

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

**INTERVIEW #11**

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**Executive Summary**

Interviewee was deputy director of the National Coordination Team, with headquarters in Baghdad.

He describes the theoretical structure of the PRT “a military and civilian team, headed by a Foreign Service officer. The deputy of the team would be military.”

The concept was practical, he said, but the execution was problematic: “It wasn’t quite as clear cut as you might think it would be.” Military people found civilian team leaders more independent than military people would be ... “a lot more autonomous or independent that you expect a subordinate commander would be in the actual military.”

Resourcing and staffing were the biggest issues. The NCT did not come with a budget, as laid out in Baghdad 4045.

“The concept... worked fine when State Department was paying the bill. When DOD had to pay for the bill, it collapsed. The problem is when you have two organizations that are trying to cooperate on this, and you don’t have everyone with the real buy-in to do it”

Huge problem: Individuals being graded by people who were not actually their supervisors.

Some people were more suited than others to serve with the PRTs. Peace Corps experience was ideal. Another need is for people willing to work together, to cooperate, toward a mutual goal.

Regulations surrounding personal security could be confusing. For example, there was movement security from point A to point B, but what happened after that was sometimes unclear. The military did not want to provide personal security detachments, but instead would simply protect and transfer individuals to the door, then pick them up at the door. However, what happened inside the building was also crucial, and interview says that a big fear was that after drop-off, the individual might be harmed.” What we didn’t want was for Ms. Foreign Service Officer to go into a building and not come out.”

In spite of ambiguity in the directives relating to movement security, Schroeder felt the PRT movement security people did an excellent job. The military people, especially, drove carefully and were very thorough. He feels that Blackwater security people were often reckless, driving too fast.

Working with Iraqis, one must be careful not to make promises one cannot keep. (P. 15)

Iraq's rule of law program was deficient. While INL and others worked well on the criminal-police-security part of it, they failed to properly address the issue of developing a good civil law system. The main problem was that there were too few rule-of-law people sent in to do this.

PRT is a misnomer: "We do capacity building, not reconstruction. ... When you go in and introduce yourself from provincial reconstruction team, it's 'What are you going to build for me?'" He'd suggest calling them Capacity Development Teams instead.

Agricultural experts are badly needed, and in short supply; likewise, Bilingual Bicultural Advisers (BBAs).

PRTs should have everything they need to operate. With specialized people available to make sure those resources are made available, and distributed appropriately (agricultural experts to areas in need of agricultural advice; rule of law people to where they are needed, etc), plus equipment, security and materials required to do the job.

There is inherent inequity in the way State and Defense employees are treated while serving in PRTs. Military people have less security, less comfort, less pay. State Department people get better living quarters, better pay, more choices and better security. This should change. (P. 25)

### **Interview**

A: I was called to active duty in February of '06 and I was deployed to Iraq in late March of '06 and arrived back in the United States in April of '07. While I was in Fort Bragg in my pre-appointment workups, we were notified that we needed someone to fill the position of the deputy director of the National Coordination Team, and the General who was the commander of my army reserve unit as well as the chief of the civil military officers division of Multi-National Force-Iraq, picked me to do that.

*Q: So you are a reservist?*

A: Yes, I am an army reservist.

*Q: Right now you are in a civilian job?*

A: Yes. I replaced a civilian colleague as the deputy director of NCT. At that time another person was the director of the NCT, and the NCT was an organization that was

stood up to field provincial reconstruction teams in Iraq. By the time I got there, it had already started its work, and I worked with the person I replaced for a while, then he left, redeployed.

*Q: Where was your headquarters in Iraq?*

A: In Baghdad. We were actually located in the old presidential palace in Iraq. The organization was stood up before I got there, but it was an ad-hoc organization that was stood up without any funding or manning document.

*Q: This was the coordination group?*

A: National Coordination Team.

*Q: How many people were part of that team?*

A: It varied at times, but probably around 10-15 people for the most part.

*Q: This is distinct from a PRT, the coordination team was something different?*

A: The NCT was not a PRT, the NCT was a coordinating element that was established to field the PRTs in the provinces.

*Q: In other words to organize them and to place them?*

A: Yes. The director of that was civilian, and it was designed so that the deputy would be a military.

*Q: Can you describe the role and mission of the PRTs in Iraq?*

A: I think it's actually pretty well known what they do. We have slide briefings and things like that where we could lay that all out for you, so I think it's a well established thing, what they are there for. One of the concepts, though, was that a PRT would be given a nominal structure, and the team leader would organize his or her team to best perform the mission as they saw in the particular province. They would be a nominal group of people with skill set to go with that, and they would take it from there. The idea was also to have a military and civilian team, headed by a foreign service officer. The deputy of the team would be military -- maybe a colonel, but usually a lieutenant colonel.

You have the organization in charge, you have the NCT here, and the PRTs underneath it, and there are several of the PRTs. The NCT, then underneath, out in the provinces, we are sitting in Baghdad. Underneath that organization and working for the director, are the PRT team leaders and they are out in the provinces, and each of them has a military deputy, and then they have a staff.

*Q: Is it a chain of authority, and up here at NCT, would it be directing the PRTs?*

A: Yes, this is very much like a military organization in that you have battalion commanders, and you have companies. The battalion commander is leader of the company commanders, and the companies have their own staff, and the PRT leaders had their own staff to meet the needs of that province, the NCT had to meet the needs of the PRTs.

*Q: Did that work in practice?*

A: I think for the most part. It wasn't quite as clear cut as you might think it would be, because being from military you have a certain expectation of the chain of command, and the team leaders were a lot more autonomous or independent than you expect a subordinate commander would be in the actual military. And it's probably fine, because those were senior foreign service officers. The idea was that they would be senior foreign service officers, in other words they were the face of the United States State Department and embassy in that province. They would work with the provincial governor, with the provincial council, and then they would have people on their staff who could deal with things such as governance, economics, rule of law, this was all laid out in a nominal organization.

Having said that, when you get to resourcing and staffing, if there is one big issue we had, it would be resourcing and staffing because the NCT was established as an ad hoc organization at the embassy under the IRMO (Iraqi Reconstruction Management Office), under the Deputy Chief of Mission. When it was established, it didn't come with a budget. It didn't come with a manning document, and it was established by a joint cable, Baghdad 4045. If you read the cable, it lays out the structure of the NCT. If a PRT were to be established on a Forward Operating Base, the resourcing of that PRT would be through DOD, through the military, through the Multi-National Corps.

*Q: By resourcing you are including security?*

A: Money, building, security, everything that a PRT needs to operate, including a place to live, food, all this stuff was laid out in the cable. If it was to be established on a regional embassy office (REO), then the State Department would pick up that bill, and then it would be split between the two. The first three were stood up. To stand them up, they said they were going to do a proof of concept, establish the first three to see how that went. The first three went up in Mosul, Hillah, and Kirkuk, at REOs. The State Department paid for everything.

Those guys moved into the building, had a place to stay, had State Department communications, it all worked very well. They worked well enough to say, okay, we will go ahead and start establishing the others. The next ones were going to be Salah ad-Din, down in Diyala Province and Anbar, these were the ones that were going on the FOBs and were full under the control of the corps. As we tried to establish those out there -- and theoretically the corps was going to pay the bill -- the corps lawyers decided in their written opinion that they could not expend military funds on a State Department

operation. Therefore, sorry, we thought we could do this but no we can't. We already had people in place, and then were told we would get no funding, would get no support whatsoever unless we paid for it all, we being the State Department. I am working under the State Department. I was assigned to MNF-I, through the civil-military operations division under strategic operations. But then I was seconded, so to speak, to the State Department to work as the deputy director of the NCT, under the embassy. When I say "we," this was the organization I was in, which was the NCT, now had people out in the provinces that we couldn't provide for, their requirements. The corps said, well, we will do this if you reimburse us all the money, and the State Department says we don't have the money.

This was a huge issue. If there is one issue in resourcing of these things that you need to establish who is going to pay for them, and people have to stand up to their agreements and execute them. I am no attorney, but when I read through it, it did not appear that is was correct. It termed this effort as a humanitarian assistance operation and used the part of the law that you cannot spend DOD funds on humanitarian assistance. I would never consider us humanitarian assistance. I would have considered this to be a stability operation, possibly reconstruction, but I would have never classified a PRT as humanitarian assistance.

*Q: Would you call this a management leadership structure problem, or where would the difficulty of this come? Where would you place this resourcing problem, is it part of the management set up?*

A: I would say it's a management set up, I mean that is the concept. The concept, well it worked fine when State Department was paying the bill. When DOD had to pay for the bill, it collapsed. The problem is when you have two organizations that are trying to cooperate on this, and you don't have everyone with the real buy-in to do it, people look for ways to get out of it. I also believe that there are differences in opinion on decorum out there, about who should be in charge of this anyway. Maybe they thought this should be a military function instead of State Department.

*Q: Was there a sense of cooperation among members of both the NCT and PRTs*

A: I didn't see a great sense of cooperation between the NCT, MNF-I and the multi-national corps. At some levels, everyone nodded their heads and said "yes," this is a good thing. But when it came down to the staff levels, for instance, this is a type of thing you would run into. We had a steering committee, an executive steering committee, that directed its operations. It was chaired by the chief of IRMO and co-chaired with him by the director of strategic effects.

There would be things said in the steering committee that were related to what needed to be done immediately, issues that needed immediate attention, and they would come to agreement on them and then everyone would walk out of the committee meeting. No one took notes, no one took minutes, and so we may or may not know what happened in a meeting even if we were there. Our director had a seat at the table and he would come

back and tell us maybe one thing that happened, or maybe we were in there and heard it, but afterwards if we went over to the corps or MNF-I and said such and such was done and said during the committee meeting, they'd go, we didn't hear it, we weren't there. You could be saying anything. There was no direction.

*Q: Was that because it was a mixed effort -- military and diplomatic people working together?*

A: It could be. But that is where you have to make it work, you have to work together. There are things in this steering committee that have to translate into a unified effort between the two organizations that goes all the way down to the bottom.

*Q: In order to address that, what could have been done differently? Taking notes?*

A: That, or when a decision is made, each party goes back and notifies his staff that this is what we are going to do.

*Q: And that didn't happen?*

A: Not that I am aware of. That created issues, because we would come out of the steering committee thinking that something was resolved, but by the next time the issue came up we were back in the same boat.

*Q: When you say we...*

A: We being the NCT. We did get some support from the U.S. military when they realized we didn't have all the staff we needed, so they did plus up parts of our staff, but as an ad hoc organization, , each person on the staff of the NCT had another home that they came from. Those people who they came from would not release them. For instance, if I had my ops officer who came from MNF-I strategic effects, he works for me in the NCT, he is rated by somebody in strategic effects, so his actual rating, when he walks away from this operation, this paper that is going to follow him is not written by the person he worked for, its written by somebody in another organization who may not even like what we were doing.

We had people from the corps like that, and we also had people from MNF-I. When you have a staff of people and they are going to be graded ultimately on how well we do by other organizations, which may or may not like the fact that they are there because they were robbed from them, that's a huge problem.

*Q: Did you have, for example, senior military people answering to State Department people who were junior or vice versa, a high level diplomat who was supposed to answer to a lower-level person in the bureaucracy of the military?*

A: I don't think we really had that, no. It wasn't a matter of rank, it was a matter of where you came from. If we all work in the same office, and I am the deputy director, and I've got my operations officer, my plans officer, and my operations officer is rated by somebody at the other end of the building that I have to interface with to get what I need, and he doesn't want to give it up, he is not going to care for me or necessarily what this guy is doing. Because that guy working for me is trying to do what I need, which is not what that guy wants down there. If I have a plans officer who comes from another part of that organization, he also is going to be rated somewhere else, and I had operations officer, regional operations officers, who actually came from the corps, who were being rated by the people at the corps whose staff their were pulled from. They refused to revise these rating changes. It was a huge mess.

*Q: How did you address that? If you were doing it over again, how would you change it?*

A: What we tried to do, and this is the concept, one of the things I first started working when I got there, was to rationalize the organization. The organization was built by the cable I talked to you about. In the cable it said, for instance, that strategic effects would provide one colonel and one lieutenant colonel and the two served in these slots, and strategic operations would provide this and this, and all these different organizations were tasked from MNF-I to provide people. So it was cobbled together in what the army is called a frago.

*Q: Could you tell me what frago stands for?*

A: Fragmentary order. The frago established where these people came from. Once they came all together, however, that doesn't mean that they are now reassigned to another organization, just that their duty is over there. It doesn't mean that they are assigned so their rating is now done there.

So what I tried to do, I took the structure and we put it in the format of an RRF. Well, that had to go through strategic operations to be sent out, after much wrangling with the other organizations involved. There was always a question of you've got too many people, or you don't have enough people, or why are you doing this, there were so many organizations out there that were trying to second guess how the NCT worked. But we put together the RRF, and we got it up to the top of the military chain, and they killed it. They said we are not going to do this. So that meant back to square one. This is about the time that a new general showed up and decided that we are not going to go forward with an RRF for the NCT. This means, you have your frago there, and that's what you are going to have to have.

Well, as people neared the end of their terms, the offices that were dictated in the frago said we are not going to replace them. So we had personnel issues, it was a huge issue.

*Q: That had to be frustrating.*

A: It was very frustrating, but we tried to make it work by cajoling these offices to provide replacements, and we did get some replacements in. The British were good about keeping someone for us. Actually. Another general had put some people in with us that were some very good people. One of the advantages of that kind of operation is when somebody came in, no one knew that person in the old organization. Well, that was good, because we got some really good people that if it had been known how good they were, they would have kept them. On the flip side, we got some duds, too, because they didn't know who these guys were, and said you go over there and take care of that, and so we got our share of duds, but we did get some real superstars in the process.

*Q: Civil/military relations in general: How about an embedded PRT?*

A: We started the embedded PRT concept when I was leaving. The PRTs that I worked in for the most part were not the ePRTs, they were the regular PRTs. The day I left, was the day the team leaders arrived for their in-briefing in Baghdad to go into those ePRTs. So that was the morning. I met them coming off the bus, turned them over to the office staff for their training, then I got on the bus and went to the airport and flew home.

*Q: Do you have an opinion on the PRTs' relationship with the brigade combat teams, is that something you can address?*

A: It was an interesting concept, but it was something that was very personality driven. If your PRT leader and BCT leader do not work together, then you've got all kinds of problems. If they do work together, it is a very good situation.

*Q: It was a matter of chance.*

A: We had it both ways. We had some that were at loggerheads all the time. They shift out and the next guy comes in and it goes down hill, or vice versa. In both cases you have type A personalities, and both of them are very determined to get their way. As long as they are going in the same direction and they wanted to work together, you couldn't beat it, because you had the kind of synergy that I think we established in some of the PRTs. By the same token, we had some brigade commanders out there who didn't buy into the PRT concept at all, who felt it was not something of benefit, it was not something they were going to support.

*Q: Did they feel that it was just imposed on them?*

A: Yes, I think so. Then we had some PRT team leaders who were micromanagers. They were very closed about what they were doing, very jealous of their projects and were not going to allow anyone else to be the spokesperson. to the extent in some cases that they muzzled their own staff from talking to the provincial leaders and frankly, to their detriment. There are some good people at those PRTs, some really good people, and some of them could do great jobs if you just sent them in the right direction and let them go.



*Q: They are all getting a chance to say something, or a lot of them anyway.*

A: In talking about the staffs of the PRTs themselves, I talked about the NCT staff, but out at the PRTs we had the nominal organization laid out. It included, and I don't know what the origin of this was, but there was a lot of negotiation and counter-negotiation about what was going to be on one of these PRTs when it came to the military. There is also the corps' opinion that the military could not work for civilians. In other words, a civil affairs company at the PRT could not work for the PRT team leader. I think we made up a lot of our own problems that way because that may be a big issue in the corps headquarters, but when you got down to the teams, if the company commander was allowed to integrate into a team, he did, and he integrated his team and everything went fine. But up at the corps staff level, there were endless arguments about the chain of command, how all that was supposed to work, that caused problems in a number of ways. And one of them was once again back to the rating chain: who is that company commander working for? Does he work for the PRT leader, does he work for the deputy PRT leader, does he work for his battalion commander back here? The initial concept was he would work for the PRT leader, but with all the wrangling, a lot of these guys ended up ultimately being rated by their battalion commanders.

*Q: Personalities had a big impact?*

A: Well, they wouldn't say that, they would say they were looking at the regulations, that sort of thing. Who you work for in the army typically is who writes your efficiency report, and if there are conflicting loyalties, in your organization, you are working in this PRT and the battalion commander wants something else, then you are pulled between the two. Or if you are working with NCT, and your rater is down in MNF-I or MNC-I and you are working for the deputy director or director of the NCT, and there is conflict, who do you go with? Our people were pulled with that all the time. It was not a clear-cut chain of command.

Now on the State side, it was probably a fairly clear-cut chain of command, although I think there you have more personality issues, in other words you have Foreign Service Officers. Our NCT leaders were 31-61s, are you familiar with that? These are temporary State Department hires. They are State Department personnel but they are on temporary appointment. Sometimes FSOs who had been years in the Foreign Service felt that they shouldn't have to answer to a temporary hire. Well if you are a State Department Foreign Service Officer, you have to be rated by a State Department Foreign Service Officer, so if you are a team leader who is not a State Department Foreign Service Officer but a temporary hire, can you rate the FSOs under you? If you are a Foreign Service Consular officer, should you be rated by a Foreign Service management officer, or should you be rated back at the embassy by the consular section? There were all of these types of issues that came up.

*Q: A lot of fuzziness.*

A: A lot of fuzziness. Then you would bring in people from DOJ, these are your rule of law people, or INL. INL is the international narcotics and law enforcement organization that claimed that they were in charge of rule of law in Iraq. But the Justice Department was tasked with staffing the rule of law positions; they could never get enough lawyers out there for us. INL came in and said we'll take care of that, but they could never get the lawyers out for us. Some of the lawyers we did have should have stayed home. For the most part, every lawyer we got out of the Justice Department was absolutely stellar. The Justice Department lawyers were absolutely stellar personnel. INL was hit or miss, because they were contracting or lawyers off the street, I don't know where they got them, necessarily, but we never had enough. Huge mission, but we never had enough rule of law. We also never had enough econ people. AID was pretty good at helping us out, but some of the functions of the team suffered. We never got the civilian staff quickly enough, and once you got them, you have to begin looking for their replacements, because a year later, they are going to be gone. You always had to be looking down the road, and the lead time to get these people in country was just horrendous.

Having said that, I went up to a PRT in another province, and I had to accompany the strategic effects general there as we were to meet with the team leader. He had the police chief, the governor, the deputy governor, and the provincial council chair all in for a meeting. The Deputy Chief of Mission also came up with the general.

Anyway, one of the things she wanted around the big horseshoe table was to have each one of her subordinate section leaders talk about what they did. It dawned on me as I was sitting at that table that except for one, every one of them was an army officer. We were desperately trying in Baghdad to get the civilians filled into the PRTs, but when you looked around, the guys that were out there doing networking were not part of the CA company, and it is very interesting where they came from. When we went over to Iraq, there was a huge thing called a functional specialty team that was established. In my understanding, that team was supposed to work with the ministries, and the ministry support teams, and the ministry advisory teams in the embassy. When they got in country, the corps would not allow them to work in those ministry teams. This is where you get into conflict between the corps and the ministry. The corps really didn't know what to do with the new people, I believe, so what they did was they sent them out to the divisions, and the divisions really didn't have any use for them, or didn't know what to do with them, so they sent them to the regional reconstruction centers, the IRRCs.

I went up one day and I visited the PRT, the people I rotated over there with, and with whom I had trained at Fort Bragg. I met them walking down the hall. What are you people doing here, I asked. We are up here working in the IRRC, they replied. I couldn't believe it. They had veterinarians, attorneys, construction people. Well, what exactly are you doing, I queried. We are tracking projects, they said. Oh, really and is this a productive job for you, I asked. No, they answered, but this is where they put us.

I went back to talk to their brigade commander and we got them all shipped into the PRT. They formed the nucleus of the PRTs because these guys were all very qualified officers that could fill those kinds of positions. It was just by a fluke that we were able to

get them in there. So, the manning of the PRTs was problematic from the word go. We had to work hard at getting the people in there, with the right skill sets, at the right time to go forward.

In Anbar province, we never got staffed up. We never got that staff up, because people didn't just come in fast enough, I don't know why.

*Q: Did it have something to do with the security situation there?*

A: It had to do with the hiring situation.

*Q: Was one province more easily staffed than another?*

A: Well, no, not necessarily, because what we did, once someone arrived at the NCT and said I'm here to be a PRT guy, then we looked and saw where the biggest need was and slotted them in there. In one case, we had an attorney who was slotted to go out to another province. She got on a helicopter, she arrived, and she got off the helicopter. She looked around, she got back on the helicopter and announced she was not staying out here. She didn't like it. Her high heels got stuck in the rocks. She said I'm going back to Baghdad, I don't care what you say. If you want to use me in Baghdad, that's fine, if not I'm going home.

We had one fellow who arrived over in the NCT. When they get to the NCT we give them a briefing about what is going on. The next day he was expected to be somewhere, I've forgotten where, and we wondered where he was. Well, he had made his flight arrangements. We hadn't even finished briefing him yet and were worried that he was heading for the PRT before we had concluded. In fact, his flight arrangements were to go home. He didn't spend 24 hours on the ground, and he just left.

*Q: So all the PRT-ers were there because they volunteered to go?*

A: Yes, everyone is a volunteer over there. You won't find anybody that has to be there, but we had people who volunteered and once they saw it, they said I don't want to do this. On the other hand, we had people that thrived on that.

*Q: What kind of people thrived on it?*

A: Somebody who wanted to make a difference, usually somebody who had some experience working in third world countries, or worked in less than the Ritz-type of conditions. For instance, if I had my choice and I was going to pick somebody to go out there like a Foreign Service Officer, I would pick one that came out of the Peace Corps.

*Q: Used to roughing it?*

A: We had a few that had Peace Corps experience, and frankly, compared to their Peace Corps time, this was the Ritz. And they are committed, and these are people that by golly

want to make a difference, and they did. But you've got to have people that are willing to work together. We had one lawyer who went up to one of our PRTs where we had a justice attorney who was already up there. I personally didn't think she needed to go up there because we had a greater need for a lawyer in other places. But this was an INL attorney, and they insisted they would be in charge of assigning where she went. She goes up there and promptly stepped in the PRT and told the Justice attorney that this was going to be her office and he needed to move his stuff out, and by golly, she was now in charge of things and that was the way it was going to be. Eventually, she was sent back by the PRT team leader, so that didn't work out, but we had other people who went out and did great jobs.

These guys go into town every day, on roads, where you can get blown up anytime you step out. So it's not what you might call an environment of perfect safety. You must take it in stride because when your time is up, your time is up.

*Q: Could you talk a little bit about the PRTs relationships with international groups, and non-governmental organizations?*

A: We tried to establish some cooperative relationships with IOM, part of the UN, but what we really found out was they were looking for money from us, and of course we didn't have any money. For the most part, if you had money they would work with you, but if you didn't have any money on the table, they would not.

*Q: Security is something people have talked about. What was the level and nature of the threat? What was the PRTs' relationship with the US military?*

A: That was another huge controversy that we hashed around with MNF-I and the corps. If you were in a REO, the State Department provided security, so you had Blackwater or Dynacorps, or whatever they were using. If you were on a FOB, then the military provided security, and made a movement team. They wouldn't assign a movement team to the PRT, so what the agreement came down to was they would provide so many movements a day or week, and that would be their task. It would be one group of people one week, another group the next. That way the brigade commander could task his forces out as he needed to, and he wasn't essentially just giving people up to work for the PRT. That was fine. For the most part, I think we got the movement security we needed.

Where it became an issue was the idea of personal security. First of all, there is movement security from point A to point B; but what do you do when you get to point B and you have these civilians?

The military says it cannot provide PSDs, personal security detachments. Here you get into a lot of semantics trying to define what is a personal security detachment? These guys have to be specially trained, and they are all specific. They said we can't do that, we can only do so much. I asked them what could they do and they replied that they would drop a person at the door, then pick them up, but they wouldn't go into the building with them. We went around that goat rope forever.

*Q: Was it important that somebody go into the building with them?*

A: Yes, because what we didn't want was for Ms. Foreign Service Officer to go into the building and not come out.

*Q: Like a ministry building?*

A: Like a government building of any type. Wherever they had to go. In a PRT, the members go off the post to downtown to the government center in some city, or they go to the what you call the Blue Dome government building in some city or other location that are not necessarily safe places. The Iraqi government had people snatched out of their own buildings. We did not want to have one of our people go in the building, while sergeant so-and-so is standing by the truck. And they can't find her because someone snatched her two hours ago. We did not see that as a good idea, and no one else did either.

But the corps and MNF-I were not willing to commit to personal security teams, so it resulted in a bunch of guys sitting around a table at headquarters, parsing words in Baghdad in the Republican Guard Palace, or the Presidential palace, saying: well you can't call it a PST.

*Q: Did you have a security issue that went on as you were acting team leader? Was there not sufficient security?*

A: No, I never had that problem. When you get down to the actual squad of soldiers that is doing this, these guys are not stupid. They are not going let somebody get nabbed on their watch. So regardless of what they say, they have a mindset in which they are going to make sure that the people in their care, get there, do their business, get back, and no one will be lost on their watch.

*Q: So you never got it in writing?*

A: Well, the whole thing is now in writing which was an issue that took weeks and weeks and weeks. Two generals worked out language, which was taken back to the regional security officer who is in charge of embassy security. He didn't like it, and so it was taken back to the generals and they didn't like it, and the personal security people didn't like it either, and so you end up parsing words forever. But when you are out at the PRT, and everybody climbs in the vehicles, the lieutenant and sergeants know what their mission is and they aren't going to lose anyone. A lot of the reason this succeeded was in spite of what was going on at headquarters. It's because you've got quality people doing the job of protecting. These are people who are not involved in all these esoteric discussions. They know what they need to do and they do it right.

*Q: So there were really good people.*

A: Oh, yes. Those movement control teams, they were wonderful people, they knew what they were doing. These were just infantry soldiers.

These are just your infantry soldiers, but they knew what they were required to do, and they weren't going to lose anyone. The Blackwater people, when the organization needed to move, those guys worked fine too. The problem was, well, in some ways if you talk to the people out there, the people that rode with Blackwater and then with the military, for the most part they will say they preferred riding with the military. The Blackwater guys were kind of scary. They drove fast, to me rather recklessly, zipping around. You didn't have that sense of professionalism. The PRT team leaders would request the military security teams, we don't want these other guys. There are a lot of them who said that. I rode with Blackwater sometimes and they are generally okay. We had one guy who had his arm broken by them during a wreck while they were going too fast.

*Q: They are not military people?*

A: No. They are private companies, and the State Department hires them. For instance, we had to try to stand up a PRT in Talil. We knew that we wouldn't get military movement teams down there because they simply didn't have them in the area. We tried to get the regional security officer to get the Blackwater or another of his teams, and that was one of the hardest things we tried to do while we were there. There were a number of roadblocks thrown up by diplomatic security

It was maddening to try to work with diplomatic security. Diplomatic security, in my opinion, has one job and one job alone. That is to make sure nobody gets hurt, and the way you do that is make sure no one goes anywhere or does anything. We were their worst nightmare, because the regional security officer for the most part, if he could keep everyone in that green zone embassy compound, he would be a happy camper. But we, in the PRT business, were taking his FSOs and putting them in harm's way, and anything he could do to keep us from doing that he would have done. He told us, unabashedly, that we were his worst nightmare.

*Q: Do you think the PRTs are worthwhile? Are they successful?*

A: Oh, yes, I think so. Some more so than others, and we had issues of accessibility. If there wasn't a REO or a FOB in that province, then working there was problematic at best.

*Q: Did you have Iraqi counterparts you would work with?*

A: We had the governance contract through USAID, and RTI was theoretically supposed to hire some of these people out in the field. It was very hard to tell what was there and what wasn't. One of the things I wanted to do and never was able to successfully to do was I wanted to get somebody in the NCT that could solely focus on finding out what RTI was doing out there and ensure what they were doing was correct.

*Q: Wasn't this counterproductive in terms of earning the Iraqis trust?*

A: Yes, sure, just because you have somebody come in and promise you something, does that mean they are going to deliver it? By the time one person rotates out and somebody else comes in promising to do this or that, the Iraqis think: 'Oh really? That is what the last guy said...'

*Q: What about the Iraqis that you worked with on a day to day basis? Was there a good relationship with them?*

A: For the most part, but you are not going to walk in there as an FSO or an army officer and have Iraqis give you a hard time. They are going to be very nice, and they are probably going to think, 'What does this person want to hear?' Then they will tell them that, and when you leave, they go back to business as usual.

*Q: Who would your counterpart be, or who would you deal with?*

A: It takes a long time to work through that, until you really know what this person does. Some people never got to that point. Some people got to it very quickly. But you have to build relationships. Its very time-consuming, and that works against us because you are only there for a period of time, and your access isn't that great. If you have to drive in from the FOB everyday, that is very time-consuming.

*Q: You dealt with the governor in your province?*

A: Yes, the governor and the head of the provincial council. But you have to then try to understand, all of their politics, and their politics are very, convoluted to an outsider. Trying to piece through who does what, who does what to whom, and who is the real power behind this guy or that guy, and who really calls the shots. That takes a lot of time and effort to figure out. They have been doing it for their lifetimes, they know how to do it. They know who does what. For us to come in and try to understand all that is a very tough job.

*Q: For example, if a rule of law person comes in or a governance person, who's plan would they try and develop, would it be the Iraqi's plan or would the rule of law guy come in with his own plan and say this is what we are going to do?*

A: Take rule of law for instance. That was one of my pet peeves there. I thought the rule of law program in Iraq was broken. Maybe I was not seeing it all. I saw what went on in the provinces. And I gave my opinion through the rule of law steering committees and the embassy. You had INL, who some said were in charge of rule of law. You had the Department of Justice people who were out working in the field and they weren't necessarily answering to INL. INL had difficulty getting people into the country to do the work. You had the Department of Justice attaché down at the other end of the building working at the national level with the chief judge. I don't think there was ever,

and there may not even be still, a cohesive rule of law program, but because these lawyers that came in from DOJ were talented people, and certainly weren't wallflowers, (and they were all type A personalities for the most part), they would go out to the PRTs and find a judge. Then they would find the police chief, whoever they needed to work with. But if you really delved into their mission, their mission was to stand up the Iraqi criminal court system, it was not to promote rule of law. There is criminal justice, that is one piece of it, but the whole civil law piece was completely neglected by INL.

*Q: That is a failure, in some respects.*

A: In my opinion, we need more people to work this issue; you can't put one guy out there and say you are the rule of law guy in this province, and he is supposed to do everything. What it came down to was that the guys went out there and did what they could do. They looked around, and tried to work on the most glaring issue. Usually it had to do with the courts, the police, the detention and penal systems, that sort of thing. They would focus on those and try to get the police, the court, and maybe the military in the same room together, in some cases first time ever. Put them all together, and they seemed to say: Oh, is that what you are supposed to do? Okay we can make that work. That, for the most part, is what those guys tried to do. Were they also able to work on civil law, did they work on provincial law, how to go about making this a federal system with quasi-independent provinces that had their own autonomy? One person can't do everything. You need a lot more people out there doing it.

*Q: Is it the same story with other aspects of the PRT, such as health, education, whatever?*

A: the rule of thumb would be: focus on what you can try to accomplish in your short time there with the limited resources you are given and the limited access you have. Sometimes that worked out wonderfully, sometimes it didn't work out so well, but what programs they try to do, they do well.

*Q: In the future, if you were going to do this over again, what would you do to address that problem?*

A: I would look at adequate staffing. That's the thing, as we were leaving there, that was something we were trying to do. It was interesting because, just trying to get a memorandum of agreement between the State Department and the Defense Department, MNF-I and the embassy on the roles and functions of the whole program and its participants. The process was a nightmare, and it went on for months. If MNF-I agreed, it would be sent to the embassy people, who'd send it to DC, and they would say no and send it back and then haggle about every little thing in there. So having a clear-cut plan, having all that done before establishing the program, would be preferable. This program was established on the fly, so to speak. If you had those kind of agreements hammered out beforehand, the concept established already, the PRT concept, and you had doctrine on how this stuff would work, and it would be laid out before you went to an area, I think it would work a lot better. Everyone would know what they had to pay for and how



much. We finally worked through the funding issue, and the only way we worked through the funding issue was when the State Department finally said okay, we will just pay for everything. That is how we got through the funding issue.

*Q: Could you talk about public affairs, did your PRT have a public affairs unit?*

A: No, we had a public diplomacy officer, but we did not do public affairs.

*Q: No liaison at all?*

A: In my province, it was hard to get public diplomacy officers out there. That was not an easy specialty to get out in the PRTs. We did have one in my province and interestingly enough, the previous team leader there had told her to focus on exchange programs, in other words getting people to go over on exchange programs to the United States. I did not understand what that had to do with trying to do this mission. So what we ended doing was trying to focus on re-establishing a radio station that could broadcast from a provincial radio station. And get programming for it, get people on the air that could speak to the people of the province to tell them what their new government was about, as opposed to listening to this Al-Qaeda guy who just came through yelling at them with a gun. What we tried to focus on in public diplomacy was more of like an information operation. It was not public affairs as in go meet the press, although one of the things they tried to do was re-establish a newspaper. That didn't go too well, I don't think, because whoever preceded me, I think they were sold a printing press that didn't work, so nobody could do their jobs. Somebody got the money for it, absconded with it, and they never got a newspaper. This press was something like out of the Smithsonian. It was an antique. When we actually called up the company that made this press in Germany, asking what would we have to do to get it to work, they said we would have to get so and so, because he is the only one who has ever seen one of those. They hadn't even been made for many years. It was way out of date. So that didn't work too well but the radio station did, and we got that back on the air.

*Q: What about counter-insurgency. PRTs are intended to bolster moderates and provide the economic component of the counter-insurgency effort.*

A: That is pretty tough to do. The BCT is working counter-insurgency, we are working capacity development and provincial government. Who is a moderate? I don't know. How do you tell a moderate from any other guy? He is not going to tell you he is an extremist. So how do you bolster moderates? I don't know. That is a tough one.

*Q: Okay, what about governance? Can you describe the PRTs activities related to governance?*

A: I think I already talked about that, I mean I worked with high government officials all the time. One of the things, trying to get the provincial council to even meet was a huge issue. They didn't feel safe coming into the province. So they lived in other places.

*Q: Were all the provinces steeped in more conflict?*

A: Some worked very well, but some were dysfunctional. That goes with the territory.

*Q: Because of the security?*

A: They said it was security. I thought it had a lot to do with internal politics. But they wouldn't tell you that. They would say, security issue, we can't get over here. If you delve down into it, you find out what party they are in, who they are aligned with, is it to their benefit to have a quorum here for this meeting or not. If they have a quorum, is the other group going to vote for something they don't want? They may say it is security, but you never really know until you delve into it and have been there a while, and become really interested in politics.

We would work with them and try to get them to meet and function. For the PRT team leader, that was constant issue, but we'd even have the division commander come down and try to coerce them. You need to meet and you need to show that you have the authority for this province. They would all go 'Oh, okay.'

*Q: Do you have anything to say about RTI?*

A: I think RTI is a whole other issue. USAID has this contract with RTI, and RTI had actually predated the whole program anyway. Let me regress here a little bit, one thing people confuse are PRTs in Afghanistan and PRTs in Iraq. PRTs in Iraq, if you actually look back at the history of this, they came from this local governance program, and a lot of that was RTI. So, way back when, in '03-'04, before the Shiite uprising, RTI had people out there working in the provinces.

By the time we got there, RTI was somewhat into the PRTs, because we had RTI people, and theoretically, for each RTI person, they could hire five local people. The local people would not come on the FOB. They are Iraqis, and they may not even be known to be associated with the US government, but they would be in the local government.

Depending on who you talk to. People in the RTI headquarters would say they had a huge number of these guys and if you ever tried to pin down who they were, you never knew really how many they had, or who they were. They were being paid by RTI, and RTI paid them through another contractor who got the money from somewhere else. So there was no tie back to the US government for their pay.

We had a problem in my province where some individuals were picked up by the military and found to be insurgents, and that was an issue for a while. How do you vet them? How do you know who you are dealing with? I was never comfortable with the entire RTI program. that

*Q: Reconstruction. Can you describe the PRT's activities related to economic reconstruction and development? What agencies and PRT members were responsible for these things? Did civil affairs soldiers participate in reconstruction?*

A: Well, civil affairs guys did get quite involved trying to do economic stuff in my province, probably less so in others. Once again, it became an issue of who has the expertise to do something like that. We just happened to have a young captain in the civil affairs company who was well-versed in doing that sort of thing, and he was one of these type-A personalities, a real go-getter. If you just gave him his head and let him run, no telling what he could accomplish out there.

'Reconstruction' is another misnomer. They named these things "provincial reconstruction teams" so immediately when you go in and introduce yourself from provincial reconstruction team, it's 'What are you going to build for me?'

Well, it really wasn't our business. One of the things, when I briefed new people in and showed them the mission statement of the PRT up there on the wall. Nowhere in there is the word 'reconstruction' in the mission statement. This is not a reconstruction organization. We do *capacity development*.

The Iraqi PRTs came from governance capacity development. A whole different genesis of the concept. They were only called PRTs because our ambassador had seen Afghanistan, and he liked what we saw there when they were developing these things. I think they were originally going to call it something like provincial capacity development teams. The confusion has remained ever since. Nobody looked back to see these are really two different animals.

*Q: What would you have called them?*

A: Probably government capacity development teams, something that showed that we were not there to rebuild their country. Get the provincial government to work; there was a pot of money that was used to work through the process.

*Q: To get what to work? They were trying to get what to work?*

A: The provincial development councils. The PRDCs. Those guys. To try to get those to work, try to get the government of the province to work through how it provides for its people. It can develop a project, scope the project, prioritize the projects, and then put money against them and make them happen.

*Q: Didn't the provincial governments do this in the past? It was all centralized?*

A: It was more centralized. To try to build the capacity to do that sort of thing, there was money from the US government in Baghdad that could be spent on projects like that. That one piece of the embassy was incorporated into the PRTs, then the provincial program managers (PPMs) and each PRT had a PPM, and they all worked for one guy in

the NCT, and he managed the entire program with all that money. It was used for that purpose, because it was not for the purpose of necessarily building something out there, it was for the purpose of developing their capacity to go through this process to meet the needs of their people.

*Q: Were they successful in doing that?*

A: In some places more than others. In some places you couldn't get the provincial council to meet and it was pretty problematic. In fact, when I arrived, I had been told that these projects were all set. When I looked at what the projects were, I went to the PPM and said what have you got here, this does not look good. He said, well, I was told by the team leader that she would handle all that and not to worry about it, so I haven't. In effect, the team leader developed the projects and told the provincial government what to do. That is not the capacity development program we wanted. We cancelled all that and turned it on its head. We went back to square one and started the process again. Did it work everywhere the same? No. Did it depend a lot on how the team leader worked with it? Yes.

*Q: Was there an agricultural aspect?*

A: In some places. They were tough to get, they were very hard to find.

*Q: Were they important to us?*

A: Very important to us, but I could get very few.

*Q: Why is it important to have an agricultural person there?*

A: Because if you look at the economy of this country, and you were to take oil out the equation, the thing that they have left is agriculture.

*Q: Is it mostly animals?*

A: Not only animals, it is both. You have the whole animal husbandry piece, which the vets were very good. They would also work on other things, too. One of the things the guys in the CMO (Civil Military Operations) division worked on bees, the bee industry.

Obviously it is an oil based economy. But if you didn't have oil the only thing they would have left is essentially agriculture: date palms and tomato canning. We were trying to get these programs going by assisting and helping to establish them and we needed somebody with special skills. We didn't need an agricultural specialist, we needed an agricultural business specialist, an economist type.

*Q: Is there a cultural advisor on the team?*

A: What we had, this was another tiff with the corps, we had things called bi-cultural, bilingual advisors (BBAs). They were very important to the PRT concept, they were all owned by the corps. We were supposed to have six per PRT, but we never got six per PRT.

*Q: What did they do at home?*

A: They had a specialty. They were maybe a lawyer, but they also had come from Iraq originally and then gone on to live in a western country. So you find somebody with that skill set in his or her profession, you try to put everything together since they are expensive and hard to find. They are highly intelligent people and are very good. You had to watch them because sometimes they would go off on their own tangent and decide to do their own thing, because they were highly intelligent people. In some cases, they have their own axe to grind because they were probably kicked out of the country before. For the most part if you got a good one, you got a great one. Having said all that, I received an e-mail that said: we are pulling them all back and we are going to cancel the contracts. If you want any, you are going to have to set up your own contract and you are going to have to fund it through the State Department with your own money, and by the way, as of September the 1<sup>st</sup> they are gone.

*Q: So they were considered dispensable by headquarters?*

A: No.

*Q: Or they just wanted them for themselves.*

A: that's it. Did they have someplace they were going to use them all, probably not. The attitude was, by golly, they are ours and you are not going to have them because we are paying for them and I don't like having to pay for what you do because that's our money. I went back to the guy and said are you sure about this? He went back to his boss, who was a C-9, and said: yes, we are going to pull them back. I take those emails, and I flew over to the headquarters and I went to the chief of the staff of the corps, and I sat down with him. He is a general, and I said, "sir, I am confused. Our general said he supports this but your C-9 is going to pull them all back. What is going to happen? What do you want to do? What is the corps position here?" He said, "I'll fix this," and we kept our BBAs. But that is the kind of thing you constantly had to deal with.

Anyway, the idea was the BBAs support the team leader and their mission. They provide the language skills, the expertise, and they can relate. They provide cultural advice. They grew up in this culture, they knew what these guys are doing, and as long as they didn't have their own agenda, they were wonderful.

*Q: The next question has to do with achievements. What did your PRT achieve during your tenure? Could you describe a list of projects completed, or other concrete achievements?*

A: I spent two months in the PRT so I'm not going to say I accomplished anything there. But my focus in going out to the PRT was as a placeholder for the next guy, and to try to reestablish the relationship between the PRT and the BCT commander and his staff, which had been destroyed before I got there. A lot of problems going on out there. So all I wanted to do was get it back on an even keel, sing kumbaya with the brigade commander, if I thought that was the right thing to do, because my mission was to go out and find the source of the problems, and make recommendations. My recommendations were to re-establish what we had, and try to go forward..

*Q: I want you to talk about the NCT.*

A: We accomplished a great deal in the getting the PRTs established that we did get established, especially given the numerous challenges we faced in trying to do this. Having said that, the PRT team leaders that went out there to these FOBs and REOs, you have to give them credit for actually getting this work done and getting it done right. Frankly, where we tried to run interference for them up at the headquarters levels, and tried to get them what they needed, we were not that successful. So they were pretty much left hanging out there, with nothing in a lot of cases, trying to make this mission work, while we were arguing with people about whether this is a humanitarian mission or a military mission, or we are arguing about funding or we are arguing about movement teams. We are doing all of that, and at the same time we are trying to get more teams established out there, so we are working with the RSO, trying to get support from them, trying to get all the logistics in place to set those up, we were quite busy with those things, and at the same time the PRT leaders were out there trying to get the mission to work. So I have to give them the credit for that. And with only a couple of notable exceptions, I think they did wonderful work.

*Q: What would you say were the lessons learned?*

A: We need an understanding on the financing and personnel systems. Also when you try to cobble all of these different programs together, such as USAID, RTI, and the rule of law program, some of them were very difficult to watch individually.

If you are going to have an organization like the NCT, you need to have the operations cell, people who are focused on the PRTs out there to make sure they get what they need, and we had that. The PRT team leader could call their regional office officer any time of the night, and could get that person to do what they needed done in the building. Sometimes there were just wonderful relationships between regional office officers and PRTs, sometimes the regional office officer would be a dud and then you've got problems. But for the most part, they worked really well. When somebody came in to visit a PRT, they would shepherd them around and make sure they got everything they needed, make sure they got out there. Take them out there, accompany them on the flight.

If you had a good one, he is worth his weight in gold, and we had some good ones. If you have a dud, you are going to have to get somebody else to pick up the slack. But you have to have regional operations officers focused down there.

What you also should have, and we really didn't have, were programmatic operations officers that are focused on programs, all across the board.

For instance you could have a governance program manager at the NCT level who is looking at all the PRTs and asking what they are doing in governance, what is RTI really doing? They could spend their full time overseeing from that level the whole program, governance, economics, rule of law, the whole gamut, and they could be the one who goes down to the rule of law guy in INL and says I need people here, I need for you to explain why you are doing this...solely focused on making that program work in those provinces. We didn't have that and we needed that.

You need planning for the establishment of these things. Planning was something that was critical for establishing a PRT. The hoops you have to go through to get people to agree to this, and agree to that, and the unbelievable hoops we went through for diplomatic security, again you need somebody focused on the thing moving forward out there.

You have to have your current ops, your planning, your programmatic focus, those were the things I think that were important. If you were to put an organization together to make this work better, that would be the way to do it. I don't know what they have got over there now. They got rid of the NCT, they came up with a thing called OPA, OPA is the Office of Provincial Affairs, and OPA is now supposedly replaced NCT.

*Q: Any interest in going back?*

A: I was out for drill at my reserve center last weekend. It is over at Fort Mead; this is the civil affairs command that I work for. And lo and behold, that command is tapped for the next rotation. This would be my third tour there, if that is the case. If I end up going with them again, it will be my third tour in Iraq. If I went, I would rather go as a Department of State employee. State Department really takes care of its people; life is a lot easier if you are a State Department guy, you get nicer accommodations.

*Q: A little safer?*

A: Well you know, you touched on one of my pet peeves out there, the State Department is so focused on protecting its people, it has the regional security officer, it has got that huge contract for teams like Blackwater, which cost an inordinate amount of money. They are so risk-averse, that to me, there is an inequity here. If you look at two people that go to Iraq and one of them is some guy off the street who has a job as a temporary hire in the State Department. Or it could be a new graduate from some college and he just became a Foreign Service Officer. He goes over there as a State Department employee. You have another guy who comes out of high school, goes in the army, goes over there, he's got...how long is basic training? Nine weeks or something? He goes through his nine-week basic training, his AIT, and then he gets shipped off to Iraq. If you look at

your second lieutenant, who's got his college education like the guy from State Department, but he goes over as a military guy. The federal government is willing to pay, I won't quote the figure, but it is a whole lot of money, for private security teams to protect one guy because he works for the State Department, and these military guys go out there and are on their own. The message is: Bud, you protect yourself, and don't cry if you get whacked, because that is what you do.

Where is the equity? The federal government pays millions for one guy, and not for the other. Well, he went through nine weeks of basic and a few weeks of AIT, and this guy went through foreign service officer school, okay. Granted, one signed up for the military. Now, what is your threat in Iraq? Your threat for the most part is getting blown up by an IED. When you are driving down the road in your convoy, the foreign service officer in the back of the Humvee and the private in the cupola of the Humvee with a machine gun, are running down the road with exactly the same risk because there is nothing the private can do to keep that IED from blowing up under his vehicle. What is the equity here between these two situations? If these Foreign Service guys are going to go out to do the job, they need to do the job. Don't cry about it. I heard them cry about this diplomatic security business, and their safety and their threat so much that, frankly, I was a little jaded by it, considering you have this 19-year-old right out of high school, and who is caring about his safety out there?

Okay, is the federal government buying a multi-million dollar team to protect him every time he goes out the gate? They will pay multiple double digit dollars for a team to go out there and protect him. It is the same federal government. It's whether you work for the State Department or the Defense Department. So if I went back over there, given what they pay, I could make twice as much money working for the State Department, and get greater protection.

*Q: And sleep in a more comfortable bed.*

A: And sleep in a more comfortable bed, oh yes. Because, if you are a State Department guy, you get your own private CHU, that is where you live, a CHU, and frankly, we need to get past that.

*Q: You live in your private what?*

A: CHU (Containerized Housing Unit), another acronym. If you don't like it, then you get back on the helicopter and go back home. A private can't say that, your son can't say that. These guys can go, 'I've had enough.' Where is the equity in that? Just because you work for a different agency, you get the authority to do this? This guy doesn't. Give me a break.

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