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

INTERVIEW #45

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Initial interview date: Sept. 24, 2008

Executive Summary

Interviewee worked at Ramadi from 2007 to 2008, not as a member of a PRT; but worked closely with Ramadi E-PRT.

Great differences existed between the Anbar PRT (located elsewhere in Ramadi) and the embedded E-PRT. The 10-person E-PRT was very closely involved with the military, its work and mission.

E-PRT leader was a foreign service officer. Deputy from USAID. One lawyer, one medical specialist. Two others had no particular specialties, although they were given specific duties. Team members arrived in 2007, mostly as a unit, and left in early 2008. The BBAs were in on contract; they came and went.

In the E-PRT, that "E" ("embedded") really made a difference. "We were able to bring them into the team and make them feel part of it. We gave good structure and vision about what needed to be done. In contrast, the Anbar PRT was frequently in conflict with Marine headquarters, each fighting for different goals."

In the E-PRT, the brigade commander established the vision, gave guidance and worked with the E-PRT leader on what that would be. They worked together.

As a member of the military, I helped explain and clarify the vision; resourced the E-PRT to do it. The commander had the vision, I made sure the vision got implemented and the head of civilian-military operations actually did all of the work.

When we arrived in February 2007, Ramadi (a city of some 250,000) was devastated. There had been intense fighting between coalition forces and Al Qaeda for years. We went on a six-week campaign to clear Al Qaeda out of the city. This coincided with the surge, but our deployment was not part of the surge. The brigade we relieved had been fighting in Ramadi for eight months and had made incredible progress. Our job was to continue the momentum

In April, when the E-PRT got there, the city was still in shambles. No functioning infrastructure, no functioning government. There was just a mayor; and he had no staff. The E-PRT's mission was to fix the city government. We set the mayor up in an office, in

a repaired building, and also placed there directors general for power, sewer, water, agriculture and medical service.

The E-PRT organized itself along the same lines as the city government -- the E-PRT member for banking met with the person on the city government that is responsible for banking and met with all of the owners of the banks; medical service officer started meeting with the director general of health to get the hospitals up; another met with DG of municipalities, etc. Their mission was to become a partner team with the city government to get the city government functioning.

The Anbar PRT leader corresponded with OPA directly and regularly. This caused friction in the Marine headquarters because in their minds, Marine headquarters in Fallujah was our higher command. A Marine two-star general was responsible for all of Anbar and our brigade was just one subordinate element to him. We did whatever he told us to do and he had complete authority over our brigade. In his mind, his PRT at the provincial level would have that same sort of authority over the embedded PRT that worked in the brigade inside our brigade area. But the E-PRTs and the PRTs didn't work that way. Our E-PRT leader didn't report to the PRT leader. There was no required connection between them at all. This person would report directly back to OPA and if they didn't like something that PRT was doing, they would tell OPA about it, or if they wanted to go in a different way from what the Marine headquarters or what the PRT was trying to accomplish, they felt very free to go and do that. The Marines saw this person as going over their heads.

In contrast, relations between the E-PRT and brigade commander were very tight. Brigade commander held weekly reconstruction meetings to review the status of all of the projects, and the embedded PRT was an integral part of that meeting. It was a good, if strange, relationship, in that the E-PRT born out of the State Department has a very different culture and mindset than a military organization. This created some friction.

A military organization is very focused on its mission, what it can accomplish. State is less concerned about what actually gets done. They don't establish metrics for themselves, or measure accomplishments. More interested in process, policy, effective communication and establishing connections that allow them to generate good reports.

The frustration with the State Department is that they are very happy just to be. And whether or not anything actually gets done is not as important to them.

But the partnership is still important to foster. It is essential to not turn the military into the arm of the government responsible for development.

The PRT leadership and management structure is incomprehensible from a military point of view. I would have never structured these embedded PRTs to report directly to OPA without having to coordinate through the PRTs. That seems dysfunctional. It creates an opportunity for a real disconnect, for it creates an opportunity for the PRT to be

communicating one message to provincial leaders and the E-PRT to be communicating a different message to municipal leaders. That can create tensions and problems.

Having State at the top and military as deputy is okay. It provides a natural connection back to the military organization. A uniformed deputy PRT leader can help communicate things, help be a translator, between the two. The military member as the deputy will bring the ethos of mission, strategy and accomplishment to the job.

We want State and Treasury and the whole aspect of government involved in what we are doing. I like it being a non-military leader to pull in the rest of our national government, instead of saying Defense is going to run and fix all of this.

What becomes a challenge is overlapping of areas. Our situation was unique in Ramadi because MNF West only had one province: The operational area for MNF West almost completely matched Anbar Province. In most other divisions, they straddle multiple provinces.

Anbar PRT had very bad "stove-pipe" issues. One person might be responsible for a certain function within the PRT…. And someone else in the PRT had no idea about it; no one on the MNF West staff had any idea about it. So that guy was working his issues in complete isolation.

In contrast, the E-PRT was not "stove-piped." The E-PRT was working on governance, reconstruction, and economic development; a US Army civil affairs company was doing the same thing and a United States Marine Corps civil affairs detachment was doing the same thing. I forced a level of integration that made all three of them feel very uncomfortable. I built one facility and I forced all of them to work in that one facility.

The way we organized it put together everyone working on one issue. Take water: You would find an E-PRT member, a soldier, and a Marine sitting in there working on water together. And they hated me for it. But I felt that it was important to do. It helped avoid some "stove-pipes" to force those three organizations to work together. And we got a cross-fertilization of ideas.

We had some real dysfuction within our E-PRT, but no more than you would find when picking any 10 random, well-educated people and telling them to live in a war zone.

There were troubling and unfair contrasts for State and Defense personnel in pay (State Department people and 31-61s got paid more) and leave time (State Department people had three three-weeks leaves; military got 15 days per year of service in Iraq.)

Security: To minimize travel, we re-habbed a building to house all of the municipal offices, then stationed the E-PRT equivalents there, too. Most of the E-PRT relationships were with people in the municipal government. We told them, "go focus and make those guys capable."

Tribal leaders had already declared coalition forces to be friendly forces. They said, 'we are partnered with the coalition to fight al-Qaeda.' So they were on board.

We had very good relationships with the tribal leaders, and we worked on those relationships every day. Just spending time talking to them, hearing their concerns, convincing them that we valued the partnership and we were committed to the same things that they were committed to. We also created a series of district councils, so we had operating for us six different battalions who owned a piece of our brigade area in Ramadi. And each one of those battalions took the neighborhoods of Ramadi and built district councils. They were involved at the district level, and that would just trickle on down.

I think the Iraqis felt like partners. We let them know that we viewed it as a partnership, and that our ultimate objective was eventually to leave.

It was all US funding, so we controlled it. We made sure where it was spent. But by being in district councils they told us which projects they would like help with… school, pave streets, etc. They would bring proposals to the battalion commander, who had authority to approve.. We spent $82 million in CERP funds, and accounted for it.

The frustrating thing was that the E-PRT wasn't able to bring in that money; it had meager funds. Depended on military commanders for the funds.

Relations with RTI were mixed. Their delivery was sporadic.

Rule of Law was huge for us. When we got there, there were absolutely no functioning courts. We had gone in and we had built up this Ramadi police force, and they started doing what police do: They arrested people. But there was no way to process, there was no court system. So we're stacking detainees in these horrible Iraqi jails. We realized that we had to have a functioning court system. And so we did it the same way we built the city government. We asked all the tribal leaders, 'hey who are the lawyers, who are the judges?' We found the judges, we got them in a room together, and we said, 'hey, you guys need to get back to work. We've got cases for you to hear.' And they said 'well, you've got to give us a secure place to work.' And so we helped secure their courthouse. They wanted pistols, and so we helped them get pistols. They wanted armored cars, and we said we couldn't do that. But bit by bit we got them to show up and go to work and put their systems back together, and they started hearing cases. We got convictions. It took a while to get some convictions because the police weren't doing a really good job of collecting the evidence and presenting evidence. I'm really proud of what the brigade accomplished in the Rule of Law. There were functioning courts hearing cases, they were convicting people, letting other people go, which is what the court system is supposed to do, and there was nothing when we got there in February.

Major achievements: Rule of Law. Defeated al-Qaeda insurgency in Ramadi. Once they were defeated, we helped the Iraqis build a system, and secure the city, and prevent them from coming in.

Second most important thing was to build an effective police force. We trained about 9,000 Iraqis to be police.

Other major achievements: Reconstruction of Ramadi.

Resurrection of city government. By the time we left, they were holding meetings, they knew how to communicate with the provincial level about what their requirements were.

Micro-grants for small businesses.

Disappointing effort at bringing civilian resources to bear; ie, effort to establish a cultural center. State Department red tape made it impossible.

Lessons learned:

1. Somewhere in the planning, in the preparation of E-PRTs, there has to be something that says what we accomplish matters. That was a real friction point between us and the E-PRT, convincing them that it mattered to set a goal, develop a plan and achieve it. We need to commit to actually achieve something.

2. We ought to look at resourcing security. As the security situation improves; we want the E-PRTs and PRTs out and about with a little more freedom of mobility. Military should not be tasked to do this. Need to look at contracted security for PRTs and E-PRTs.

3. PRTs need quick access to lots of money. CERP works. I think we did amazing things with CERP, and I think CERP was just as important to the brigades' success as every bomb that we dropped in Ramadi was important to our success. It was huge. If we couldn't have been able to spend that $82 million to pull out the rubble, to repair the waterlines, to bring in electrical power, we wouldn't have been as successful as we were. And so the E-PRTs and the PRTs need that same sort of access to reconstruction and development funds.

4. In funding , you must control corruption. You don't just pour money in; you have to hold people accountable.

Interview

Q: Please tell me where your PRT was located and what your capacity was.

A: Sure, my experience with PRT's was when I was in the military in Ramadi. I was there for 13 months between 2007 and 2008.

Q: A good amount of time to be in one of these units?

A: That's probably about right. It was a long and exhausting experience. I wouldn't want anyone to have to do it any longer, that's for sure.

Q: Did you learn some Arabic while you were there?

A: I did not. Just based on my duties, I was responsible for running things in our headquarters, so while others were out and about doing things, I almost always stayed in the headquarters and ran the headquarters. And so the Arabic that I learned was nothing more than making a couple of polite salutations when I met somebody.

Q: Were you with a PRT?

A: No. We had an E-PRT working with the brigade and their mission was to be the E-PRT for this Brigade. Then I had some interaction, although much less, with the Anbar PRT, which worked mostly with the Marine headquarters in Fallujah. The PRT was physically located in Ramadi because that is where the provincial government was. But their coalition counterpart was the Marine headquarters in Fallujah, so I had very much less interaction with them.

Q: How separate were the E-PRT and the PRT?

A: They were very separate organizations. When the E-PRT first got created in April of 2007, that's when we started seeing the first people. They came and lived on the same base as us and were really integrated into our brigade headquarters. The PRT lives on a different base there in the city in Ramadi.

Q: So you were never part of the PRT?

A: I was never part of it, no. I worked with them regularly, but I was never part of one.

Q: What was the nature of your own relationship with the PRTs and the E-PRT? What kind of contact did you have?

A: With the Anbar PRT, minimal at best. They would contact the brigade when they would need some sort of support; if they had a mission that they wanted to go on. If they had somewhere particular that they wanted to get to in our area of operations, they would call the brigade and ask for our assistance in executing whatever it was that they wanted to execute. As the brigade executive officer, I was a good point of contact for them, because they could call me and then I could get the right resources allocated to help them accomplish what they were trying to accomplish.

Now the E-PRT, on the other hand, worked hand in hand with the brigade. So their mission and our mission were the same. Certainly we had different tools for accomplishing the mission, and they weren't focused on trying to establish security within the brigade's area of operations, but all of the work to established governance and

improve economic conditions and do some basic reconstruction, the E-PRT and the brigade were completely partnered in that.

Q: How many were in the brigade? Is there a standard number?

A: Well, a standard number for a brigade is about 4,000. Our brigade was task-organized a little bit differently. Our brigade had two additional Marine battalions and two additional Army battalions and so in April 2007, when the E-PRT was created, our brigade combat team probably had about 8,000 soldiers and Marines assigned to it.

Q: How many people were in the E-PRT?

A: Ten people.

Q: And wasn't the standard structure a State Department person as chief and a military person as deputy?

A: Our deputy E-PRT leader came from USAID. So the State Department Foreign Service officer was the E-PRT lead. And of the other eight, we had four who were military reservists.

Q: Were they specialists in a given field?

A: Well, one was a lawyer, so he had some legal background. One was a medical service officer, so there was some medical experience. The other two were not particular specialists. They were given specific portfolios, but I don't think they came with any specific experience.

Q: So of the other eight, there were these four military reservists and then the other four were?

A: They were either DOD or Department of the Army or Department of the Air Force civilians. They all came out of some government GS position.

Q: Did you have some bilingual, bi-cultural advisors?

A: There were some that were hired. I think the E-PRT hired three or four BBAs. Though they didn't stay as long. The members of the E-PRT arrived in April 2007 and left in February/March of 2008. So they were established. The BBAs were in on contract.

Q: So the members of the E-PRT came in as a unit?

A: Four came at first, and then the other six. I can't remember exactly if the six came at once, or two at a time. There was about a month that we had our first four before the rest of the team got there.

Q: You're in a pretty unique situation in that you could observe both the E-PRT and the PRT. Did you see a lot of contrasts or differences?

A: I did. In the E-PRT, that "E," that "embedded," it really made a difference. Partly because our brigade headquarters was established and operating as the E-PRT was being created, so we were really able to bring them into the team and make them feel like, hey this is what we're doing, you're part of us, this is how we want you to help us accomplish what we need to accomplish. And so we were able to give them really good structure and vision about what we wanted them to get done. As for the PRT, which was working provincial levels for Anbar, I often saw them at loggerheads with the Marine headquarters, where the Marine headquarters would want them to go one way and the PRT wanted to go another. And to get the two of them to talk and agree on what ought to get done, I saw a lot of friction there. I think we had much less friction between the E-PRT and our brigade because they lived with us. They weren't a stand-alone entity. If they wanted to go somewhere, they went because we took them there. They ate with us, they slept with us, they came to our meetings, they were with us all of the time, and I think that made a big difference.

Q: Were you the person who introduced the mission to the E-PRT?

A: Well, it was a combination. The brigade commander established the vision and gave the guidance and worked with the E-PRT leader on what that would be. So when our E-PRT leader got there, the brigade commander and the E-PRT leader worked together, and he said, hey, this is what I am trying to accomplish, this is how I think you should be helping me. And they developed that vision together.

In my duties, I certainly helped explain that, clarify it and I resourced the E-PRT to do it, but then the head of our civilian-military operations did all of the really hard day-to-day work. So if you could imagine that sort of stratosphere, the commander had the vision, I was responsible for making sure the vision got implemented and then the head of civilian-military operations actually did all of the work.

Q: Let's pretend that there is a new E-PRT coming in. Would you please explain what our mission is going to be?

A: I would take you back to 2007, when Ramadi was a horrible, awful place. There had been intense fighting between coalition forces and Al Qaeda for years, and the city was devastated. We got to Ramadi in February of 2007 and went on a six-week campaign to clear Al Qaeda out of the city.

This coincided with the surge, but our deployment was not part of the surge. When we deployed to Iraq in February of 2007 we were replacing a brigade that was already there. As part of the surge, the Marines brought in an extra Marine battalion and we did get an extra Marine battalion that was added to our task organization in March. So there were some relevant portions of the surge, but our brigade was not a surge brigade.

Q: Do you attribute the drastic improvement in Ramadi to the surge activities?

A: It's certainly a part of the whole. The surge, I believe, was an important part of the whole that explains what happened in Ramadi. The brigade that we relieved had been fighting in Ramadi for about eight months and had been fighting very hard and had made incredible progress. So our job, when we got there in February, was to continue the momentum. So I don't think that we were the ones that changed everything. The brigade prior to us had been working really hard in establishing and gaining good success and we were able to capitalize on that and finish it.

Q: So back to the introduction.

A: Right. In April, when the E-PRT got there, we had just finished our six-week campaign to clear the enemy out of the city, and the city was in shambles. The city wasn't completely free of the enemy, but the enemy no longer owned it like he had previously. But there were devastated buildings everywhere. There was no functioning infrastructure. The power lines didn't work, the sewer didn't work, the water didn't work, the government didn't work. There was no recognizable city government. There was a provincial government, but that was in shambles. That wasn't our mission.

The city's government consisted of nothing more than a mayor. But he had no staff, he had no budget, he had no capacity to do anything. And so the mission that we gave to the E-PRT was to fix the city government. Make that city government function. We worked very deliberately to set the mayor up, find him a building that he could work in that was secure, that had basic infrastructure and then we worked with that mayor to go out and find the directors general that he needed to run his city government. Guys to be in charge of power, sewer, water, agriculture, medical. We went and found those guys and we told the E-PRT what we want you to do is go partner with that city government.

Q: This is a city of how many people?

A: I think that we briefed the city of Ramadi at 250,000 people

Q: And only one city official at that point?

A: That's exactly right. Because Al Qaeda had either killed everybody else or they had gone into hiding because they knew if they showed themselves that they would be killed. So we told the E-PRT to assist the city government. So the E-PRT organized itself along the same lines that the city government was organized: The E-PRT member for banking met with the person on the city government that is responsible for banking and met with all of the owners of the banks to try to get the banks up and running. The medical service officer started meeting with the director general of health to get the hospitals up to standard. One of the E-PRT members met with the director general of municipalities to get the trash system working again. Somebody else partnered with the director general of electricity to get the power distribution fixed, and so on. Their mission was to become a partner team with the city government to get the city government functioning.

Q: I think we've got the history and the structure of the E-PRT down here, and the mission. What was the relationship between the E-PRT and the office of provincial affairs, the NCT, the embassy, and all these units?

A: I know that there was a relationship. Not being a member of the PRT, I wasn't intimately involved in that. I know that the PRT leader corresponded with OPA directly and regularly. I know that that caused friction in the Marine headquarters. They were very upset about that because in their minds, the Marine headquarters in Fallujah was our higher command. A Marine two-star general was responsible for all of Anbar and our brigade was just one subordinate element to him. We did whatever he told us to do and he had complete authority over our brigade. And so in his mind, his PRT at the provincial level would have that same sort of authority over the embedded PRT that worked in the brigade inside our brigade area. But the E-PRTs and the PRTs didn't work that way. Our E-PRT leader didn't report to the PRT leader. There was no required connection between them at all. That person would report directly back to OPA and if they didn't like something that PRT was doing, they would tell OPA about it, or if they wanted to go in a different way from what the Marine headquarters or what the PRT was trying to accomplish, they felt very free to go and do that.

Q: So the Marine saw this person as going over his head?

A: That's exactly right.

Q: What was the relationship between E-PRT and your unit, the brigade combat team?

A: Well, we were very tight. Once a week the brigade commander would hold a reconstruction meeting to review the status of all of the projects, and the embedded PRT was a part of that meeting. And when the brigade commander sat at the head of the table to get that update, the E-PRT leader sat right next to him. Every congressional delegation that came to visit the brigade, the E-PRT leader was there to greet the congressional delegation along with the brigade commander and we would always take the congressional delegation to show where the E-PRT was operating and what they were doing.

Q: Would you describe that as a good relationship?

A: I would describe it as a good relationship. It was a strange relationship, in that the E-PRT born out of the State Department has a very different culture and mindset than a military organization -- and that created some friction.

Q: How would you describe the differences in the culture?

A: A military organization is very focused on its mission and what it can accomplish and what gets done. And my impression of the State Department is that they are not as concerned about what gets done. They don't establish metrics for themselves, or measure

accomplishments. They are much more interested in the process and what the policy is and in communicating effectively and establishing connections that allow them to generate good reports. But actually accomplishing something is not all that important.

Q: Is the partnership between State and the Military a good one? Should such a partnership even be attempted?

A: Yes, it absolutely should be attempted. I think it is essential that we don't turn the military into the arm of the government that is responsible for development around the globe. Certainly when we go, we've got to be prepared to incorporate those portions of the government that are trained in development and reconstruction and governance building. That's my own opinion. I don't think it is good for our nation if that is what we rely on the military to do. So yes, I think the partnership is a very important one.

My frustration is… I mean I have never walked in the shoes of a Foreign Service Officer, so I don't claim to understand why their culture is so important to them. I understand the military culture and why it is important to us. The frustration we have with the State Department is that they are very happy just to be. And whether or not anything actually gets done is not as important to them.

Q: How would you rate the effectiveness of the PRT leadership and management structure?

A: From a military point of view, I don't get it. I would have never structured these embedded PRTs to report directly to OPA without having to coordinate thought the PRTs. That to me seems dysfunctional. It creates an opportunity for a real disconnect, for it creates an opportunity for the PRT to be communicating one message to provincial leaders and the E-PRT to be communicating a different message to municipal leaders. That can create tensions and problems that we do not really want. So that part of the structuring of the relationship between the PRTs and the EPTs I don't think really makes sense.

Q: Within a PRT, with a State Department first then usually a military number two, and all of these others underneath, is that a kind of structure that is functional in your view?

A: Yes, I think that's OK. I think having a military person as the deputy PRT leader is good. One, I think it provides a more natural connection back to the military organization. A uniformed deputy PRT leader can help communicate things, help be a translator, between the two. And I think that the military member as the deputy will bring the ethos of, hey here are the things that we need to get accomplished, and let's develop a plan and a strategy for how we are going to accomplish them, which I think is good.

Q: The military person should not be the leader?

A: I don't have a problem with the military person being the leader. But as we look at national strategy, I think we want our State Department and our Treasury Department and

the whole aspect of government involved in what we are doing. And so I like it being a non-military leader to pull in the rest of our national government, instead of saying, hey the Department of Defense is going to run and fix all of this.

Q: Back to your thoughts on the relationship between the PRT, the E-PRT, and the OPA. Do you have a vision on how that might work better?

A: I'm sure there are all kinds of reasons why you wouldn't want to do this, but from my standpoint, and I recognize that I come from a military culture, so I'm preconditioned to think that way. My brigade clearly worked from MNF West -- Multi-National Forces West. That's the Marine two-star headquarters in Fallujah. They were our higher headquarters and they had complete authority to tell us what to do or what not to do inside of our area of operations.

And likewise, MNF West reported directly to MNCI, Multi-National Corps Iraq. And MNCI could tell MNF West do this, don't do that. So that chain of command works and it would seem to me that there would be a comparable structure at the national level.

What becomes a challenge is overlapping of areas. Our situation was unique in Ramadi because MNF West only had one province. The operational area for MNF West almost completely matched the Anbar Province. That is very different than what you find in most divisions, where they straddle multiple provinces. And so that part of it is different and unique.

Q: Do you know the term "stove-piping?" Did you see that happening in the functioning of the PRT or E-PRT?

A: Yes. I felt the PRT had very bad "stove-pipe" issues where there was a guy that was responsible for a certain function within the PRT. I'm talking now about the Anbar PRT. And somebody else over in the Anbar PRT had no idea about it, or there was nobody on the MNF West staff who had any idea about it. So that guy was working his issues in complete isolation.

Q: And he might be the agriculture guy, the econ guy?

A: That's exactly right. The agriculture guy, for example, might be working his agriculture project in complete isolation from what everybody else was doing. I'm looking through it in my own rose- colored glasses, but I don't think our E-PRT was that "stove-piped." Certainly everybody had their own portfolios. But the E-PRT was only 10 people. One of the things that I believed in so strongly was that the E-PRT was working on governance, reconstruction, and economic development for us; but I also had a US Army civil affairs company that was doing the same thing and I also had a United States Marine Corps civil affairs detachment that was doing the same thing. So as I looked at these organizations, I forced a level of integration that made all three of them feel very uncomfortable. I built one facility and I forced all of them to work in that one facility. And sure, the E-PRT leader had a private office, and the civil affairs company

commander had their office, and the Marine Corps civil affairs detachment commander had their office. But the way we organized it said for example, hey, this is everybody that's working water. And you would find an E-PRT member, a soldier, and a Marine sitting in there working on it together. And they hated me for it. But I felt that it was really the important thing to do. So I think that helped us avoid some "stove-pipes." By forcing those three organizations to work together. And the E-PRT was small enough that it was easy to put them all in one room and it was easy to get a cross-fertilization of ideas. A PRT is a much bigger organization, and it's harder to just build the physical space that holds them all. So in that regard, it was a little bit easier to avoid the "stove-pipes" in our E-PRT.

Q: From your vantage point, how did you see relationships between each of these (PRT and E-PRT)? Did those folks get along?

A: You know, that's so personality-based, so we had some real dysfunction within our E-PRT, but I don't know that it was any more dramatic than you would find when picking any 10 random people who are reasonable well educated and tell them to live in a war zone. That's just going to create stress and situations that do not necessarily bring out the best of everybody's personality.

Q: Did all of these people have the same time-frame obligation?

A: I don't know what sort of escape clause the State Department folks had. What I do know is that the State Department people had a much more liberal leave policy. So, a service member who goes to Iraq for a year is given 15 days that he is allowed to leave. In contrast, the State Department employees on the E-PRT had three three-week leave periods.

Q: Is there some resentment?

A: A little bit.

Q: What about the pay scale and benefits?

A: They are different. That was talked about some. I do think State Department employees are paid better, and the reason I say that is that we had two of our uniformed reservists on the E-PRT who stayed for a second year as State Department employees on contracts. One, a commander in the US Navy, did his year and he went home, took a two-week break and came back in civilian clothes because he was going do the exact same job at better pay.

Q: What did you observe in terms of team members' readiness when they showed up? Was the training in Washington and then on the ground in Iraq appropriate to what was needed?

A: It was probably about as good as you can do. I can't think of anything that says: 'our E-PRT showed up without this skill.' I mean there, I don't know there's any way. Our E-PRT members, when they showed up, were absolutely in culture shock. I mean, they were just in culture shock. When they got to Ramadi in April 2007, it was not a horrifically violent place anymore. It was a dangerous place, no question about that. But not like Ramadi in February of 2007, which was horrifically violent. But still, they were in absolute culture shock when they got to Ramadi in April of 2007.

Q: Did anybody quit?

A: Nobody quit.

Q: The next question has to do with security: What was the level and the nature of the threat? When you went out, what was your security like, and on whom did you depend to provide security?

A: I'm not sure how the Anbar PRT security was handled. They were on a base.

Q: What about the E-PRT?

A: The E-PRT lived on a base and they had military security. They didn't have any private contracted security. Any time they went somewhere it was because one of our units took them there.

Q: What were the requirements to have a meeting with a province? Who needed to go with you?

A: Our standard was that the minimum formation that could move had to include three vehicles, and so that'd be a minimum of nine soldiers in those three vehicles to go anywhere off of the base. Now our circumstance was just a little bit different in Ramadi because our E-PRT was partnered with the municipal government. So what we did was we built a municipal government center in Ramadi. We found a building, and we built a compound for the government.

We took a building and we slapped a generator on it, and we got a bunch of T-walls -- the big concrete barriers -- and built a whole perimeter around it. We completely renovated this old nasty old building. I can't even remember what it was. But completely renovated it. And then we went and built some wooden buildings inside of the compound so that there would be room and space for a city government to come and work and hold meetings. Our vision when we built it was that all of these 'director generals' would work there. That the director general of water would work there, and the director general of sewer would work there. What we found out after we had built it, was that that's not the way the Ramadi city government had ever worked, and each one of these director generals had his own office scattered about the city. So if you were the guy in charge of sewers, you had your office at the main sewer pumping station, if you were the guy in charge of water, you had your main office at the water pumping station, if you were in

charge of electricity, you had a place where all the electric trucks were kept and that's where your office was. Which was fine, but we built this compound, and that's where the E-PRT worked every day.

Q: Did these government people stay there, or did they go out to the other offices?

A: They went to the other offices. But they would come there, because that's where they knew we would be, and that's where the mayor's office was. So if you wanted something from the mayor, or you wanted coalition forces help with something, they knew that's where you had to go. It never materialized into exactly what we wanted it to be, but it became something that was close enough that it worked.

Q: So the E-PRT members would go to work at it? So they would get one trip out and one trip back?

A: For the most part, that is correct.

Q: The security was then available to take other people other places?

A: The way that we worked it, KBR had an armored bus. Kellogg, Brown, and Root, those Halliburton guys. They had this armored bus, so I got them to add the municipal center onto their route. So we would use the armored bus to get there. They'd go once in the morning, once in the evening. Great point of friction in between us and the E-PRT because we provided two humvees to secure the armored bus and our guys don't like taking the same route at the same time every day. So sometimes the route would take them almost two hours to get to work… And it'd take almost two hours to get back, and the air conditioning didn't work so good. And it got to be July, and so it was a great point of friction between the E-PRT and us. It was the way I could get them back and forth to the municipal center, with the least commitment of combat power, which worked out pretty good for us.

Q: What was the distance?

A: It wasn't far at all. In a car it wouldn't take you but five minutes. If you could just wake up, grab your briefcase, hop in a car and drive there it wouldn't take you but five minutes. We had three bases that were relatively close together. There are these waterways that go through, so some days the bus would clockwise, and some days it would go counter-clockwise, but we never wanted it to go at the same time, so we didn't want it to be a target. So sometimes it would loiter here 20 minutes, and sometimes it would loiter 40 minutes, and anyway, it became a great point of friction between us and the E-PRT. Now if they needed to get out into the city to have a meeting, then they would typically travel with some of those soldiers from that civil affairs company, or some of the Marines from that Marine civil affairs detachment. So I forced them all to live together. And so they would say, hey I need to go meet with the DG of water, and so I'd sit there and go, well we'll use this Marine CA element, they can go out there and check on this project, and you can have your meeting, and so it was these pick-up

arrangements, if you will. It required a lot of flexibility on everybody's part. But the E-PRT never got what they wanted, which was 'Hi I'm a member of the E-PRT, and here are my three trucks and my nine soldiers that will take me wherever and whenever I want to go.' That's what they wanted. And they never got that.

Q: Is that the situation today?

A: I would bet, I would imagine. And it was definitely a point of friction between the two of us.

Q: Do you know what the E-PRTs relationships were with intergovernmental and international organizations?

A: You know, we had some good relationships. And it was mostly through USAID. But we had a few implementing partners through USAID that we worked really well with. A couple others that were abysmal. And then there was the Iraqi-American Chamber of Commerce, with which we worked well for a while.

Q: What are some of the other Iraqi counterparts you were dealing with? Governmental leaders or civilian business types, for instance? Can you describe some of those relationships?

A: You know, most of the E-PRT relationships were with people in the municipal government. I mean, we told them, "go focus and make those guys capable."

Q: What about tribal leaders?

A: There was some of that. Tribal leaders were enormously important, and nothing in Ramadi happens without the tribal leaders being involved in it. The mayor doesn't exist except that the tribal leaders support him. It's not like there was an election and the people voted this guy mayor. The tribal leaders said this guy should be our mayor.

Q: Was it a full-time job?

A: Well, by our standards, no. Did he have any other means of employment? No. But Ramadi had no functioning anything. I mean, there was essentially no employment. When there is employment, 80% of that employment comes from the government. So you're getting your government paycheck to be the major, to be a teacher, to clean a street, to pull gunk out of the sewer. Really, the government provides, I think it's fair to say, about 80% of all income to the people.

Q: From your view, how did these Iraqi people feel about being in this one building built by the Americans? Did they feel resentful?

A: The Iraqi's? No. Ramadi was a unique experience, because the awakening, the Anbar awakening, was very deeply rooted in Ramadi, to some degree anchored in Ramadi, even

if it didn't really start there. And so, the tribal leaders, before we got there, had declared coalition forces are friendly forces. They said, 'we are partnered with the coalition to fight al-Qaeda.' So they were on board.

A few very important tribal leaders were on board by the time we got there. Now we had our own work to do convincing the rest of them, and helping the movement spread, so that it became the predominant movement. But it was clearly on its way by the time we got there.

There were certainly some members of the government that were anti-coalition, and were inclined to cooperate with al-Qaeda, but by and large, they knew that we had CERP money, and we were willing to spend our CERP money and if you wanted a piece of that, you needed to come deal with us.

Q: Did you have a public affairs officer?

A: We sure did.

Q: Who was the audience? Was it Iraqi citizens, or was it the US press?

A: Our public affairs mostly focused on the US press. We tried very hard to figure out how to communicate with Arab media. There was no real functioning Arab media in Ramadi when we got there. There was not a single functioning radio station; there was not a single functioning television station; there was not a single functioning newspaper. By the time we left, there was a Ramadi newspaper. There was a guy in Ramadi that put that thing together, but he had it printed in Baghdad. You know, he'd write his stories, he'd build his newspaper, he'd go off to Baghdad to get it printed, and then he'd bring it back into Ramadi. But the Arab media just didn't have enough of an established infrastructure for us to communicate with them very effectively.

Q: What about the people? How did you communicate with the Iraqi people in the area to convince them that they and their government were achieving something?

A: Great question. Certainly through the tribal leaders. We had very good relationships with the tribal leaders, and we worked on those relationships every day. So, just spending time talking to them, hearing their concerns, addressing their concerns, convincing them that we valued the partnership and we were committed to this same thing that they were committed to. The other thing that we did was that we created a series of district councils, so we had operating for us six different battalions who owned a piece of our brigade area in Ramadi. And each one of those battalions took the neighborhoods of Ramadi and built district councils.

So we created a system. We had the mayor and we built his compound, and we got the mayor to hold a city council meeting once every other week. These city councils, or the neighborhood district councils that the battalions had created, would send a representative

to that city council meeting to express the concerns of the district council. So while the brigade leadership was focused on the mayor and his staff, the battalion leaders subordinate to us were focused on these district councils that they had created. And they were holding the same sort of meetings with the district council and telling the district council 'hey, what are your concerns, let's go address them with the mayor. This is how we're gonna help you. You're concerned about that water pump not working? Yeah, we'll fix it for you. If we fix it, how are you gonna secure it? If we fix it, where are you gonna get the fuel from?' And so they were involved at the district level, and that would just trickle on down. A battalion would have company commanders who worked for him, and that company commander would find the leaders in his neighborhood and be talking to those neighborhood leaders on a regular basis.

Q: So what was the basic understanding here? Did the Iraqis feel that they were partners?

A: I think they felt like partners. I mean, we didn't mind letting them know that we were in charge. But, I think we also did a pretty good job of letting them know that we viewed it as a partnership, and that our ultimate objective was eventually to leave.

Q: Did you feel that when there were funds expended, generally speaking, the CERP fund and other funds, that they were spent well and accounted for? Did the Iraqis have the capacity for accountability?

A: No. The Iraqis had no capacity to account for any funding.

Q: How did you handle that?

A: Well, you know, it was all US funding, so we controlled it. We made sure where it was spent. But what we did by being in those district councils, the district councils would come to us, and say 'hey here is a project that we would like your help with. We would like you to rebuild our school. We would like you to repave this street. Would you please help us stock this medical clinic that has run out of supplies?' And they'd bring us these proposals, and then, the battalion commanders would take those proposals. And the battalion commanders had a certain level of authority that they could approve. Higher ones would come to the brigade commander for his approval. Higher ones still would have to go up to the, to MNF West for their approval. So there was this tiered process.

We spent $82 million in CERP funding over the year we were there. We accounted for it expertly, I think down to the penny. How it was all spent, and why it was spent there and what we were able to achieve with that money. So the ideas came from the Iraqis: 'These are the things that we want, would you please help us?' And sometimes we fed them those ideas. 'Hey, don't you think we ought to repave your street?' So they would feed us the ideas, but then we controlled all the money. Working with the district councils, we would say: we're gonna spend $50,000 to fix that school. Who do you believe, from the local area, would do a good job fixing the school? And then the tribal leader would say

'here is my brother, my brother is the very best school fixer,' and so okay, we would write a contract to that guy to go fix the school.

Q: Counter-insurgency was one of the goals, bolstering moderates and so on, how did the E-PRT and PRT do in that department?

A: I've got to focus on the E-PRT, just because they are the ones I worked with every day, and I think they did a great job. They were an important part of what the brigade did.

Q: All these projects, too, are also bolstering moderates.

A: Absolutely. Right. To be honest with you, that was one of our frustrations with the E-PRT. We spent $82 million of CERP money. And while the E-PRT was a part of that process, they didn't bring any money. So I think that the E-PRT leader had, from OPA, $250,000 that could be spent, or something like that. I mean, it was pennies! And the leader did great things with it, but there was no infrastructure in the E-PRT system to be able to do what military commanders were able to do with the CERP.

Q: So that's maybe something for later on, a lesson learned…

A: Mmhmm.

Q: Governance. Can you talk about that?

A: Our whole approach was to start with the facilities, and then we went out and we found these people, said 'okay you're the guy, you're the DG of water, you will come to this meeting, you need to come to this meeting. We're here to help you rebuild your water system, but you've got to come and show us what it is that you need, and we can help you get the funds to do it.'

And by the time we were leaving, the E-PRT was helping the municipal government understand how to get Iraqi money from the Provincial Government and from Baghdad. You know, when they first got there, it was all about just fix it. Let's get American money in, we'll return some normalcy to the people that are in this city who have been living in combat for the past couple years. Fix their sewers, fix their electricity, fix their streets. But by the time we were leaving, the E-PRT was really focused on helping that municipal government understand, not how to ask the Americans for a CERP project, but how to ask their Provincial Government for the funding and the resources they needed to be able to run their city.

Q: Did you work with RTI?

A: We did work with RTI. We had hit or miss with RTI. They started slowly, there were lots of promises, and it took them a long time to deliver. Once they did deliver, their product was pretty good.

Q: What about the Provincial Reconstruction Development Committee?

A: I had no real interaction with them. I recognize the term, I remember that they existed.

Q: In the area of Rule of Law, what were some of the activities?

A: Well, you know, Rule of Law was huge for us. When we got there, there were absolutely no functional courts. We had gone in and we had built up the Ramadi police force, and they started doing what police do: they arrested people. But there was no way to process those arrested, there was no court system. So we're stacking detainees in these horrible Iraqi jails. We realized that we had to have a functioning court system. And so we did it the same way we built the city government. We asked all the tribal leaders, 'hey who are the lawyers, who are the judges?' We found the judges, we got them in a room together, and we said, 'hey, you guys need to get back to work. We've got cases for you to hear.' And they said 'well, you've got to give us a secure place to work.' And so we helped secure their courthouse. They wanted pistols, and so we helped them get pistols. They wanted armored cars, and we said we couldn't do that. But bit by bit we got them to show up and go to work and put their systems back together, and we started hearing cases. We got convictions. It took a while to get some convictions because the police weren't doing a really good job of collecting the evidence and presenting evidence. I'm really proud of what the brigade accomplished in the Rule of Law. There were functioning courts hearing cases, they were convicting people, letting other people go, which is what the court system is supposed to do, and there was nothing when we got there in February.

Q: The next question has to do with your list, the top list of achievements, and I guess that would be up there.

A: Rule of Law is definitely up there. The most important thing that the brigade did was we defeated the al-Qaeda insurgency in Ramadi. Nothing else could be accomplished as long as al-Qaeda could operate effectively in Ramadi. So once they were defeated, and we helped the Iraqis build a system, and secure the city, and prevent them from coming in, that was huge.

Second most important thing that we did was to build an effective police force. Because okay, the enemy was gone, but the enemy wanted back in, so until there were Iraqis securing street corners that the Iraqi people believed and trusted and had confidence in, not to mention providing employment for people that might be otherwise inclined to build an IED. That was the second most important thing, building that police force.

Q: And how many people were trained to be police?

A: We trained about 9,000 Iraqis to be police. We ran a training center on Camp Ramadi, and we tracked these guys down to the individual. In order to get it all done in time, as we were getting ready to leave, and as the security situation improved, we couldn't get enough of the Iraqis into our training center fast enough, so we took the training, we

created more trainers, and took the training curriculum and started spreading it around and doing the training in police stations. By the time that we had left we had trained 9,000 Iraqi police.

Q: Are there other things on your list of achievements?

A: Well, the reconstruction that we did in the city was just absolutely amazing. We spent $82 million in CERP. $12 million of that was simply removing rubble from the city. Simply bringing out all the bombed out buildings.

Q: Where did you put all this cleared stuff?

A: In landfills that the Iraqis have around the city. They had four established landfills. There were some problems with some contractors who would remove the rubble from this site and dump it in another, but we got the mayor involved, and the Iraqi police involved, and said, 'hey this isn't going to be tolerated.' It wasn't perfect, but we got the rubble cleared out. We got the main highway that runs through Ramadi repaved and opened up. You know, when we first got there, big huge check points, there was no traffic allowed on the main thoroughfare through the city. It was too dangerous. So we said 'nobody goes.' But by the time we left, commerce was flowing through the city of Ramadi. Great big huge check points to get into the city, but commerce could flow through the city.

Q: Which of the E-PRT members would be involved in that kind of project?

A: Building and training the police was a security thing that the E-PRT was not involved in. The Rule of Law guy helped us do some Rule of Law instruction for the police, and for the judges, absolutely. But the E-PRT was helping the city government to organize, to decide how to remove the rubble, and how to repave, and restoring power to the city, and fixing the water lines, and the sewer lines. The E-PRT was involved in every bit of that day-to-day stuff. So, which one of those was more important than another, it's hard to say. If you can just imagine a city that was devastated: standing sewage in all the roads… and by the time we left there are functioning marketplaces!

The other one that was really amazing was the micro-grant stuff that the E-PRT's got going, and getting these market places to spring back to life with these small businesses, man that was phenomenal. Phenomenal.

Q: In the four fields (improving governance, promoting economic development, utilizing American military and civilian resources, and counter-insurgency), how would you rank the E-PRT's achievements on a scale of 1-10 in each? Starting with improving governance.

A: Man they're like a nine. They did great. The city government didn't exist, and by the time we left, they were holding meetings, they knew how to communicate with the

provincial level about what their requirements were. Now the city government itself, I would rate like a three, but the E-PRT's work was huge.

Q: What about promoting economic development? Including those micro-grants.

A: They're an eight. It was phenomenal.

Q: Utilizing the American military and civilian resources?

A: American military resources, they were a seven to an eight. They knew how to get from the brigade what they wanted. Civilian resources, I'm not sure what civilian resources there were for them to utilize.

Q: Maybe the contractors? Maybe the State Department people?

A: We were very disappointed. The E-PRT didn't really bring that sort of stuff. We were hoping they would. Here is a case in point: The brigade commander said, 'You know what I need? I need, in the city of Ramadi, a US cultural center.' The tribal leaders came to him and said, 'You Americans, you're not half bad people, but many think that you're the devil. So help us understand that you're not the devil.' And so the brigade commander said, 'That's great, we're going to do this.' We had just helped the Iraqis renovate a library, we had put all this CERP money into building this library. So we said, 'Let's build a US cultural center. You could walk in, you could check out books about America, you'd have a copy of the Declaration of Independence, there'd be a nice little video… help the Iraqis understand America.'

Q: And did they do that? Build that?

A: We did it. The E-PRT could not do it. We thought for sure the E-PRT could go to the State Department, and get the State Department to help us build this thing. Bureaucracy, red-tape, oh, this will have to go to some under-secretary for their approval, blah blah, blah blah, blah blah… It was maddening, maddening. So that's just one case in point where we had really high hopes that the E-PRT was going to help us tap into some sort of network of civilian resources. We didn't see it.

Q: Finally, lessons learned. Are there five or six lessons learned or recommendations that you would pass along to future E-PRTs?

A: Somewhere in the planning, in the preparation of E-PRTs, there has to be something that says what we accomplish matters. I mean, that was a real friction point between us and the E-PRT, convincing them that it mattered that, hey we're going to set a goal, we're going to develop a plan that gets us to that goal, and accomplishments matter.

The E-PRT was very content to talk in ideas and concepts, and wouldn't it be nice if….. And not laying out plans and organizing resources to actually accomplish things. And so,

I think that we want those elements of our national government involved in this fight. There's got to be some 'hey we're going to actually accomplish something.'

I also think we ought to look at resourcing their security. As the security situation improves; we want the E-PRTs and PRTs out and about with a little more freedom of mobility.

Q: Isn't it expensive?

A: It is expensive. I don't think it is right to task military units to do all of that. I think we should be looking at some contracted security solutions for PRTs and E-PRTs. The US Army Corps of Engineers uses them. The US Army Corps of Engineers gets out and about on the battlefield with contracted security. They don't rely on tactical formations to secure them when they have to go places.

Q: Don't they use Blackwater?

A: I think so. I think AEGIS. USAID uses AEGIS.

And money. E-PRTs and PRTs need access to money.

Q: You mean quick access to funds?

A: Quick access to lots of money. I think CERP works. I think we did amazing things with CERP, and I think CERP was just as important to the brigades' success as every bomb that we dropped in Ramadi was important to our success. It was huge. If we couldn't have been able to spend that $82 million to pull out the rubble, to repair the waterlines, to bring in electrical power, we wouldn't have been as successful as we were. And so the E-PRTs and the PRTs need that same sort of access to reconstruction and development funds.

Q: How do you fight corruption and misdirection of these funds?

A: You work very hard at it. And you recognize that if an Iraqi got paid $20,000 for something that should have only cost $15,000, that's not the end of the world. I mean, I'm not saying that we ought to be flippant with American taxpayer dollars, but the city of Ramadi was devastated. There was not a functioning infrastructure. Complete buildings collapsed from the bombs that were dropped on them, or the bombs that al-Qaeda planted. Roads completely chewed apart by IEDs, water lines busted because of IEDs, sewer lines busted and sewage flowing in the streets. It takes a lot of money to fix that sort of stuff.

You don't just pour money in and you have to hold people accountable, and we worked very hard, by having good effective relationships with the city government and the tribal leaders and down at the local community level to avoid the corruption. I mean, the blatant taking money and not providing any service in return. That happened on a couple

of occasions, but it was minimized by establishing good relationships with the Iraqi people. The Iraqi people wanted their school fixed, and they wanted their health clinic filled full of supplies, and if you made a commitment with them that that was going to get done, and if you had a functioning relationship with the people that actually lived there, they could tell you who could actually be trusted to do it and do it right.

Q: All right, thank you very much.

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