the sensation of doing something new, and you really wanted to do it well. But we were a small team and we had three districts, over two million people. We tried to do a lot but we only had very little in terms of resources.

Q: Were you responsible for these three districts because you were embedded with the brigade that was responsible for those districts?

A: That's correct.

Q: And there was no way to spin off another EPRT?

A: Only by adding staff and that's why I proposed the addition of two positions and why we benefited much from the ninth position that we added just a couple of months ago. That did make a difference.

Q: Was there any evidence of the tension that some people have mentioned between the approach by the military which is one of getting projects done quickly: they perceive what needs to be done, they go in there and do it, and the more leisurely State Department approach to development, which would say: "Okay, we need to develop capacity among people and it's going to take much more time. We could build a school quickly, but if we need to teach the Iraqis what it takes to build it, we'll have to give it more time." Did you find any clash of cultures along those lines?

A: There were differences and I fully expected that coming in, but it did come up periodically. In doing our weekly briefings on Friday afternoons, I would often brief with this in mind, realizing that DOD culture tends to emphasize tactics, training, short term,

immediate results, whereas the State and USAID approach tended to be long term development, partnerships, programs, processes. I think we were able to get each side to kind of understand the organizational culture and terminology of the other. When we planned we took this into account, so that what we were doing made sense and did include some short term accomplishments but also some longer term things we were building towards.

I think we came in very inculcated that there are different organizational cultures, which we need to take this into account. You can't just ignore it. It's there. You have to deal with it constructively.

Q: As the team leader, you felt you were successful in interiorizing the military culture sufficiently that you were comfortable and you think your military counterparts did the same with respect to your civilian culture?

A: I think I did interiorize it fairly well. I'm fortunate in that I had a fair amount of experience working with DOD in previous postings. If I hadn't had that, I would have been very disadvantaged. But I think the fact that I had been in local government, I had been in the Peace Corps, there had been a variety of settings that gave me perhaps more resiliency and flexibility.

But I think only those that realize they're going to have to be very flexible really should come into work like this, because you're in a brigade, they provide everything for you, your life support, transportation, and security. You're highly dependent on that. So what you can do is limited by the parameters within which you work.

Now from the military side, I think people respected the State Department. Most of them had not worked directly with State Department people before. They understood things I was saying and why and we had many spin-off discussions which developed an appreciation for my points of view and why I was saying things. I was consistently well respected by the brigade and its members.

I think we were able to do better together than either of us could have done individually. I think that synergy, the three D approach I mentioned before, did prove to be valuable and that's something that DOD took into account. I know that at higher levels of leadership all the way up to General Petraeus, for example, they often spoke well and favorably about PRTs and what their work was in the field and the value of things like education and working with public works departments.

Q: Were you convinced they weren't just paying lip service? They in fact believed that this diplomatic component and the value added that civilians supplied was important?

A: I do and I think part of that has to do with timing. We were there when the conflict had been going on for five years. Well, the kinetics worked very well, the war was over in the early days. The conflict, however, remained. The conflict was much tougher.

Well, they've read their Clausewitz, they've done their military philosophy and history and they understand that the center of gravity is the people and what programs and partnerships were doing was really trying to work to provide a better life for the people and to give them reasons to trust and build some trust and faith in their own government. They realized that kinetics alone weren't going to solve the equation.

Q: Fair enough. You mentioned reconciliation as well as one of the activities that you frequently undertook. Were there some examples that you saw of reconciliation in action?

A: We had three very mixed districts, each of which had large Sunni, Shi'a and Christian populations before the conflict. As time wore on, the Sunni and Christian elements decreased. Many of these folks chose to migrate to Ninewah province or to Syria or Jordan, for example, because it was safer. But there still were sizeable minorities within the communities.

When I talked about reconciliation -- understanding that it means different things to different people -- I mean to develop an awareness of each others' faults and sufferings and to work together with a unity of effort towards peace and brotherhood, to restore the torn fabric of Iraqi society. And the things that we did were outreach; talk to political party members, or to try to talk to OMS party members. That wasn't successful.

Q: OMS?

A: Office of the Martyr Sadr. That's the party of Muqtada al-Sadr.

We were unsuccessful in meeting with its representatives, even though we certainly asked around and tried, but we did meet with Dawa Party members and ISCI, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, for example.

Q: That's al-Sistani's group?

A: Exactly, the Grand Ayatollah. So we were able to meet with their representatives. Also we met with representatives of the Christian community; had on-going, on a biweekly basis, dialogue with representatives of the Sunni community. This was fostered by a human rights activist within the Iraqi government.

We met with him either in the Green Zone or on the Forward Operating Base or elsewhere. We met biweekly with him and his of advisors and representatives from each of the six Sunni pockets within our three districts. Each one has its own sort of lieutenant that represented those people. Their lieutenant met with our battalion commander or his people during the.

Q: The "we" that were meeting with him were?

A: The brigade commander, myself, one or two other members of the EPRT, one or two other members of the brigade Effects Cell. So roughly five or six of us would meet with him and his half dozen local representatives of the Sunni population and a couple of translators, for example.

Q: Now what would you discuss at a typical meeting?

A: Reopening Sunni mosques and providing security to Sunni mosques that had reopened. It might be the placement of security barriers. It might be the integration of Sunni men into Iraqi security forces or the so-called "Sons of Iraq" neighborhood watch program, concerned local citizens or other various groupings of local security. It might also be about employment in general, about education.

The notion for most of these was Sunni inclusion. Sunni inclusion in district councils, for example, because in two of our districts, the districts had one Sunni member each and one had one member who was half Sunni. So the representation of Sunnis in the district councils was very low. We were interested in increasing that and we talked to them about finding good candidates and campaign platforms and actively campaigning and working to get out the vote by Sunnis to support their candidates so that they would have representation on the district councils.

But something more interesting which came up, was that the Sunnis expressed interest in doing an *iftar*; doing a fast-breaking meal during the Ramadan season last September. I thought about it. What I counter-proposed was a community reconciliation event held at six Sunni mosques in the six pockets, provided that Shi'a and Christians were invited.

I attended two of these *iftars* and we saw neighbors greeting each other who had not spoken to each other in years. We saw Sunnis take their turn at prayer, meaning that those outside were Shi'a and Christians, because the sequence of the *iftar* and prayer, , is a little bit different for Sunni and Shi'a. We witnessed people talking to one another very casually and children were running around. There was a very enjoyable pace or atmosphere or tone to the events and we were very pleased.

Q: You said you also had a formal agenda, there were going to be some discussions

A: We had an NGO called Lifegivers. They had a little desk with flowers and a speaker stand for a microphone. A representative from the NGO opened the event and an imam led the group in prayer. Then one of the district council members spoke about peace and unity and that "Those who seek to divide us are from outside, this is not a part of who we are, we have never been against each other in our neighborhood and we need to go back to our integrated neighborhood, where we're all neighbors regardless of our faith." I think it was a very nice event and I'm glad to have been able to play a part in making this come about.

Q: You used the phrase "to restore the social fabric of the community." To what extent is that an accurate description? How typical is that of Baghdad or Iraq, I wonder?

A: That's the issue, because we're only looking at our three districts and we can only be so many places at one time, because we're moving with a minimum of four vehicles in a convoy. We're under heavy security, and our ability to get out and around to see different things is limited. We really only know about our three districts. So when people ask us questions about what's happening over on the west side, "Sorry, don't have a clue." When they ask about national politics, I say, "Honestly, I don't work at that level and I'm concentrating more on working with our stakeholders within our own districts."

Q: Well, that's fair enough and you presented a view of a microcosm there where apparently reconciliation sounds possible.

A: It is. The lower the level you go, the easier it is. The thing is that people are waiting for an example at a higher level to set a good tone for the nation. They want to see the president and vice presidents, prime minister, deputy prime ministers, hand in hand, inaugurating projects, being cordial, talking about Iraq, about a united people and a nation that's regained its footing, that once again seeks to restore its rightful role and for people to live in prosperity. They want to see this example, though there are not too many like this.

We're going back to the beginning of the Iraq-Iran War in 1980. Everything has been on a downhill course since then. This immediate conflict is only a small part of that larger picture.

Q: That's a provocative statement. Could you elaborate?

A: Until the late 70's, Iraq had one of the highest standards of living in the Middle East. When you fly over Baghdad, it's very evident to you this is not a poor city, never was a poor city. In middle class neighborhoods, middle class homes, people are educated; there are universities, churches, government buildings. It's a system, a culture that worked very well, a very literate culture. The 80's were largely lost to progress due to the Iraq-Iran War. In the 90's, you had economic sanctions. Past the year 2000, the conflict breaks out and is now in its sixth year.

During that time there wasn't a time when the oil and gas wealth was put to good use and that the livelihood of people improved. For many people it has been relatively stagnant. There was no investment in water or sewer systems from the late 70's to today. In 9 Nissan, there are large areas where there has never been public water or public sewer systems. They were never built.

Looking back we're saying, "We're working with Iraqis who basically inherited an infrastructure that's been deprived of attention for its fourth decade now in a row, and this is really a shame because there's this pent up sense of: 'We remember how things were when we were kids, we can do better than that, we need to get beyond this' and that 'It shouldn't be like this, that outsiders or infiltrators who are setting off these bombs, al

Qaeda or Iran, this is what's keeping us divided. We aren't divided one against another. We know who we are. We're Iraqis. We get along. We intermarry.'"

People live all over the city, very intermixed. Jews, Christians, Kurds, a very mixed population. People very much want to go back to those good old days. This is how they describe it to us.

Q: But the ones who actually remember that first hand are now fifty or sixty years old. Those younger than that, have they somehow managed to grow up with the same vision, having been told about it?

A: I'm not certain, because, of course, people we're dealing with from the district councils tend to be these fifty plusers. I'm not certain what younger folks would think. I think people are puzzled. I think they recall what their parents would say about the good old days and how activities used to be or what people would do for fun. I think they're getting it from that. And they realize that they've got gas and oil but they're still in a situation of great insecurity and they're wondering what it will take for it to end.

Q: You mentioned the Quick Response Funds and how those were deployed. Did you see an evolution in the need to use this U.S. money, Quick Response Funds or other types? Was money ever an issue or did you have what you needed?

A: Well, remember, the Quick Response Funds only came about in late September, early October (of 2007). So when we went out, everyone had told us about this marvelous tool that was coming. Month after month went by, no funds. And then very suddenly, "Here's money! Get a safe! Get training! Get a cashier! Get everything lined up!" By the time this came about we had a pent up desire to use funds, for this small rehab project, this clinic, that school, these soccer uniforms, sewer compressors here, plastic bags for a trash cleanup project over here, agricultural plastic, *iftars*, community reconciliation events. There were all these different things that we wanted to do.

We started assembling the projects and working on them and during that half year we did more than 65 projects. These are for $25,000 or less. There were a lot of little things that we could do.

Then at the end we started applying for some larger grants. For example, a center for training children with Down's syndrome, which simply did not exist. These are larger grants, but that was at the tail end of the year. But, again, we hadn't had the money all that long. This came out last fall.

I do think it's a great tool. I would like to see Iraqi money used. When I talked with the Army Corps of Engineers projects, that was CERP funded, we talked about Iraqi-funded CERPs and then we started saying, "How about Iraqi-funded QRF?" Really the money behind this should be a transfer of Iraqi resources, because there are incredible amounts of them.

Q: Was that an accepted principle as you left, do you think, that it should be Iraqi money now funding these things?

A: Yes. Iraqis were starting to share that perception and there were a couple of instances in the last of month or two when a project came up and the Iraqis actually said, "No, you don't need to do that. We're already doing it." Wonderful! "We've got funding for this school and we're going to do that hospital. We've already got it budgeted."

Of course, one has to realize 2007 was the first year that capital budgets transferred to the level of the province. So this budgetary devolution requires able financial managers, accountants, auditors. It doesn't happen overnight. Money can disappear overnight. Using it wisely is important and this part of devolution is going to take some time.

The country suffers in part from being a top-down economic and political. So trying to get entrepreneurial energy to build the small and medium-sized businesses, rather than large, state-owned enterprises which are not competitive economically, is one chore.

Another chore is politically, to have the budgetary resources come down to the lower levels of government to decide which streets in their district are most important to repave. They know. They live there. You don't need to decide that at city hall. Government officials at the district level can make that decision, from their allocation of the road funds for that year. That's the kind of public administration I want to see. Accountability, transparency, public input but resources provided locally for local needs.

Q: Did your EPRT work with a number of NGOs? You mentioned one, for the iftar *dinners and you mentioned the Down's syndrome effort.*

A: Oh, a number. Ten or a dozen various groups, perhaps. One was working with a women's' sewing cooperative. Others involved a program for widows, orphans and divorcees.

Q: And were these organizations Iraqi NGOs?

A: Oh, yes. I don't think we worked with any international NGOs at all. Of course, there are very few international NGOs in our districts.

Q: Were these local NGOs of long standing?

A: No, I think most of them were relatively recent. I think most of them were probably post-initiation of conflict.

Q: How were they empowered?

A: By the moxie of their leaders, who were often determined women, which is tremendous. Women were seeing unmet needs and doing something about it.

With the Down's syndrome facility, the woman's youngest child happens to have Down's syndrome. She realized, "There's no one who's doing anything for us. I'm not alone. There are others who have this same situation. We need a center where children with Down's syndrome can come to learn basic life skills, and socialization skills, instead of being cloistered at home." Which is what happens.

Q: What about RTI, which apparently works throughout the country on governance issues. Did you have any dealings with them?

A: USAID funded them as the largest supplier. Yes, I am aware of some of their projects, because we needed to ensure that we did not duplicate the work of others.

There was one example, the 9 Nissan district council hall, where they did some upgrades to the hall and we wanted to be certain that we did not interfere with their project. So we looked at what their scope of work was to ensure that we didn't duplicate that.

They are out doing some projects and we are aware that they're there, but we typically don't run into or work on the same project site as an NGO.

Q: Did you have a public affairs officer in your EPRT?

A: No, we're too small. So it devolved to me. I did about twenty media interviews during the year: TV, State Department.

Q: International media, local media, or everything?

A: I think they were American. Maybe a couple of them were with small local radio or newsprint organization. I talked to several newspapers, over my phone. I did radio or newspaper phone-ins. Some were at the embassy and were televised on AFN, the Armed Forces Network. I recall counting them, somewhere in the mid-twenties, somewhere near the end of my year.

Q: And of course you could do your interviews in Arabic but maybe that wasn't relevant if it wasn't the local press that you were interviewing for.

A: Well, no, the interviews were in English. I've seen myself on TV in Arabic. I'm not certain how it became dubbed into Arabic. From our translators and our advisors, I never had the impression that anything was misattributed or taken out of context.

But often you'd have TV cameras at a district council meeting or at an event. It was not uncommon at all.

Q: At a district council meeting, your role wasn't that of a principal?

A: Not at all. I'm an observer. I don't even sit at the table.

Q: So I guess if they were going to interview the Iraqi officials, you would be there as one of the attendees.

A: As an observer, yes, that's right. The media might come to a district council meeting; for example, one time a group of sheiks came. Several other times NGOs came and made presentations. And those would typically be the kinds of times that the media would show up, although one of the district council members did work for a radio station and one of the district councils does have its own radio station, which the brigade helped support.

Q: They didn't have one before, I guess?

A: Not before the conflict, no.

Q: You mentioned your Bicultural, Bilingual Advisors (BBA) and apparently these folks were very well educated, also. One was an engineer?

A: Yes, two were PhD economists and one was a chemical engineer.

Q: And how did they work as part of your team?

A: By the way, one was from Canada, one from the U.S. and one from the United Kingdom, which was not uncommon.

Both my first two were PhD economists and they specialized in the area of business development. However, the first one was only there not even two months when a medical issue arose and he had to leave. The second one transferred into the Green Zone after about three months there.

The new one that came in, the chemical engineer, worked quite a bit with our industry specialist, but, as he is Sunni, also worked closely with me on the biweekly reconciliation events and dialogues. He's truly a utility infielder. That gave him exposure to each of us and what we were doing. He had knowledge of everything that we were doing. A very good sense of humor, we thoroughly enjoyed his presence.

I suppose in an ideal world you'd have one for each of your three districts, so somebody could really specialize on the persons and places. But then as your team grows, our constraint becomes movement, being able to get into different convoys to go to different places. So, it's difficult, because you're still in a conflict situation. As a small team you feel you've got to cover the waterfront and that's just tricky. It's quite challenging to do. There's a lot going on out there.

Q: It sounds like these individuals played the role of your FSNs (Foreign Service Nationals) in each section of a traditional Embassy: the economic section, the political section, the cultural affairs section and press section; in a normal Embassy, there would be an FSN in each of those sections.

A: If you could have one that just did business and commerce, you could also have one that just did industry. I don't think we do enough agriculture to justify an agriculture BBA. You might be able to do it, on the governance side, perhaps. You'd probably have someone that would facilitate meeting with the public works department representatives and the district and neighborhood councils.

But you could certainly use more of them and the brigade has BBAs also, by the way, and we made use of some of them. Some of them were economic specialists who would go to Karada events. Other ones would visit Rusafa events.

Q: You would borrow them from the brigade?

A: No, they weren't selfish about them and they were dedicated to that mission and you could work with them as your cultural informant and translator, as need be, on specific projects. The relationship was flexible enough that it permitted them to work that way without anyone's feathers being ruffled. In fact, we were openly invited: "Make use of our people. We have brigade assets." I think many times we had ideas for ways in which we could put them to work; we could use them, where the brigade might overlook and underestimate their importance.

As Foreign Service officers, we're used to working with FSNs. They're used in many posts where they do phenomenal work. We couldn't imagine working there without them, whereas to the military, it's something new to them. So I think we understood perhaps more quickly how valuable they really could be.

Q: When you needed to go to your meetings, how complicated was that to arrange? You didn't have your own fleet of vehicles?

A: No, each Friday we'd have our Effects Cell brief, where we each brief on what we're doing. We'd have slides for a Power Point production. After this meeting we'd have a transportation meeting and talk about the coming week, working backwards, each day, discussing where people wanted to go, what they needed to do, how we could put together rides for that many people. This resource allocation, this planning for resource use in the future, was very key, because it's all about logistics.

We also, on the human resources side, used brigade translators and interpreters. They were freely available to us. When I needed a document translated I could go directly to one of them and give him a document and said, "Please translate and email it back to me in Word." The system worked.

When we did our transportation matrix, I said, "We need one or two translators" and we had one assigned to us, not a member of our EPRT, but he was associated with the EPRT as our de facto translator. He went to many of the meetings with us. Our other BBAs would also do translation. Many times one person's translating and two or three people are writing, making sure that we get the gist of what's going on at the meeting.

Q: Did you personally rely much on the translator?

A: Yes. My Arabic was limited to courtesy level. In fact, no one in my class had beyond courtesy level. I speak fifty, sixty words of Arabic, but I get a lot of mileage out of them.

Q: In your class, you said?

A: In my class, in training, as I was preparing to go to Iraq. I don't know anyone associated with PRTs or EPRTs who came in with fluency in Arabic. And it does make a tremendous difference. Physical behavior, gestures and body language, these sorts of things, it was helpful but Arabic of course is a very difficult language. So it's very difficult to expect people to have that background.

Q: You mentioned as well that your background included some service in local government. What do you think in your own experience was the best preparation for this job, or maybe several things were important preparation for your PRT duties?

A: I think the Peace Corps was probably the best, because you're living and working on your own, doing community organization or community development, assessing your opportunities, taking advantage of them, planning activities, coordinating with others, doing training, trying to leave something behind that would continue past your being there. PRTs are more like the Peace Corps than anything else.

Q: What do you think was perhaps the most important thing or things that you left behind in your year in Iraq? What do you feel most proud of among your accomplishments there?

A: I think investment in the human resource base of our districts. Several hundred people have taken a full half year of adult literacy in Arabic. Several hundred have taken the small business training course. Hundreds have benefited from grants and loans to start businesses. District councils' capacity has been strengthened. The industrial and the agricultural bases are strengthened. Community reconciliation is underway and people are talking to each other more than they have before. I think it's mainly investment in human capital and processes and relationships that will continue.

The activities have continued at a high level. I overlapped with my successor a couple of weeks, and they're moving on, they're very busy.

Q: Now, if you could see some changes in the way that EPRTs were constructed or how they work, were there some things you would have liked to have done differently or had others do differently to make it better?

A: Well, I suppose access to the QRF, the Quick Response Funds, earlier in our tenure would have been preferred, instead of coming in maybe three months after we'd arrived. I realize that we do have a learning curve and that during the first two or three months, it

might have been difficult to use them then, but that, a little earlier, would have been helpful.

For us, a slightly larger, slightly differently configured team would have been an improvement. And one thought that did occur to me late in my experience was "It's possible we're at the point where we need to resize among EPRTs and PRTs. Okay, we have X bodies in each EPRT and each PRT. If we shake the box, some of these would move around." Perhaps there are some PRTs that have far too many personnel, perhaps. I don't know. I'm not there directly to know first hand.

But we did get one individual from a PRT where he was underutilized and he had exactly the kind of skills we needed, and also had lived in Baghdad City, one of our districts, before. So I think a right-sizing exercise might be helpful.

But you need to use some sort of a template or interviewing technique, because everyone will say, "More, more," because that's the nature of bureaucracy. I think it needs to be carefully measured, but they probably could reconfigure to be a little bit more efficient and a little bit more effective. We're in all provinces now. I think there are 31 units, at my last count.

Q: PRTs plus EPRTs?

A: Plus PSTs.

Q: And PSTs as well, okay. Is the balance, military-civilian, about right, would you say?

A: Well, I only had one civil affairs officer on my team. That's one person one of nine, so I can't see how that would be an issue.

Q: It's not necessarily a problem. I'm wondering if you might want more civil affairs people on your team?

A: It would depend on what their background was. For example, my first civil affairs officer was a nurse of 33 years standing, so for him, he should have worked with the health sector, and he did. He worked with an EMS training program. He also worked with some physicians on referrals of patients. But his background made him uniquely qualified to do that and that was a real plus.

If I have a civil affairs officer who's a nurse, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, offered, would I take him or her? Yes, because we have health needs and we can make use of that specialized background.

His replacement had a background in water and agriculture; it's what he wants to do, what he has confidence in, where he's interested in working. That's great! Then we look and see what other people we have and what task needs we want to spread around: industry, business and commerce, economics, some reconciliation here, some governance

and public works there and we get the right people in the right portfolios. But we have to be flexible about that, so we changed one over.

Then health and education, who does those now? Then we said, "Well, who does women's and children's social affairs? Who does NGOs? Do we need an NGO person? Do we need an internally displaced persons (IDP), specialist?" Those are good questions.

But in any case, we were looking ahead, what issues are likely to come up during the next few months.

Q: One final thought, were there any services that you needed from the embassy, the Provincial Affairs Office, which is supposed to help either provide guidance or other services to the PRTs. Were they helpful for you?

A: Absolutely. OPA is our section in the embassy. We work for OPA. We also coordinate with Baghdad PRT, because you've got a provincial PRT, then you've got six urban EPRTs and then three rural EPRTs. And Baghdad PRT, which is much larger, about 120 FTEs, coordinates our functions. Then OPA, with its deputy director and director, that's who writes my EER, that's our policy and guidance.

This is where our QRF office is. Many times we're emailing or calling the QRF office with questions about various projects. The grants, for example, go before a panel and are reviewed briefly. So, we work with OPA on an on-going basis and have a very collaborative, constructive relationship.

We work with Baghdad PRT on an ongoing basis. I do presentations at conferences. Baghdad PRT does bimonthly EPRT coordination workshops, as they call them. The PRT team leader there is very collaborative, has a very good style, and brings in EPRTs.

Then, on the other hand, OPA holds a quarterly PRT/EPRT/PST conference and brings us in for that. But along the way there are various budget workshops or there's a rule of law workshop. I delegate one person here, one person there, two people here, covering these different workshops and conferences.

Between your work, the conferences and workshops, your VIPs or distinguished visitors, you keep very busy, not to mention your R&R, which you have to get and which they told us, "Regard R&R as a duty. You need this to keep fresh. Take it. Don't try to get out of it. You won't do anyone a favor."

Within the Embassy, we worked most closely with the political section, economic section and public diplomacy section. Those are really the key ones. All of these have visited our turf at one point along the line or another. When you do cables they go into the political office, they'll process them around for clearance and advise and tap us for information for overall cables. If they're doing one on reconciliation writ large, they want input from us and we do input for those. It's a two way information sharing with

other political officers. With the economic section, it's the same thing, but perhaps to a lesser degree.

For public diplomacy, OPA is now so large it has its own public diplomacy section. The PD section in the embassy has its own staff that deals with PRTs alone. That specialization is very helpful, because we do a lot of media interviews, we come in on camera, and we do quite a number of media engagements. Having them there is very helpful to us. In sum, we work with the embassy extensively.

Q: In what way were they helpful, actually? I can see they made different demands and provided information, but how did they help you?

A: The public diplomacy section?

Q: Yes, let's take public diplomacy.

A: Well, I was granted pre-clearance for media interviews. When you come in new, if you want to talk to the media you have to refer a request, say what they want to talk about; you should only address your situation, the EPRT and of course not say anything that reflects on things beyond your expertise. Hypothesizing could easily become problematic.

I enjoyed that but remember I was probably one of the closest EPRTs to the embassy, on the other side of the river but physically I was relatively close; we got a lot of visits that way; we got more media that way. Sometimes you'd come in the embassy and they'd say, "We've got A, B and C we want you to talk to. Let me bunch these the same afternoon." Or, "We want you to do radio interviews with these three. Can you call these three at your convenience" or a time you agree on or something like this.

They have a studio upstairs. We did AFN, for example. We came in and they've got lights and desks and everything. We're on camera. They have a studio, a lot of professional expertise, and a lot of advice. If we got a stray question, a stray email or something, we would bounce it off PD, just to help us to look at things with fresh eyes.

They did a public affairs officers conference which I went to; to help us to understand how the media was looking at us, about embedded reporters, which our brigade has had several of. We covered a lot of different media topics: conveying to us media news from Washington, for example. Again, it's sort of a two-way information sharing. It's helpful. I don't regard it at all as being onerous, but a resource that I could tap when I wanted to or needed to.

Q: I think we've made quite an extensive tour d'horizon. *I thank you for that. It's been interesting, and most exciting to listen to.*

A: Well, thank you. I appreciate the opportunity. It's a very special chance to go and serve in the administration's highest foreign policy priority. I grew immensely during the

experience. I hope that I contributed more than I got out of the experience. I thoroughly enjoyed it. The time went very quickly. I thought our work was vital. I thought our work was very important for the future, nation building, that in the future we're going to see the Departments of Defense and State and USAID and perhaps others working together, the whole of government approach. I think we're going to look back on the EPRT experience in just a few short years and say, "There are things we can learn from our experience to help us to work together organizationally in complex dilemmas in the future."

Whether they're pandemics, famines, nation building, insurgencies, we're going to find that kinetic approaches are not going to work and that we're going to need specialized interagency approaches that bring in talents of different parts of our government. They're out there but they need experience working together and I think this EPRT experience in particular has given us this opportunity, more at the EPRT level perhaps than the PRT level, because they're provincial stand-alones.

We're fully integrated. We live and work among the military. That gives them an understanding about the State Department as well, because, again, I think as much as I learned about DOD, certainly several hundred people in DOD learned from me, the only State Department officer on the east side of Baghdad.

Q: I think that's an important point, that DOD folks have learned a lot from your presence .and that's definitely a good thing. Again, I thank you very much. I appreciate your sharing so candidly and completely.

A: You're most welcome. Thank you.