

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

**INTERVIEW #13**

*Interviewed by: Sam Westgate  
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**Executive Summary**

The interviewee was a key adviser in the rule of law section of the Baghdad PRT, who served for a total of 18 months. In general he found cooperation within the PRT to be excellent, but found external coordination to be inadequate, particularly with the rule of law section of the embassy and with local military commanders. The informant noted that many of the problems stemmed from the poor security situation. At least a quarter of their planned meetings outside the Green Zone had to be cancelled because of the ongoing violence in Iraq. Also because of poor telephone infrastructure, it was not possible simply to pick up the phone and to arrange impromptu meetings with outsiders.

The informant worked mainly with the court system and less with prisons and police. The Iraqis have inherited an outdated legal system based upon the Napoleonic Code and imported into Iraq during the 1950s via Egypt. Because the interviewee had worked within the American legal system, which is adversarial and based upon English Common Law, he found Americans unable to bring as much relevant experience to Iraq as the Europeans. As a consequence he steered his Iraqi counterparts to European interlocutors, who had more experience with the European continental system. The European Commission became a valued partner, which had more resources to run training programs than did the Americans.

The interviewee was particularly concerned that the Iraqi legal and court system had not been updated. Under traditional continental civil code, the defendant had few rights, but the Europeans had managed to repair much of that weakness, while the Iraqis had not. Significant work remains to be done with juvenile offenders and their treatment in the legal system. The informant was pleased to have made some recommendations in improving the juvenile system.

The informant was also satisfied with his work with the Iraqi Bar Association, whose members have felt marginalized and dispirited. Yet, because most Iraqis saw American forces as occupiers, he finally saw the PRT's efforts as making a "positive" difference rather than a "substantial" difference.

## Interview

*Q: Can you please describe the location, history, physical structure, size and staffing of the PRT in which you served?*

A: I worked in the Baghdad PRT, which was located inside the International Zone in Baghdad. The entire PRT during the time I was there ranged in size from between seventy to around a hundred. It grew in time while I was there. We were located on two floors.

*Q: Could you describe the role and mission of the PRTs in Iraq and be as specific as possible?*

A: The PRTs were designed to work with the provincial governments, that is to enable them and to help them in their development since the 2003 war. There were various sections within the PRT. For instance, I worked in the rule of law section, but there was also a section that worked with governance, there was a section that worked with infrastructure, working with some of the oil industry, transportation, etc. But the goal was to work with the various levels of provincial government: (1) to be the eyes and ears for the embassy with regard to the status of the development of those institutions and then, (2) to work with them to try to help them develop democratically, to become effective leaders on the provincial level. We were in Baghdad, so in Baghdad we worked with both the county or province and the city of Baghdad.

*Q: Can you describe the PRT's relationship with the Provincial Affairs Office or the National Coordinating Team, the U.S. Embassy and U.S. military command? So that has four parts, that question. The first part was the Provincial Affairs Office.*

A: I have no idea what that was.

*Q: Or the National Coordinating Team?*

A: That I can talk to. First you need to be aware of the fact that I worked with the rule of law section and so I worked under the team leader and the deputy team leaders of the PRT. I had very little contact with the National Coordinating Team and quite frankly they were of little or no assistance to me. You would have to ask the director or deputy director how much assistance they were to him.

I think their role changed during the time I was there. There were different roles played in the area of rule of law. There was a time when I think what we did was directly answerable to them, and during that period of time they provided very little if any coordination or help.

*Q: Then the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. military command?*

A: Well, the U.S. Embassy, again, during the time I was there, the embassy personnel to whom the rule of law team would have been answerable was either the Department of Justice attaché or the rule of law coordinator. Neither of them was of much help to us. There were very poor communications. When we asked questions, they were very slow in responding to us and I found them to be of very little if any assistance whatsoever.

*Q: And how about the U.S. military command?*

A: Concerning the military command, there were two ways in which we worked with them. One, of course, we pretty much relied on them for our transportation, for when we left the International Zone to go visit the courts or the police or the prisons or any other of the rule of law actors with whom we worked. So we were dependent upon them for that. In that sense I think that that the work was very good and they were very helpful and it was of great assistance.

The other area would be when we worked with local commanders who had responsibility, rule of law responsibilities, for various areas of Baghdad, and there I would have to say the record was mixed. Some had an interest in rule of law programs and worked with us. Others had no interest in rule of law matters and were of little or no assistance. I guess there was a third group: those who had a real interest in rule of law efforts. Sometimes their efforts would maybe clash, maybe that is too strong a word, but at least there were differences of approach between what they wanted to do and what we thought should be done.

*Q: Can you describe the chain of command, both civilian and military and the internal organization of the PRT?*

A: I was the rule of law coordinator. In that capacity I had responsibility for both military and civilians. There was a parallel military chain of command to which they were answerable with regards to their daily conduct, but with regard to their actions in the area of the rule of law, I was their supervisor and I was responsible for them and I never found any problems.

Now that is to say it is a very tenuous situation. If you look at a normal government organization or a private industry organization here in the States, normally the supervisor will have had some role, even if a minor role, in selecting those who work under him or her, or will have even hired them. That of course is not the case in these PRTs. You get who you get. People are simply assigned to work with you. So it somewhat limits your authority as a supervisor.

*Q: So did you find that the various chains of commands often then in conflict or in disharmony?*

A: There was sometimes conflict. I would say the conflicts were minor. What was probably more substantial was the fact that often the personnel you had would not be the appropriate personnel for working rule of law. As a result, sometimes you would ask

them to do things and they simply could not do them. Alternatively because you were not their ultimate supervisor in life, they could disregard what you had to say and go on their merry way and there was really no penalty for that. And as a civilian supervisor, one would be hesitant to push the issue, knowing that all it would do is push the divide between the civilian and military leadership and probably create greater problems. So you tried to lead by persuasion, which I suppose is always a good thing to lead by example, but it had its limitations.

*Q: You have already touched on this partly, but how would you rate the effectiveness of the PRT leadership and management structure?*

A: I worked with leaders that were both very good and very bad. I would say overall it probably rates fairly good.

*Q: What improvements would you recommend, in terms of the leadership and management structure?*

A: You know the problem is probably not that of structure, the problem is that of personnel and there it is a crap shoot, isn't it?

*Q: So how would you rate the effectiveness of the PRT organization? Would you give it a high, medium, low kind of score, from an organizational structure point of view?*

A: Well, the problem is that you cannot rate them in a vacuum, and unfortunately the situation in which you are rating them is a wartime situation. It could be argued that the United States was more than a mere advisor but was, at least on a certain level, an occupier. We were still engaged in military operations. We are outsiders. It is a different culture, a different way of looking at things. It is their country, we are only there for a short period of time. And I think that impacts on our ability to make a difference.

I would say that the greatest weakness was the military influence. I say this with all respect, because I respected the people with whom I worked. I know that everyone was very sincere and committed to what they were doing. I think the greatest problem was too much of a military influence and not enough influence by those who were really familiar with the culture, familiar with the society, familiar with political structure. I can speak more specifically in the area of rule of law.

I think we have a positive effect. I think that the PRTs are very good, but I do not think we make a substantial difference. I believe that the PRTs are necessary. I think they do good work. But I think we have to go into it recognizing that the ultimate benefits may be marginal.

*Q: Did you encounter agency stove piping and did agency representatives coordinate and integrate programs?*

A: I believe within the PRT itself there was good sharing of information and there was no stove piping, although I would have to say in the broader scheme of things, when you look at the relationship between the PRT and the embassy, I think there you probably had more stove piping going on and less coordination.

*Q: Describe the relationship and interaction of members of the PRT staff. Did the PRT function effectively?*

A: There was good communication between the various sections of the PRT. Every day there was a staff meeting of the team leaders within the PRT. So, for instance, I would be at that meeting as the leader of the rule of law team. There would be leaders from infrastructure, from governance, from USAID, the various other groups were there, and we all talked about what we were doing, what we were engaged in. So I thought within the PRT there was good communication and I think there was good mutual respect between military and civilian and between the various sections of the PRT.

*Q: Again, you have touched on this slightly already but your relationship with brigade combat teams?*

A: First, there was a problem of communication. Often we found it just was not possible to pick up the phone and talk to someone, because the communication systems were so bad, or at least during that period of time in Iraq. So, one it was hard to communicate.

Two, to meet, it was not the type of thing you just call up and say, "let's get together." So meetings would have to be planned days if not weeks in advance. And then when you did meet with them, there were some units who had a real interest in what you were doing. Others who had no interest and again some of those who had an interest had definitely different ideas than what you had, and so they created somewhat of a conflict.

But often, again, because military people have their own agenda and their agenda comes not from me or from rule of law people, it comes from their local commanders. So we could talk to and work with the military personnel normally in the ranks of maybe majors or lieutenants or captains for working rule of law, but they took direction not from me, but from their colonels. And so if their colonel had specific ideas of what they ought to be doing, it would not make any difference what I thought, it would not make any difference what the people of Iraq thought, it would be what the colonel or the commander wanted to have happen. As a result, I would say that was not a very good situation.

*Q: Security issues, now what was the level and nature of the threat while you were in Baghdad?*

A: Well there was always the potential of danger wherever we went and whatever we did. Our most important work was often done by leaving the International Zone and going out to the courts, the prisons, law schools, police stations, to really talk to the rule of law participants and try to work with them. Whenever we did that, we had to go out with

military convoys, because of the security situation. I was there for 18 months, and I would say on average, at least a quarter of our planned trips ended up being cancelled for security reasons. There were times when we were completely shut down. There were times when things were better.

Just as an estimate, I would say a quarter of the time we were unable to go places because of security and once we got there we were limited to maybe stays of maybe two or three hours, because we were always told that it was never wise to be in one position or one location for a relatively long period of time. So it really made it limited. It limited our opportunities to get out, and then once we got out, it limited the time we could spend with the rule of law stakeholders.

*Q: Did the PRT ever rely on Iraqi security forces?*

A: No.

*Q: And you said that despite the situation you were able to operate in the field?*

A: Yes.

*Q: External relations, describe the PRT's relationship with international and non-governmental organizations.*

A: There were relationships. I will address the rule of law section. We made a consistent effort to try to work internationally and with the European Union and other outside agencies, because during most of the time I was there, we did not have access to any money for any programs whatsoever. So to the extent we were able to get things for the courts or the police or the lawyers with whom we were working, we had to work through these outside agencies. Now that changed near the end of my stay there, but we did form very strong relationships, primarily with the European Union.

*Q: Were there any NGOs that you had contact with?*

A: Yes, we had contact, but it was not substantial. There really were not that many that were working in the area of the rule of law. Now if you talk about the entire PRT, there would be more, but I couldn't really speak to that.

*Q: And now your interaction with Iraqis. Who were your Iraqi counterparts?*

A: I worked primarily with the judges in Baghdad. Baghdad is divided by the Tigris River, and each side of the river has a chief judge who is responsible for the courts in those areas. But there are also a total of about 11 or 12 court houses in all of Baghdad and we tried to, as regularly as possible, go to all the court houses and work with all the chief judges in each of the court houses.

*Q: Did you ever work with tribal councils or local business communities, citizen groups?*

A: No. The PRT did, but I did not.

*Q: Public affairs program, did the PRT have a public affairs officer and program?*

A: Yes.

*Q: Who was the audience for that program?*

A: Well, I guess it was both for the United States and for the Iraqis. I know there were two people while I was there; they were both very active in trying to gather stories from Iraq to spread back to the United States, but they were also instrumental in trying to work with the local Iraqi press, to try to build them and to build their capacity to work.

*Q: Do you feel that their program was effective?*

A: You know, I have no way of judging that.

*Q: Counterinsurgency, the PRTs are intended to bolster moderates and provide the economic component of the U.S. counterinsurgency effort. What comprised this effort and was it effective?*

A: I guess that would primarily be the work of the governance team. It would also be the rule of law, simply trying to build relationships with people in authority, with the governor of the province, political leaders and working with judges, just trying to strengthen their position, trying to find out what their needs are and trying to see if we could provide support and guidance of any kind.

*Q: Do you think that the PRT had any effective role in counterinsurgency?*

A: I think in terms of strengthening the local governments, I think the answer is yes.

*Q: Governance, please describe the PRT's activities related to promoting democracy and the ability of provincial or sub-provincial governments to function effectively and provide public services.*

A: There were very strong relationships with the provincial leaders and with the local councils. They worked with them on a weekly, on practically a daily basis, meeting with them, trying to find out what their needs are, trying to redirect aid in their direction, giving guidance, generally just trying to help build their capacity. I think that that was very regularly done.

*Q: And how about providing public services?*

A: Again, we were involved in a lot of projects, trying to help in terms of sanitation, in terms of electricity, in terms of all of those things. No matter how effective it was, there

were still substantial problems. Again, I think we made a difference, but, again, I do not think it was a substantial difference.

*Q: RTI International, describe and evaluate the role played by RTI international in the PRT's effort to promote good governance.*

A: I think over time they became a very strong player in terms of helping with governance. Because they had no substantial role in the area of rule of law, I had very little personal contact with them. I know in the area of governance they provided substantial training for provincial and local leaders.

*Q: Reconstruction, describe PRT activities related to economic reconstruction and development.*

A: There was an economic team at the PRT. It worked substantially with the economic committee in the provincial council, trying to help them in getting financing for various things, helping them just to build their capacity. I know there were strong efforts to try to work in the area of microfinance, trying to find support for small businesspeople. The economic team was a very active team, trying to work with the various economic governmental leaders and I think there was substantially positive work done in that area.

*Q: What U.S. government agencies and PRT members were responsible for these activities? You have already mentioned the economic team, but how about the agencies that were involved?*

A: The Department of State had people in each of those sections. There were representatives from USAID. To my mind those were the primary United States government agencies that were involved.

*Q: Did civil affairs soldiers participate in reconstruction projects?*

A: Yes, they comprised most of the members of the PRT.

*Q: The Provincial Reconstruction and Development Committee, the PRDC, please describe the work of the PRDC.*

A: I am not the right person to do that. I was never on that committee. I never attended any of their meetings.

*Q: Did you have any sense of their performance?*

A: It sounded as if it was good when I heard it described. I had no first hand involvement, so I really can't speak to that.

*Q: Well, now we get to your area, the rule of law.*

A: About time!

*Q: Describe the work of the rule of law section.*

A: We had a very broad agenda. We worked with as many of the rule of law components within the province of Baghdad as we could. So we worked with judges, police, prisons, we worked with lawyers, we worked with law schools. We tried to work with them, one was just reporting, to find out where they stood and just figure out what their capacity was and then, two, to see what we could do to help them build capacity.

*Q: How did, in this regard, the PRT related to training programs run by the Multinational Security Transition Command Iraq, the so-called MSTCI?*

A: You know what, there was no relationship whatsoever with MSTCI.

*Q: Do you have any more comments about the effectiveness of the rule of law program?*

A: I think that our effectiveness was limited. One, as I stated earlier, part of it was, we were just limited by the environment in which we worked: the security situation, the cultural situation, the fact that it is an entirely different legal system from what we have here in the United States. Quite candidly, I think our work with the courts was very limited by that.

*Q: Can you get into a few more specifics? How did their legal system differ?*

A: I guess I try to analyze it along the lines of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. If you look at Maslow's hierarchy of needs, at the very bottom you have food and water, basic sustenance and you kind of work up to the very highest personal satisfaction. You can do the same thing with the needs of the courts of Baghdad. At the very bottom of the pyramid would be their need for buildings, security, pay, that type of thing, and we could do something along those lines. Over time we eventually were able to get access to money so we could help them fund more security for the courts, better facilities for the courts, that type of thing.

But when you get to the very highest part of the judicial system, it would be doing justice and there, quite frankly, we were clueless and part of the reason we were clueless is because the Iraqi legal system is not a common law, adversarial system. It is a civil code, it is primarily the French Civil Code that came through Egypt to Iraq basically back in the late Fifties, 1959 or so. And unfortunately whereas the French legal system has developed over time to provide what they believe to be better justice and a more efficient system, the Iraqi system has been frozen in time essentially since the late Fifties.

So there are significant problems and they are problems to which we cannot relate. It is hard for us to give guidance, because although we can read the books and we can understand a little bit about the French system and understand what it looks like on paper, there is a difference between having an academic knowledge and having a working

knowledge of the system, and quite frankly I think we lack credibility in trying to help them and work with them and even analyze and critique the type of work they are currently doing. That is the type of work that could only be done by French practitioners or Italians or civil code attorneys or judges or prosecutors who really understand the system.

So in terms of really understanding whether justice is being done, whether investigations are being conducted properly, whether trials are being conducted properly, whether all the players in the system are really doing what needs to be done, you really need someone from a different legal system to be working that.

So we did the best we could, but that was a huge gap in our work in the rule of law area.

*Q: Were there insufficient protections, let us say, for defendants? Was that one of the areas?*

A: Oh, absolutely. Over time, in Iraq, defense attorneys have been marginalized. So they have very, very little role in the system, in how it works. On the other hand, it is a different system than the adversarial system in the United States and under a civil code system defense attorneys do have less ability to influence the system. But they have considerably more in France and Europe than they have in Iraq. That is an area where we really lack the expertise to be able to say to the Iraqis this is what should be happening with defense attorneys, because we really lack that inside knowledge of what is going on in Europe. Again, Iraq may choose not to adopt modern European practices, but on the other hand I found that judges and practitioners and law professors in Baghdad were eager, were hungry to find out what was happening in Europe, how the civil code practice of law had developed over time. So I think they understood that they had been frozen out, that they had been isolated over time and they were very eager and hungry to learn.

But we lacked the ability to instruct. So that is one area where we worked with the European Commission in order to try to encourage them to bring over to Iraq practitioners or judges or professors who could really talk to and work with the Iraqis and really help them in the areas in which they want and they need assistance.

*Q: It is interesting how the shadow of the Napoleonic Code should extend all the way to the Middle East. Any more comments in terms of rule of law? You talked about, certainly defendants' rights do not seem to be defended as well as they could.*

A: There needs to be substantial work done with attorney groups. The Iraqi Bar Association needs to be strengthened, and we tried to work with them, because we were not just working with prosecutors, police, or prisons. We really wanted to enable and strengthen the attorneys of Iraq. It was our belief that certainly you can shape the rule of law by working from the top down over a short-term period of time, but over the long time you will be more effective if you work from the bottom up, if you really strengthen the institutions. The foundation for much of what will happen in Iraq over time will come from defense attorneys or come from lawyers.

What we found is that the law schools right now have really been shattered over time. They give very, very poor instruction. They do the best they can, but they have had limited resources, they have security problems, and they understand that their training is not up to date as it should be. So that needs to be strengthened. Lawyers who are already practicing need to have continuing legal education.

So there is just so much that needs to be done little on that level, and there was so little we could do, because, one, we did not have money and, two, we did not have the right expertise.

*Q: I notice you have not mentioned prisons too much.*

A: I guess I mentioned them, in the sense that we worked with prisons, but, again, our work with prisons was really limited because there was already a group from the Department of Justice in the United States that was working substantially with prisons. They were at these prisons basically on a daily basis, as a result of which, we thought that was pretty well covered and there was really little that we could do.

Indeed, if we tried to do something, that is an area where we would be thought to be stepping on their toes. They were very jealous of their work, and even when we did visit and made suggestions they would often be offended by it, and thought that we were stepping out of our places.

*Q: We could move on, then. Describe the role of the PRT agricultural advisor.*

A: I know very little about that.

*Q: So you were not really too familiar with the agricultural assistance efforts?*

A: Not really. I know that they tried to encourage development in a lot of different areas. One area I know they tried to develop was beekeeping. So I know that they were doing things, but in terms of the effectiveness, I am the wrong person.

*Q: Your PRT had Iraqi cultural advisors. Can you describe and evaluate the role of these advisors?*

A: We had a couple of bicultural and bilingual advisors (BBAs) and, again, it just depended on who the person was. They were helpful, because you need people in that position, people in that role, people who are really familiar with the culture, who could really advise you, because we were Westerners, outsiders who knew very little. So they were very important in helping us make contacts, advise us on who should be our contacts, advise us on what we should say, should not say, on what we needed to be aware of culturally. So they were very helpful.

*Q: Achievements: what did your PRT achieve during your tenure?*

A: Well I guess I would focus on the rule of law team, and there I think our achievements were minimal.

*Q: Did you plant any seeds that you might see, if they do not grow immediately, could grow in the future?*

A: I believe that that is certainly the case. Again, I keep repeating this but I think this point is very important, because typically reconstruction should be initiated after hostilities cease. If you go back to our country, the Civil War, reconstruction didn't begin until after 1865, after the war had stopped. I think it is just very difficult to engage in serious and meaningful reconstruction in the midst of a conflict. That is for starters.

Secondly, if you are going to engage in reconstruction, you have to have significant resources, financial resources and then also you have to have the right training, culturally, legally, socially, etc. I think we lacked all those things.

One, we were trying to reconstruct during the midst of a war, so there were security problems. Two, we had insufficient financial support. And three, we simply did not have the right training or the right insight and the right tools to make a significant difference.

*Q: Can you point to, not just your section, but to any concrete accomplishments of the PRT?*

A: I will just speak to the rule of law team. Here is the other problem. Anyone who is there is only there for a year or so. My initial commitment was only for a year, but I extended for six months. And part of the problem is that it is just no way to conduct a war, it is no way to conduct a reconstruction in a foreign culture, by having these one-year assignments. Your first three or four months there are just kind of figuring out what is going on, and then you only have seven or eight months left, whatever, to really make a substantial difference and it is just hard to do in a year. And when a new person takes over you can advise them, but they sometimes tend to start from scratch. So some have argued that over there we have really had a series of four or five one-year wars, where people come in, do their time and someone comes in and starts over again.

But that having been said, you have got to figure out a place where you think you can make a difference, and we picked out at least two areas where we thought we could make a difference. One was in the area of the juvenile justice system. What we tried to do was focus on the two juvenile facilities there in Baghdad and tried to figure out what we could do to help them, i.e. in terms of giving them better financial resources, helping them connect better with human rights agencies. So we tried to focus on them. I think we made differences there. Again, not as much as I would like to do but I think we did effect a positive influence for the good.

The second area was working with the Iraqi Bar Association. Again, that was a major commitment. What we were able to do, because we did not have money or resources initially, we were able to connect them up with the European Commission or with outside sources that would be able to fund them and try to help them in terms of their training.

So I think we made substantial progress in those areas. Those are just two areas. I think we made progress in a number of other areas, but just marginal progress. But I think we made a substantial difference in those two areas.

*Q: Again, this may seem a little repetitive, but if you could assess, looking at the PRT as a whole, how effective they were in the main missions, including governance, promoting economic development, utilizing American military-civilian resources and counterinsurgency?*

A: I guess I can only repeat what I said. I do not think we made a substantial difference, but I think we did make a positive difference and even if it wasn't substantial, I think it was worth the effort, worth the expenditure of time and resources. And you have to realize that you have to come from a perspective that we destroyed that country.

Again, setting aside the question of whether the war was a good thing--although deposing Saddam Hussein was definitely a good thing--so setting aside the question of whether the war was a good thing or bad thing, the effect of having engaged in that war was to destroy Iraqi society. The structures that did exist, the rule of law that existed, all the relationships and governance that did exist, were destroyed. And I think that once that happened it is my personal opinion that we had a moral responsibility to try to undo that harm or try to ameliorate the detrimental effect that our action had.

And so I think it was important for us to be there, to be there physically with time and money and resources to try to work with the Iraqis to make the situation better. Again, are we making a substantial difference? I think the answer is no, because of the problems that I have related. But even marginal help is better than not doing anything and simply walking away from the situation that we created.

*Q: You have already touched on this some, but do you have any comments on the training, specifically training you might have received before you went to Baghdad? Did your home agency provide you with any programmatic training?*

A: The training was insubstantial and not sufficient. Basically my training consisted of maybe a couple weeks of Department of State general training in what it is like to go to Iraq and dealing in a foreign culture. Then I was given suggested reading by the Department of Justice and maybe a few hours of seminar on the Iraqi system. But I just found it insubstantial and not sufficient. There should have been something more organized and more disciplined.

But the other problem is that once you get there, the training should have been better, but even with the greatest training, a lot it is just what you pick up while you are there and

the relationships you pick up while you are there. So there is so much learning in those first two or three months when you get there, but you need a stronger foundation going in, and that was not provided.

*Q: What modifications would you recommend?*

A: I think that you still should have the two-week training you get from the Department of State. The Department of Justice should put together a one-week program in which, one, you get serious instruction on the Iraqi legal system and you get people coming in who have already been in Iraq to talk to you about their situation, their successes, their lessons learned. And you can talk with the other rule of law actors who are there in the Washington area, so you are aware of your support base in Washington, but also you have better instruction, better training and something more organized.

*Q: Lessons learned, what lessons did you draw from your experience?*

A: Looking back, I think it is important, the first two or three months there, just to absorb, just to listen, trying to figure out what is going on, listening to the Iraqi stakeholders, finding out what your agenda should be.

The second part is, in the area of rule of law, we can do certain things with nuts and bolts and security and buildings and that type of thing, but that we cannot do the important work that needs to be done in terms of justice being done and the legal system operating properly. Again, I go back to the argument that there we need to reach out to, and we need to somehow build relationships with the European Commission.

It is twofold. I think that the first thing that needs to be done is to bring into Iraq for a week or a month a real blue ribbon team of judges and lawyers and respected people in the rule of law community from Europe. I am not saying any of this is easy, but this is what it would look like, to come over and do an assessment of the Iraqi legal system. The Iraqis would welcome that. They would love to look over other systems: how do they conduct trials, how do they treat defendants, what happens in prisons?

That is the first thing that needs to be done. Secondly we need Europeans who are willing to come over for training of judges and lawyers and prosecutors and other people and that's something we cannot do. But that is where the focus needs to be. Somehow we need to figure out a way of getting that done.

*Q: Thank you very much for your interview*