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

INTERVIEW #68

Interviewed by: Marilyn Greene
Initial interview date: December 17, 2008

Executive Summary

Former Marine; currently an Army civilian … GS 15. The PRT experience began in 2007 at Fallujah, in Anbar province. Transferred late in 2007 to a new E-PRT in Taji, which was then embedded in Ba'qubah, in Diyala Province.

Fallujah was a new E-PRT with three people on board. Team leader was an RSO, who organized team based on position (health, agriculture, etc). It was not organized, as it should have been, as an overall activity. (Diyala was much different).

We were three E-PRTs -- one in the west at al Asad, one in Ramadi and one at Fallujah -- and were supposed to work at the district and below level.

The E-PRT was not well organized. No clear mission statement was given, beyond vague intent to help Falujans form their government and provide services.

Team leader didn't involve us in higher-up activities. Excluded team members from meetings with Marines. Team really needed leadership and management capability.

Duty areas paralleled Iraqi ministry setup. Interviewee was the financial manager, helping Iraqis build a budget. Also did banks, women's issues, sport and youth. Some agriculture, health and governance as well.

Taking real action was difficult, because team leader was focused on one's title. Did not talk directly with team members and sent e-mails from across the room. Refused to turn on air conditioning so as to acclimate us to Iraq heat.

Inside the team, members worked well together, especially when the team leader was away. "The structure wasn't bad; it was the individual they chose to put in place. … It was very dysfunctional as long as the team leader was there and when that person left it was very functional."

The E-PRT had relations with both the Marine Regimental Combat Team and Marine Expeditionary Force command, all of whom worked very well together when allowed to.

Threat level dropped dramatically during my time there. Largely due to the RCT. Marines cordoned off city of Fallujah. Sectioned off pieces and cleared them one by one. Fallujans began revealing where weapons were and who the bad guys were. They were tired of the fighting. Sunnis in that area had had the "Awakening" and were siding with the Coalition forces against al Qaeda,

The military provided our personal security detachment and vehicles. Before that we had to find room in CA team Humvee and were much more constricted.

Had little to do with international groups. There were some women's groups. I started a program to help widows start small businesses. Through chamber of commerce they could apply for $1,000 in start-up finds. Were required to come up with idea of what they wanted to do, a rudimentary business plan. Vegetable shop, toy shop, clothing shop, shoe shop, bakery, a limited catering business, a tailoring business, a sewing shop.

High local officials consulted with the PRT and they listed needs of towns, villages and sections of the city, and then we prioritized. It was the first time anyone had asked them what they needed. They were accustomed to getting what was given. To be able to ask for something meant they had to prioritize. And for the first time, city council members thought not just of their own neighborhoods, but of the entire district. It was revolutionary.

The resulting budget included many issues. It was in both Arabic and English. The No. 3 issue was a project to provide pre fabricated housing to move around the city for people who had no place to live.

It was significant because all those making these decisions already had a place to live. Yet they put housing for homeless near the top of their list. Showing that they felt responsibility to take care of their people.

We did not have a public affairs officer but the small business member of the E-PRT created a newsletter, even though public affairs wasn't his job. Newsletter was sent to the Pentagon, so they knew what we were doing.

We helped create a radio and television capability for the people in Fallujah. One of the last things I did was to pay for the equipment. Broadcast ability was important because most people have TVs.

We were propping up and assisting the chosen leaders of the town by doing various things. For example, trash. It was everywhere, and a hazard because IEDs could be in there. So Marines took big trash containers throughout the city as they cleared, and we provided small trash containers for families to take their own trash to the big bin. We

provided $100,000 worth of trash bins. They were small enough so that a child of 10 or 12 could carry it to the dumpster. An added benefit: We purchased them locally.

Another accomplishment: Repaired and refurbished city council quarters. Soon council members began showing up. Instead of shouting at each other, and instead of being armed, they sat down and talked.

Things were settled and issues were brought up and issues were solved by them. Later on, Iraqi television covered the meetings. So you were getting some transparency of government there. It was part of the whole Rule of Law thing.

Not impressed with RTI. They had the mayor and city council chairman go to some special class up in Baghdad. We wanted copies of what had been covered, so that we could reinforce it. But they wouldn't share. They were excessively risk-averse. RTI tried to hold a class in Ramadi, saying it was too dangerous for them to come to Fallujah. But it was almost impossible for people from Fallujah to get through to attend the class.

We did some economic reconstruction, trying to help build business by starting a chamber of commerce, revitalizing small businesses and little market areas. But there was no systematic reconstruction plan, in which you would look for instance at the entire electric and figure out where you need to make changes to get the maximum amount of electricity to the most people. The same lack of systemic approach to water, schools.

The Corps of Engineers built a state-of-the-art water treatment plant, too complicated for Iraqis to maintain. It was huge, took a long time to build, cost millions … but was not connected to any primary, secondary or tertiary water lines. So you have clean water connected to old, dirty lines or connected to nothing at all. And you are back to having dirty water. So no matter how clean it was in the beginning, if it did end up finding a pipe, by the end it was dirty, because there was no effort to look at it in a systematic way.

The reconstruction budget was supposed to go to the PRDC at the provincial level. The provincial government was very Ramadi-oriented. The governor was focused on having Ramadi fixed and having his cronies get the contracts. We wanted the work to go to Fallujans, but they never even heard about the projects or got to bid on things for their own town.

E-PRT finally got a rule of law guy, who tried to work with police, courts, prisons. He was alone, though, and could not do much.

Had more success helping veterinarians, by providing books.

We did help with governance, working with city council and ministries to understand that you're not just doing this for you and your family, but for all of the citizens in your area.

We gave widows a basket of food and a scarf from city council. We tried to do things in the name of the council to show people the government was doing things for them. Whereas they once didn't even know the names of their leaders, they now did.

Team also helped with hospital and clinics. Helped schools with supplies and desks. Did things with sport and youth. (Organized soccer games.) We bolstered the idea that working with the coalition was a good thing.

Training for the E-PRT was not good. One week class at FSI was not helpful. Trainers had no idea of conditions outside Baghdad, where most of us were going.

CPR training done out in Virginia…. They were teaching people how to do First Aid out of this huge box of equipment that's apparently set aside in a safe place inside the embassy. So if your embassy was being overrun or you couldn't get out, this is what you would use until the Marines came in with the helicopters to lift you out of the embassy. But that is not what happens on the battlefield. I knew more about what to do for First Aid than the people teaching the course. The Army's Combat Lifesaver Course would have been more appropriate.

They took us to a race track in West Virginia and let us drive race cars. Not Humvees, the vehicles we really needed to know. It was fun, but useless to us.

Asked for cultural awareness training. They said they would send us something, but did not. We had no Arabic language training. They should have provided us the CD and phrase booklet used by the Defense Language Institute.

Lessons learned: The Iraqis are determined to have a country that will afford them a normal lifestyle. And there are huge numbers of greedy people who just want to push everybody around. Those are the people that you have to teach rule of law… It needs to be more of an inclusive society.

"The other thing I learned is that I will never, ever, ever work for the State Department as long as I live and even after I'm dead I won't work for them. Military better suited to lead the PRT effort. Military fantastic at planning. They understand how to make decisions."

That is not what the State Department does. The State Department kind of gets people together and they talk about what might be and what might feel good or what really is going to look good and then they see how they can check the blocks that are required of them without doing much and then they write each other a bunch of cables.

Their leadership was absolutely abysmal.

The military is big on leadership and management. Wants to show that the effort put forth actually has a result and what is that result and is it better than the result that we had

before. We look at what happened, review the process, see where there might be improvements made and apply those lessons the next time we do the same thing.

There is nothing like that, as far as I can tell, in the State Department.

You need to choose the right people. You cannot just take any warm body off the street and have them do this. The people who go over there need to know that this is a miserable experience. But it is also the most fabulous experience I've every had, no matter how miserable I was, to be able to help the Iraqis through a process, to be able to work with the soldiers and the Marines, to be able to accomplish something that I felt was helping Iraq move forward. It was worth every single bit of the misery.

You cannot send people over who want to hide on the FOB. Who think, "I'm going over there so I can make enough money." That shouldn't be why you go over there. Because no amount of money is worth the agony that you go through. The rewards are intangibles, they're not tangibles.

Contrast Fallujah with Diyala E-PRT:

Chose to leave Fallujah because the interviewee was not allowed, as a woman, to go do things. Left because of the team leader. I felt that there just wasn't too much more I could do and he was frustrating me so much I wasn't able to do as much as I could have, because of interference.

Moved up to Diyala, where a PRT was in place. This PRT was supposed to be working at the provincial level, but had farmed people out to work at the district level in Ba'qubah.

The team leader was very intelligent, very well spoken, very educated, but was very condescending.

We got some 31-61s who had never worked for the military or the State Department.

Two problems with them: First, they weren't told the truth about what the conditions were; and second of all their biggest interest was in making the maximum amount of money.

In Diyala the E_PRT did a somewhat better job of defining roles and missions. They had more help from the military in doing that, and they actually listened more. It was still pretty loose, but it was better than the first team.

The team leader didn't understand that part of financial management was not just orchestrating his little pot of money and giving the money out, but it was also helping people build a budget. So we never got to do that at the district level.

We had lots of al Qaeda in our area. The military was trying to clean out al Qaeda, push them down and then push them out so people could return to their homes. We would go down to where we had cleared up that point. Al Quaeda is no longer there on a daily basis, but remained just a palm grove or a field away.

We would move down to the next town, and I went with artillery people in one of three platoons. One would be either doing security and the other two would be doing missions. There were usually missions in the morning, one in the afternoon and one in the evening, or at night.

Every place we went, my mission was embedded in their military mission. So they would go out to do security and patrols and while we were on that security patrol we would do my educational stuff or infrastructure things, like the electrical stuff, the water systems. We integrated all of this so the unit wasn't losing its security mission and I was also getting to do the governance, the infrastructure, meeting people and building relationships, seeing the people from the city council where they lived and having them show us the issues that they had, so that we could tell what was going on.

It was the most effective system. It was superb. It was truly superb.

I told my military colleagues that their job, if something happens, is to do their job, not protect The Girl. That understanding is crucial because otherwise they're going to spend their time trying to protect you and not do their real job.

Our area included the city of Ba'qubah and its outlying villages. We brought in some medical care, giving out First Aid kits to families and larger ones to schools. Also gave out food and school supplies. Used schools for medical visits.
Dedicated teachers worked without pay.

They were very happy to have us. They grew their Concerned Local Citizens, which were guys that we paid to guard their town. We built berms with them, and they had their little nests on top so that they could watch out over the fields and al Qaeda couldn't sneak up. Every man in the town took his turn doing what they needed to do.

But a new unit came in after us, and failed to follow through on what we began. Their attitude was we are only here a few months, so we're not going to do all of that, so al Qaeda started coming back in. They overran the area.

I felt like I let them down, because it's not the way it was when I left and we had made such progress.

You can't look through American lenses or Western lenses and see what they see and see what they need to do.

Best thing that I brought to the table was that I was a 56-year-old female with gray hair. Gray hair, in that society, is revered, because wisdom is revered. And a woman can talk

to the women, who hear and see everything and will discuss it with another woman (they do not talk to men.)

In Iraq, all things are based on relationships and trust. You will never be able to work out an agreement with someone over the first meeting. You have to have, they say, three cups of tea. It's a mutual understanding and mutual trust that has to be built and part of that is the tea process.

Aftermath for PRT members: When I first came back I couldn't go into a crowd. You're constantly scanning your whole area. You're actually turning around periodically to get the back, too, and you're constantly scanning and you have a heightened sense of awareness of everything that happens. It's very difficult to stop doing that

I couldn't sleep at all when I first got home, because it was too quiet.

I'm at eight months and I'm nearly finished recovering from it. I'm going through all of the same things that the other people are going through at some greater or lesser degree, and it's all completely normal and it's all completely resolving itself and it flares up periodically but it is what it is and it's getting better.

When I came back, the Army didn't ask me a thing about it. But then I went into this fellowship program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. I've talked to and have been interviewed by other people. I've given talks and doing Army outreach. So I've been talking about it a lot.

So now that I'm back, I'm trying to help some other people who are newly coming back. There's something wrong. You don't know what it is, but there's something definitely wrong, and you think it's only you. So until I had somebody else who's been there to discuss it with, I didn't know that I wasn't just being weird.

But there was no official program or anything to get people together or anything else, so I had to kind of find some people who had been there.

I would recommend some kind of debriefing about the experiences. Because the experiences first of all are lessons learned. And second of all, it's a way for people to talk to other people who can understand, and for them to find out that what they're going through is a process of recovery.

It's kind of like the steps of grief. There are steps of coming back to CONUS from a war zone. It's completely normal. And if you are thinking about some things that are not so normal, you probably ought to seek some help.

So there are lots and lots of facets of this, and I don't believe the State Department or the Department of Defense has done a good job re-integrating the civilian portions of those people who were over there.

The PRTs and E-PRTs can be the most effective stability operations tools we have. First, have the right personnel. The right temperament. Use a screening process. Make sure they are aware of what they're getting themselves into. You can't be scared to go outside the wire.

Second, they really need cultural awareness.

Third, never have the State Department running or managing or leading an effort of this kind in a war zone. That's not what their core capabilities are and they mostly just don't get it. The military should be in the lead. Have State play a back seat; they do not have a leadership role in a war zone.

Fourth, get people with wide knowledge at the district level and below. Local relationships are the most effective.

Interview

A: I began my PRT experience at Fallujah, in Anbar province, in 2007. Later that year, I transferred to Taji, which is above Baghdad, and joined a unit that was starting a brand new E-PRT there. After three or four weeks we moved with the unit and were embedded in up to Ba'qubah, in Diyala Province.

Fallujah was a brand new E-PRT when I arrived. They had three people on board who had all gone through the training and had met the Secretary of State and the president and all that stuff together.

I was the fourth person in. After that we seemed to get people mostly in twos. It went up as high as 13 when I left in October.

That team leader decided that what they would do is organize based on kind of position, like health, agriculture, small business, big business, governance, finance, banking.

Q: That decision was made further up than the team leader?

A: Well, the people that were brought in through the State Department, whether they were DOD or any other agency, were assigned a title and they sort of shoved them out that way. And so the team leader just took those titles and decided he was going to organize it by the kind of business or the kind of activity, not as an overall activity.

In Diyala province it was much different from that.

We weren't totally sure what the mission was, because they never really got down to a clear mission, except that we were to help the Fallujans form their local government and help them turn all their essential services on. That's about as much as they got into it.

They were not terribly organized. It was a very loosey-goosey kind of feel-good -- or not feel good – organization, and it was somewhat lacking.

Q: Were decisions like that made by consensus among the team leaders or was it top down?

A: Well, we didn't know, because the team leader didn't involve us in any higher up kinds of activities. The meetings with the Marines we were kept out of. So we didn't know whether lots of cables had come in or there were conversations or what have you, because none of us were involved on it and we just kept on trying to cull out. It was like pulling teeth, because, well, clearly there was a lack of leadership and management ability, which are two totally different things.

I was the financial manager. So I had budgetary responsibilities to help the Iraqis build a budget. I did banks. I was coincidentally also a woman, so I did all the women's issues; I was the only woman on the team. I had children, so I got sports and youth. I used to grow vegetables, so I ended up with agriculture until somebody else did it.

I've been to every emergency room this side of Arlington and in many other countries, so I got the health stuff until the health guy arrived. So it was sort of hit and miss. And I was a teacher at one time, so I had education.

And so it was sort of split up based on the ministries that the Iraqi government had.

Q: So you interfaced with all these various ministries.

A: Right. And then I also assisted with some of the governance things, because of my political history background. However, it was like pulling teeth to be able to actually get in to do any of these, because the PRT management was very focused on the title you came in under. We received e-mails about what to do from someone sitting right across the room.

This was a person who decided we needed to acclimate to the heat in Iraq, so he refused to turn the air conditioner on until it got to be 108 degrees inside the building.

You can imagine me with my hot flashes and the sweat just dripping down my arms. I had to put my arm on a little cloth so that I could actually type, because all the water was going into the computer. Not a comfortable situation.

Our chain of command: Both military and civilian people in the E-PRT reported directly to the team leader, except that the team leader didn't talk to most of us most of the time. However, we worked very well inside the team with each other. We helped each other, we interfaced.

I would have to say the structure wasn't bad; it was the individual they chose to put in place. Obviously you have to have a team leader, but you have to have a team leader that

feels comfortable enough with people of his own rank and grade to be able to discuss issues and gain consensus, and that didn't happen.

Q: Just a little bit about your background, again. You are a Marine?

A: I'm a former Marine, but I'm a current Army civilian with more than 24 years with the Army. I'm a GS-15, which is a colonel equivalent.

Q: But you did wear a uniform in Iraq? Was it an Army uniform, then?

A: I wore an Army uniform, until the Marines decided they really wanted me to wear their uniform, because it's our uniform and so I shouldn't be running around in an Army uniform, so they gave me a Marine uniform.

Q: And you were addressed as Colonel?

A: No, I was Miss. Civilians don't wear rank, but we have a little civilian thingie that we wear on our uniform.

So, effectiveness of the organization: Initially, I thought it was very dysfunctional due to our leadership problems but things improved with personnel changes. We got along extremely well with the Marines.

Agency stove piping: We didn't stove pipe to the State Department, although we did file all of our information up to them, too, but the Marines also got the information from us. Some wanted to listen to it, some didn't. The Marines, they don't have an inherent civil affairs capability, although they're trying to work on it. So they would take people who had some other job and dub them civil affairs. So it's a learning process for them, as well.

Q: And did you see a difference in the stove piping issue between an E-PRT and a PRT? Was it more of an issue with a non-embedded PRT?

A: Well, it's interesting, because our team leader didn't have good relations with the PRT team leader in Ramadi, so we didn't have a lot of open interface. We had kind of below the covers interface with the other two E-PRTs in Anbar and at Ramadi.

The difference is that inside the State Department structure there was a PRT in Ramadi, which is the capital of the province, and they were supposed to work on provincial level kinds of things. We were three E-PRTs -- one in the west at al Asad, one in Ramadi and one at Fallujah -- and we were supposed to work at the district and below level.

So it was really tough for us to work with the other people when our team leader didn't get along with them. But we had an ongoing e-mail kind of a thing. We shared ideas and we tried to help each other and we talked about issues and things like that.

Civil military relations: the E-PRT had relations with both the Marine Regimental Combat Team and the Marine Expeditionary Force command. The Marine Corps was in charge of all of Anbar, so the RCT was in our area and the MEF was over the whole thing. So we had relations with both of those, but it was something that we had to kind of do without telling anybody, because there were unhappy circumstances between the team leader and everybody. But we worked very well together when we were allowed to. It was fine.

The threat level: When we got there it was not a good security situation. When I left in October it was a very different thing. The RCT had a huge amount to do with that.

Q: Did this coincide with the Surge?

A: Yes. We were like the second group of the Surge who went out there. So there was a huge difference in the level of violence.

The Marines were very active in cordoning off the entire city of Fallujah. They wouldn't permit any vehicles to go in and out for a good long time while they sectioned off pieces. And they worked on clearing each one of those pieces and then worked on a new piece and then added the clean piece to the cleaner pieces and so they went through the entire city.

After a while they started getting people telling them about caches and who the bad guys were, because the people of Fallujah had about had it with the fighting. And the Sunnis in that area had had the "Awakening" and they were siding with the Coalition forces against al Qaeda about that time. They were starting with that and it was gaining momentum.

So what the military did for us was that they acted as our security as we went outside the wire and eventually they gave us a personal security detachment and vehicles and they were the new MRAPs, we got those while we were there.

Q: They were dedicated, then, to you.

A: Yes, by the time I left. It was a very big improvement. Before that we had to find a seat in a Humvee on the supposed CA team, who was running around doing things.

Q: And there were limited numbers of seats available?

A: That's right and an MRAP has a lot more. So we were able to go out and move in limited areas of the city. Then, as the city was cleared, some of the members were able to go out to some of the outlying villages and towns.

External relations: We didn't really have too much to do with international groups. There was an NGO working for USAID in the area, sort of under the auspices of the E-PRT, and they would hire local Iraqis to do the actual work of trying to employ the 18- to

25-year-old males and actively get them to do things, get the kids busy doing things. So they were trying to help with stability.

Q: You mentioned women's groups.

A: There were some women's groups. Women's groups were a very difficult thing. I could see the women's groups and participate or talk to the women who led these things -- if they came to the city council building. But I could not go to their meetings; I could not go out in town. They were meeting in people's homes, because of the security of the people.

Q: Who's rule was it that you couldn't go?

A: Well, basically, if al Qaeda had seen us, we're really hard to miss when we show up in battle rattle. Everybody wears flight suits in Anbar, because they are nomex and they don't burn as easily. So you get another 30 seconds to get out of the vehicle if it gets hit and it catches fire. So everybody's wearing that, and you're in your battle rattle, and you drive up with three to four vehicles in front of somebody's house. Well, you just can't do that.

So we didn't do that, mostly because it's not going to help the people we're going to visit. It's going to make them a target.

So I would talk to them if they came to the city council.

Q: And these were mostly widows' groups?

A: No, they were all kinds of different groups. I did have a program that I started. The city council chairman had told me that there was a problem because there were lots of widows and they didn't have any visible means of support. And so I came up with a program to be able to give them a start at a small business, for those who wanted to do so.

The follow-on program was going to be a start in an agricultural endeavor, but I didn't get there before I left. I was still working that out.

But we had started a chamber of commerce and we had gotten that going and we used the chamber of commerce to form this ability for women to apply for about a thousand dollars for a kick-off, to get a small business started. They had to come up with the idea of what they wanted to do. They had to tell the chamber of commerce, who we paid a very small fee, like $500 for like 12 women, but it was a very reasonable amount of money for what they were doing.

They would make sure they had some sort of business plan, even if it wasn't what we would consider a business plan: where they were going to buy their things, who they were going to sell to. And then in two iterations I gave out the money to the widows with the chamber of commerce members and the city council and the mayor, in the presence of

them, we did it together, so that we were enlarging their *wasdah* and the women were also being helped.

So they had things like a vegetable shop, a toy shop, a clothing shop, a shoe shop, bakery, sort of a limited catering business, a tailoring business, a sewing shop, all different kinds of little endeavors that they could do. Some of the women went together to pool their money and work together in a business, some did it separately, but all of this was vetted by the folks at the chamber of commerce. This was a very inclusive group, because it's mainly Sunni there, there aren't many Shi'a or Christians or anything else in this area. So they weren't leaving one group out because they were different and that was interesting. We also told them that they couldn't be all of these peoples' relatives.

My Iraqi counterparts were the different ministries: education, health, youth and sport, representatives in Fallujah. And then they would have a representative from Ramadi and then it would be the central government. So each of the ministries have these little strings down all over the country and they run independently of the government of the province, which is very interesting. That is the way it is, that's the way they devise their system and that's the way they did it.

I think a lot of that is left from Saddam and his need to control every aspect of everything. When he thought somebody was getting too powerful he'd split the ministry in pieces, so that nobody would have too much power. At any rate, this is still left.

So those were some of my counterparts. Then I also had counterparts from when we built the chamber of commerce and those people were in the business community. There were a number of women: there was a female banker, there was a woman who started a small NGO to help other women with agricultural types of things.

Q: What would that be? Animals?

A: Our ideas and I don't know if they did them, because I left. But our ideas were to be able to give them about $1,500 to buy things like chickens, new livestock, grain for planting, maybe hoes and some means of being able to break up the soil, which is very difficult to break up, so that they would be able to have a livelihood of some kind.

Q: Where did all these supplies come from?

A: They would have come through Baghdad, with our money paying for it. We would give them the money and then they, through this agricultural group, would go out and try to find somebody who would have these things. They had the connections to people who might have had chicks for sale, or livestock for sale. But that piece never got off the ground, at least while I was there.

One thing about Iraq is that the women do most of the actual work. And I'm not talking about the building of buildings. But they do most of the farming, most of the office work. They aren't in charge, generally, although sometimes they are, mostly a man is in charge

and he stands there with his hands -- I'd say his hands in his pockets, but they don't have pockets -- but watching the women work. That's pretty much the way it works there.

And I had a lot of interface with the city council chairman and the mayor, because I was helping them to build a budget. We had to go through all kinds of lessons on what governance is, who you're looking after. They're a district, so they then had to also look after not only just the city but the villages and the towns around it. They had to make sure that they didn't spend all of their budget in the city, but also gave a share to other places.

And this was a very new thing, because they really wanted their own street paved, wanted water, and to hell with everybody else. Well, we went through the process, they got input from the little towns and villages and the sections of the city, and they put this budget together, through working with *muktars* and the ministry people who worked on some sort of a redevelopment budget that came out from the central ministry to the governor of the province and then a share was supposed to go to Fallujah.

So they made a list of things, and then we went through this whole process of prioritization. They didn't get prioritization. They thought if they put something on a list you should just get it, because before, the way the Iraqi government worked was the central government would push down what you were going to get. They would send what you're going to get to the province, the province would then break it apart and the ministers would say, "Okay, this is what I'm getting."

Almost never, in fact they couldn't think of a time anybody ever asked them what they wanted. They were just told what they were going to get. So to be able to ask for something meant that they had to think about what was the most important thing, or what could they do in a short period of time, which is like a year for this kind of money, what could they do with it, where could they make an impact and what would be the best impact that they could make and then prioritize those things.

We did make a budget. It had many, many, many issues on it. It was both in Arabic and in English, so that it could go through the American side as well as the Iraqi side. And it was prioritized.

The number three issue on the list was a project to build a sort of fabrication area to fabricate housing that could be moved around the city. As they rebuilt the city they would move the people who had no place to live into some of these housing units. And then when they were done and there was a house for them to move into, they could move into the house and then they could move this someplace else.

Q: And why was this significant?

A: It was significant because all the people making these decisions already had a place to live. These were mostly widows and displaced people who had no place to live and they were putting them as number three on the list, well above many other projects that would

probably have benefited them more. Because they felt the responsibility, once we were talking with them about it, to take care of their people.

Q: That was really revolutionary?

A: It was very revolutionary. It was also very revolutionary that we had a list developed among all of us and we went through the process. I sort of force fed them through. "Okay, if you could only have one thing out of all these things, what is it going to be? And is it the most important thing to you, so if you get nothing else, this is what your item is?" Learning to prioritize. And they prioritized every single thing.

The first time they did it they had many Fallujah things on it. So I went through the learning thing about how we also have to take care of those people who don't live in Fallujah. And so the second time, we prioritized some of those things inside the Fallujah list, so it was an integrated list after a while.

It took many meetings, but they were happy with it. And then we transmitted it to the PRT and they transmitted it by e-mail, from a system that we had purchased for them, so they could have a satellite connection to the Internet. They sent it to the minister's representative at the governor's office, so it could go to the governor.

Apparently it got briefed all the way up the military chain and got us big kudos for this budget because it was the first time that had ever been done in Iraq. So it was a fabulous thing to be able to help them do. Then they can replicate the process.

Public affairs program: We did not have a public affairs officer when I was there. We worked with the Marine Corps public affairs people to some degree. We had one fellow who was really super at making a kind of a newsletter. This is what happened in our E-PRT during this period of time, with photos and it was three or four pages and it got shot up to OPA, to other PRTs, E-PRTs, so people could share the information. I sent it back to the Pentagon, so they would know what we were doing, and I'm sure everybody else who worked there sent it to their folks, too.

So it was a very professionally done document and it due to one Navy reservist who was very good at this kind of thing. He was fabulous, but that really wasn't his job. His job was small business. He just kind of did that as an extra thing. So that was fantastic. I think that program was very effective.

The other thing that we worked on was to create a radio and television capability for the people in Fallujah. And as I was leaving, one of the last things I did was to pay for the equipment for both of those and they were going to be installed in an area that was protected by the American forces, so that it wouldn't walk away.

They then had the capability to really do some broadcasting, which was a very good thing, because the people had television, when they had electricity, and so this would give them the ability to see things on television.

Obviously we were propping up and assisting the chosen leaders of the town, the mayor and the city council chairman and all of the city council members by doing various and sundry things.

We had, for example, a trash issue. Every place in Iraq, everybody throws the trash just everywhere and we decided that IEDs and things could be in that trash and it's better to clean it up. So the Marines did this thing with great big trash bins that they put throughout the city as they cleared and we bought small trash cans to have at people's homes, so they could take the trash can, fill it with trash and then once a day take it down and throw it in the big bin and they wouldn't be throwing it all over the place.

Now that was given out by the people who lived in that section of the town that were on the city council, the city council chairman and the mayor and that's how it was given out.

Q: Do you know how many trash cans you distributed?

A: I think it was $100,000 dollars worth. It was many.

Q: Were they plastic or metal?

A: They were plastic. They were small enough so that a child of 10 or 12 could carry it to the dumpster.

Q: That's a lot of plastic trash cans!

A: It was. And we purchased them locally, from different people in the town. The idea was to buy the ones for that area from a vendor in that area. Sometimes that wasn't possible, but that was what our intent was to do, so that we spread out the purchases, so everybody got a little ownership in this thing. That was one thing that we did.

So, yes, we did try to bolster up the people who needed that governance. Yes, we did the promoting democracy thing. The whole budget thing was a democracy-setting agenda.

When we arrived, at the first meeting of the city council, it was a bunch of Iraqis in the dark, without air conditioning, without any electricity, in this decrepit room, all armed to the teeth. And closer to the end of my assignment there, they had a refurbished room which we had paid for, they had new furniture that was not very expensive. And I'm saying "we," the Marines, the coalition forces, paid for that, not the E-PRT. And all of the city council members were now coming to the meetings. Slowly but surely they started coming out of the woodwork. The chairman was there, the mayor was there, sitting next to him. There were no arms in the room, except ours. There was no yelling and screaming, the way there had been.

People were recognized by the chairman, they said their piece, and they discussed it amongst the group without yelling and screaming and jumping up and down, which is

what happened previously. Things were settled and issues were brought up and issues were solved by them. And while this was happening, closer to the end, they had the Iraqi television cameras and still cameras, as well as Marine Corps assets, taking still photos and recordings to put on the television, so that people could see what was happening inside their city council meeting. You were getting some transparency of government.

The whole rule of law thing was something that we were very intent on bringing to them, and this is part of it. We eventually got a rule of law guy, a lawyer, in, to work on some of those things, but it was close to when I left.

RTI, the mayor and city council chairman went to some special class up in Baghdad. We never could find out what they were teaching, because they refused to give us copies of it. We wanted copies of what they had, so that we could reinforce what they had learned in this class. But they wouldn't share. If they gave it away, they might not be necessary, I guess. I don't know.

Q: You weren't too impressed with RTI?

A: No, I was not impressed with them.

Q: What are other things that they did that bothered you?

A: They did try to hold a class for some people. They held it in Ramadi, but in order to get to Ramadi from Fallujah you had to go through all these checkpoints. People constantly couldn't get through, so it was difficult for them to get to the classes, or they'd get there really late.

The RTI people said it was just too dangerous to come to Fallujah and they just were very, very risk-averse. So they were not terribly helpful.

Reconstruction: Yes, we did some economic reconstruction. We were trying to help them build business by helping to start the chamber of commerce, helping with small business areas. They had projects to revitalize and to bring back some of the little market areas, so that they could open shops in them. There were different things that we were doing as part of the E-PRT.

The Marine Corps civil affairs people, being not real civil affairs people, pretty much ran around looking at things that they thought might need to be fixed and threw money at them. It was not a good thing, because then all the Iraqis were coming to us for was money and that's not what you really want to do. There was no view toward reconstructing any of this area by what I would call system, so that you look at the entire electric and figure out where you need to make changes or fixes so that you can get the maximum amount of people to get the maximum amount of electricity. The same thing with water, the same thing with schools. It was, "Oh, that school looks terrible! We need to reconstruct it!"

The Corps of Engineers had gone out and decided that nothing would do but they had to build a state-of-the-art, would be great in Arlington, Virginia, water treatment plant. Well, first of all, the Iraqis do not maintain anything. So anything you build has to be very simple, with the fewest number of moving parts possible.

We also had a problem because chlorine was an issue, because the bad guys were stealing the chlorine and using it to gas people. And if you don't use chlorine you're not cleaning the water and lots of other things.

So basically the Corps of Engineers built this great big huge thing, it took a long time, cost millions of dollars, but it wasn't connected to any primary, secondary or tertiary water lines. So you could get really clean water. But then they connected some to old lines, and some were connected to nothing at all, so it wasn't very valuable.

But if you're connecting it to old lines that haven't been cleaned or have breaks in it, first of all, if you have breaks in it, the water goes through the break and out, because water goes to its lowest point. And second of all if you go through a dirty pipe, the water becomes dirty. So no matter how clean it was in the beginning, if it did end up finding a pipe, by the end it was dirty, because there was no effort to look at it in a systematic way.

So that was pretty much the reconstruction. The reconstruction budget was supposed to go to the PRDC at the provincial level. The provincial government was very Ramadi-oriented. Some high officials were very interested in having Ramadi fixed and not terribly interested in anybody else.

He also was very interested in having all of his friends and relatives in any place he thought he could get *wasdah*, which is influence. So they tended to announce the projects on paper, on the billboards, in Ramadi at their government center. And of course the people from Fallujah didn't know they were being announced, didn't have access to that board, so they couldn't bid on anything that was going to happen in their own town.

We were trying to work with the PRT to get the PRT to work with the governor and his cronies to understand that the contracts to reconstruct the district of Fallujah should come to Fallujah. The city council and the mayor should have something to do with them, so they could give them to the people who would actually do the work and also be able to make sure that nobody got too much, so that it employed the maximum number of people and they got the product that they actually were paying for. And when I left that still hadn't happened.

We did get a rule of law guy finally, and he was trying to make some effort to work with the police and the courts and the prisons. But he's one guy and there wasn't a whole bunch that he could do initially. He did go out to the law school, because there was a university there and he was supposed to pick some law books that we could purchase for the law school, since a lot of that stuff had been destroyed. He never gave me the list, so I don't know whether any of that happened.

I did get a whole list from the head of all the vets in the area, and there were a lot of veterinary books that we purchased and we gave to the veterinary school. We did do that.

I think that our PRT did help with the governance, they did try to and I think successfully worked with the city council, the directors from the ministries -- we called them directors general, but they were really the directors general's representatives in Fallujah -- to try to solve their problems amongst themselves, try to sort out what all of that was. So I think the governance was something that we really helped with a lot.

I think we helped them understand that you're not just doing this for you and your family, but you're also doing this for all of the citizens in your area. That's really important as part of democracy. They had voted to be able to get these people in there, and it wasn't just the annual vote. This was more a tribal getting together and who should come from this area and that area and this kind of thing. So they kind of did their own sort of voting, which actually works quite well, and they did allow people to come and be part of the city council.

I think helping the widows was important, too. We gave widows a basket of food and a scarf. It was right after Ramadan and we helped them get that from the city council. We were still trying to do things in the name of the city council and with them out front to show the people that their city council was doing something for them. This was very important, because when we first got there they didn't have any clue who the mayor was, city council or anything. But by the time we left many people knew who they were and there's a big difference there.

We also helped extensively -- not me specifically, but the health guy and I assisted -- with the hospital and the clinics in the area. We helped the schools with supplies and with desks for the kids to sit at, reconstructing some of the schools, cleaning them up, getting the kids back to more of a normal life. They didn't have near the number of schools they needed, so they would often have two to three sessions, different kids coming in.

So they'd have kids in the morning and those kids would go home and eat lunch, because of course there's no school lunches. Then the afternoon kids would come in and they would go home and eat dinner. And then the early evening kids, after they'd eaten, would come in. So sometimes they had to use it several times in a day. And getting that up and ready also keeps the kids off the street.

We also did things with sports and youth. They're big into soccer, what they call football, and to have these soccer games, we got the Iraqi chief of police, who had been a former insurgent leader, involved with us in helping the youth with their soccer programs, to guard them and to work with them, to get the kids involved.

I believe we did improve governance. I think we did promote and help them with their economic development. I think both military and civilian resources were used. We didn't have much in the way of NGOs there because it was so kinetic. I don't think we actually

started the Awakening, but I think we certainly bolstered the idea that working with the coalition was a good thing.

Every single meeting after we got there and had worked with the city council chairman, he would stand there and tell everybody, "Thank Allah for the coalition forces, because we get nothing from the central government or the governor." So certainly they were very happy that we were there and helping them, as well as the Marines.

Training: There was a one-week class at FSI, the Foreign Service Institute, that wasnot very useful. They didn't have a clue what anybody, who was not going to be at the embassy in Baghdad, should bring in their bag, or would encounter outside the wire. Even the people at the embassy had no clue what was going on anyplace outside the embassy.

One example: I wanted to be able to have Iraqi dinars to give out. It was State Department money and I felt that it was better to give people, especially the widows, Iraqi dinars instead of U.S. dollars. So I requested $100,000 in Iraq dinars. They said at the embassy in the financial management office that they had never had that request and they didn't know how to get Iraqi dinars. They figured out how to get it through the central bank of Iraq. They went down there, they got it. It's really dirty looking, kind of nasty bills and it weighs like a ton. I then went by helicopter to the embassy, counted it all out and brought it home in my backpack.

But their initial response to me, because they had never dealt with dinars before, was, "Well, why don't you give us the EFT account number for the local bank and we will just EFT the funds there and you can just go down to the bank and draw the money out?"

So then I knew that they had no clue. So I then sent them a picture of what the local bank looked like, which was completely destroyed and I said, "It would be really tough to go to the bank and get anything. They have no electricity. They have no cash cage. The vault is broken. There's nobody working there."

And they said, "Oh, I now understand." But they had no concept that there wasn't a bank on the corner to just go to, complete and utter non-understanding of what was outside the embassy compound. It's very scary.

So I thought that week was not helpful. Then we moved for a week, and we went down somewhere in Virginia. And for part of the week we did this medical operations kind of stuff. They were teaching people how to do First Aid out of this huge box of equipment that's apparently set aside in a safe place inside the embassy. So if your embassy was being overrun or you couldn't get out, this is what you would use until the Marines came in with the helicopters to lift you out of the embassy.

Well, that is not exactly what happens on the battlefield. Having been a Marine and having been involved in the community emergency response team here in Arlington, I knew more about what to do for First Aid than the people teaching the course.

I later, through the Army, took a combat lifesaver course and was able to do all kinds of things that these people wouldn't even have had a clue what to do. So it was a total waste of time.

Q: So they could have used the Army course to much better train PRTs?

A: Absolutely; and it would have been fabulous. Now, they did take us out to a race course in West Virginia for a few days and we got to drive a race car, not the Humvee, which is the vehicle we were going to be in, or an MRAP, but a race car. And we learned how to drive backwards and do j-turns and do all this and I got an A plus, because I already knew how to do all of that. And we got to bash a car and move it out of the way.

And these were very great things if you're driving embassy vehicles through a typical city, not a war zone. So while that was the best course I think I've taken in my life, and I had a great time, I never drove anything off the FOB, so it was worthless to me.

A better training exercise would have been to actually drive the Humvees, because my job in Humvee was I sat right behind the driver. If the driver had been incapacitated, the guy sitting next to me in the other back seat, diagonally across from the driver, would have lifted him out of the seat onto him and I would have jumped in, because the guy sitting next to the driver can't get over the radios. So I would have driven the vehicle. That was one of my jobs, if that happened. It never happened, so I didn't have to do it, but that was one of my jobs.

The other job was to hold the legs of the gunner, in case we rolled over, to keep the gunner from going out of the vehicle, since they're not attached. And my third job was to give the additional ammunition to the gunner and if the gunner went down I was supposed to go up and shoot. So the Marines explained it to me and they said you might have to do this. But I never got to fire the weapon, so I don't know if I could have done it our not, but at least they showed me, so in case something happened I would have known how to do it.

Those would have been much more effective types of things to learn than how to drive a vehicle through Islamabad or Delhi or some other country. I did ask for cultural awareness training. They said they would work on it and they would send us something. They never sent us anything. We had no Arabic language training. That would have been very helpful. Had they just been able to give us the CD that the Defense Language Institute uses, and the little booklets on common phrases, that would have been a hell of a lot better than what we got, which was nothing.

My biggest lesson that I drew from this experience was that the Iraqis themselves are very determined to have a country that will afford them a normal lifestyle. That's what they want. And there are huge numbers of greedy people who just want to push everybody around. Those are the people that you have to teach rule of law and that's not

the way it's going to happen. We're not forming the mafia there. That's not the way it needs to be. It needs to be more of an inclusive society.

The other thing I learned is that I will never, ever, ever work for the State Department as long as I live and even after I'm dead I won't work for them.

They are the most egotistical, risk-averse, do-nothing crowd I have ever seen in my life.

Q: You mentioned some comparisons with how the two cultures -- the military and the State Department – are different, and how that could be counter-productive. Could you expand on that a little bit?

A: Well, the military is fantastic at planning. They have planning down to a science, at least the planning process. They also understand how to make decisions. There is a complete decision-making process that the military has and it actually is taught by Wharton. I went to Wharton recently and I took a class in critical decision making and they were teaching what we do. So it's a really good process. And once we get a plan, we make a decision, then we move out and we actually want to accomplish something.

That is not what the State Department does. The State Department kind of gets people together and they talk about what might be and what might feel good or what really is going to look good and then they see how they can check the blocks that are required of them without doing much and then they write each other a bunch of cables.

Their leadership was not inspiring. I can't imagine trying to follow anyone that I met. There was maybe one woman who came in to head OPA after I had been there quite some time who had some leadership capabilities, but everybody else was not there. They also couldn't manage anything.

The military is very big on leadership and very big on management, which are two completely different things. We also are more metrics-oriented. We want to show that the effort put forth actually has a result and what is that result and is it better than the result that we had before and if not we have this whole thing called lessons learned, we look at what happened, review the process, see where there might be improvements that could be made and we apply those lessons learned the next time we do the same thing again or something similar.

There is nothing like that, as far as I can tell, in the State Department. In the field, you really need somebody who's strong, somebody who knows how to build a process, somebody who knows how to manage and to lead and get a result.

Q: Could these things be organized in a way that they were less personality-driven, designed more on the military pattern, where there were procedures and this is what you do, regardless of how you feel about it?

A: The military doesn't do it that way. Yes, we have SOPs, standard operating procedures, but in any of the standard operating procedures, there are always going to be things that happen that don't line up with the norm. And so you have to be able to say, "Yes, I know this is the way the Army teaches to do it or the Marine Corps or what have you, but here's a different circumstance and so I need to be flexible enough to adjust to be able to accomplish the mission even with all of these changes."

So it's not that we are "this is the only way to do it." It's that you have to be able to think on your feet. You have to be able to lead. You have to be able to manage. You have to be able to think of the consequences. You have to figure out if you do this, what are the first, second and third order effects of that action. Because sometimes it seems like a really good thing, but then you find out it's a disaster because something else gets broken down the line. You have to be thinking about all of those things at one time. You can't be just following the rote "this is the way to do it."

Now, the most important thing that you can ever do in any kind of a group is to provide people who have very good training, I wouldn't even say adequate, I'd say very good training, have very good leadership skills, very good management skills and can get along with people. And if you can't get along with people, you're never going to be able to do everything you can. And if you can't manage, your output's not going to be as much as your input. And if you can't lead, then you're likely to be what we call shot in the back, fragged by the good guys just so they can move you out of the way.

But you cannot just take any warm body off the street and have them do this. That's not the purpose of this. The people who go over there know -- or at least need to know and most of them don't because they're not told -- that this is a miserable experience. You are hotter than hell, in 140 degrees in the sun in the summertime, wearing body armor and in uniform, in hot boots, you carry water, you carry everything you're going to have and you're in a vehicle that may or may not have air conditioning, because maybe the vehicle doesn't work the way it should because it's been over there for so long and there's no air conditioning and it's very dusty and you can't stop sweating. It's a miserable experience.

You're away from your family, you're away from your home, you're away from everything you know. But it is also the most fabulous experience I've every had, no matter how miserable I was, to be able to help the Iraqis through a process, to be able to work with the soldiers and the Marines, to be able to accomplish something that I felt was helping Iraq move forward. It was worth every single bit of the misery, except for maybe the team leader. But it was worth it.

Q: You didn't mention, in all of this misery, you're also in great danger a lot of the time.

A: Yeah, well, you are in great danger all the time. But it is what it is and you cannot send people over who want to hide on the FOB. You have to send people something similar to what I decided: I was 55 years old when I left, I had pretty much done everything that I ever wanted to do in my life and more, because who knew I was going

to be able to do all the things I've done so far in my life, even before I went to Iraq. It was okay if something happened to me because I was doing something to put forward trying to get peace in the country and in the rest of the world. It was worth my life, for that. That's the attitude you need to have, not be "I'm going over there so I can make enough money and I can charge as much overtime as possible, so that I can have lots of whatever it is when I come back." That's not why you go over there. That shouldn't be why you go over there. Because no amount of money is worth the agony that you go through. The rewards are intangibles, they're not tangibles.

Now, if we could quickly get back to the Diyala thing and I'll kind of do a little, real quick summary of what I did in Diyala. Got to Diyala, brand new E-PRT. There had been a PRT on the ground. This is after Fallujah

I left Fallujah late in 2007, just after my birthday. The Marines had had a huge celebration for me for my birthday. So it was my going away and birthday party all at once.

Q: But you chose to leave?

A: I did choose to leave. The team leader was really not willing to allow me as a woman to go do things. He was also threatened by people who were in effect the same grade as he was and probably those people who have more education. I think he had a college degree. I have three masters degrees There's a little bit of difference there. I also have a lot more experience doing a lot of things and so did some other team members, but they were males. So males could do things that females couldn't, at least I couldn't do, at least under his watch I couldn't.

I did all kinds of things when he was on leave. And the State Department goes on leave every quarter. By the time they get there, out of the quarter, it would take a week to get to where they were going, they'd have two weeks off and it would take a week to get back. So that was one month out of every quarter that they were gone.

That actually was the best thing in the whole world for us, because we did fabulous things while he was out. Whereas we in the military or in the Department of Defense, we got to go once during the year. Once, instead of three times.

Q: Was there bitterness among the Pentagon people?

A: No, we just shook our heads, just like we have every time we've had to deal with the State Department before and realized that these are the privileged individuals of the world and we don't have that privilege and that's okay. Because the minority were the people who got to do it; the majority were the people who didn't. There were two guys in our unit who got to do this: the USAID guy, and the team leader, who was Department of State. Nobody else did. Everybody else was there. And it was sort of like, "Oh, you baby, you have to go do this." So, it's okay. We didn't mind.

I left there because of the team leader. I just felt that there just wasn't too much more I could do and he was frustrating me so much I wasn't able to do as much as I could have, because of his interference. And I was not the only one. There were other people who wanted to leave, too.

I talked to people at OPA and I said I wanted to leave. I was given the opportunity to leave and to go another E-PRT. I went up Taji. I was there three or four weeks while we attached ourselves to the brigade that was there. It was new to us and they were then in the process of moving the entire brigade from Taji up to Ba'qubah and they would replace the unit that was there.

So I got to spend three weeks having dinner with my son, who was on a military training team teaching the Iraqi Army how to be an Army, on the Iraqi Army side of Taji. So he would come over and we'd meet for dinner. Who gets to see their son when they're deployed to Iraq? So that was super.

We moved up to Diyala, where a PRT was in place. This PRT, since they didn't have an embedded provincial reconstruction team under them, had sort of acted as a quasi both-kind of team. They were really supposed to be working at the provincial level, but they had farmed people out to do things at the district level in Ba'qubah. So while those people were in place, before they turned over, it was kind of difficult, because there was this trying to get them to get their clenched fingers off of things to allow us to do some things. You tried to do it in such a way that it didn't annoy them or anger them, but you still had to be a little bit firm in trying to do that.

Our team leader, who was a very genteel gentleman and a Foreign Service Officer, was very good at trying to deal with the other team leader, who's a very nice gentleman as well, but who had the attitude that "It's been mine, it needs to stay mine, I need to finish this." So it was a little bit of a struggle, but they tried gentlemanly to disengage and to get on mission.

The team leader that I worked for was very intelligent, very well spoken, very educated, but had a bit of an inflated ego. Plus, he didn't understand anything about the military. They would say something about a security type of issue, like "Don't talk about this outside, don't talk about classified or anything like this." After 24 years with the Army plus 33 years overall in the Department of Defense, I think I know about loose lips sinking ships pretty much better than he does. So it was that kind of talking down, condescension.

Now, it was probably good for some of the people on the team, because we were starting to get people in who had never worked for the military or the State Department. But these were these State Department temporary hires called 31-61s. And first of all they weren't told the truth about what the conditions were; and second of all their biggest interest was in making the maximum amount of money that they could.

They stretched their days to fill as much overtime as they could so that they would get paid the most, and then they fought with State Department because they didn't think they were allowed to put enough overtime. So they got that raised.

And then they were working to the odd hours at night. I was doing the same kind of things they were, the same kind of mission, but I wasn't having to work that kind of hours unless I was actually on a mission. And there were night missions and I did work 18 hours a day sometimes, but that was when the mission required it, that wasn't every day. So there's a real problem with some of those 31-61s. I'm sure it's not all of them, but it certainly is some of them.

There were a few former military and they got it. It was these other guys, plus they didn't know what they were doing, period. They might have done some rural development in the United States. It's a whole different thing to do this in a foreign country where people are shooting at you.

They, too, were very risk-averse: "Well, I don't want to live in that place, I want to live in this one, because it's closer to the wall." We didn't tell them it doesn't matter, if it goes off, it goes off, it's going to kill you anyway, not to worry, your wife will be rich. So there was that kind of a thing going on.

So when I left there, there was a team leader who's a Department of State FSO and a USAID independent contractor, who really didn't know anything about USAID. I had to give him all my slides I'd collected from other places, to tell him what they did, because he didn't really know.

Then there were four or five of us underneath that, and then there's a military CA guy who's really part of the brigade but worked with us in our office. And then we were starting to get some military from the CA units who were starting to work in the office as I was leaving.

I left after eight months because I needed to be back in the U.S. It seems like just yesterday. The time in Iraq just seems like it was years, because we did so much, but this time, coming back, it's been very difficult to re-acclimate to the United States.

In Diyala they did a somewhat better job of defining their roles and missions. They had more help from the military in doing that, and they actually listened more. It was still pretty loosey-goosey, but it was better than the first team.

During my mission on the E-PRT, I did all women's things, of course, because that's the plumbing that I have. I did things like education, I did things like health and I pulled in the brigade surgeon and I got him involved and we did things together and he had a hospital administration person that worked in his office and she participated, so we did some of those things. I did some PRT -level things as well, because that doctor had gone off on one of his trips. But I also did Ba'qubah and that kind of thing for the district for the E-PRT and pretty generally helped in those kinds of things.

I also had the ESF budget, or the ESF dollars, that were in the QRF funds, the Quick Reaction Funds.

Q: ESF?

A: The way the State Department is funded, ESF is the title of the whole thing.

Q: But that's State Department money?

A: It's State Department money. And QRF is the Quick Reaction Funds. It was part of the ESF money. It was just a kind of ESF, it was kind of underneath that and it was supposed to be like the CERF dollars, the Commander's Emergency Response Fund. It's supposed to be like that, only from the State Department.

And so I managed. Since I'm a financial manager, a comptroller, I did all of that for both units. But the second team leader, didn't really understand that part of financial management was not just orchestrating a little pot of money and giving the money out, but it was also helping people build a budget. So we never got to do that at the district level.

I did things the PRT leader approved of, because I certainly wasn't going to go out and do any of these things without his approval. But then we were also given areas. We were given an area of operations and a unit. We would be embedded in that specific unit, which had responsibility for that area. It was called an AO.

And so I went to work with an Army artillery battery, but they were acting as infantry, as most artillery batteries do over there, because there aren't as many people who need to shoot the big guns as they need infantry kind of things. So our area was from the bottom of the city of Ba'qubah south to Baghdad. It was a very big distance. We had all the outlying villages and hamlets, all the way down to where Baghdad started.

That was an area where al Qaeda would come in from Iran and go down into Baghdad. So we had lots and lots of al Qaeda in our area. The unit did a lot of kinetics before I had gotten there and had cleaned out some things. They were still cleaning out when I was with them and even as I left.

They were trying to clean out al Qaeda, push them down and then push them out, kill as many as they could, obviously, but get them out of the area, let the people go back to their homes, let the people go back to their livelihoods, get their lives back to normal, as much as possible.

And so we would go down to the very bottom of where we had cleared up that point. Now al Qaeda's still coming into this area, but they're not there on a daily basis, they're not sitting on the corner attracting a lot of attention at this point. They're hiding in the woods or the palm groves.

Our next push was to move down to the next town. I would go with the people in the artillery and they separate them into three platoons. One platoon would be either doing security or would be back on Warhorse kind of recouping and the other two would be doing missions. There were usually missions in the morning, one in the afternoon and one in the evening, or at night.

Q: How many people are you talking about doing these different things?

A: There are about 20 per, so it's about 60 to 70 people in a company. You would do a morning mission, you'd come back -- because you really need to -- for lunch and to get fresh water and things like that, and they you'd go out in the afternoon and do a different one. And then you'd the dinner thing and then you'd go out and do another one.

A lot of this involved a lot of walking, so it was all I could do some days at the end of a mission to walk back to wherever the vehicle was. After 55, walking six to eight miles a day with full battle rattle on, plus a combat lifesaver bag and other things, camera equipment, whatever I was carrying, it gets tiring. But we would go out and every place we went, my mission was embedded in their military mission. So they would go out to do security and patrols and while we were on that security patrol we would do my educational stuff, we would work on the infrastructure things, like the electrical stuff, the water systems. They would work on the schools.

We might talk to the school here or visit a school, but we might have done an electrical thing the block before. We integrated all of this so the unit wasn't losing its security mission and I was also getting to do the governance, the infrastructure, meeting these people in the first place and building relationships, seeing the people from the city council where they lived and having them show us the issues that they had, so that we could tell what was going on.

Q: That sounds like a really effective system.

A: It was the most effective system. It was superb. It was truly superb.

Q: Did you sit down and plan it this way, or did it evolve?

A: It evolved. And it evolved it because I understand the military mission and I understand that they need to be able to do their security mission to keep al Qaeda from coming back in, because they're only one field away. The company commander understood my need to be able to improve governance, help with the infrastructure, help with the women, which was a really big issue, do all these things, because he didn't have any training to do that kind of stuff and he had been trying to do whatever he could but he didn't have any training in any of that.

So he was just vastly relieved that there was somebody who was going to come and help. In fact he had asked for somebody to come and help. So it was kind of a real meshing

together of what the military needed to do to keep security and what we needed to do or I needed to do to be able to help them do other things.

Q: Did that system survive after you left?

A: Well, in a few minutes I'll tell you what happened in the whole area and you'll be shocked and dismayed. It's not a good story.

We worked very hard with the city council. We got a lot of health care out to the people who hadn't been able to have any access to health care at all.

Q: The city of Ba'qubah?

A: This is the city of Ba'qubah, but it's all the outlying villages. Those people couldn't go down the roads to get to Ba'qubah, because the roads were filled with IEDs. So they couldn't travel down them, or else they'd be killed. So it was very difficult for them to get food, to get fuel, to be able to get clean water, because al Qaeda had broken the irrigation canals and so the water wasn't coming down, and they were all dry. So that meant they couldn't get any water to drink, they couldn't get any water for their crops. This is an agricultural community, now. They have to have water to be able to survive. They weren't getting any.

They didn't have medical care. Their schools had shut down because al Qaeda had to be shut down because al Qaeda had taken over the buildings. They had stripped all the wires out. They had used it as a barracks. The people had fled. We bombed them. As a result, a lot of the buildings were completely crashed. It's a mess out there.

So as we're coming down, we're trying to help them get some health care. We bring doctors out periodically, we give them medicines that they hadn't had in a long time. I had a program to give the women household managers a First Aid kit, so that they could at least clean up damage. Maybe it's not even shrapnel wounds, maybe it's just somebody falls. They had nothing. They had no aspirin, they had no pain killers, they had no antiseptic, they had no antibiotic cream, they had no soap, they had nothing. So that kit gave them the ability to be able to wash their hands before they touched a wound, clean a wound out and dress it.

We also brought them food. There were school teachers and the heads of schools in these communities, who finally moved back in after we had cleared it out. We gave them some supplies for the kids -- the little books that they write in and pencils and all kinds of different things so they could operate their schools, even though they're sitting there in a room that has no electricity, they have broken down desks, the windows are blown out because of our bombs. School was starting up as soon as it was safe enough to do it.

We also used the schools as a place for our medical visits. We'd bring the doctors down and they'd give out their medicines, depending on what the illnesses were. So we got the schools back up running again. The teachers were there.

There were a few of them who were actually being paid, or would be paid if they could ever get to a bank that ever had money. So they were on a roster to be paid. They just hadn't been paid for a long time because they couldn't get there, the bank wasn't open, there wasn't any cash to put in the bank anyway. This was another issue -- how to get cash out there.

But there were other teachers who were not on the list to be paid. Who were working as teachers anyway, because they knew the kids needed to learn. Those are the people you want to help, because they're donating their time, pretty much. Whether they're on the list to be paid or not, they're still not getting any money for it and they're doing it anyway. They didn't say, "Well, I'm not getting paid, I'm going to go home and sit at home." They went out there. They helped the children. They got them organized. The kids were learning things with the books and supplies and paper products and everything else that I could provide.

I also provided them with school First Aid kits, which were much larger than the individual ones, so if anything happened while they were at school or something happened and they ran out, they would have it and the school teachers would be able to help the students.

In that one little town that I talked about before, al Qaeda had thrown in some mortar into the town and it killed one little boy and very badly injured seven other children. These are things people are living with all the time.

Al Qaeda is just a field, an agricultural field, away, in the tree line. They are right there.

So we did that. The people were very friendly. They were very happy to have us. They grew their Concerned Local Citizens, which were guys that we paid to guard their town. We built berms with them, and they had their little nests on top so that they could watch out over the fields and al Qaeda couldn't sneak up. Every man in the town took his turn doing what they needed to do.

But the unit that I was in, they were due to leave. A new unit was coming in to take their place. I had left them a very comprehensive package of all the information I had gathered in this period of time that we were together, which was all the schools, all the condition of the electric, the condition of the water, all the major systems and all of these things, plus a list of the *mukhtars*, all the city council members, all their contact information, where they lived, the exact areas of the town, because they live in neighborhoods and there's a *muhktar* that's in charge. It's like a neighborhood captain who would be in charge of that. We had all of that organized.

We handed all of that over to the new unit. The new unit, however, didn't really want to go outside of the base. So al Qaeda started coming back in. They overran the area. These guys fled to the FOB.

Two weeks ago one of the sheiks who had been very friendly with us and was very helpful to the coalition and really worked with us to guard his area and to make things better for his tribe and his clan in this very out of town kind of an area, he, his wife and four kids were killed by an IED when they were driving their car.

So at this point everybody's had to pull back in and now I feel like I need to be on the first plane back over there to try to unscrew what these guys screwed up, because they came in saying, "Well, we're only going to be here for three or four months, so we're not going to do everything that you did."

And maybe that's part of it, but maybe it had to do with the leadership of the commander. It could have been any number of things. I don't know what it was.

But I am just sick about it. I think of those people on the city council who said, "When you leave and you get back to Florida (because I'm actually from Florida) and you're sitting on the beach, think of us. We'll be thinking of you. And thank you so much for what you did."

I think about the widows' project that I had, and the children's projects, and all these other things that I did to help them. They really appreciated it. And for them to now be thinking, "That woman left us to these other people who didn't do anything for us."

I felt like I let them down, because it's not the way it was when I left and we had made such progress.

So it's very deflating. But this is why these things are so important. You have got to do these things. And the way I did it was the most effective way we could do it.

Some of the other guys, the 31-61s, would expect the unit they were supposed to work with to come pick them up, drive them out to a meeting with somebody important, have the meeting, stand out there for four or five hours in the sun while they have the meeting, and then drive them back, so they didn't have to stay outside the wire anytime longer than they had to.

Well, that kind of screws up the whole military security thing. You don't have those kind of assets, because every time you roll you have to have three or four vehicles and it's most of your vehicles and it's most of your people, just taxi driving this guy back and forth and standing around waiting.

I firmly believe they need to do it more the way I did it, where I became a member of the unit and I went where they went and I figured out, based on where they were going to go, what kinds of things I could do. Talk to them about it ahead: "Are we going to (such and such a destination? That means that I could do this here. That's good! Okay, we'll put that in the plan."

Sometimes plans change, and you're going to need to do something else. So you think, "Well, there's a school over there we haven't been in before, I have never laid eyes on it before, can we go in there?"

"Yes, we'll clear the building. We'll go in and do an assessment."

So we worked like hand and glove together and it's because I became a member of their unit. The best thing about the whole thing of being in the unit was that I was treated like somebody who was a member of that unit, not as some special character. And I'm far senior, if you want to look at seniority the way DOD does, than any of these guys. I'm senior to the brigade commander in years at that rank or grade.

But we didn't talk about any of those things. I just did what I did, they did what they did. We did it together and it just really worked out. I still have these guys calling me all the time. One of them just left with his family, who stayed here with me while they're waiting for their housing. I'm going to see more at Fort Stewart. We have a bond.

Q: Is this some kind of system that you could put on paper so that it could be replicated?

A: Yes. I could probably get with some of the guys in the unit and we could try to draw some of this out, build a model for how this should be done.

Q; It might be a way to sort of resuscitate what got damaged after you left.

A: It was a perfect model. But it was also a lot based on personalities.

Q: Well, then maybe there could be some vetting of people, a psychological profile or something, before people go and get in those situations?

A: One of the really important things for doing well down there was that I was culturally aware, basically because I've lived all over the world and I understand that things in the rest of the world are not the way they are in the United States. And we don't want it to be, because then it wouldn't be fun to go there. You want someplace to be different. I understand what the West is and I understand what the non-West is, and this is definitely the non-West. They do not look at things the way Westerners do, period. That is what it is. You just have to accept that. You can't look through American lenses or Western lenses and see what they see and see what they need to do.

But the best thing that I brought to the table was that I was a 55-, then 56-, year-old female with gray hair. Gray hair, in that society, is revered, because wisdom is revered. Unlike in the United States, where if you have gray hair -- and almost everybody dyes their hair here if they do have gray hair -- they want to cover it up, because being old isn't a good thing. There, it's a very good thing. People actually listen to you if you have gray hair.

The fact that I was a female made a big difference, too. You couldn't really tell by me in my battle rattle and uniform and all this kind of stuff, because the helmet kind of comes down. But when I spoke to them in Arabic, with my very limited Arabic -- but I learned enough to be able to greet people and to talk and I had an interpreter that would do anything more than that -- I spoke and I had a female voice.

And in non-Western countries and specifically Iraq, all things are based on relationships and trust. You will never be able to work out an agreement with someone over the first meeting. You have to have, they say, three cups of tea. Well, it's more than three cups of tea. It's a mutual understanding and mutual trust that has to be built and part of that is the tea process, because giving somebody tea is part of hospitality, but it's sharing a meal with them if they offer food, it's bringing them things that they need, it's a mutual kind synergy that has to be created and it takes a while to do that.

So the first trip past a particular house, the woman hears my voice and starts looking over the gate, because everything's gated. The second time I go by and greet, she's got the door open just a little bit so she can peer out of the gate. The third time I go back she's at the gate and kind of looking out. The fourth time I go by she might actually step out and speak with me.

It does take time, but it also takes a gray-haired female to be able to speak to all of the men, because I have gray hair and all of the women, because I'm a female. The soldiers cannot speak to the women. First of all, it's disrespectful to the woman to speak to her. And second, if she does speak her family members or relatives or neighbors may stone her to death.

So it's very important, especially in rural areas. It's not so important in parts of Baghdad, where they've been more of an open society. It's not as important in parts of Ba'qubah that were more advanced, more open educated. But it's very important in rural areas and traditional areas to be able to follow their rules and their mores, because to not follow those rules is to put them in jeopardy.

The other thing is that when you're a woman and you can talk to women, women hear and see everything and they also discuss it with all of the other women. It's amazing that the information travels like wildfire throughout the community. We would show up and once we were well known in the community, people would start coming out of the woodwork to come and talk to us.

"Our guy got arrested and it was because there was this fight between these two families over these kids and what they had done and all this stuff and this one guy and his brothers ends up getting arrested."

He just happens to be one of the really good guys. We get him out of prison. He had been rolled up by the Iraqi police, because they had been told all these things by those guys. It was a little family feud thing that was going on. Nobody needed to go to jail.

So we solved some of these problems, but it was only because the mother of these guys came to me and talked to me about what was happening, with some of the other women from the village, and we had been dealing with this guy for a long time and we knew he was one of the good guys.

So it's important to be able to send people who have wisdom and age and knowledge and can think about the big picture. Can think about how all the pieces can fit together and can be joyful while miserable in the heat and dirt about helping somebody else. That's the kind of people you want out there.

Q: That might reduce the numbers.

A: Well, it's going to reduce the numbers, but the other ones just are a waste of military assets and money.

So I told you it was organized more based on area and to have one person who's responsible for an area. That's why the organization is so different. I told you about the relationships.

We didn't work very well across the staff, mainly because these guys, these 31-61s, came in and looked down on us. They really knew how to do this, we didn't really know what we were doing, so they were going to show it to us. And I shouldn't, as a female, go out there.

It was very funny, because my guys loved me and we got huge amounts of things done.

It was two guys and they were okay. And then these other two guys came in and they were the guys who had done rural development in California. That's not anything close, but they thought that he just knew everything about everything. And he didn't even know enough to put frickin' sun block on. And I had to treat some of his wounds, because he couldn't keep himself from getting injured. I was also the medic for our E-PRT. I was the one with the Band-Aids and the Neosporin.

So we did work with civil-military relations there. We had a lot of real CA people, it was actually their real job to do this kind of thing and they were in the reserve capacity, but these guys, some of them, it was their third tour over there. They'd figured it out by now. Maybe they weren't so hot the first time they were over there, but this is like the second or third time.

One guy was with Fox News. He was an attorney and he was a staff sergeant in the reserves. He just wanted to come back and help -- and he did fabulous things. So, yes, we worked very well with the CA group.

Security: I told you it was extremely dangerous outside the wire, much more so than Fallujah when we got there. And of course in the area I was in, it wasn't any better on any given day. But it was what it was, and I came back alive and everyone from my unit

actually came back alive, although one's still recovering in Walter Reed and still has many, many, many more operations to reconstruct him. But he still comes by the house with his wife.

One of our interpreters stood on an IED and that's how he got injured. The interpreter got blown up and was in little pieces all over. But mostly we came back intact. There were injuries, but it was more because it's just a 'hard thing to do' kind of injuries. My lower back, my heel, my arm, the fact that my internal systems were all screwed up and still are a little bit, coughing because of the burning, you burn everything, all your trash gets burned, plastics, non-plastics, everything gets burned. We had latrines that were half of 50-gallon drums that were underneath the little plywood with the hole in it and you'd go in there and then you'd take it out a couple times a day and burn it. That's the kind of situation we were in.

You're breathing all the dust. A lot of the soldiers and I still have the cough. So there is damage that is done to you and body armor still hasn't gotten light enough yet still be effective enough to be reasonable to walk around in.

Q: You think many of the PRT members have psychological issues after serving?

A: Absolutely. When I first came back I couldn't go into a crowd. Remember, I'm used to a crowd of military uniforms. That's fine, because everybody is wearing a uniform, weapons everywhere, we're good. Outside the wire, crowds are a bad thing.

So what you do when you come home is, at least if you're outside the wire a lot like I was, you're constantly scanning your whole area. You're actually turning around periodically to get the back, too, and you're constantly scanning and you have a heightened sense of awareness of everything that happens. It's very difficult to stop doing that. I couldn't go in a restaurant for three or four months and when I did go in, I had to have my back to the wall. I couldn't walk down a street without feeling very uncomfortable.

I couldn't sleep at all when I first got home, because it was too quiet. I was used to, when I was there, having helicopters go a hundred feet over the top of my hut, having outgoing, incoming small arms fire, dogs barking, because there're packs of dogs all over the place. All of this noise is going on all of the time. So when you come home and there's no noise, you can't go to sleep all of a sudden.

There are lots of things. Part of it was that I left my unit out there on the battlefield and I had to come home, because I had to meet my one-year deadline. I would have stayed out there with them until they returned, which I think would have been a better thing to do, because I didn't see them back in a safe place.

Q: Unresolved.

A: I have now had one of the soldiers come and stay with me. I've seen the one that was blown up. The first time I saw him, I took them to lunch at Walter Reed and I just had to keep touching an uninjured part of his body and say, "I'm just so glad to see you" and I just had to stare at him, because I'd been worried about him all this time and there's nothing you can do and you don't even know how to reach these people. It's like by a fluke that you ever find anybody after they've been blown up and they come back on a Medevac.

Q: Were you with him when he was injured?

A: No, I wasn't with him. I was back on the FOB, which made me feel even more guilty, because I couldn't do anything about it. I wasn't there to help, which was probably a good thing, but in the scheme of things, at least they weren't worried about The Girl.

I did have an agreement about the girl thing. I had an agreement with the unit. The first time I went out with each platoon, I told them about me, I told them about my mission, I told them about my strengths and my weaknesses, and I told them I had been a Marine.

I told them that their job, if something happens, is to do their job, not protect The Girl. And in the instances where things happened, they did that and they did have enough confidence in me to be able to do the right thing, because they knew I knew, shooting starts, you get down on the ground, you get behind something, whatever and usually it was out in the middle of a field and there was nothing to get behind. So they knew that I knew, and they were good with it. I was good with it. But you have to have that understanding, because otherwise they're going to spend their time trying to protect you and they're not going to do their real job and then you're going to get overrun. That's not a good thing.

Q: Do you experience Post-Traumatic Stress?

A: Stress syndrome, or whatever it's called and I'm at eight months and I'm nearly finished recovering from it. I started not sleeping again, and I think it had to do with seeing the guys again. I've seen more and more of them, and I'll go visit some more of them. I've talked to more of them on the phone and then I heard about the sheik and now I've been worried about what the people are thinking. I think that's contributing to my not sleeping again.

Q; Can you contact them?

A: No, there's no way to contact them.

Q: Tell, me, does something like this, some kind of a debriefing by someone who's detached, is that helpful? Some people have said, "Nobody's ever asked me anything about my experiences, or cared about what I have learned."

A: When I came back, the Army didn't ask me a thing about it. But then I went into this fellowship program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. And I've been to a lot of USIP things and all of the think tanks that are over there, and I've talked to and I've been interviewed by other people and I've done a lot of this. I've given talks to people and I've been doing Army outreach. So I've been talking about it a lot.

Initially, it was like nobody could understand what I've been through. There wasn't anybody. And then I then managed to find some friends I had known. One had been three years at the embassy. I said, "I can't sleep."…"Yeah, I went through that."

So now that I'm back, I'm trying to help some other people who are newly coming back. There's something wrong. You don't know what it is, but there's something definitely wrong, and you think it's only you. So until I had somebody else who's been there to discuss it with, I didn't know that I wasn't just being weird.

But I'm going through all of the same things that the other people are going through at some greater or lesser degree, and it's all completely normal and it's all completely resolving itself and it flares up periodically but it is what it is and it's getting better.

But there was no official program or anything to get people together or anything else, so I had to kind of find some people who had been.

Q: Would that be something that you'd recommend?

A: I would recommend it, and I would recommend some kind of debriefing about the experiences. Because the experiences first of all are lessons learned. And second of all, it's a way for people to talk to other people who can understand, and for them to find out that what they're going through is a process of recovery.

It's kind of like the steps of grief. There are steps of coming back to CONUS from a war zone. It's completely normal. And if you are thinking about some things that are not so normal, you probably ought to seek some help. But I haven't had any of those issues.

There are probably some people who do have some feelings like that, and they certainly should see somebody. But for me, there is nothing.

I went back to a financial management community where people were like, "Oh, hi, how are ya? Have you been gone?" And there was nobody, except when I would see a soldier on a bus and we'd get to talking: "Were you in Iraq? I was in Iraq. When were you there?"

I have more in common with the soldiers than I do with the civilians and it's constant. We're always, "Where were you and what did you do" and back and forth and "Oh, yeah, I was there." It is a very healthy thing. But you have to be able to have access to other people who have had a similar experience. It doesn't have to be on an E-PRT or a PRT, it

just has to be on the battlefield somewhere, living in those conditions, being used to that heightened awareness.

When you first get there, you are pretty much scared out of your wits when you start going out, because you're afraid to die. Everybody's afraid to die. Even me, who said, "Oh, I'm willing to die" was still afraid to die.

After a while you become immune to that. The very dangerous thing is as you're getting ready to leave. You've been there so long. You're so immune to it that it's almost like, "I've made it through 10 or 11 months of this. There's nothin' that's going to kill me."

That's when you make a mistake. And that's when you die.

So there are lots and lots of facets of this, and I don't believe the State Department or the Department of Defense has done a good job re-integrating the civilian portions of those people who were over there.

The PRTs and E-PRTs can be the most effective stability operations tools we have. But if it isn't done properly, you won't make as much progress. So you get a bigger bang for the buck by doing it right.

Q: What would be four or five things that you would recommend?

A: The right personnel, and I mean by temperament.

Q: How do you get the right people?

A: You have to attract dedicated people, through a screening process. You don't just take any warm body who applies. You need to make sure that those people are completely aware of what they're getting themselves into. You can't be taking somebody who's afraid to go outside the wire and get them there and then they can't be effective because they're too frightened.

They really need cultural awareness. That's really important, because there's some really bad things you can do, like showing the bottom of your foot. You don't do that. You don't put your hand out to shake hands with the men. You wait until they're comfortable with you and then they will make the motions and then you put your hand out. There are things you have to learn.

Also, I believe, you should never have the State Department running or managing or leading an effort of this kind in a war zone. That's not what their core capabilities are and they mostly just don't get it.

Q: Who should lead it?

A: Unfortunately, and I hate to put another mission on the Department of Defense, because we already have a full plate and we already have not enough money to do everything. Even though we had lots of money, it still is never enough to do everything we are asked to do. I think it's the military's. If I could tell the president one thing it would be to have the State Department play a back seat. They certainly have a role, but I don't think they have a leadership role.

Now I know they have a leadership role when it comes to non-battlefield activities. Diplomacy is very important and you have to have diplomacy even on the battlefield, but the State Department is not the only one who can do diplomacy.

I also think that you need to get people with a wide swath of knowledge at the district and below level, because I really think the one-on-one, where you build relationships, really worked better at the local level. Maybe you can do the specialists at the PRT level, where you have a guy who's just an economics guy or a guy who's just an agriculture guy, but that isn't going to work at the local level or the district level, not if you want to be able to cover as much area as you need to cover. So maybe the attributes would be slightly different.

Q: Well, I think that you've made a fantastic contribution to the whole concept with your insights and your suggestions.

A: Well, I hope so.

#