

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

INTERVIEW #6

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Initial Interview Date: March 13, 2008
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Executive Summary

The interviewee was a former team leader in a Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction team, who was with the PRT at its start up with a staff of approximately two dozen people. He helped build the PRT into an organization of about 90 personnel and a \$ 130 million budget by the time he ended his tour in spring 2007. He described the civil-military organization as vertical in principle and in terms of chain of command, but horizontal in function. The effectiveness of the PRT was based on collegiality in order to meld the various agencies with their separate appropriations into a coherent unit with coherent purposes. On the whole, the interlocutor did not find agency stove piping to be a problem.

The informant described in detail how the PRT organized around promoting good governance, economic development, reconstruction, and effective utilization of resources. Counterinsurgency did not appear to be an active mission other than as a hoped for byproduct of the PRT's main activities. The security situation was so bad in 2006 that the PRT suffered, as did the rest of the mission, from constraints on the movements "outside the wire" by PRT personnel. Nevertheless, team members did manage to get out with the help of military units and Blackwater when allowed to do so. The interlocutor was proudest of PRT work with rule of law and with assistance to the Baghdad provincial councils, district councils, and Baghdad City Hall. With the bad security situation, he did acknowledge that the PRT was working only at the "margins," given the enormity of the problems facing Iraq. The only answer, however, was to "stay the course."

In terms of "lessons learned," he felt that PRTs need "to put aside notions of uniform, notions of attire, notions of rank and instead clothe themselves with substantial humility, focusing on the mission at hand." Interpersonal skills have been the premium assets in team building and in interaction with Iraqis. The interviewee thought that there needed to be more and better training, and suggested that the civilian and military personnel at some point be trained as a unit before leaving for Iraq in order to further team building.

Interview

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

A: Yes, the PRT in which I served was the Provincial Reconstruction Team Baghdad. It was located in the Green Zone. We shared the building with Government of Iraq agencies, with the World Bank and with U.S. military units.

The PRT was formally set up on March 26, 2006, at which time we had about two dozen people. By the end of '06 we numbered approximately 75-80 people and by April 15, 2007, shortly before I left, we numbered just about 90 people. That group, roughly a third of whom were U.S. military personnel, were people representing essentially the U.S. Army. We had U.S. Navy, and we had also someone from the U.S. Air Force on board. So we had about 30-35 U.S. military folks. We had another third which was essentially U.S. government civilians or contractors of U.S. government civilian agencies, and by that I mean contractors working for USAID, the U.S. Agency for International Development. And then we had about a third of the staff composed of locally hired Iraqi nationals or dual nationals, that is to say Iraqis holding a second nationality.

Q: Were they most often American, or could they be sometimes be...?

A: Some of the dual nationals were in fact Iraqi-Americans. We generally had them on board as what were called BBAs (bilingual bicultural advisors). There were also some Iraqi-British nationals, Iraqi-German nationals.

Q: Could you please describe the role and mission of your PRT in Iraq? Be as specific as possible.

A: The PRT, Provincial Reconstruction Team Baghdad, was set up to help the provincial government develop capacity for good governance, economic development, reconstruction, provision of essential services and rule of law. We worked very closely with the provincial government, because the constitution of Iraq 2005 mandated that the country be essentially a federation, a federal structure, in that you had the central government and you had provincial governments. The provincial governments were relatively weak. In the history of Iraq, in the previous twenty or thirty years, the country had had a heavily centralized government. And so we focused really on capacity building, and by capacity building, I mean we focused on those policies, practices and procedures which would make it possible for government officials at the municipal, district and at provincial levels to provide essential services to the population.

We had a fairly robust section in infrastructure, for example, infrastructure and essential services. I think the group probably numbered 15. It was led by a lieutenant colonel who, by the time the PRT was set up, had been there already two years and he put in a full year, full 18 months in fact, beyond the point of the PRT's establishment. They engaged municipal and district and provincial authorities almost on a daily basis, all with a view to enhancing the infrastructure for the provision of essential services.

We did a lot of governance. We had a team that was comprised of about five-six people, who worked very closely with the district and provincial government authorities. They

also worked very closely with USAID to help the government institutions govern on the basis of what you would consider to be democratic practices, parliamentary procedure and things of that kind.

The rule of law section was probably the most robust of the PRT. I think we had five or six people there, four of whom were *bona fide* lawyers. They focused essentially on trying to bring about reforms within the judicial system and they conducted a great many visits to police stations, prisons, various detention centers and worked closely also with members of the Iraqi bar to help them do whatever was necessary, or what could be done to ensure that the rule of law indeed was a characteristic of what was going on in the area.

Q: Could you describe your liaison role with other elements, e.g., the national coordinating team, other elements of the U.S. embassy, the other regional PRTs or EPRTs and the U.S military command or commands?

A: Because we were in Baghdad, I can say that liaison was continual, effective, and very good. We were within a kilometer of the headquarters of the national coordination team, which was then led by a major general. He had a very good sense of what had to be done and indeed provided continuing useful advice, which made it possible for us at PRT Baghdad to carry out our mandate.

We worked closely with international agencies, with our coalition partners, especially the British, in large measure through a monthly coordination meeting which oftentimes was led by our British colleague but we occasionally hosted the meeting as well. We typically had half a dozen, sometimes even more, representatives of various non-governmental organizations that came to us and we exchanged ideas and we brought people up to date with regard to what we were doing.

Liaison with military commands was exceptionally effective, in part because the deputy team leader was dual-hatted. The deputy team leader, a colonel in the first instance, then a lieutenant colonel, was also the Multination Division Baghdad division engineer. That being the case, this person was in daily contact with his military command, subordinates as well as his superiors and through his superiors he ensured that our liaison with the Multinational Corps was as it should have been. In terms of liaison, I do not think we had any cause for grievance. It was as effective as any could be in the circumstances.

Q: Can you describe the chain of command that went on, both civilian and military, in your PRT and its internal organization? Maybe we can start by what was your title and role in the PRT?

A: My title and role in the PRT was that of team leader of the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team. As team leader, I essentially oversaw the operations from the point of view of the big picture and liaised with senior officials in the embassy and occasionally within the provincial government. I gave a great margin of maneuver to my subordinates in many instances. Many of them were subject matter experts who knew so much more about what was going on than I did, and so I gave them full sway to

carry out responsibilities as they saw fit. I think that was an exceptionally effective way of running the PRT, and we accomplished a great deal during my 14 months that I was associated with it.

I generally took my guidance from the National Coordination Team. In fact, I always did. We took our directives from the National Coordination Team, which coordinated whatever we did very, very closely with Multinational Division Baghdad.

The Provincial Reconstruction Team was really a civil-military organization that was put together to ensure that there was unity of effort, as opposed to unity of command, in what we were doing. By that I mean that I had no command authority over the military elements within the PRT.

Q: So would you describe the organization as more horizontal and less vertical than most?

A: Yes, it was definitely much more horizontal than vertical, although when you looked at the table of organization, you might think that it was the other way around. That in fact was not the case in many instances. I would tell various people that I essentially ran the organization and felt as if it was being co-led, that is to say it was co-led by me and by my deputy, who was a military officer. He had command and control authority over the military elements of the PRT. I, of course, had had command and control authority over the elements provided by the Department of State and indirectly by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Department of Justice. Nonetheless it was a setting in which real collegiality was key to it all. Because of the flatness, as it were, of the organizational structure, we were able to do a great many things that we might not have been able to accomplish had it been strictly along vertical lines.

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

A: Well, of course it is a very biased view, in as much as I was team leader, but I think indeed PRT Baghdad was very effective in its organization, especially at a time when there was a great deal of insecurity in Baghdad. It was effective largely because I relied heavily on subject matter experts who knew so much more than I did, who were very committed to the mission that we were pursuing and who worked many, many hours per day, sometimes seven days a week, in pursuit of those missions.

Q: What improvements would you recommend, say, for successors down the line, in terms of the leadership and management structure? We are really talking about structures.

A: In terms of structure, I would not suggest something that is substantially different from what we had. I think if one has an alternative, if one's alternatives are the vertical or the horizontal structures, he is well advised to organize the PRT along horizontal as opposed to vertical lines.

One of the things that should have been done, should be done in future, is to provide pre-deployment train-up to civil and military members of the team to be. Before the civilians and the military elements of a PRT deploy to a particular site, they will have had time coming together and getting to know one another and working with one another. By the time they get into the field, a sense of team will be there and they will be able to work with much greater unity of effort.

Q: As you know, I think the military does this much better than State does, in terms of providing the training and setting the scene well before people arrive.

A: Of course, the military has a long history of doing this and has far more people who can be dedicated to such an effort. Now the Department of State has very few people which it can spare for train-ups. And because that is one of the constraints on the Department's assignment of personnel, it oftentimes proves to be an obstacle in the development of teams such as provincial reconstruction teams.

Q: Did you encounter any agency stove piping in your attempts to coordinate various representatives from different organizations and programs?

A: I did, and I think it is inevitable. The various agencies operating in the field are all mandated by statute to carry out a particular mandate. They are provided funding through their respective departments and both by virtue of the mandate statutorily given to them and by virtue of the money and funding that they receive from the departments, their representatives develop programs that they by and large attempt to defend very well. I think that is understandable. I do not think that will change any time quickly, especially in the absence of anything like the joint military cooperation that the Goldwater-Nichols Act of '86 brought into the military, and the military is only getting there now after 25 years of having this particular legislation on the books.

We are getting there at State. We will continue to face problems of the kind. The way to address corporate stove piping essentially is through collegiality, through interpersonal relations. Whenever these are good it becomes so much easier for colleagues to prove to one another that they're involved in the common fight.

Q: Is it essentially largely then Washington's fault, writing up statements of work or whatever, that there is not enough flexibility given in the use of funds, when suddenly another need is perceived?

A: I think the Washington representatives of the various agencies could do a lot more to sensitize their personnel to the need for all to work in considerable transparency towards a common effort. That often is not done because so many of the Washington agencies do not have all that much experience working beyond the borders of the United States. And even in those instances when you have agencies that do have that kind of experience and I am alluding to the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development, there is not enough transparency. In the absence of people who have

worked together for some time, it is not surprising that there are always some reservations on the part of some really to be transparent as they go about the various activities they are pursuing.

Q: So you found a lack of creativity in terms of trying to bend certain programs to certain needs?

A: That may be one way to put it. I am not sure it is lack of creativity, as opposed to simply the statutory and regulatory constraints that essentially dictate how resources, men and women and funding, can be applied in a particular effort. By and large it has been my experience that on PRTs, there is immense good will shown by the men and women who are serving in these PRTs. If the architecture within which they are pursuing their activities were broader, they then indeed might find it easier to be accommodating to one another than if they feel they are in narrow confines that make it more difficult for them to be fully transparent with one another.

By and large, though, stove piping was not all that much of a problem.

Q: You have described that you had harmonious relationships with other members of the PRT and that it functioned effectively, but I wanted to get to your relationship with the EPRTs.

A: The Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams were not in Iraq when I led the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team. The embedded teams began flowing into Iraq at about the time I left. So I really do not have any experience whatsoever which makes it possible for me to give you an answer.

Q: Security: while you were there, what was the level and nature of the threat?

A: Well, you may recall that in 2006 insecurity in Baghdad was probably as bad as it had ever been in the five-six years that we have been there, five years. Yet we were privileged in the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team because we had such a close working relationship with the Multinational Division Baghdad, in large part because the deputy was also the division engineer. That being the case, we were given continuing security support by the division through its special troop battalion. So in most of the instances when we did want to engage Iraqis outside the Green Zone, or as we would say "beyond the wire," we did so many times.

I figure that during the 14 months I was associated with the PRT we had something like 400 engagements beyond the wire. Probably in three quarters of the cases, the security support was provided by elements of a special troops battalion.

We could call upon the personal security details that were assigned to the Regional Security Office, the RSO. These of course were details provided by Blackwater and were under the control of the regional security officer. We preferred by and large working with the military elements, in large part because we thought they were more

responsive. They were also, we thought, much more thoughtful of Iraqi concerns and less aggressive than were the elements associated with the regional security office.

Q: Did you find a certain inhibition, because of the security environment, to operate out in the field, in other words outside the Green Zone?

A: No, I did not. Surprisingly enough, we had a problem that was pretty much the contrary. That is to say there were many, many times during which we had colleagues in the PRT who did want to go outside the Green Zone. They did want to go beyond the wire and had to be reined in by our deputy team leader, who was also responsible for security and intelligence. He and his people had concluded that the threat was simply too large to permit civilians to be meeting with Iraqis outside the Green Zone. On the other hand, whenever the deputy team leader and his people deemed the situation was sufficiently secure, we always had somebody out, always and in many instances we would have three or four teams going out in a single day.

Q: Can you describe the PRT's relationship with international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)?

A: The international organizations were relatively few in number, and so those that the PRT met with tended to be organizations that worked fairly closely with the European Union and more particularly the United Kingdom. We would essentially work with them through a monthly meeting, at which time we would update them on our activities and take them into our confidence if in fact we thought we could work with them on some particular projects. We did not have too many occasions to be engaged in joint activities. The non-governmental organizations we worked with were essentially contract organizations working for USAID, such as Research Triangle Institute, which is a large private non-governmental organization working for USAID and is involved in governance. And occasionally we would work with two or three smaller Iraqi non-governmental organizations, generally, again, in business development activities, or microcredit activities.

Q: So most of your thrust was really institution building.

A: With governmental authorities, yes.

Q: The interaction with Iraqis--who were your Iraqi counterparts?

A: Our Iraqi counterparts could be found at one of three levels, I guess. In the first instance we worked very closely with members of the provincial council. The provincial council was the dominant legislative entity within a province. It had a mandate to oversee implementation of government policies with the province and we worked very closely with this organization, helping it develop policies and practices that might make it possible for it to exercise its mandate fairly effectively.

We worked equally closely with members of subordinate district committees. These were people who had been designated in the days of the Coalition Provisional Authority to represent in effect members of some nine districts within the city of Baghdad. And we worked with them especially closely in the context of provincial reconstruction and development, essentially, again, working on infrastructure, reconstruction, provision of essential services and ancillary services.

Then the third tier with which we worked very closely was city hall. The mayor and his staff were very well structured. In the days of the Baath regime, in fact, the mayor had had ministerial status and could rely on his personnel, who numbered some 15-16,000 people, to carry out a great many functions that you would associate with normal goings on of a city such as Baghdad.

And so we worked very closely with all of these people. I would say probably every two weeks or so we had many members of the district councils who would come together with the PRT to conduct their own activities in Arabic, with the support of members of the provincial reconstruction team. We met with them most often to coordinate on security matters.

All in all we had continuing and effective dialogue with these representatives of these three tiers of

Q: As a follow up, to what extent were you and the members of your team able to get out into the provinces and were you able to meet with tribal councils and local business communities and citizen groups?

A: We were able to do that quite a bit as of about July of 2006 and from that point on. We always did that with a fair number of security details being assigned to the individuals who were going out. After all, insecurity was still the watchword throughout all of '06 and the early part of '07.

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

A: Yes, indeed, public diplomacy was a core function of Provincial Reconstruction Team Baghdad. It was unique to the provincial reconstruction team in that no other PRT in the country had a public diplomacy cell as we had. We had four people within our cell. It was led by an FS-1 officer, who I am glad to say, today is now a counselor. He was promoted as a result of the good work he did for me. He had a master sergeant working for him on the military side of the house, and he had two other individuals, Iraqis, one of them was an Iraqi-American and an Iraqi local national, working for him.

They did remarkably good work. Among other activities they pursued was the publication of a weekly provincial newspaper. They brought this about through U.S. Army funding. That was a success. They also encouraged, I believe, the establishment of a private radio station that essentially broadcast the kind of content that we were looking for.

So we had a robust, effective, public diplomacy, public affairs section within the provincial reconstruction team.

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

A: Now, this particular mandate is one that was brought into play with the establishment of the embedded provincial reconstruction teams. It was not part of the mandate at the time that the stand-alone provincial reconstruction teams were established in Iraq. So when we were established in March 2006, we were not specifically told that we were being engaged as a support element in a counterinsurgency effort. It was very much an implied activity. We did that largely through dialogue on the governance side of the house with members of the provincial council and with the office of the governor.

Q: Since you have mentioned it, let us move to governance. Describe the PRT activities relating to promoting democracy and the ability of provincial or sub-provincial governments to function effectively and to provide public services.

A: With respect to what we did in governance, we had essentially a two-pronged approach. One of these was through diplomatic engagement with municipal, district and provincial authorities on a regular basis. We would exchange ideas, we would recommend measures that we thought might indeed promote reconciliation. We also recommended various activities that suggested outreach by the authorities to lower levels of government and more particularly to the inhabitants of the province. That is typically the work you would expect of political officers working for the U.S. Department of State. In fact, the section was then headed by a political officer, a foreign service officer.

On the other hand, the other prong was one that relied and was being developed very heavily by the U.S. Agency for International Development. It was working very closely with Research Triangle Institute, which at the time I guess had a fairly sizeable contract that had been given to it by the U.S. Agency for International Development in order to teach a whole array of courses in public administration to members of the provincial council, the governor's office, the district councils and even the mayor's office. It focused on areas such as parliamentary procedure, strategic planning, governmental budgetary accounting--typical courses you might expect in any civil administration.

I worked very closely with USAID and with the various authorities within the province to build up their capability to manage the various programs and to manage their funding, which was being provided by the central government, so that indeed it might be more effectively used to provide services to the inhabitants of the province.

Q: Can you describe for us the role and evaluate RTI International in the PRT's effort to promote good governance?

A: We had a very healthy relationship, a very positive relationship, with Research Triangle Institute. The organization was large, was clearly well resourced and was led at the operational level by a gentleman whose mother tongue, I believe, was Arabic, although he spoke English very well and who had built a relationship with the Iraqi nationals that was second to none. He proved to be very effective in working with them and working with us. And so he certainly was a means whereby we leveraged whatever we did in governance. I think all in all it was quite effective.

Q: Please describe the PRT activities related to economic reconstruction and development.

A: The activities were largely directed on the basis of funding provided directly by USAID or by the U.S. military through the Commander's Emergency Response Program, that is the CERP funding that is typically provided to civil-military units within brigades. We had, again, a fairly large section within the PRT. I think we must have had at least eight people assigned to the economic section. It was led by an army major. Within the section we had a fellow or two who had doctorate degrees in economics, had worked for quite a few years with USAID, and we also had an Iraqi-Swiss national whose specialty was business law.

Essentially what we did was to promote activities relating to developing microcredit institutions. That turned out to be fairly effective. When the PRT was stood up, there were no such institutions. By the time I left I think there were six or seven branches within the province that had been established. And so that worked fairly well.

Of course the economic achievements that the PRT had to its credit could not have been achieved had it not been for the section's close and continuing relationship with the U.S. Agency for International Development or with the brigades of Multinational Division Baghdad that were operating in the field.

Q: Were there any other U.S. agencies involved and responsible for this aspect, economic reconstruction and development that played a prominent role? You have mentioned USAID, of course.

A: The Corps of Engineers was very much involved in development and reconstruction involving large projects. So we worked with them, but we do not really take credit for the work they did, because what we did was essentially coordinate with them. We did not benefit from funding from these institutions and we did not have personnel assigned to the PRT by the Corps of Engineers or other governmental agencies. All our interlocutors on the U.S. government side of the house were essentially USAID and its implementing partners, RTI and International Relief and Development, which is another U.S. private non-governmental organization that is very much involved development activities in Iraq. We worked with them very closely.

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

A: Oh, yes. In fact, when I was saying that we had about a third of the PRT elements from the military, I would say of that 33-35, probably as many as 30 of these people were civil affairs personnel. All of these people were reservists.

For example, one of the chaps who worked on governance and reconstruction was a naval submarine commander, a reserve officer. While you might say to yourself what in the world would this guy bring to governance or infrastructure, it turned out that he had a master's in public administration and a masters in business and was also a member of the city council. He was a man who had clearly a good sense of governance, as we understand it, within a democratic setting.

Within the governance unit we also had a staff sergeant who had been called up or had volunteered and was serving in the governance unit, and it so happened that in civilian life he was a member of a state legislature. He, too, on the governance side of the house could bring to the table experience which was key to what we were pursuing, or were trying to pursue in Baghdad.

By and large members of the civil-military affairs unit that was assigned to the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team were quite effective, quite good, men and women.

Q: Can you describe the work of the Provincial Reconstruction Development Committee and evaluate its performance?

A: The Provincial Reconstruction and Development Committees were set up during the Coalition Provisional Authority days and had been established essentially to provide a forum for representatives of the Iraqi people to identify targets that, if realized, might go some way towards meeting essential needs of the population. When the PRTs were stood up, the PRTs worked with these organizations in pursuit of that particular mandate. The Provincial Reconstruction Development Committee in Baghdad province was effective in late 2006-2007 largely because the provincial reconstruction team worked very closely with the PRDC members, helping them identify various projects that would then be vetted by personnel from the mayor's office and members of the provincial council, all with a view to having these projects funded by U.S government authorities or, secondarily, through Iraqi funds.

In 2007, fiscal year 07, if I am not mistaken, the Provincial Reconstruction Team Baghdad channeled something like ninety to a hundred million dollars of funding for various projects through the Provincial Reconstruction and Development Committee of the province. It did so working very closely with members of the committee, with staff at the mayor's office and the members of the provincial council to ensure that indeed the projects that were being identified by the PRDC were indeed projects that the other authorities could buy in on.

Q: Can you describe for us the work of the rule of law officer? How did the PRT assist the Iraqi police, courts and prisons?

A: The rule of law section of Provincial Reconstruction Team Baghdad was robust. It had five, six people, four of whom were certified attorneys. It was led by a gentleman who was an assistant district attorney in a large state and a Department of Justice Senior Executive Service official. They essentially focused on ensuring that the detention centers, prisons and penitentiaries within the province were operating as they should be operating. Now the rule of law personnel of the PRT were operating also under a particular constraint, because rule of law writ large is really a responsibility of the central government and not of provincial authorities.

For example, the police by and large take direction from the Ministry of Interior and from other elements of the central government and not from the governor's office or the provincial council. Nonetheless, the members of the PRT rule of law section worked very closely with elements of the police, especially closely with members of the judiciary and also relatively closely with members of the Iraqi bar. The goal was to raise the awareness of all of these people on the need to respect the rule of law and human rights and also on the need to be proactive in approaching whether it be the U.S. government or other members of the coalition,. The hope was to get additional funding to ensure that whatever had to be set right could be set right on the basis of appropriate funding.

That particular group was remarkably effective. I know that during the time I was with the PRT this group had visited all of the detention centers, in some instances multiple times. There was not a week when the group did not have meetings with members of the judiciary and it was very effective in its coordination with other elements of the embassy and Multinational Division Baghdad. The rule of law section had to work very closely with the U.S. embassy, given that the U.S. embassy had a rule of law unit that was large and that clearly had a mandate to promote programs that we were pursuing. Yet our PRT rule of law section was able to assist in some ways that it might not have been able to do, had it not been so effective.

Q: How did the PRT relate in its training programs to those run by the Multinational Security Transition Command Iraq?

A: We had virtually no liaison with the multinational security transition folks, in large measure, I suppose, because the embassy lead on that was essentially through the office of the political-military affairs counselor and also because its focus was national, as opposed to provincial.

Q: Can you describe the role of the PRT agricultural advisor and evaluate the PRT's agricultural assistance effort?

A: We did not have a professional agricultural advisor within the PRT, in large part because our focus was on an urban area within the city, the nine districts which comprised the municipality of Baghdad. Beyond that there were some six counties where you would have had some agriculture. We didn't really get into that until the latter days of my being associated with the PRT.

Having said that, we had a young soldier who indeed was tasked to work with the agricultural committee of the provincial council and to share information, to pursue ideas, which we thought we might be able to support. Yet it really was not one of our primary activities, given that three fourths of the population of the province resided within the municipality.

Q: Your PRT presumably had one or more Iraq cultural advisors. Can you describe and evaluate their role and effectiveness?

A: I believe we had about four bilingual bicultural advisors. We had one assigned to each of the substantive elements within the provincial reconstruction team. Some were more effective than others. They tended to be the point men to set up appointments for us, to provide guidance whenever we asked or it was necessary, making it possible for us to have more productive engagement with Iraqis when we were meeting with them, whether it was within the Green Zone or outside. In some instances some were given substantial responsibilities, given that they had shown themselves to be very proactive. So by and large our bilingual bicultural advisors were a plus and in some instances we could not have done what we achieved had they not been with us.

Q: Could you describe for us what the PRT achieved during your tenure? Do you have a list of projects completed or other concrete accomplishments you would like to share?

A: I have been away from the PRT for a year now. I do not have that list before me. In brief I would say what we accomplished was bringing together people of very disparate backgrounds, people who had been suspicious of one another in the days of the heavily centralized Baath regime and bringing them together with a view to focusing on common activities. That helped make it possible for them as representatives of government, at whatever level it was, to provide essential services to the people whom they were representing. That in a nutshell was what we were able to do. We were able, as I said earlier, to program substantial funding for the provision of essential services, some clinics, some schools, various small infrastructure projects, through the use of substantial economic support funds. I believe in fiscal year 07 a total of something like 130 million dollars was given to Provincial Reconstruction Team Baghdad for that purpose, 50 million of which went into reconstruction activities. Another 50 million went into projects that were less grand, as it were, but nonetheless related to the provision of essential services. That is essentially what we were able to do when I was associated with the PRT.

Q: This next question is somewhat repetitive, so perhaps it is only if you have additional comments. It is on whether you felt your PRT accomplished its missions in improving governance, promoting economic development, utilizing American military-civilian resources?

A: I think that the PRT accomplished its mission, given that the PRT was working in an insecure environment, one in which there was a great deal of interethnic tension. We had no illusions. We were not there promoting revolution. We worked at the margins.

And in the end I think each soldier, men and women who worked with the PRT when I was there, left with a sense of having done something for the common good.

Q: Since we touched on this earlier, I just want to check to see if you have additional comments on training, both while you were in Iraq and prior to arriving in country. Do you feel that your home agency provided you with enough training for your mission?

A: I think that back in 2005, when the embassy and the Department of State had concluded that provincial reconstruction teams were to be set up in Iraq, an effort was made to provide training which, all things being considered, was probably adequate to the purpose. We were given training by members of the National Coordination Team, by Research Triangle Institute, and by other people associated with the U.S. Agency for International Development, which did help us to really put ourselves on a good footing to carry out the work that was expected of us in the ensuing months. More of that training might have been given had the concept of PRTs been developed many years earlier.

The Foreign Service Institute now has a fairly large number, I think, of training modules or courses that are offered to people who will be serving on PRTs. The military establishment, more particularly the U.S. Army, is also developing programs for soldiers who will be participating in PRTs, but those programs are also open to members of civilian agencies. I know that provincial reconstruction team members in some instances, civilians, are benefiting from such training at Fort Bragg, and at the training center. The latter I believe is at Fort Polk in Louisiana. So there is an opportunity for much more substantial training now than was the case in the past.

Q: Are there any recommendations you have in this area for the future, given the constraints on staffing that various agencies have in their ability to provide time for training?

A: The Foreign Service Institute is committed to developing a host of programs, a host of lessons that are meant to impart training to people who will be on PRTs. I really do not have much to say beyond "stay the course," as it were. I know that most recently, for example, the Foreign Service Institute has set up a department for stability operations training. Through that department the Foreign Service Institute will work closely with the U.S. Army, with the Training and Doctrine Command, with the Combined Arms Center, and with the U.S. Army War College. It will make it possible for members of the civilian agencies to be given more training early on and quite often in a joint and by that I mean in a civil-military environment prior to deployment.

I would say stay the course: that is essential. Push for funding, as is now being done, to indeed make it possible for these programs to continue year after year. If more than half of what is being pursued now is indeed achieved over the next two or three years, I think we will be well on our way to being better prepared for these contingencies in the future.

Q: This is my final question. What lessons did you draw from your experience?

A: The basic lesson I drew from my experience was that, by God, in PRTs people ought to put aside notions of uniform, notions of attire, notions of rank and instead clothe themselves with substantial humility, focusing on the mission at hand. The provincial reconstruction teams are quintessential civil-military organizations. You have people with all kinds of skills, regardless of rank or organizations. The best and most effective way of drawing upon these skills is to realize the mission at hand. To achieve the mission at hand is to take people for what they are, giving them substantial leeway to accomplish what they believe they can accomplish in the context of the mission and go on from there. If people stand on matters of rank and protocol, they simply get in the way and it is not the most effective way to manage civil-military organizations such as our provincial reconstruction teams.

Q: Thank you very much for your time and this interview.