

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

**INTERVIEW #63**

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**Executive Summary**

Interviewee began his association with Iraq reconstruction as a contractor working in the Ministries of Defense and the Interior. Subsequent to that period, he took a cut in pay and became a State Department contractor working as a senior governance advisor in his province of assignment.

Interviewee advises: “A consistent thing that I’ve seen since I’ve been over in Iraq working on different issues is unless you take the project and follow it all the way through to completion and have the ability to supervise it, as other individuals come in their priorities are different, it changes and it fails.” “...as different people come in they have these different objectives, instead of staying on target and moving towards that, they shift all of their resources and it creates a state of flux.”

The interviewee was part of the creation of PRT satellites, one-person offshoots with a specific, targeted focus. “...the satellites are strategically important. When I look at a PRT concept and I’m looking long range and dealing with issues of capacity development and sustainment, it’s easy to develop the core. Baghdad is being developed heavily. The satellite concept pushes that *development* out into these smaller *areas*...” “Putting one or two bodies in a satellite initially is a good idea, if they’re competent and are a city manager or have a background in development as a governance advisor. To put an ag person or someone with no real governance background in a city and expect them to change everything is incompetent.” “I say strategically because if we develop the core and we ignore the key recruiting ground of the insurgency, we’re creating our own failure in the long run.”

“I think that the Foreign Service greatly enhanced the PRTs by taking FSOs that have a management background and placing them in team leader positions...I think that you have to have a skilled manager who has the ability to know personal skill sets and assign them appropriately and to make decisions. Without that it’s a rudderless ship. And being in management and making those decisions on personnel actions and how to best utilize people is something that’s not learned overnight...”

Lessons: “I think that when we do a PRT mission, that whatever brigade or military unit we’re with has to encompass the whole province. In our province part of the province

was in the Area of Responsibility of another brigade, so that area was not considered in our ICERF funding or even probably our CERF funding. So that area kind of got short-changed. And another problem area that happens is the insurgents know that that area is not really part of our province and not really under our control and in those areas where there's overlap the insurgency has a tendency to flow back and forth.”

“A second lesson learned would making sure you assign people with the specific skill sets to where they should belong, not just throwing them randomly against the wall and hoping they stick. Satellites would be an example of that. You've got to have that targeted skill set in the right place and you've got to have enough support there for that person...when we're trying to move around the country and we rely on military assets, we have to be in a position where when we sign up on a list, we're not automatically bumped to the bottom...we have to have the ability to move around the country just like the soldiers do.”

“One area of concern I have is that in any professional organization, when you have people leaving, you talk to them and you find out what's going on, what they've learned, what they haven't learned. We've had lots of 3161s leave this country after a year with lots of experiences and this *interview* process wasn't done with them. They signed in their phones, they said, 'Thank you' and..."were sent on their way.

### **Interview**

Initially, I was asked about coming over to Iraq in 2005 to deal with election issues as a contractor. I worked with MPRI in a CPATT (Civilian Police Assistance Training Team) in the management section a majority of the time, then did the budget and planning for a police mission for 2007, was the senior advisor to the Iraqi Police National Command Center and then was offered a position by the Logistics Management Institute to do strategic planning and capacity development for MOI. However, I also float into MOD to work with them on their issues.

*Q: MOI and MOD?*

A: Ministry of Interior, which handles all of the security forces and then Ministry of Defense is the Iraqi Army and they both had different sets of problems that I developed plans for and then moved forward on.

Subsequent to that, then, I had an offer from the State Department, felt that that would be more appropriate, I took cut in salary and moved over to the Department of State as a provincial senior governance advisor.

*Q: Tell us a little bit about, before you joined the PRT, tell us more in depth, some of your work with the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. Could you talk about that project?*

A: Yeah, for the Ministry of Defense I looked at the logistics capacity and what problems they developed. And so strategic planning is looking out at long range, so I looked at an end state 15 to 20 years out, which would be the United States military participating in joint exercises with the Iraqi military, with the Iraqi military being able to provide logistic support and then basically reengineering it backward to figure out what would have to occur in that environment, knowing that the military would be downsizing, there would not be civilian contractors at some points.

Based on that knowledge, I contacted the Defense Acquisition University and then also the Army Logistics Management College and I spoke with them and they agreed to do a strategic partnership at the Ministry of Defense training center. The minister of defense had agreed that he would pay the cost associated with it. Also, DAU and MLNC

*Q: What do those stand for?*

A: DAU is Defense Acquisition University and then ALMC is Army Logistics Management College and they agreed that they would provide their curriculum free to the Iraqis and then also that they would be open on a cost basis to have instructors come over to Iraq and also Iraqi instructors be able to go to their institutions. That was important, because the Ministry of Defense training center, as we drew back, it was in the best strategic interests of the United States to have that ongoing relationship to develop their logistics capacity.

There were a few minor issues with it, in that there were contracted personnel who viewed their contracts more as a proprietary interest in developing curriculum themselves than in accessing curriculum that would be available to them for free and adapting it over to the Iraqis. Since we basically ceased the functioning of their military and were building it from the ground up, it was important that we have a consistent educational base kind of in line with us.

The Iraqis had difficulty in using the logistics system that we'd set up. And so what should have happened was exercises built so that they would cascade into failure, so that they would realize that using the different levels of logistics was important and their units would not be functional if in fact they bypassed certain units and went to key logistical support that should only be doing major maintenance. However, the contractors that were involved in it, my personal view is that they were looking more out for themselves and the interests of their company and personnel than actually getting the job accomplished.

*Q: How did that impact results in the short term?*

A: Well, for me, it was a pattern that I'd seen previously and that's why I decided that I'd go over to the Department of State, so that I could actually get things accomplished and see these concepts and ideas come to fruition.

*Q: So when you left that previous position did you feel that stuff had not been completed fully?*

A: Yes, I have no doubts in my mind, even though it was all set up and given to them and everything had been agreed upon and worked on, that it failed. A consistent thing that I've seen since I've been over in Iraq working on different issues is unless you take the project and follow it all the way through to completion and have the ability to supervise it, as other individuals come in their priorities are different, it changes and it fails.

While working at CPATT, as an example, every time a new general came in they had their own concepts and ideas of what should be occurring. So you could be very close to your target, accomplishing your mission. However, every one of them wanted to achieve results that they had determined to be successful. And it's like having an oil tanker moving along and suddenly trying to change its course. It doesn't happen overnight. And all those things we were close to ended up falling apart.

I think that's probably one of the greatest failures I've seen over here, is as different people come in they have these different objectives, instead of staying on target and moving towards that, they shift all of their resources and it creates a state of flux. So we've constantly been shifting, instead of achieving results.

*Q: And so the long term impact of kind of your perception of contractors not looking out for the greater good and changes in staffing, that essentially meant the whole project ended up not being complete?*

A: Exactly. That goes across the board, in the sense that when you have leadership come in and they have the ability to change what the objective is, that sets the mission on a different course. And when you have leadership come in that doesn't have expert knowledge of the subject area and they don't have a management background to use the skills of the personnel they have appropriately, once again the resources are being squandered. And that has been a consistent issue in the almost four years I've been here, almost five years, now.

*Q: And have these companies that were working on these projects, are they still around, have they left Iraq?*

A: Some are still here. They've shifted focus. Some of them have left, because they didn't meet what their contract called for.

*Q: Well, let's fast forward a little bit to your current position and why don't you just describe the general attributes of your PRT: location, history, size, staffing, etc?*

A: When I got hired, I was hired to be the senior governance advisor for a province and you're given a very clear, basically, statement of work, what you're supposed to be doing and what your authority and kind of targets are.

However, even before I arrived in the province, actually, I was met in Baghdad by a senior economic officer who had determined that I should immediately go to a satellite. The satellite concept is a very good concept. However, what was occurring and as I got into the PRT realized that, they were so anxious to fill those satellites that they were taking personnel from a smattering of backgrounds with no concern and throwing them into the positions whether they should be there or not.

I went up to a satellite position. Once I got up there, the individual that had been assigned as the team leader for the satellite was not an ideal choice for that position, in my opinion. The individual was not going out and engaging, and if they did engage maybe it would be once a week.

He was a warm body filling a spot and squandered DOD resources and he was assigned over to DOS for the whole period of time that he was in Iraq and when he left his reputation with the military burned so many bridges that the next person that went up there, that was extremely competent, who just was hired by Homeland Security, so he's leaving, he engaged and did a tremendous job up there, but he was treated so horribly that any senior person that would have went up there would have turned and walked away.

I was up there about a week and the behavior that happened towards me was worse than I have ever experienced as someone with an executive background who'd been working with the MOI and MOD and had such a variety of experience. Frankly, to throw me into a satellite without even really talking to me and seeing where my skill set could be best used was stunning.

And then to be assigned under someone who absolutely had no clue what they were doing and having a unit that was antagonistic, based on the person they'd been dealing with, was symbolic of a lot of the issues that occurred throughout these satellites.

*Q: So give us an instance of something not quite clicking under this system in the satellite.*

A: Well, an example would be, we've got very few Department of Agriculture personnel that volunteered to come over to Iraq. In one case, we have an individual who is from a western state, well studied, very motivated, to the point where he went and purchased on his own a bunch of background volumes on agriculture that the British had written, one of their officers had written, while they were in Iraq, about all the flora, fauna, agriculture here. He'd studied all that and instead of assigning him to the main PRT they assigned him up to Tozkh, which has no agricultural need for him to be there. He stuck it out for eight months, just being a warm body in a location, until the unit was shutting it down and he said, "You can have me sit here for the next seven weeks, or transfer me somewhere where I might be of use." That is probably the clearest example of misuse of somebody's ability that I've seen over here.

*Q: So what was the sex appeal of these satellites?*

A: Well, the satellites, I think, are strategically important. When I look at a PRT concept and I'm looking long range and dealing with issues of capacity development and sustainment, it's easy to develop the core. Baghdad is being developed heavily. We've got multiple PRTs, EPRTs, there and the provinces, at the main cities, we've got a PRT who's working really hard. The satellite concept pushes that out into these smaller *qadhas* and actually you pull in the *nahiyas* with it, too, if you have that ability.

Putting one or two bodies in a satellite initially is a good idea, if they're competent and are a city manager or have a background in development as a governance advisor. To put an ag person or someone with no real governance background in a city and expect them to change everything is incompetent.

And I say strategically, if we develop the core and we ignore the key recruiting ground of the insurgency, we're creating our own failure in the long run. We can have a highly developed core, but if we're not out on the fringes making sure that government works in these local *qadhas* and *nahiyas*, and things turn and we pull back, they're going to be the first ones to fall under insurgent influence, if we haven't developed their processes.

So we can claim great victories and great capacity development in certain main cities, or even in the central government, which I haven't seen, because of the disfunction, even working with the local province on budget and as we pull back the blood and treasure that we've put in this country will have been squandered because we did not do an effective job and, sadly, we've been here long enough where it should have been happening.

And I can look at the province where I'm currently and see that it hasn't happened, even at the provincial government level. And we're looking at withdrawing next year and shutting down these satellites which, yeah, they've been up with a warm body in them, but there's been little to no development in these cities.

*Q: Can you describe the satellites themselves? How big are these and are they geographically roughly a certain distance from the core area of the PRTs?*

A: They're around the provinces in major cities. We have a few highly skilled persons who have been operating very independently but very effectively, because they've been senior managers before, they know exactly what they're doing.

*Q Is this individual by themselves there, or are they with a military unit?*

A: We work closely with the military units and the individual is with a military unit down there and has an interpreter. For a support system, they could reach back to the main PRT. However, that rarely happens, because the individual has been so busy on construction issues and redevelopment issues, working with the UN and trying to develop the capacity of the local government that they are struggling and their living conditions, again, aren't the best, because they're in a satellite.

The military struggles with really understanding what the individual is doing, how they are doing it, and why they aren't here all the time, when in fact they're moving around and actually getting things accomplished for the city itself.

But that is an international treasure for the Shi'a and that should have a lot more going on at that satellite, to make sure that that possible tinderbox as time goes on in dealing with Iran and with the Shi'a contingent is well taken care of.

Now we look at Bayji, which is in the northern part of the province.

*Q: And this is where you initially went?*

A: Yeah, this is where I originally went. A great opportunity, great location and should be really worked on. We should have five guys up there working on the issues in Bayji alone. We've got one body in each location.

Now Bayji, with the incumbent leaving, we're not going to have anybody there for like six months. Now when you look at Bayji, you're looking at the Bayji oil refinery. Huge amounts of money for the government of Iraq are earned there and a lot of that may be being siphoned off by the insurgency in different ways.

The city of Bayji is getting 24/7 power, where the rest of the province really isn't getting that. Some are getting maybe one hour a day or two hours a day. But Bayji, because of politics is getting that much power and they have a line going from the Bayji oil refinery right to the city.

You've got the Bayji power facility there, which is providing power to the Bayji oil refinery and the oil refinery sends over heavy crude oil for the thermal burners, so it's kind of a symbiotic relationship. And you've got the Bayji fertilizer plant there as well.

All three of those are putting contaminants in the river. There's been little or no action done on that. We have a major drinking water problem throughout the province. We've also got a drought occurring.

The basic needs of the population and the functioning of the government are being impacted, but they could be impacted a lot more if we had the right amount of personnel with the right skill sets.

You can have a great functioning provincial government, however if the central government is not functioning, the provincial governments aren't getting the money they need to function. An example would be Anbar province. We've turned Anbar province over to the Iraqis, when they really didn't want it to occur. Some of these army units haven't been paid in a while. Now if they're not being paid and they're not being allowed to go home, their search areas are shrinking back to their bases, which allows the insurgents to move into areas that we had cleared previously.

If the central government had its business processes established to where every province clearly knew what they had to do in order to get their money and the money was being released out, that would be successful. If they had then business processes and only one or two provinces were getting their money it would be successful. If you had 17 provinces getting their money, it doesn't mean it's successful. It means one person may be ordering the money released. When that person dies, if the business processes aren't there it will fall apart.

So from the top to the bottom we have to develop this capacity and these business processes. I think that's been ignored greatly and when I look at the capabilities maturity model, originally Carnegie Mellon developed that, we've adapted it in different ways and I did develop with my team under me, the provincial training teams, police training teams, they go to police stations and train them and there's a police station monthly report on the military side and that's subjective. And on the Department of State side this capabilities maturities model that's been developed is subjective.

On the military side, you have a commanding officer, a general, saying that "I want all of these stations to be green by this date." Well, everybody under them then subjectively moves them towards that green marker.

Within the Department of State, you've got FSOs who are in charge of different sections with no experience or expertise in those functions or management background in charge of people who've got decades of experience in some cases, who are filling out the capability maturities model and not talking with these people, because their supervisor said, "We're looking at shutting down the PRT by this date." So just like the military, they're being evaluated by these supervisors. Are they moving it towards the goal, just like these soldiers, to make sure they're doing their job?

What is the difference between the paperwork and the reality and that's why you need an objective instrument that is very clear to see whether these processes are actually happening or not and we shouldn't be filling it out, we should be working with the Iraqis so that they have that and are filling it out and moving forward, because that's how we're supposed to be training them.

*Q: How many satellites were there?*

A: Let's see, we've got Tikrit, Samarra, Bayji, Tozkh. So right now I think we have four.

*Q: What would you describe the primary role and mission of the PRT, as a whole, in the province?*

A: It's called a provincial reconstruction team, so, I guess, are you looking at reconstruction of facilities, reconstruction of government, reconstruction of civil society? I think there's kind of three roles.

The reconstruction aspect of it, we have someone very effective now, a lieutenant colonel from the Army Corps of Engineers and when I say he's effective, he's literally changed the whole dynamic of how we deal with the province on failed U.S. projects because of minimal oversight. He is now going out, working with the Iraqis, the assistant governor for technical affairs and going and inspecting these areas, work we would have paid for before and saying they're not meeting standards. There's no rebar in the floors, no rebar in the walls, under five years they're gonna fall apart. And so the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is going and destroying them. They're not paying, where before we would have paid and had a field project and tried to shove it over on the Iraqis, which would made them believe that we were incompetent and didn't know what we were doing, because we were being ripped off financially and they were being left with projects that were nonfunctional.

So I think on that aspect, on the construction side, the U.S. Army corps of Engineers is working closely with the provincial government and with the PRT, now, who developed the PRDC, the Provincial Reconstruction Development Committee, which is all Iraqis and extremely effective. The process we set up, for like ICERF funding, my peers and [I] had a great debate on that. I view that ICERF was probably one of the best tools that was ever developed for building capacity, because what it did was, yeah, it went through the brigade commander, at least that's what it was supposed to be doing but the way we'd structured it was, we would have the local *qadha*-level electrical or water person do a full statement of work, give it to the mayor and council so they could review it and sign off on it, so they would know. They would send it forward to the PRDC, who would review it and on the same time the battalion would send it up to the brigade. Now the brigade will not fund it unless the PRDC agrees to it.

So what we've done is, we've worked with the PRDC so that they understand what a real statement of work should look like and the detail of it and also help them understand that their long range plan is what's important. An example would be Samarra sends up a half million dollar electrical plan, statement of work and the brigade is ready to pay [for] that and do that. The PRDC and the DG of electricity looks at it and says, "You know what, that doesn't go with our long range plan. We don't want you to pay for it." and they kick it back. So when we in fact remove ICERF we've created the processes, business processes, for them to develop a good statement of work, to send it up through their chain, have them look at it, review it, prioritize it and make a decision on it. So as we eliminate the American aspect of it, that'll be left functional.

Now for governmental processes that's a lot more difficult, because they have that stove pipe that they look at and what you're given is what you deal with. Trying to develop the DGs under an assistant governor for technical affairs is more difficult, because some like to hoard information and knowledge, because it's power. It's hard to replace them as long as they've got that. And that's why a lot of Iraqis really don't like going to a computerized system, because now anybody can access what they know and they lose that job security. So in that aspect it's a little more difficult bringing transparency to the process.

We just developed capital budget planning software and the provincial government went for that and they agreed to it, they wanted it, they took it and they're entering all their data into it and that was two of the military guys that work under me had IT experience back in the U.S. because they're reservists and we talked and I told them to move forward on the project. Absolutely brilliant job and that will create a lot of transparency on contracting from the very beginning when the contract's awarded through completion.

The other aspects of the government, because I'm pretty much the governance person working on that, it's a lot harder. If I had five staff working for me I could delve them into different areas and target their resources and we could see big gains.

And this kind of plays into RTI, which is a contracting agency that I believe is supposed to work for the State Department. When I arrived, getting an assessment of what's going on was difficult. So when they determined that I would be in charge of governance, I went and asked the head RTI guy there, "What are you guys doing? What are you working on? What's your plan? So that I can make sure I'm not gonna interfere in what you're doing and maybe can support it or use you to enhance what I'm doing."

"Don't worry, you're not gonna impact anything we're doing."

Talked to the satellite guys, 'cause there's RTI guys supposed to be out working with them, they'd never even heard of some of them, never talked to them. Massively failed contractor arrangement by poor contracting statement of work. I don't know what they've been doing. They've done a couple of little things since I've been there. If they were totally under our control from the beginning we might have been able to get a lot more done. Too loose, too free flowing, not enough control over them, so they kind of set their own agenda.

Civil society peace, reconciliation, developing different groups, again, lack of manpower, lack of long range planning, you've gotta have a target to kind of move towards that. I have kind of an idea of what I need to do for capacity development and so I've been plodding along towards that, but without the manpower, without having control over the satellites and how they're interacting, working closely with the central government, with our liaisons that are supposed to be engaging them, it's a lot more difficult. We've got several ministries of the central government that nobody's working with, like youth and sports, ministry of labor and social affairs. The reach back has been fairly difficult and so coordination and working together towards what we should be going to achieve has been a big issue.

Returning to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers activities in Iraq, they take a percentage. They really don't have any of their own money. However, they can take an eight or nine per cent administrative fee to supervise all contracts. Now that's another very failed area, because all these projects we've done where they've collected their percentage that failed, we should be asking for that administrative fee back, 'cause they weren't going out there every month checking on them, we had substandard work. They're the ones

who were supposed to be monitoring these projects and these contractors. We've squandered billions of dollars and they didn't do their job.

*Q: Okay, do you have specific examples of failures in mind?*

A: Oh, water treatment facilities is a big one. As they went out and built these water compact units, they weren't involved with the Iraqi government at all, which is a failure. If we are going out and we are doing things, we need to be working closely with whatever Iraqi department is doing that. We build water compact units, we didn't do them to Iraqi standards or even American standards, so there was improper chlorination, improper piping.

When we look at the electrical projects that were done, these mobile transformer stations, we did not talk to the Iraqi ministry of electricity and we did not work with the DG of the province, we dropped them in where we thought it would do best. There's little to no oversight on what kind of power they're drawing off the grid right now, so they've created more problems than they're worth.

What the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has done on the water issue, when the Iraqis have gone out and refused to sign for the project at the provincial level, they went around to the ministry up in the central government, got them to sign for the projects and now the Iraqi provincial government owns it. That is a quick way to shove off a losing project on somebody that's supposed to be our partner and doesn't develop good relations.

*Q: Describe the PRT's relationship with OPA, the Office of Provincial Affairs, the embassy and the U.S. military command-- it's kind of a three part question.*

A: At the provincial level there is minimal contact with OPA. When you look at desk officers, we've had one initial desk officer when I came in who wasn't effective and so we were basically on our own. There was no communication coming down at all and when we were even there meeting face to face with this individual there was really little to no support.

*Q: What do you guys look for as being the role of a desk officer to assist the PRTs?*

A: I don't even know if they've ever even clarified that, as to what their role really is. The current desk officer we have, if I send a request up to them, I know I'm gonna get a response back. If I'm running into a problem, I know if I send an e-mail, this person will take care of it, they will set it up.

This person is the conduit to deal with the senior advisors for the central government, that's my view. If I'm down in the provincial level and I say, "In order to initiate the first contact to break that stove pipe barrier that I need an appointment with the DG of electricity from my province with the minister of electricity," this person would go to the senior advisor of electricity, talk to him.

Now as for the embassy itself, minimal contact. Some of the FSOs do an email up, they do their reports but there's pretty much no contact with the embassy itself.

For military components, right now we work with a certain civil affairs unit. They're doing a fantastic job working with us and supporting us. Different units have different ways of dealing with the PRTs.

We're lucky, in the sense that this was a cohesive unit that came over, they were all together and we were able to get some of their staff, I feel particularly lucky to end up with some of the officers and enlisted people that fell into the governance, because they were able to actually feel like they have accomplished something and move forward.

Not everybody in the military that gets attached to a PRT feels that. The last unit, as they were leaving, just as I was coming in, I talked with them and they felt that they were treated poorly, that they were absolutely worthless and felt that they accomplished nothing.

And so this unit I think has gotten a lot more tangible things that when they go back they'll be able to say, "Wow, we did this," including an Iraqi governor presenting certificates to two enlisted members of the unit for their work on that capital budget planning software. Baghdad television, provincial television, Combat Camera, we had them all there to film that as well.

[**The previous unit**], I think they were Ready Reserv[ists] that had been called up, hadn't worked together in other locations and so they hadn't bonded in any way and they kind of came into the PRT, the PRT didn't use their skill sets, maybe didn't pull them in and engage 'em and so they felt their time was squandered.

*Q: Tell us about the general chain of command in your PRT.*

A: You have the team leader

*Q: And that's an FSO?*

A: Yeah, the team leader is an FSO. The you've got econ lead, who's an FSO; the public diplomacy lead, that's an FSO; a governance/political section person, that's an FSO. Then I'm governance/capacity development/civil affairs, we're supposed to be co-leads in that section. And then you've got the satellites that fall under the political section of governance.

*Q: And you have military people intersected in your team?*

A: Well, with governance, we do. Basically what it is, it's taking "Sons of Iraq" and transitioning them through education into employment.

*Q: And how do you rate the effectiveness of PRT leadership and management structure?*

A: Well, from when I got there, I'd say on a scale of one to ten, maybe four. I think that the Foreign Service greatly enhanced the PRTs by taking FSOs that have a management background and placing them in team leader positions, if they choose that route.

I think that you have to have a skilled manager who has the ability to know personal skill sets and assign them appropriately and to make decisions. Without that it's a rudderless ship. And being in management and making those decisions on personnel actions and how to best utilize people is something that's not learned overnight and with a PRT you have senior managers that are brought in because they're experts in their field and to take a senior manager and to place him under a Foreign Service Officer who has way less experience than them is a disservice to the mission.

Team leader I can understand, wanting to oversight for the State Department, to make sure the mission's on track and that it's going the way the embassy wants. But when you have an econ team and you have all these senior people with huge backgrounds in economics and finance, to be put under a 26- or 27-year-old with no real econ background and start guiding the mission as they see fit, is not the best use of their talents, because they're deciding what to do, they're moving for it and they're telling these senior advisors what to do.

*Q: So the nature of the leadership, though, more recently, has improved, I think you said earlier?*

A: It's tough, because you get different leaders in with different viewpoints. I have my own management style and I ran lots of different people, did budgets up to \$78 million. And a lot of what I have seen is management by no management. By looking at a situation and instead of determining what's fair, kind of determining "This person's a Foreign Service Officer, the other person is not, therefore I'm going along with the Foreign Service Officer's position." I've seen two people terminated based on that, highly skilled. One of them was more of a management difficulty.

But to squander those resources so quickly was just a huge waste for the unit. We could have done a transfer, because other units wanted them within our PRT, because they were so skilled and yet we let them go, which was absolutely stunning.

*Q: Let's switch gears slightly. Tell us how you describe security issues in the PRT.*

A: Security issues as in going out?

*Q: It's a broad, open question, so you decide which way you want to take it.*

A: I think the units that we're working with do an excellent job of providing security for us. The reality is that there's such an open movement area, of people being able to flow in even without appointments, we're very vulnerable. A lot of the women are able to flow through with minimum to no checks. They have access to the same areas we do

when we're meeting with leaders. It would be very easy for someone to penetrate that security, because once they get in our soldiers are not rechecking them, because supposedly they've already been checked. On more than one occasion I've gone in and had people that I did not know, did not have an appointment with, end up in the same room as me.

*Q: Are you moving around a lot and what security concerns with that, or is that operating smoothly?*

A: Well, when you look at movements, I also operated out of a Baghdad PRT, as a liaison with them, so we were moving to different locations, there was no set pattern, no set time, we weren't communicating when we were showing up and that seemed fairly effective.

For the PRT I'm with currently, there's mainly two locations we go to, the pattern is very set, the time we leave is pretty much very set, the routes we take are pretty much set. So it would be fairly easy for someone that was determined to be able to target us. I think we've been very lucky. I think they tend to target the military more than the PRTs. However, we are, in my view, very vulnerable.

*Q: What is your folks' relationship with NGOs out in town, if you will? Do you guys work with many non-governmental organizations?*

A: I personally don't. Some of the other people do. However, you have a hierarchy of corruption in the government there and so the relationships, even spreading into the NGOs, are questionable and working with the NGOs, my focus is the government and the capacity development with them. Haven't had to work with the NGOs. I've got more than enough time to spend with the leaders, trying to help them.

*Q: So why don't you describe your interactions with Iraqis themselves in the government?*

A: I've been in Iraq since January 2005 and so I've worked with a wide variety of leaders and different skills sets. My province, it's kind of broken down by what position you hold as to what leaders you're dealing with. My philosophy has been, I don't give them any money. My view is that if we're giving them money and that's all they have from us, when they get their own money, which they have, we're gonna be of no value. And so advice, recommendations, I've tried to add my value that way and it's become very effective, where now they're calling for me to come and meet with them.

So I think we've made great strides. They've accepted that capital budget planning software and as that gets implemented deeper into their system they'll have a lot more capacity and actually see what's happening with their contracting process, is it fair, what money is really being spent, subcontracts, which money is being spent. So fiscally we'll be able to track their decision making on the contracting process.

For their chain of command, I think we're doing a good job establishing a relationship between the provincial government and *qadhas* and *nahiyas*. I think it still has a long way to go and we haven't even started working on the *qadha* and *nahiya* government practices.

So I think it took anywhere from three to six months, six months, probably, for the relationship to really kick off where they trusted me and my advice because they saw that what I was telling them would happen is actually starting to happen. The central government said, "We want this, this and this." I already had electricity do all the assessments, water do the assessments, sewage do the assessments, environment do the assessments, so they were better prepared for this budget for 2009 to go in. As we work through the hard side of it, now I'm going in to the assistant governor for administrative affairs, which is more the soft side of it. So by the time we have to do the 2010 budget, I think my province will be pretty solid on that.

What I told the team leader was the election process is gonna be great, because when it happens, which may be January or February, I recommended that we pull back, not give any advice or recommendations and see how their government is functioning, these new replacements coming in. Did we in fact institutionalize these processes, where if five of the guys out of twenty are still there, are they gonna be showing the other 15 guys the processes that should be happening, that they should be listening, they shouldn't be arguing, they should be following these procedures. So that'll be exciting, to pull back and see what worked, what didn't they do and then to target what they didn't do, to try and build that capacity up.

So I think relationshipwise we're on pretty solid ground with a lot of the people who may move into different positions but as long as that value of us assisting them is there even with the five, the other 15 should be buying off on it.

*Q: Does your PRT do much in the way of public affairs kind of programs and projects?*

A: Not really. It's been very poor. We have a public diplomacy officer. The military people under this person tend to do a lot of the work. For the certificate ceremony previously mentioned, I ended up going through the assistant governor for technical affairs, so that he could notify the media to come in. The PD officer did notify Combat Camera, but wasn't present.

Working with the local media, it's very different when you're talking about building capacity. You can be an expert in media affairs, but unless you know how to build the business processes of building a successful media through advertising and the different business aspects of it, you're on loose ground, because why would they listen to you if you don't know what you're talking about and they'll pick it up pretty quickly.

*Q: Your PRT, do they do much with rule of law?*

A: Yeah, we have a rule of law officer. He's got several military members working closely with him, so when he's not there, they're engaging in what he's directed them to do. A good relationship with the Iraqis.

I believe that's probably one of the more successful programs that I've seen, because rule of law is my background. Even talking with the attorney who's our senior rule of law advisor, I was a court administrator back home, so in talking with him I said, "This is your area. If you want, I could come in and I'll work on the governance capacity of the court administration."

He's like, "No problem." Knows what his levels are and what he can handle and he'll take help if someone has the expertise in that area. So I think that's a strong component, where we're at.

*Q: What are some of the projects that they've worked on?*

A: I know they've worked on detention issues. They've worked on making sure that judges have adequate security, that their offices and homes are taken care of, that the judges have a weapon or their personal security has weapons, they have weapons cards for that, that they're able to function and actually do the court work.

*Q: How about counterinsurgency issues?*

A: Don't really see that. I've applied for a top secret clearance so I could sit in on some of those sorts of briefings, so I could kind of work and plan around that.

An example would be when I was working on the MOI side of it and MOD side of strategic planning was trying to find jobs for Iraqi veterans who are no longer in the **Iraqi** security forces, so that we could reduce the insurgency recruitment of trained personnel that knew how to use weapons and tactics.

For the PRT level, I think that long range planning is sorely lacking in a lot of areas. I went to the brigade and said, "Okay, you notify me. You tell me your five hot spots where you've got a problem with insurgents being young." And so I've worked with the DG of youth and sports, they've provided me that information. I've said, "Okay, we need to set up youth programs in these areas to engage them."

I've submitted stuff for ICERF to fund those programs, but it's not a priority in a lot of ways, because people don't see it as a priority. Unless we're targeting the next generation that's coming in, we're going to have a problem in the future. A lot of the juveniles that were incarcerated, the insurgency was intentionally allowing people to get captured and be put in with them to do recruitment, leadership development and to sway these young kids. These kids are in outlying villages, a lot of them, without a lot to do. So we need to engage them in youth activities, we need to engage them through long range planning, working with the ministry of oil, ministry of electricity, to say, "Okay, in ten years, you're gonna need how many engineers, electrical engineers, how many

welders?” so that we can start gearing these kids and targeting them to jobs and training so that they can fill those slots later on down the line.

Similarly, in the United States, if you’ve got an area of economic deprivation, those kids with no sense of hope are gonna be swayed towards gang activity, quick money. Same thing in Iraq, massive economic deprivation, not a lot of job opportunities and we have an insurgency willing to pay them two to four hundred dollars to plant an IED. It’s fast money, kids have no sense of life, really, so they make great soldiers, because they’re invulnerable, they don’t think they’ll be caught.

We need to aggressively target the youth, my personal view and we need to be doing a lot more of the long range planning and saying, “If you’re working with the ministry of oil and you haven’t looked out ten years to see what they need for employees and we haven’t worked with the ministry of education to make sure they have high quality programs to provide those kinds of staff, so we have high level of schools here, which they used to have, the premier of the Middle East, we’re dropping the ball.” And we’ve had five years to set all this stuff up and we’ve been rudderless, just kind of floating around.

*Q: When you were talking about groups being purposely caught so they could kind of work the prison system to gain recruits, which specific organizations are you referring to?*

A: I’m talking about al Qaeda and that came out in the rule of law conference we had in 2007. At that time I was dealing with youth issues in Iraq as the liaison from CPATT to the Baghdad PRT.

*Q: Describe some of the better projects that you’ve completed. Which ones stand out in your mind?*

A: Well, the biggest one is that capital planning budget software. We worked with the assistant governor for technical affairs, got him involved, so we could have his buy in, which was huge. I kind of refer to this project as “the lure of the web.” It does a great job tracking their projects and the money and later on, after they fully incorporated it, is when they’ll really get to understand that. Now that they have the processes I’ve built several layers of transparency into it.

So once they have it fully engrained we’ll be able to go, “Okay, what contracts were awarded in Bayji?” and we’ll see all the contracts. And we’ll say, “Okay, what contractors were awarded the contracts in Bayji?” Now, suddenly, we have eighty per cent of the contractors that are not from Bayji but from some other area. And then it’s, “Why weren’t local contractors used?”

Now, completion rates, if we have contractors that are not completing their projects or are substandard, we have notes in there. So if these contractors are consistently not doing their projects they’re gonna be able to blacklist them.

When the public gets all this information, long range we're looking at giving them access to this information, they're gonna be able to see that their government is doing a fairer job of awarding contracts, that the contracts, the money that's allocated for it, is fair, that there's not great cost overruns, 'cause it'll red flag it and that the contracts are done on time.

And it does such a good job of tracking all of that, 'cause these two military personnel built it based on what we've given them before and an Excel spreadsheet, some modifications that I made and also modifications that high Iraqi officials had asked for.

So that project alone, it's being beta tested right now. When I get back from leave we're gonna look at it and then we'll give the Iraqis an opportunity to take to the ministry of planning and ministry of finance to say, "This is Arabic and English, very effective but shouldn't we see if it actually works on a day to day basis before we cheer ourselves hoarse? What do you think of it?" And if they want to send it across the rest of the country, which I believe they should do, I think that would be the biggest impact I've made in the eight months I've been here.

And it's an access database software so it would flow right into the financial management database system and RTI's been paid millions of dollars to develop a traditional accounting-based budget system. I don't think it's done. I think they're kind of testing it themselves. But this would flow right into that as well and I think this is probably superior to what they've developed and it was free, done in a few months by a couple of soldiers.

*Q: How old were these two men?*

A: I think one is probably about 35. The other has got to be maybe 25.

*Q: You think PRTs are accomplishing their mission out there?*

A: I guess it depends on what you define as the mission, again. I think the PRTs, at least the two PRTs I've been with, the Baghdad PRT, as a liaison, no doubt about it, the rule of law section there is doing a great job working with a variety of Iraqi institutions, working with the colleges to develop attorneys, absolutely fantastic.

In my PRT, when I sit down and look at it, I'm convinced there was a lot accomplished, I would think, before I arrived. I know a lot's being done in different areas. For the governance section, I think we're really on track with what we're doing.

The Foreign Service Officer who was chief of governance when I arrived, brilliant man, governance wasn't his area, wasn't really his specialty, but dealing with people, high skill level, was able to develop what we call a road show, which is taking the provincial officials around, knew that I had my specialty area, let me go with it, supported me, made a big difference in the province, just based on the road shows alone and the interaction with the Iraqis.

*Q: Tell us some more about road shows, specifically.*

A: Yeah, the road shows, in order to develop relationships between the provincial government and the *qadhas*, the governance chief had set up a program where the military, originally, because of the security situation, would fly down high Iraqi officials managing sectors like electricity, water, sewage into certain *qadhas* which are big cities. They would meet with the city officials down there and talk about their problems and what could be done to solve them.

So that opened the lines of communication. Now that the security situation is improved, we don't have to drive these guys. They'll say, "Let's do a road show in a certain city" and they'll all drive down there and meet there and we'll fly down and meet them and we'll meet with the council personnel and talk about their problems.

*Q: So that has had some longevity to it? The PRT essentially kicked it up, but now it's running on its own steam, essentially, right?*

A: Well, pretty much, they're able to drive down there. Whether it continues or not, that'll be interesting. But I think that the ability of the *qadhas* to talk more freely with the provincial government is there. I think it still needs a little work, but it's moving forward.

*Q: Looking at your total experience, did you find your training to be adequate to fulfill the role that you're now serving?*

A: I was hired for a specific area and so the training was very good. The courses on culture and background, I already had a lot of that because I'd been over here, I thought it was very positive.

I thought that it could have been enhanced, now that I've been over here, by making sure that everybody has a clear understanding that they're under the direction of the team leader and that although their hiring paperwork may say they have the ability to flow pretty freely and do their job, that's not the reality of boots on the ground and they need to be made aware of that before they come over here.

*Q: Is there a way that that could be done? How would you do that, if you were in charge of the training?*

A: Well, what I recommended when I was back in D.C. on my consultation was that they basically insert a paragraph in the job description saying that "all of the above listed items will be prioritized by the team leader and other duties may be assigned." Administratively, although it says on our hiring papers that we report only to the team leader, administratively he can have us report to someone else and that should be made clear in there as well.

Unfortunately, we've had some senior advisors come over where they did not want someone that junior giving them any kind of commands, especially when he/she didn't have the background in that area and there was some conflict on that.

*Q: All right, what lessons do you draw from your experience in your PRT?*

A: One, I think that when we do a PRT mission, that whatever brigade or military unit we're with has to encompass the whole province. In our province part of the province was in the Area of Responsibility of another brigade, so that area was not considered in our ICERF funding or even probably our CERF funding. So they were left off financially from us and then the AO that they were in, which was Ninawa province, Ninawa divided its money up only for Ninawa province. So that area kind of got short-changed.

And another problem area that happens with that is the insurgents know that that area is not really part of our province and not really under our control and in those areas where there's overlap the insurgency has a tendency to flow back and forth. That would be one lesson learned.

A second lesson learned would making sure you assign people with the specific skill sets to where they should belong, not just throwing them randomly against the wall and hoping they stick. Satellites would be an example of that. You've gotta have that targeted skill set in the right place and you've gotta have enough support there for that person. Some of the military units haven't provided full support for the State Department personnel working with them. It's been lackluster support in some cases. It's been a difficulty doing movements, 'cause we have a lot of people trying to do a lot of different things, we don't have enough movement assets for it.

When we're trying to move around the country and we rely on military assets, we have to be in a position where when we sign up on a list, we're not automatically bumped to the bottom when we've been waiting three days for a flight and every time a military person comes in we're bumped lower on the list.

We have to have that ability to move around the country just like the soldiers do.

Those would probably be the top lessons learned. And as I mentioned earlier, the reach back capability in making sure that we can actually get information flowing down about what's going on is very important.

*Q: Any interesting story you want to share with us?*

A: Nope, can't think of any,

*Q: Humorous story?*

A: Humorous story?

*Q: You'll come up with one, sometime and you can write it in your journal. Any final thoughts?*

A: Just that I'm glad that there's this opportunity, because probably one area of concern I have is in any professional organization when you have people leaving, you talk to them and you find out what's going on, what they've learned, what they haven't learned. That has probably been one of the biggest mistakes I've seen happen here.

We've had lots of 3161s leave this country after a year with lots of experiences from all over the place and this process wasn't done with them. They signed in their phone, they said, "Thank you" and sent them on their way.

*Q: Well, we appreciate so much of your time today.*

A: Thank you very much. I was happy to participate.