

United States Institute of Peace
Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Iraq Experience Project

**LESLIE A. "CAP" DEAN
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Interviewed by: Haven North
Initial interview date: October 28, 2004
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Cap Dean, 64, has an MA Economics (Univ. of Illinois). His professional history includes US Air Force (4 years); International Banking (1 year); USAID (28 years); Vice-President of Operations, International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH) (5 years). In Iraq he was Regional Coordinator, Baghdad, January-September 2004. He discusses Reconstruction, Governance, and Security

The Assignment: Until a mayor was elected in May, Dean held the authorities and responsibilities of the mayor and governor of Baghdad Province as Regional Coordinator.

Conditions in Baghdad: In Baghdad, there was a considerable amount of damage. This damage was largely due to looting that took place after the war, rather than from the war itself. While there was a fair amount of economic activity, there had been significant disruption of business and trade in the city. Such disruption resulted in high unemployment. Also, due to the poor water quality, health issues became a serious concern, especially among children. Health concerns were never quite addressed to the degree that Dean would have preferred.

The Security Situation: During the time Dean was in Baghdad (January-September), the security situation deteriorated from a lack of flexibility in moving around the city without some type of security into needing considerable security support anytime one left the Green Zone. While there were ever increasing numbers of police in Baghdad, a question of how adequately they were trained remained.

Restoring City Services: In Baghdad, the city was responsible for drinking water, the sewage system, city parks, and road repair. Restoring these systems from war damage as well as updating systems that had not worked properly even while Saddam Hussein was in power was a task Dean and others took on. Coordination was a key component of this type of work. He estimates that there were four or five sources of projects in the city geared towards reestablishing these basic services.

City Hall: One major accomplishment was reaching a point where they had an operating and somewhat effective city hall. After this obstacle was removed, another issue was to increase its capacity. Dean tackled this problem by working with city hall employees on their systems and teaching them how to accept responsibility and make things happen. Next, they worked to have a mayor and governor elected and installed, a goal that was achieved in May 2004.

Working with Iraqis: While disbursing funds at all, much less allowing for

competitive bidding was an obstacle, Dean and General Corelli worked in the direction of diverting funds away from the large American firms and toward local firms. Dean felt that this had many advantages, including better prospects for security. He also praised the Iraqi citizens saying, "I have never worked in a country either in Asia or Africa where you had such a high level of achievements, of education of the indigenous people."

Establishing a system of local government in the Baghdad Central Region:

A major province of Dean's work in Baghdad was helping to set up and establish a functioning system of local government. This responsibility stemmed from the American decision for a more decentralized Iraqi government. Councils were set up on a number of levels, from the neighborhood level up to a regional and provincial level. Each Neighborhood Council was established so as to represent the make-up of its population. Then the councils would select a member to represent its neighborhood at the next level. This type of selection of a member for representation continued up through the levels so as to ensure that the people were properly represented at each level. Dean summarizes that there are about 120 different councils within the Baghdad province with approximately 1,500 representatives. He is not sure, however, that all these levels will last for very long, but he believes the concept will.

The transition and lessons learned: Dean maintains that the transition took place too soon. One of the major problems he sees with this decision is that the numbers of people there in advisory roles has diminished significantly since this time. Dean feels that these mentoring positions are necessary, as is following through with what the United States has started. Now that transition has already taken place, Dean recommends that the U.S. Embassy take a more active role, rather than the typical role of an Embassy.

Another significant continuing problem is finding a way to disburse funds more quickly and move programs along. Dean attributed the high numbers of unemployed to the increases in insurgency. He points out the rationale that Iraqis need to provide for their families and earn a salary. With the economy recovering at the slow pace it has been, it may seem logical for these men to do whatever necessary, including becoming an insurgent to earn money. This decision also comes on the heels of bitterness at the unfulfilled promises of Americans that there would be opportunities and restored capacities.

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Q: Today is October 28th, 2004 and the interview is with Cap Dean. How long were you in Iraq, Cap?

DEAN: Eight months. I arrived out there on the 27th of January of 2004 and I departed there, I think, on the 22nd of September and had a week of paperwork and briefings in Washington, D.C. before I got back here on the 30th of September. So, eight months.

The Assignment

Q: What was your position?

DEAN: I was the Regional Coordinator for Baghdad Central.

Q: What does that cover?

DEAN: There were four regions within the country, North, South, South Central and Central. Most of those were multi-province, multi-state regions except for the Baghdad Central region, which had only the one province, Baghdad, which was a sizeable province. It was just the one province, but it did have about seven or seven and a half million people, or roughly 25% of the country's population in that province.

Q: This region was all within Baghdad itself, or were there some environs that were part of it?

DEAN: It was the environs too. Baghdad City, the city proper of Baghdad, was about 20% of the geographic region of Baghdad Province. My responsibilities covered the entire province with about five and a half million people in the city of Baghdad and another million and a half people, who were outside the city of Baghdad, but were within the province of Baghdad.

Q: What was your responsibility in that position? You were a senior advisor, but does that mean you were the local governor?

DEAN: Well, basically until transition, or actually until we had a new mayor elected to the position in May, I held the authorities and responsibilities of the mayor of Baghdad as well as the governor of the province of Baghdad. Our office and I had what I saw as three primary functions. One was to help restore services and do some rehabilitation in Baghdad that was necessary for restoring those services. Second, was to go ahead and provide some mentoring and some capacity building for the city, for city hall, and third, was to help establish a system of local government for the city and province of Baghdad. Those three jobs were what our office did and what I focused on.

Q: Before we go into each of those, to whom did you report?

DEAN: It was interesting. I originally reported through the chain up to Ambassador Bremer through a British ambassador by the name of Bearpark, Ambassador Bearpark. He was head of regional operations, which included head of the four different regions in the country. I reported through him, but all of the regional coordinators were, I guess I would have to say, semi-autonomous. We met with Ambassador Bearpark generally once a month for a regional conference, but he certainly gave all the regional coordinators pretty much the flexibility to do what they needed to do.

Q: Did you have a staff?

DEAN: Yes, when I first arrived there in January we probably had about 40 people total in the office. That's including all the Iraqi nationals as well as a fairly diverse group of international employees in the office. My deputy was an Australian. We had quite a large staff of translators and Iraqi engineers. We built that up to its peak in May, probably about 75 or 76 people total in the office of Baghdad Central. We had a sizeable staff focusing on those different areas and we worked very closely with a group called the Governorate Support Team, GST, which was a local group of people from the military who were doing civil affairs work. They were not attached to our office, but in many respects, they were part and parcel. We worked hand-in-glove and had many contacts each and every day. That office was headed up by a military colonel who worked for the head of the First Cavalry Division, which did a lot of the civil affairs work, the hands-on work out in the different municipalities of Baghdad, the subunits within the city. We worked very closely with them. There were another 25 people in that particular group. Of course, the First Cavalry Division totaled about 30,000 people, and many of those people were available to work on a lot of the activities and projects that Baghdad Central had developed and was coordinating.

Q: When you first got there, or just before you got there, what was your understanding of the situation that you were going to be faced with?

DEAN: A couple of things. I went in there to replace another former USAID employee,

Ted Morse. Ted sent me a job description when he was trying to bring me up to speed on what this job consisted of and, like many job descriptions, I read through it and said, well, this is the ideal. This is probably over inflated. When I got there, I was kind of appalled by the fact that the job description Ted had sent me was understated, if anything. The job parameters were just huge, and I must say I was rather taken aback and I said, you know, I'm just appalled, in one sense, at the breadth of this job. I hope I can do it, and I was quite antsy that first week as to whether or not I was going to be up to that job, but I quickly got my sea legs and my bearings and felt very comfortable after a week with the job. But the job was very flexible. Ted Morse had basically developed a job description that included everything from being mayor and governor of Baghdad City and Baghdad Province to design and development of the rehabilitation projects, and setting up the various local democratic organizations within the province and the city; it just went on and on and on. Coordination with the military between the civilian and the military authorities for Baghdad Province was a large part of it. So I was not exactly sure what I was going to be getting into when I got there, but it worked out and the job had a lot of flexibility. Although there were certain things that you had to have done and had to do much of what was done by Baghdad Central, it was flexible. You figured out what needed to be done and organized your people to do it.

Conditions in Baghdad

Q: How would you describe the conditions in Baghdad and the province area? Was there a lot of damage or a lot of disruption? How would you describe the economic and social conditions?

DEAN: Well, I got there in January 2004. The initial fighting that took place back in March 2003 was nine months behind us. That situation was past. But obviously there were still considerable security concerns. There was a tremendous amount of damage that had taken place in Baghdad. Interestingly enough, [the damage was] not so much from the bombing and the fighting. This was one of the first things I learned when I got there. It was very surprising to me. You see all these buildings that had been destroyed, just the skeletons of the buildings that had been destroyed or burned and no windows and no doors. I very quickly heard a number of people say that 80% of the damage that you see around the buildings in Baghdad was not due to the fighting or to bombing or shelling by American troops, but was due to the looting that took place subsequent to the initial round of fighting and this became very evident. People could argue, I'm sure, about the percentage, whether it was 75% or 90%, and I've heard a wide range of estimates. I would say that three quarters of the damage certainly would be a realistic figure. People would go in and they would just remove from buildings anything that had any salvage value, such as fixtures, plumbing fixtures, the metal, the windows, the doorframes. They would strip off the copper plumbing and the wiring so that really all you had left behind was the shell of the building. Just about every decent building around, every government building or buildings owned by the Baathist party, had been thoroughly looted. The ones that escaped were few and far between and very quickly occupied by the military forces.

In terms of the economy, certainly there was a lot of business that went on as usual. The streets were full of businessmen and shops were open and operating. You would go downtown and traffic was heavy. It seemed in many respects that the economy was going on as usual, though obviously there was a lot of unemployment, a lot more than there had been prior to the war. Certain types of things were not available, the trade patterns had not been re-established and, of course, you had the sanctions before the war so that was always a problem. There was a lot of economic activity going on in the city, but there had, of course, been very considerable disruption of business and trade in the city. There were certainly a lot of security concerns when I arrived there in January.

The security situation

Q: Yes, what was the security situation?

DEAN: As far as people working for the Coalition, for the CPA, you could not safely go downtown. You could not safely leave the Green Zone without some kind of security and, unfortunately, that situation just seemed to deteriorate further from the time I arrived until the time I left. Whereas I did hear stories of people back in late 2003 who would be going downtown for dinner or for routine shopping without huge concerns about their safety, by the time I arrived in January, there was very little flexibility that people had in terms of movement around the city without some kind of security. By the time I left in September, things had deteriorated to the stage so that any time you left the Green Zone, you had to have a considerable security support or you were taking extreme risks in terms of your safety.

Q: Was there any kind of a police force at work?

DEAN: Oh yes, absolutely. There were a lot of local police downtown and, of course, more and more of the local police appeared as that eight month period I was there went on and as more and more people were trained. There were a lot of police in Baghdad. The question was how many of them were adequately trained and that was really the argument. We probably had in total numbers of police almost enough police in the city, and I won't quote numbers because I'm just not comfortable enough with the numbers, but there were extensive efforts going on towards training more police and more national guards so that the presence of police and national guard around the city was rising gradually the whole time I was there and that helped. What is necessary, of course, is to figure out how many more police are necessary, and particularly how many more trained police. The number of police varied considerably from area to area so that in some areas there was a considerable police presence and there was relative safety. In other areas, such as Sadr City, which subsequently came to be called Al-Thawra, there were relatively few police. There were maybe 600 to 800 police in all of Sadr City, an area with a population of probably about two million people, so the number of police was nowhere near adequate for the Sadr City portion of Baghdad.

Q: You've mentioned three different tasks. Let's take them one at a time and go through them. What's the first one?

Restoring city services

DEAN: The first one was to help restore city services and get things going. Baghdad, as the capital city, was in some respects like Washington, D.C., or a number of other capital cities around the world where it had its own unique status. And a lot of things were unique about Baghdad in terms of city services that you might not have in other parts of the country. In Baghdad, the city itself was responsible for drinking water. It was responsible for sewage treatment and the sewer system. It was responsible for city parks and road repair. We did a lot of things in the area of basic city services and things that in other cities within the country were being done by the national government and directed by ministries, whereas in Baghdad the responsibility was being handled essentially by city hall.

When the war was initially over back in early 2003 and the Coalition forces arrived, a lot of these services simply were not working at all, and that wasn't necessarily because of the war, although the war did disrupt some of these services and did cause some damage. More specifically, because Saddam Hussein's regime simply was not taking care of the infrastructure within Baghdad or, for that matter, in other areas around the country, so that the sewage treatment plants in Baghdad were not working and had not worked for years. This wasn't just sewage treatment. You saw this in other plants, such as water treatment plants and so forth where workers were not being paid properly so they said, "Okay, fine, if I'm not going to get paid, I'm just going to steal some machinery." They would steal a motor, or steal some of the spare parts that were available to repair machines, or steal copper wires and so forth, and a lot of this theft caused plants to become less and less operational. In an area like sewage treatment, the problems did not become immediately evident to the people. The sewage just went into the Tigris River untreated, not a problem that most people are going to pick up on specifically. We immediately went about, starting back in April, May of 2003, to try and get some of these different plants fixed, the water treatment plant, the sewage treatment plants and so forth. The sewage lines, many broken and collapsed around the city, needed repair and there were standing ponds of sewage water in many places in the city, particularly in some of the economically depressed areas like Sadr City, which was probably 95% Shiite. The Saddam Hussein regime simply did not see fit to take care of that part of the city. We went ahead and started putting out contracts for repairing a lot of these things.

Q: How did you find people who knew how to do these things?

DEAN: A couple of things. When I was there, we had a huge amount of the funds that had been generated by the UN Oil for Food program, and those funds were allocated to the different regions for utilization in different types of projects. My predecessors, Ted

Morse and Hank Bassford, who had been the regional coordinators prior to me, went ahead and let contracts for some of these different rehabilitation jobs and some of these contracts went to U.S. companies. Some of the contracts went to local firms, which might have been Iraqi firms, or they might have been Turkish firms or other firms operating in the region that had experience or had been operating in the region previously.

When I arrived there in January, there were a number of projects already underway. We probably had, I'm guessing, 40 or 50 projects going, and we very quickly started increasing the number. These were all sorts of projects which ranged from work on water treatment plants to replacing broken sewer lines, building new what they called lift stations to help keep the sewage flowing in the lines. We put in some new lines. We worked on a lot of new connections. We did some work on schools in Baghdad and provided funds for repair of some of the schools. We worked very closely with the U.S. military's First Armored Division when I first arrived and subsequently the First Cavalry Division, working with them to coordinate on our projects, to make sure that our different activities were dovetailing. Or we might identify a project and say, "Hey, here's a military project that you need to do with your civil affairs folks."

There was a lot of coordination work. We had probably four or five different sources of projects that were going on in the city to help get things reestablished. We had the USAID Mission, which was doing a lot of work with OTI (Office of Transition Initiatives), which was doing work in Iraq. USAID was doing some of its own bilateral mission work within the city. We had subsequent to the \$86 million Supplemental Appropriation, \$18 billion for Iraq, and probably of that there was about \$2 billion that had been identified for rehabilitation projects in Baghdad Province, and we had that. Then the U.S. military had what they called CERP funds, Commanders Emergency Response Program funds. Those funds were funded from both appropriated dollars as well as the Oil for Food dollars that were allocated to the military. Then we had a fourth area of funds, those funds that were allocated directly to Baghdad Central and to other regions by the financial folks in the CPA. So, we had to make sure that all these different organizations – USAID, the Program Management Office, the military, Baghdad Central – and the various sources of funds had to be coordinated and make sure that we weren't stepping on each other's toes and we were getting our priorities straight and so forth. A lot of coordination work on different types of projects was essential.

Q: When you put all those pots of money together, was that more than \$2 billion?

DEAN: Yes, and, of course, a lot of the appropriated money has not yet been started.

Q: Right.

DEAN: Yes, I would guess that eventually when all those appropriated funds are contracted for and initiated, that that would total up more than \$2 billion for Baghdad and

Baghdad Province.

Q: Did you have a staff of engineers to design and manage these projects?

DEAN: All four of those different organizations had engineers. USAID had engineers. Admiral Dave Nash's area, the Project Management Office, had their engineers. The military had military engineers and we had assigned to Baghdad Central a group of engineers from the U.S. Corps of Engineers. We also had about 15 Iraqi engineers of mixed skills. They were right in our office, and they were part of the initial staff that we had. They would do some initial assessments. They would help to make sure that the bids that we were getting from local contractors and American contractors were in the ballpark for what we wanted to do. So, we had that in house capacity to do a little ground-truthing on the reliability and the quality of the estimates that we were getting from contracting firms.

Q: How did you set priorities given that I guess everything had to be done and had to be done at first?

DEAN: There was an awful lot of coordination that went on with the government, and essentially we had to make sure that our priorities matched those of the people in the city government. When I arrived there, there were three deputy mayors within the city. There was no mayor, and I truly was functioning as the mayor. I didn't think that that was going to be the case, but I basically was the mayor. We would meet with the city hall folks and meet with the deputy mayors a couple of times a week, and were in telephone contact or e-mail contact with them much more frequently than that. We had people going down to the city hall every day to work on issues, whether it was electricity or sewage or education or whatever it might be, coordinating with the directors general in city hall. My predecessor as the regional coordinator recognized early on that in his capacity as regional coordinator, he could not be making every decision down at city hall, so they quickly put in place a system that said we've got three deputy mayors, and two of those mayors acting in concert can act as the mayor. The three mayors were working as a threesome there to make routine decisions and the more critical decisions would be brought to the attention of the regional coordinator and he would make the major decisions. Again, we worked very closely with the city hall in order to make sure that the priorities that we were seeing were the priorities that agreed with those of the Iraqis in positions of authority within the city and Iraqis at the neighborhood and district levels.

Q: We'll come to that in a minute. What do you think the main accomplishments were in this reviving of the city and the public works and what was not working?

Main accomplishments in Baghdad rehabilitation

DEAN: Certainly in terms of the rehabilitation, we did get to the point where we had an operating and effective city hall. Not as effective as we would have liked, and not as

complete in terms of their capacity building as we would have liked, but we did get treated water going again. We did get one of the sewage treatment plants up and running, not 100%, but to the point where a lot of the sewage was being treated and not just being dumped raw into the Tigris. Schools were through the efforts of everybody; I mean USAID, Admiral Nash, the military, and Baghdad Central. Schools were probably raised to an improved level of physical repair, that is, the repair and the rehabilitation of the schools probably left schools better than they were before the start of the war. We put a lot of money into the schools. So, your basic areas were up and running.

Q: What about electricity?

DEAN: Electricity. We had the Ministry of Electricity working on that. Our office in Baghdad Central did not work so much on that, but electricity production at the time I left, countrywide, was probably not quite what it was before the start of the war, but it was distributed much more equitably. Now, people would say, well, before the war most people in Baghdad had electricity 24 hours a day. Well, that may be true, but outside of Baghdad an awful lot of people didn't have electricity at all. So, the Coalition worked very hard to give a more equitable distribution of electricity around the entire country so that it wasn't just the folks in Baghdad that were getting access to fairly reliable electricity. When we left, probably the norm was four hours of electricity on and two hours off, four on, two off, so that most people were getting some electricity during the day for more than half of the time.

Q: I gather demand was growing very rapidly.

DEAN: Yes. By the time I left at the end of September, most basic services had been restored.

Q: What about telecommunications?

DEAN: Communications had come a long way. Again, communications were not something that was handled by our office, but the phone services had been restored, though not to the level that they were before. There were fewer services in terms of landlines, but a dramatic increase in the number of cell phones around the city. That was a big plus. Your sewer, water, schools, road repairs, clearing the city of the hulks of burned out trucks and cars, that had all been taken care of and Baghdad Central was taking care of the hulk removal.

Q: I see. Was there any major gap in that work that was not being addressed?

DEAN: In hulk removal, my predecessor had pretty much wrapped up most of that. I mean there were still some hulks around town, but he had let some contracts, which had a number of different companies remove the scrap.

Outstanding problems

Q: I was thinking more in terms of general infrastructure. Were there gaps or something that was not getting done?

DEAN: Yes. I would say one of the areas that was not really addressed the way we would like was health services, although health services had been restored to some degree. I think that funds were made available under the Supplemental Appropriation, but they simply had not started to flow yet. Yes, there's still a huge amount of work left to be done in Baghdad. I'm stretching my memory a little bit on this one, but I think there was something like \$700 million that had been set aside for health clinics and rehabilitation of hospitals and very little of that had been spent at the time I left. Health clinics were not running the way they should be. They had not been rehabilitated as much as they should have been. Some work was going on in this area, but just not the amount, the levels that we would have liked to have seen. Part of it was just that there was a huge amount of work that had to be done. There was a huge amount of looting that had taken place.

If one drives around Baghdad today you still see huge numbers of buildings that are obviously not functioning; they are basically still skeletons. We tried to help address that. Our office initiated a couple of projects. One of the interesting activities, for example, [started when] Ambassador Bremer had an interview one night, a TV interview with Geraldo Rivera. As Ambassador Bremer was waiting in the lobby of this building for his interview to start, one of the people from the Iraqi Governing Council sidled up to him and said, "You know, Mr. Ambassador, we've got two or three months now until sovereignty. It would be nice if you could turn Baghdad over in a beautiful condition to the people of Iraq at the time of sovereignty. You really need to work on making Baghdad a beautiful city." Ambassador Bremer thought about it for a couple minutes and said, "You know, that's a good idea. I'll do that." Well, anyway, 20 minutes later, on Geraldo Rivera live all over the U.S., the Ambassador said, "One of our new efforts will be to turn over a beautiful city, so I'm announcing \$10 million right now for a beautified Baghdad before sovereignty on June 30th." The Ambassador called my office about two hours later and said, "Cap, we've got \$10 million for you. We want a beautiful Baghdad in the next two or three months." So, we swallowed hard and got our \$10 million and immediately started a project called Baghdad Beautiful and, of course, \$10 million just wouldn't cover it, but we did a lot of work with that.

Q: What kind of things did you do?

DEAN: A lot of trash pickup, playgrounds, rehabilitating some of the open areas in the city, painting fences, curbs, removing a lot of trash, just whatever we could do on the surface that was going to make the city a more beautiful place. A couple of people were a little frustrated with this. They said, "Look, why are we worried about making the city beautiful at a time when our kids are standing in six inches of sewage water, why worry

about beautifying the city? You should be working on sewer pipes." Basically, what we said, we need to do both. We did a lot of trash pickup and cleanup, fix up, and at the same time we were working on some of the more fundamental infrastructure questions. We certainly did not get everything done.

Q: Generally, what did you find was the health of the population there? Were there any real health problems?

DEAN: Very serious health problems. Again, because of some of the shortcuts that had been taken by the Saddam Hussein regime over the years, health was suffering. Now, one example of that is that water lines and sewer lines were running down the same trenches when they were putting in a water and sewage network for the city of Baghdad. Well, that's fine initially, until your sewage lines start breaking and developing leaks and your water lines start leaking and you have cross-contamination. We had some of that and we had an awful lot of gastrointestinal problems with kids. There were some cases of cholera that were beginning to appear in the city, hepatitis and other types of problems. A lot of this was due to the poor quality of the water. There were areas of the city that did not even have access to piped water, so the First Cavalry Division was doing an awful lot of water distribution. We were pushing more water treatment plants and the problem is you just couldn't get things moving quickly enough.

One of the shortfalls I would see, and this is always very controversial, one of the controversial arguments that was always going on was the \$18.4 billion that had come from the Supplemental Appropriation for rehabilitation. Was that being actually obligated and disbursed as quickly as it should be? People in the Program Management Office, PMO, Admiral Nash's office, said, "Sure we're moving very quickly." Now, my understanding is that those funds became available in October 2003. By the time I arrived there in January, I think, nothing had yet been spent. Some of the problem was actually the process of disbursing the funds from the Treasury, the Budget Office to the Coalition Provisional Authority, but some of it was just the huge problem of getting contracts out there, identifying exactly what had to be done, and competitive bidding of projects. We had a lot of issues on that, as you're aware, the issue of well, do you give funds without competitive bidding and so forth. That turned out to be quite a hassle in terms of how to proceed. There was a lot of emphasis eventually on competitive bidding, but all this resulted in the fact that just a couple of months ago, I think it was probably in July, maybe even as late as August, it was only in the last half of 2004 calendar year that we had actually passed the point of having disbursed, not just obligated or committed, but disbursed, \$1 billion out of that \$18 billion. A lot of people said, well, this is just unacceptable and this is part of the reason for a lot of the frustration and disappointment among Iraqis and among donors that here we are, so far into the reconstruction process in Iraq, and we have disbursed only \$1 billion. I would agree that that was a very legitimate complaint, that somehow we had to move, should have moved, much more quickly in disbursing those funds. Now, there are a lot of reasons funds were not disbursed more

quickly. Certainly very serious security problems and the problems of working through major American firms was a huge problem in many respects. Design problems, trying to get it right, exactly right and not move so quickly that expensive mistakes are going to be made.

On one of the issues that Baghdad Central addressed, we worked very closely with First Cavalry Division. My counterpart in First Cavalry Division was just an outstanding officer by the name of Major General Peter Chiarelli. General Chiarelli and I worked towards trying to do less in the way of contracts to large American firms and trying to divert more funds to local firms. The purpose there was that if you could move it away from the American firms, then you did not have quite the same type of security problems out there. As soon as you got expatriates working out on the project site, you just attract the insurgents, the terrorists, like a magnet, and as soon as you get a couple of mortars lobbed into a site or a drive-by-shooting with small arms or a couple of improvised explosive devices, IEDs, these American contractors would say, "Well, we do not have the kind of working environment here that our contract calls for. We're suspending activities until security gets better." That was a huge problem.

Q: I'm sure.

DEAN: I witnessed this in our projects where you would get major American companies who would say, "Sorry, we can't work out there. We don't have the right type of security environment and that's up to the Coalition Provisional Authority to provide that. We do the building and construction. We're not expected to provide a safe and sound security environment to work in." So, General Chiarelli and Baghdad Central worked hard to try and move towards more local contractors.

Q: Were you able to find local contractors that were able to do the job?

DEAN: We were. We were able to find local contractors and were able to get local contractors moving in. I must say, my whole assessment of the U.S. military went up tremendously during these eight months. I came out of a military background many decades back, so I've always had a high opinion of the military, but I'd never seen the military working quite this effectively in an environment where they were focused on two things. One was the military aspects of what they were trying to do, and two was the civil affairs aspects of what they were trying to do. They were just extremely effective on the civil affairs. They could move so much more quickly than PMO or move so much more quickly than many of our other efforts in terms of getting monies moving quickly, working through local contractors, and they could get a lot of projects moving quickly out in the neighborhoods of Sadr City or Mansoor District, or some of the other areas within Baghdad.

Q: What do you think was the characteristic of the military that enabled them to do that?

What was different between that and other ways?

DEAN: First, they were working out there all the time. The military were spread out and disbursed around the city and they had brigade teams out there, with civil affairs teams attached to them. They could go out there. They provided their own security. They could do their own on-the-ground assessments of the security condition. They could go out there and make contact with people. They had some good procedures for contracting. They had to compete once they got above a certain funding level, but they were not as tied up in paperwork and bureaucracy as PMO was and, unfortunately, USAID to some degree. I spent 28 years with USAID so I'm a very strong supporter of USAID, but certainly USAID and the Project Management Office all had difficulty working in the high security environment.

Another problem in terms of the large American contractors was that, because of the security situation, they would have huge amounts of contracts going into providing security. These personal security details which they had to have around are very expensive, along with the security equipment that you needed. The costs for an armored vehicle — you're talking \$200,000 plus for an armored SUV, plus the people that are needed to provide the security once you do have that SUV — are just very high. So, you could have some of these American contracts where — again I'm always reluctant to use statistics on something like this — but I'm sure that on some of these contracts you had 20% or more of your total cost for those contracts going into security, a much higher cost than you would have if you were working with a local contractor, because the local contractors did not face the same security environment that American contractors were facing.

Increasing the capacity of Baghdad's City Hall

Q: Let's go into the second of your assignments.

DEAN: Okay, well, the second assignment tied in a lot with the first assignment. It was increasing the capacity at city hall.

Again, this was where we worked at city hall to work on their systems, try and get them working in terms of accepting responsibility, knowing how to go about doing things. City hall, what they called the Amanat, had always been functioning, had been around for a long, long time and had always had a privileged position in the city. The mayor of Baghdad had always been directly appointed by Saddam Hussein and was a very powerful individual. What it meant was that nobody in city hall was comfortable making decisions. They always looked up the chain for somebody else to make the decisions. It was very difficult to get people to go ahead and move and act on their own. We did a lot of mentoring. We did a lot of consulting. We worked on procedures. We worked on how you'd get trash collection moving, for example. Trash collection is not just a question of having the right trash collection trucks and so forth. You've got to have systems in place.

My understanding is that before the war, under Saddam Hussein, trash collection was always very punctual and worked very well. People were simply working out of fear. If the trash did not get picked up, somebody was going to get fired or somebody was going to get killed. A lot of that discipline broke down after the war. A lot of our trash collection trucks, basically garbage trucks, got stolen. They would end up being sold in Turkey or Iran and a lot of the other trucks wound up being used for private garbage collection where somebody would have trash collection picked up, but the people would have to pay for it on the side. It was not an official city function. We had to work very hard on that, trying to get these systems back in place, working with the deputy mayors and the directors general.

We also worked towards the goal of getting a mayor elected and a governor of the province elected, and we accomplished that. We finally did get a mayor and a governor elected and installed in late May. Then, from the time they were elected on up until the transfer of sovereignty eventually on June 28th, I worked as a senior advisor to both the governor and to the mayor.

Q: You were trying to build up the administration there.

DEAN: So once we had the administration set up and had the governor and the mayor in place, I and others within Baghdad Central worked as advisors to them. Up until the transition, the mayor was working for me and he took his guidance and direction from me, as did the governor. Once transition took place I was no longer in that same position of legal authority. I was, at that time, simply an advisor and I continued to meet with them on the same frequency as I had before and actually a little bit more, but my advice was simply that. It was no longer providing direction; it was just advice, and they could take my advice or ignore it. Now fortunately, for both the mayor's and the governor's positions, we ended up with very strong people. The mayor particularly had been a city planning consultant in Abu Dhabi. He was Iraqi and had left in, I believe, 1994 or 1996 and had gone to Abu Dhabi. He was a very strong personality, very self-assured, very confident of his abilities, and did very well and will continue to do very well. I continued to work with him until I left and once I left he no longer had a person working as a senior consultant to him. That second phase of Baghdad Central's job was simply working with city hall and trying to get things running there, because city hall has the responsibility for the overall administration of the city of Baghdad.

Q: How did you get them to take more responsibility? I gather, under Saddam Hussein, people were afraid to make a decision. What did you do to bring about a change?

DEAN: Well, you know, before the new mayor came in, it was simply saying, "Look you've got the authority, you need to move on this, we need to do it." There was a little bit of carrot and stick. When we were working on the trash collection issues I had to come down pretty hard a couple of times and say, "Look, we need to have better trash

collection or people are going to be replaced. If the city can't do this, we may have to go to commercial contracts. We will dissolve city garbage collection and contract it out to the best bidder, if the city is not able to do the job." Some of it was cajoling, some of it was just sitting down and talking to people and advising on some of the alternatives of what you can do. You've got the authority, go ahead and do it.

Q: Did they rise to the occasion?

DEAN: It depends. I'd have to say yes and no. We had a lot of different municipalities, sub-cities. Baghdad is a little bit like New York City. New York City has its five boroughs, and we had nine boroughs within Baghdad. Of these nine sub-administrative units or municipalities within Baghdad, some of them rose to the occasion and did very well. Others did not. There was always the threat of security and some of the people administering these different districts said, "Look, I can't fire that garbage truck driver because he left his assigned route, or his assigned rounds, because of fear of getting shot. I've talked to these guys and they let me know that if I come down on them hard, something is going to happen to me or something is going to happen to my family." It was always hard to tell how much of that was bluff and how much was real, but we did have people, city officials, officials on our different councils, getting killed by terrorists on a weekly basis. So, there were real security concerns and security problems continued and even today it is one of our huge concerns.

Q: Right. Did you have training sessions for your administrative people?

DEAN: We did. We worked hand-in-glove with a USAID-funded contractor, one you're familiar with, Research Triangle Institute, and RTI has a huge contract. We're talking many millions of dollars. They had about 1,500 Iraqis working for them around the country, working on various types of training programs and there were dozens of expats, many Americans. Within city hall in Baghdad, RTI had an excellent team of expats, largely American, who worked in city hall every day and provided a lot of training sessions where they discussed topics such as how a mayor relates to a city council, or the roles and responsibilities of the city council, or how garbage collection should be handled. RTI did a lot of this training for us under USAID funding, and we worked very closely with RTI in trying to establish needs and priorities.

Q: Training in budgets and administration things of that sort.

DEAN: Right. So, RTI came up with a good assessment. Their team leader in Baghdad while I was there was a fellow by the name of Al Haines. My understanding is that in the past Al was essentially the city manager of Houston, Texas. He had an excellent and highly relevant background. He was the perfect person for this job, and he knew what had to be done and how you go about doing it and he oversaw a number of good projects. I just can't speak highly enough about RTI's performance on this job and the capacity

building and daily advice that RTI was giving to people within the city hall, within the Amanat.

Q: Right. Well, let's go on to the third area. What was that?

Establishing a system of local government in the Baghdad Central Region

DEAN: The third area was basically helping to set up, establish and achieve a functioning system of local government. This was part of the federalism approach that had been part and parcel of the reason the Coalition went into Iraq. That is, Saddam Hussein was the sole person of power in Baghdad and in Iraq and all decisions were traced back to him. The whole idea of what we were trying to do was to decentralize and set up a federalist system to get the power down to the people.

When Ted Morse came in, in April or May of 2003, we had a number of people working in Baghdad Central, including one very excellent Foreign Service Officer by the name of Andy Morrison. What we set up in Baghdad in both the province and the city was a system of local government councils, in many ways what we do in cities all over the United States. Initially, we set up Neighborhood Advisory Councils (NACs) in both the city and in the region within the province outside of the city. We set up Neighborhood Councils and we went into neighborhoods and said, "Okay, we're going to have a neighborhood meeting here three days from now and we would like interested people to get together. You're going to pick out some people who can speak for the neighborhoods on issues of reconstruction, safety, security, and political issues that are of interest to you." So all over Baghdad City and Baghdad Province, we had these neighborhood meetings. You might get a couple hundred people attending. Baghdad Central, with the help of the military, would go in there and say, "Okay, look, here's what we're trying to establish. We want you to set up a council of maybe of 20 to 30 people who can speak for your neighborhood and people who are going to be able to represent the rest of you." We went ahead and did that and put together these councils. I think there were roughly 100 of these Neighborhood Councils all over the province. Then we said to the Neighborhood Councils after they had gotten themselves elected and set up and had council chairmen, that they should elect people to the District Advisory Councils (DACs). Within Baghdad Province there were 15 districts, nine within the city and six more in a circle outside the city. Each of those 15 districts wound up having a District Council of about 30 people.

Q: Thirty people on each council?

DEAN: Thirty people on each council.

Q: Right.

DEAN: Those 30 people would come from those people on the Neighborhood Councils

that were in that district. We had nine District Councils from the city, six more outside, and then we had elections within those District Councils to set up two more councils. One was a City Advisory Council with 35 people on it and the other was a Regional Advisory Council that was representing the six districts in Baghdad Province in the region outside the city. They set up a council of about 35 people. So, now we've got Neighborhood Advisory Councils, in the neighborhood of 100 of those. We've got 15 District Councils and we've got a City Council and a Regional Council. Then the City and the Regional councils voted and set up one more council which was a Provincial Council, what we would call a state assembly here in the U.S. You now have the whole council system with about 120 different councils within Baghdad Province, and probably in excess of 1,500 people represented on all of those, or 1,500 people who are members of all those different councils, representing all the people in the province. Now, this is the first time in 5,000 years, the first time ever, that there's been any kind of a representative government in this area. Many of the other provinces in Iraq, all of the other provinces, in fact, set up similar systems. I was pleased that Baghdad Province was the first. We really set up the model and were just at the stage of wrapping up this system when I arrived in January. It had been pretty much set up.

Q: Where did this idea come from?

DEAN: Well, it was setting up a system of local government that we use throughout the United States. It's not unusual at all. I think what we set up in Baghdad, and which we don't have so much of in the United States, are the Neighborhood Councils. In the United States, you've got many different types of neighborhood groups and committees, but not quite as well formalized as we have in Baghdad. We just felt that it was important that you get something a little bit more formal here to make sure we had a system that, in fact, gave everybody representation.

Q: Do you think that the councils on the different levels were reasonably representative of the communities that they were representing?

DEAN: Yes, absolutely I do.

Q: In terms of ethnic groups, in terms of women and men, etc.?

DEAN: Very much so. We worked very closely with the groups as they were setting up these committees and said, "Look, you know, here's what we're trying to achieve. This is not a group where all your men in the community come together and ignore the women or where you simply come up with your predominant ethnic groups. We want everybody represented here. As you vote at the neighborhood level to go ahead and pick people for the district level and the district level for the city council, we want you to think in terms of men and women. We want you to think in terms of Shiah representation, Sunni representation and Christian representation. We want you to think

in terms of getting sheiks in there and non-sheiks. Think in terms of getting some religious leaders and so forth and so on, not all wealthy people. We want a cross section of what your district looks like. If your district, if your councils do not come up with a representative mix, we're going to ask you to redo it." We did, in fact, ask some of the councils to redo it. We had what we called "refreshment." Let's say you're in an area that has got a heavy representation of Sunni. If they came up with all Shiites, we would say, "Okay, you're going to have to drop some Shiites off of your committee and get some Sunnis on. Sorry for this heavy-handed approach. I know that you have tried to do this, but it is very important that we have a representative group here. That's what this is all about."

Q: Were they cooperative in making the change?

DEAN: There was a little bit of grumbling. Some of the people said, "You know, you've asked us to select a council and we have done that and now you're telling us you don't like the way it came out and we have to redo it." We would sit down with them and talk through again the importance of having a representative council, the fact that this is going to be very important for public perception and therefore, you need to think in terms of what this is going to look like on the outside and what it's going to look like when we aggregate all the numbers system-wide if it winds up that you've got 95% Shiites and no Sunni representation, or if it winds up being 95% men and almost no women. We're looking at the bigger picture and you need to, too. We found that generally if you sit down and really talk this through with them in an open and frank manner that people will say, "Well, okay, I hadn't thought of that." We wound up with a number of situations where people would grumble about it, but after a couple of days everything was comfortable and we ended up with a very representative system.

Q: How were the different levels accepted by the general population?

DEAN: There continue to be problems on that to this day and some people say, "Well, look, you know you've got a system here that was imposed essentially by the Americans." Yes, we had a role in this process, but these people were not really elected by the communities at large. So, there continues to be this little bit of feeling that until there are open general elections of people and people are selected by the population at large, that you really don't have a truly representative group of people. Given the situation at the time that this was done, we certainly did not have the conditions that would have allowed for selection of people by public-at-large elections.

Q: Do you think that will take place, moving in that direction?

DEAN: That's a good question and one of my concerns is whether this system of councils is going to hold. We've got a lot of people within the current government who have grown up on a model of strong central administration. They've grown up under a

dictatorship. They are not used to having a situation where people, at all levels, really have a voice in the government. I have heard people quoted saying — I'm talking about people at the ministerial level in the current government — saying, "Look, we don't need all these councils. They're just going to be nipping at our heels all the time and questioning our decisions. We can get rid of them and you save a lot of time and a lot of money and make life a lot easier if you don't have other groups out there questioning the validity of your decision." I think there are going to be some real issues here.

The Coalition Provisional Authority was very careful to provide the legal basis for setting up the councils. We had the Transitional Administrative Law, the TAL, which was set up by the Coalition Provisional Authority and written by Iraqis. We were the force pushing it, but it was drafted by Iraqis with a strong input from the Coalition. Under that TAL, there was an Order Number 71, the Local Government Powers Act, and that provided the authority for the government powers. It said whatever councils, whatever people you've got in those councils at the time of transition of authority, stay there until either the system has changed or there is a new election. In theory, everything was in concrete at the time of transition. We do have that system in place with the TAL and with Order Number 71 in place. That gave the authority for the City Council and the Regional Council to go ahead and put in place charters. So, Baghdad Central and Research Triangle Institute, working very closely together with the Regional Advisory Council and the City Advisory Council, went ahead and prepared fairly detailed charters, a city charter and a regional charter, which gave the councils powers and procedures and put those in place. Those charters were approved by Ambassador Bremer and me just before transition.

Q: Did any of the different levels of Councils have any authority or any resources?

DEAN: More so at the city level than at the regional level and provincial level. This is one of the means by which those people, who are not as supportive of councils as I am, can exert control over the councils. The City Council has its own budget and gets its own budget from the government just as if it was a ministry. Historically, the city has always been treated as a ministry and the mayor has had ministerial status. He's paid at the ministry level so the city gets its own money and since the city gets its own money, the city can allocate funds directly to the City Council for administration and management of the City Council. It's not quite so smooth and neat and clean with the Regional Council and with the Provincial Council because they have to go to the other sources to get their money. In theory, they should be going directly to the Ministry of Finance to get their budgets, but, in fact, right now they're having to go to the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works to get their funding and the Minister of Municipalities and Public Works is one of those people who seems to be less than fully supportive of the concept of councils. There are some legitimate arguments here as to whether we may have a too complex and overly-engineered system of councils. In retrospect, some people say, "Gee, we really only needed one council. We should have a Provincial Council, maybe a

City Council, but not a Regional Council. You've got so many councils that you've got questions coming up of what are the roles and responsibilities. What kind of overlap do they have? What kind of duplication? Where do you find the funding for all of this and so forth?" There are some very legitimate questions that are going to have to be sorted out.

Q: What about the District and Neighborhood Councils? Do they have any resources and what do they do?

DEAN: They do, and the Neighborhood and District Councils are receiving money from the municipalities. Those people who fall under the city councils are receiving funds from the city and from the budget, that is, the Ministry of Finance. People at the districts and neighborhoods in the regional areas are receiving monies, if I've got this right, from the Municipalities and Public Works Ministry. But not the kind of funding that we would like to see. Now, in theory, the Provincial Council should be getting enough money to be working on sewers and electrification and other things directly from Municipalities and Public Works. There's this argument that goes on in which they say, well, that's our job, so why do we want to give you money. There is a bit of a question here as to the viability of the Regional Council and the Provincial Council.

Q: What about the Neighborhood Councils, what do they do?

DEAN: The Neighborhood Councils, if they continue to exist and, I think, that's a real question, are advisory councils, the same way a group of committed citizens in Fairfax County or in Falls Church would come together and provide advice to the City Council.

Q: It's a lobbying function?

DEAN: That's right – making sure that the interests in the neighborhood are represented. Now, if they continue, and I hope they will continue, it will be as Advisory Councils. Once we went through the transition of sovereignty, the District Advisory Council dropped the advisory designation and the City Advisory Council dropped the advisory designation, so it's a City Council and they have a real role to play. They used to get frustrated by all the arguing and all the back and forth and I would say to them, "Look, your council is going through exactly what any council in the United States would be going through. You go to the Burke City Council in the Washington, D.C. area or you go to the Boston City Council or the Phoenix City Council, and they have the same types of arguments that you're having. The councils' arguments are a means of venting all your concerns and airing these issues and that's what they're all about." Some people would say, "Well, gee, it seems like we spend so much time discussing." We'd say, "Hey, that's what democracy is all about, getting everybody's views out there on the table and making sure that these are all aired and these positions are coming from the people and not from somebody at the top without having proper input from others." So, there are real issues

in the councils on what the role should be now.

One of the big problems that we've seen here, quite honestly, is that the transition of authority, at least from my perspective, came too early. Initial discussions on transition of authority had been revolving around sometime late, late in 2004 or early in 2005. This was backed up to June 30th and eventually to June 28th, when the transition actually took place. Some people would say that the earlier date for the transition of authority was done for U.S. political reasons. An awful lot of people agree with that and the feeling was that the administration, the U.S. administration, the White House wanted to get that particular albatross off of its neck before the November elections. Who knows, that may well be true. An awful lot of people think that that is the case.

In any event, many people think you can really build a case that the transition to sovereignty took place too early. It wasn't just the fact that the transition to sovereignty took place. It's that once that transition took place, it was a whole different mindset with the end of the CPA and the initiation of a standard U.S. Embassy. My office, for example, Baghdad Central, had 75 people in May. It was initially supposed to continue on until sometime in February 2005 after the Iraqi elections so we could help with some of these transition issues. After the transition, we no longer had the commitment to get the replacements of military people that made up part of our office or the replacements of the Foreign Service Officers that made up our office or, indeed, for my replacement as the regional coordinator. My feeling was that if we're not going to have the people that we needed to function effectively as Baghdad Central, then let's just not call it Baghdad Central and we will phase out. We had gotten down to less than a dozen people by the time I left. We closed Baghdad Central, I think, on the 25th of September, and our remaining few people, which were three Foreign Service Officers, a person from the Overseas Buildings Office in the State Department, one person from the Department of Homeland Securities, plus one Iraqi translator, rolled on over into the U.S. Embassy Political Affairs Section. In that capacity they were supposed to continue working on helping to continue the mentoring of these different councils. Whether or not you can do that effectively with six people I think is a real question.

Q: Sure.

DEAN: I also think that once people leave an environment like that of Baghdad Central which was committed to and devoted to those three different goals that I mentioned – rehabilitation, mentoring city hall, and setting up a local governance structure – once they are placed in a political section, then you wind up facing the problem of getting pulled into the vortex of reporting, VIP visitors and setting up schedules and all the many things that a political affairs section legitimately has to do. The people wind up getting involved in those duties, so I think for all practical purposes, the role that Baghdad Central had with the councils and the mentoring and rehabilitation pretty much came to an end at the end of September. There will be a little bit of residual work there. We've got, for

example, among those six people who transferred over into political affairs, one person who is going to be functioning full time trying to make sure that the \$100 million of projects that we had ongoing when we closed that office will get completed in a responsible, timely manner.

Q: What do you think the prospect is for this complex of administration and councils that you help set up? Are they still functioning?

DEAN: They are still functioning at this time. The “insurgents” – which is almost too nice a word – the terrorists who are opposing the democratic process in Iraq are working very hard to discourage it. At the time I left in September, we had had more than 20 council members who had been murdered by terrorists.

Q: At the local level?

DEAN: This was primarily at the District and Neighborhood Councils level. We had not had anybody killed from the Provincial or the Regional or the City Councils when I left. Hopefully we will not, but at the District Council, we had a number of very gruesome murders, just savage, and the brutality, of course, discourages those people. They receive death threats; they get notes pinned on their doors at home; they get telephone calls; and they have all sorts of problems. Is it really worth it to achieve some kind of representation of local people if my family is going to wind up without a breadwinner here because I was devoted to this process? So, there are real issues here.

Q: Do you get a sense that they're giving up on the process or not?

DEAN: At this point, I mean at the end of September, the process was alive and it had the problems that I mentioned of not everybody in the Iraq government [supporting it]. The interim Iraqi government supports it and there are funding issues, but the concept was there and it should survive in some form. I guess my expectation is that there will be some sort of a streamlining of this process.

Q: Right.

DEAN: I hope and anticipate that some form of the council system will survive. Honestly, I don't think all three councils or all three primary councils, that is, regional, city and provincial, are going to make it. I don't think we will continue to have all 120 or so councils that will survive. We will, I think, continue to have some sort of a council system that will be representative of the people. The kinks in the system, the overlapping, a lot of this is going to get worked out and cured and, I think, it will survive in some form. I can't believe there won't be some changes to it and that's natural, that's to be expected.

Q: What was your sense of the population's acceptance of all this? Were they enthusiastic about it or not?

DEAN: Those people who are within the system are extremely supportive. A lot of people outside the system think it is great, too. Some of the people within this system, I think, tend to say, "Gee, we don't have enough resources," and we say, "Yes, we agree with that, but you are able to influence decisions and we worked very hard to try and consult with the District Councils, City Council, Provincial Council and Neighborhood Councils in terms of decisions. I mean, do you want this school fixed up or do you want that sewer system fixed? What about a neighborhood clean up project? We've got some money here. What areas would you suggest for clean up? Do you have some particular problems?" We tried to bring them in on decision-making processes.

All of these councils were involved in the selection of the mayor and in the selection of the governor. We ran advertisements in the newspapers in Baghdad and said, "Are you interested in being the mayor of Baghdad or the governor, and if so, send in your résumé." Then we went through a very selective process, which was run by the City Council for the mayor and the Provincial Council for the governor, in terms of screening applicants. In the case of the mayor, I think there were 93 applications and résumé packages, and for the governor 50 some for that position. The process proceeded to the point where the applicants were screened and reviewed and gave speeches to the appropriate councils. Then the councils themselves voted on and selected these people. It is a process that really reflects input and decisions from the people. The mayor of Baghdad works for, is hired by, and may be fired by the City Council. The City Council is made up of District Council members and so forth. So you have the people who are on the City Council and these people are also members of District Councils and Neighborhood Councils, so you have among the 35 people in the City Council, full representation from around the city and those are the people who are supervising the mayor. Do they have a real voice? Yes, absolutely they do. Do they have a role? Absolutely.

One of the reasons why I think we really had the transfer of sovereignty too early is because the relationship between the City Council and the mayor still needs to be worked out. There is still a little jostling going on there as well – you know, how much oversight there is, or should be involved here, and the relative roles and responsibilities. RTI is working on this and Baghdad Central was working on it and that's one of the jobs that I was doing as senior advisor in terms of trying to help these two, the City Council and the Mayor, come up with a mutually acceptable and agreeable working relationship on who does what. We were doing the same thing with the Provincial Council and the Governor because the Governor works for the Provincial Council. There's still a lot of work to be done.

Q: Did they actually have money to work with? There was some question that the money was hard to get out of the central government.

DEAN: The City Council certainly does have money to work with and again, the Mayor, who has quite a sizeable budget. The Mayor has said to everybody, including the Project Management Office, the U.S. military and USAID, "Don't even think of starting a project in Baghdad without clearing it with me. These are projects for the people of Baghdad and they're going to be cleared by the people of Baghdad and although yes, we need your support, we want your support, if you're not going to clear these things with me and coordinate them with me as the Mayor, then we don't want your help." The new Mayor, a very strong personality, very positive, very self-assured, has really asserted himself and is making his presence known. The City Council, by virtue of having authority over the Mayor, in theory has authority over the use of much of that \$2 billion. Again, you know, the District Councils can influence their representatives to the City Council and the Neighborhood Councils are able to assert their authority to those people who are on the District Council. Some of this is in theory as opposed to practice, but these are the same problems that we have in the United States. It's a good system once these kinks get worked out and the funding relationships get worked out. Availability of funding is going to continue to be a problem; there is never going to be enough money, particularly in a developing economy that is trying to get its feet off the ground. They're plagued by too many subsidies: gasoline for example, runs six cents a gallon, which is just unacceptable. You've got major food subsidies for the entire population, and these subsidies eat up a huge amount of available government funding, and you've got huge debt service requirements on the national debt of billions of dollars. Lots of problems there in terms of funding availability.

Q: Then there's security problems.

DEAN: Of course, yes, absolutely a security problem.

Q: Is there any area we haven't touched on?

DEAN: Lots of them.

Q: I'm sure there are.

DEAN: Lots of areas, but that's the gist of what we're doing. There are lots of lessons to be learned.

Lesson learned

Q: That's what I would like to turn to if you can. You hinted at a lot of them, but if you were to point out four or five major lessons learned both generally and specifically it would be very helpful to have that kind of a wrap up.

DEAN: Okay, well, unfortunately, I have not done as much thinking on this as I should

be doing, but you know, Iraq is unique in many respects. There are some things that come out of this. The follow-through by donors and by the U.S. is essential and many people have been kicking that around in the development world for years and years. We have seen a lot of cases where we have made commitments where we have not followed through on them. Not wanting to get too political here, but we've seen this happen in Afghanistan where we had all sorts of commitments and we arguably have not followed through on them.

Q: Right.

DEAN: I'm worried about the same situation in Iraq. We need to stay the course and lots of people of good faith can take both sides of the issue on whether we should have gone into Iraq, but now that we're in there, we have to finish it in good fashion. We need to follow through on what we've done or we're going to have a mess that's at least as bad as it was before we went in. That would be one of my arguments here, that regardless of what people feel in terms of should we have gone in there, we are in there now and that's a done deal. That's a decision that we can't reverse even if we wanted to, but we do need to follow through.

We do need to make sure that we continue to provide the funds. It's not just running a normal U.S. Embassy, which I want to note was fascinating in Iraq. I was there for five months before the transition and then for three months after the transition, and it was a night and day change once the CPA ended. You went through a very free wheeling organization there – that is, CPA – to a much more traditional embassy which, of course, will never be completely traditional simply because of where we are and what we're doing there. But the changes that took place when Ambassador Bremer left and then Ambassador Negroponte came in were phenomenal, not just because of the individuals, but because of the differences in roles, the differences in structures.

Q: How did that affect what you were doing?

DEAN: Baghdad Central no longer had monies to commit because we were working strictly with non-appropriated funds so we had no more money to work with after transition. We no longer had the personnel numbers that we needed to provide the advice and guidance and counsel. Of course, this was not just Baghdad Central. This also was taking place in the other three regions within the country. My concern with Baghdad Central is that we quickly went from 76 people down to eventually six, but the job is still there. We could still be using 76 people in Baghdad Central if we had them and my concern, as a big lesson learned, is that we need to follow through. We can't convert from CPA with its thousands of people to a normal U.S. Embassy and expect to achieve the goals of the U.S. there and the goals of the majority of the Iraqi people. So, we need to stay the course.

Q: Were there any lessons at the operational level, the technical lessons?

DEAN: Yes, I would say we need to do whatever is necessary to speed up the disbursement of those funds. A lot of people involved with the security situation would argue that one of the reasons that the insurgency appears to be picking up some strength and some steam is that people have been very frustrated that change has not been coming more quickly. For example, when we first went into Sadr City in March, April, May or whenever it was in 2003, I'm told it was like the liberation of Paris. People were cheering and the U.S. soldiers were received as heroes. You can't drive through Sadr City now without considerable forces to provide security. One of the reasons that a lot of people say is behind that is that all the commitments for improvements and all the commitments for progress and jobs and better quality of living have not materialized to the degree that people would want. Have we made progress? Yes, absolutely we have, but we still have in Sadr City a city of two million plus, and hundreds of thousands of unemployed. At a point Iraqis say, well, okay, I've been listening to the U.S. promises for jobs and clean water and good roads now for more than a year, maybe I need to switch sides. In any event, I need to feed my family and it's time for me to start working for a salary and start carrying an AK-47 and give up on trying to find a job through the normal economy because progress is not coming around quickly enough. Somehow we need to start disbursing funds more quickly and following through.

I saw in the New York Times yesterday that they're now considering the appropriations bill for Iraq for fiscal 2005. We need to make sure that that gets passed as quickly as possible and that it gets passed at an appropriate level of funding. One of the unnamed senators in that article was talking about having heard figures as low as \$25 million all the way up to \$100 million plus. Whatever that bill is going to be it has to be sufficient to cover the needs. We can't just say, "Okay, they've got their sovereignty; they're on their own now. We'll provide some training and that's it." We can't do that or we will continue to have chaos. On an operational level, we need to start spending that money more quickly. We need to continue to appropriate money to be able to sustain our efforts over there. We cannot give up on the advisory roles that we have. We cannot revert to being an embassy that is just an embassy where we do political reporting and that's it. We need to play a very active role and the U.S. military needs to continue performing not only its military role, but very importantly, the very dynamic civil affairs role that they have played over the last 15 or 16 months. That has to be continued.

Working with Iraqis

Q: What about working with Iraqis?

DEAN: Absolutely. Again, I guess because of my years with development that's just taken as a given. We have to work with Iraqis.

Q: What was your experience working with the Iraqis?

DEAN: My experience was excellent. I worked with some very highly qualified people. I've got to say, and I've said this to a lot of friends in Iraq, that of all the developing countries that I've worked in over the last three plus decades, I have never worked in a country, either in Asia or Africa, where you had such a high level of achievements, of education of the indigenous people. One of the first meetings I went to when I got to Iraq was with a District Advisory Council and I found myself talking to this one gentleman on the council. We got to chatting and he was an aeronautical engineer, had gotten his masters degree in a university in the UK, had worked in Seattle, Washington for Boeing, and was very erudite, very well educated. He's currently the Minister of Transportation. He had been for a short while the Governor of the Province of Baghdad. Anyway, there are a lot of very, very well educated, very erudite, very committed people. I look at the different people I worked with, the Iraqis, over my eight months there; they had just an amazing degree of commitment. People in my office were getting threatened and yet they continued to push for reform and democracy, and continued to show up for work. Their level of threat, their level of vulnerability, was much higher than mine and yet they continued to work. They continued to strive for all these changes for democratization and rehabilitation. Yes, absolutely great to work with. Great people and if we can help them hold this together long enough I think we're going to win this. I really think we will and I'm very optimistic about where all of this is coming out. I think personally that we've got a couple of tough years over there, but if we hang in there, five years from now we can look back and say, "Hey, we made a difference, we have a functioning democracy in the Middle East, we really did it."

Q: Good.

DEAN: It's going to take a lot of commitment and continuing to reaffirm our commitment and shoring up our "stick-to-it-ness," which unfortunately, I don't think the U.S. has always done as well as we need to.

Q: Right. Anything we haven't touched on?

DEAN: Lots of things.

Q: I'm sure.

DEAN: I know we've got a time limit here.

Q: We don't want to cut you off if you've got something more you want to add.

DEAN: It was a phenomenal eight months, I must say, and just a unique situation where we really, really can have a huge impact over there if we'll stay the course.

Q: This has been an excellent interview and it's going to be very helpful to the group, I'm sure they'll be delighted to have it.