

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

INTERVIEW #73

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Initial interview date: January 12, 2009
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Executive Summary

The interviewee had two tours in Iraq: the first tour from 2005 to 2006 in the Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) for the Department of State (DOS); the second from 2007 to fall of 2008 as embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (ePRT) team leader for a surge brigade in Baghdad Province.

The first assignment

This assignment included: (1) work with the academy on police training for a civilian Iraqi police force (training the trainers) and (2) work with the Iraqi prisons and the mechanisms required to run an efficient correctional facility. It also included working on Rule of Law, which involved a multitude of areas working with the Iraqi legal profession and system. The work was carried out by a large number of contractors. The Department of Justice (DOJ) trained investigative judges and U.S. Marshals designed and trained staff for court security operations.

In Iraq, civilian policing is an infant concept and policing skills are not learned overnight. The Iraqis had their own laws, the Koran, and tribal culture all of which had to be connected in a system of the judiciary, corrections, police officers of the street, investigators and building communications and filing networks and procedures—in effect, starting from scratch. The Iraqis have made progress (leaps and bounds from the time of the first tour), but it takes time.

The ePRTS and PRTs did not exist at that time (December 2005), but the interviewee was involved in the conceptualizing the Rule of Law component with the view of having subject matter Rule of Law experts in each PRT.

The second assignment

The ePRT went in with the surge brigade to a fully kinetic area; went in right there on the ground as soon as the military had secured the area. The task was to build basic government followed by economic assessments to guide training and assistance, getting the people reenergized. The area was predominantly farming so the PRT helped establish eight farmers unions, recognized by the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture.

On organization, the ePRT is a partnership with the Brigade Commander (Full Colonel and a Civilian Team Leader—a Senior Civil Service officer). The Battalion Commander

of the support battalion was the *ad hoc* ePRT Deputy Team Leader. The PRT team included three young captains from each of battalion's companies, Bicultural Bilingual Advisors (BBAs), a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) representative and a USAID representative. The ePRT had two battalion movement teams, which enabled them to be out in the field 15-20 hours a day, 5 to 7 days a week. It had a standard mission statement much like all the other PRTs' mission statements. The ePRT team leader reported to the OPA/Embassy for administrative support, but it was not a positive relationship.

The ePRT was built from the bottom up, while the Baghdad PRT with the subject matter provincial teams (governance, economic development, etc) working with the Baghdad Provincial Council was built top down. (The Baghdad Province was made up of Qadhas, which were made up of Nahiyahs for the local district areas). The ePRT was part of the effort to build up the Baghdad governance system, connecting it to local areas.

The key to effectively accomplish this task was building relationships of trust and cooperation and connecting groups—the military and Baghdad PRT staff and, in the field, the local sheiks, town councils, the Qadhas and Nahiyahs. USAID's Local Governance Program (LGP) with Research Triangle Institute (RTI) was used for training the Iraqis on governance.

The ePRT, using Iraqi expertise, worked with business associations (dry goods manufacturing, milk delivery, egg processing...) and agricultural unions (laying hens, beets, date palms...), providing them with some grants for assessments and training to build up their independence and connect them with the Ministry of Agriculture expertise. We built relationships with local groups such as women's groups and then they would mentor the new groups creating cross territorial economic links and tribal reconciliation. Working with the women's groups was particularly successful, e.g. the women are starting a literacy program initially for 200 women. The ePRT also renovated a girls' school and expanded schools in the rural area to provide for higher-grade levels. It also worked with the Ministry of Health on local clinics. Infrastructure projects (water, electricity, pump stations for irrigation, etc) were handled by the battalion with Commander's Economic Reconstruction Program (CERP) funds. The U.S. military provided subject matter construction expertise.

On building relationships: you have to be sincere, believe in your mission, conveying compassion and understanding. Take time for the Iraqis to get to know you and you to know about them before starting to talk business.

Major achievements: with the population, helping them to regain their self-esteem and turn to providing their families with support rather than picking up a gun and shooting people. The PRT team stood by the Iraqis as a partner helping the Iraqis grab the ball and run with it.

There are three stages for an ePRT: going into an unknown area with the surge brigade; development of the area with mentoring and developing programs; then evolving

connectivity with main PRT and the Embassy; the ePRTs evolve into a consulate and more normal diplomacy. The staffing characteristics change.

The preparatory training was one week and totally ineffective. The knowledge and experience and the lessons learned of those who had served in PRTs was not drawn on. They should be used in the training programs. The main emphasis of the training should include: engaging the PRT teams' leaders with the brigade he/she will be assigned to; an emphasis on relationship building; how to network effectively with multiple communities.

Some lessons:

- the full cooperation of, and integration in, the brigade is essential;
- core staffing should include the team leader, deputy team leader, political reporting officer, a USDA person, and a USAID person—to be the first ones on the ground;
- then, the next wave of staffing: a BBA economic specialist to get an understanding of the grassroots, realizing that the Iraqi people have zero knowledge of democratic change and how its form of government and free enterprise work— one has to maintain that realization;
- you have to understand and have support for logistics— the lifeblood of the military. (The State Department lacks that mentality and understanding the importance of preparation, planning and prompt action on staffing, especially subject matter specialists.
- as team leader never undermine the role of the Brigade and Battalion Commanders, while maintaining your own personal status.

Are ePRTs effective?

They are extremely effective in direct correlation with a fluid relationship with the Brigade Commander. They are ineffective when command and control by the Brigade Commanders are driven solely by the military personality and unreasonable metrics leading to built-in frustrations; when they are forcing us to get results. The basic concept is the four legs of a table: security, governance, assessments of the economics of the area and essential services —built on an even scale.

Are the PRTs accomplishing their mission? Yes— a remarkable difference by the fall of 2008 compared with 2005-2006. Will the PRT's work be sustained? Yes, already being sustained; the agricultural unions, business associations, councils and the qadha and nahiyah continue to grow.

Should the PRT concept and approach be used in other situations, as appropriate?

Absolutely, but with precursors: DOS has to get off its tail, establish a database of proven operators, recruit for the future, identify team leaders' replacements, do strategic planning with the same mind set as the military

Interview

Q: When were you in Iraq?

A: My first tour, I was in Iraq from 2005 until 2006. During that tour I was in the Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) for the State Department, where we oversaw the police, corrections and Rule of Law program throughout the country, working closely with the police program and the military.

Q: And the second time?

A: The second time, I was asked to come out and be a team leader for one of the surge brigades, arriving there in 2007.

Q: Where were you located?

A: I was in Baghdad Province. The eastern boundary was the Tigris, and, then by the time that I left my western boundary was the Euphrates.

Q: Was this a local government you were working with there?

A: We went in with a surge brigade, in an entirely kinetic environment with an embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (ePRT).

Q: Let us go with the first assignment and talk about that. Describe what your assignment was and what you were trying to do.

A: From an academy standpoint and also from a mentoring standpoint, the focus was police training to stand up a civilian police force. From the corrections standpoint, it was involved with their prisons and the connectivity and professionalism within their training and also the practices with inmate accountabilities and all the mechanisms required to run an efficient correctional facility.

Then, of course, Rule of Law was working in a multitude of areas; it is an all-engulfing task. You are working with the new government; you are working with the legal profession and with the legal system.

Q: And who were you working with? Did you have a large group working with you?

A: Essentially, there were one or two of us. But I had a tremendous number of contractors. Also, too, the Department of Justice (DOJ) worked with us on the training of investigative judges. We also had U.S. marshals that worked with us, who trained the court security and also designed courthouse security.

Q: Did you design the training programs?

A: No, we had subject matter experts in that. We managed the program.

Q: Who were these different experts that you had?

A: They were contractors.

Q: American contractors?

A: Yes.

Q: And how many people did you train?

A: I do not have numbers in all those categories.

Q: But there were large numbers..

A: It is ongoing.

Q: And how do you think the training program worked in getting people to perform?

A: People can say a lot of things, but a lot of the Iraqis that stepped up to the plate in all of those areas sacrificed their lives and even in the recruiting lines, countless times during that year you had 25, 50 of them blown up while they were in line and then the next day, when they reopened the recruiting line, the line was bigger.

So were there some rough spots, but civilian policing is an infant concept. Do they have more progress, now, looking at a couple years later? Sure, they do. But they are getting there. It is one stronghold after another that perfects a trade and skills of civilian policing that are not learned overnight.

Being a former police officer myself and with the FBI for many years, it takes time. They have had thirty years where they were not exposed to this new concept of civilian law enforcement and practices. Of course, they have their laws and they have also the Koran, which affects the laws. And they also have their tribal culture. All of these are factors. All three of those were interworking vessels that had to be connected, because unless you had the judiciary connected to the corrections and the police officers on the street, the investigators, that takes time to connect that system. Building the communication and filing networks and procedures required to track people, so, if someone is detained, they have accountable records, so that there are no unduly lengthy detentions.

Q: Starting from scratch, pretty much?

A: That was exactly it.

Q: Did you work with the Rule of Law people in each of the PRTs?

A: PRTs did not exist then. I was involved with the National Coordinating Team (NCT), when they were conceptualizing the PRT concept, which was initiated back in December of 2005.

Q: Were you involved in that process, conceptualizing it?

A: Yes.

Q: And what was your view of what the PRT's role should be in the Rule of Law work, planning for that task?

A: There should be a Rule of Law expert representative in the PRT, a subject matter expert.

Q: And they work across the board with judges and courts and prisons?

A: It all depended on their particular area. Currently, I would say that the Rule of Law program really has not reached too far out of Baghdad proper. You have to understand that on these ePRTs and PRTs out there, they are just starting from ground zero and there is no internet connectivity. This is an infant government; for three years we were putting the pieces together. We made some significant strides over 15 months, but we are still connecting pieces out there, especially when it comes to investigative judges; they can only get out to certain areas. Also the courthouses, things like that, it is a gradual process. Also the police officers are not in all the areas yet, because all the areas are not cleared. But they are moving out, little by little.

Q: I suppose lack of security, or inadequate security, was a big impediment to this process?

A: It is like anything with a new concept, you have to have the foundation to get it started, and then you take the initial steps to educate the areas that you are going into on how it works. It is an education process that starts at ground zero, in many cases.

Q: And this training is still going on now?

A: The training of the investigative judges?

Q: And all the others

A: The police training is. We no longer do the academy training, because you train the trainers. That is what that concept was and that was all turned over to Iraqi trainers. The mentoring is done on a police station, one-on-one basis.

Q: And the other categories, have you pretty well completed the task?

A: The corrections people normally live on site, or close to the prison that they are assisting, so that is a security issue. They have reached quite a few prisons. Some of your outlying ones, of course, presented problems, but nonetheless you have a very capable Iraqi corrections training program, from what I was last briefed on.

Q: I understand from previous conversations that there was a problem with the judges' security, because of being involved in controversial cases.

A: Oh, yes, they get killed all the time. Investigative judges... there is not a politician who is out there, in local governments or higher government, that has not received some kind of threat or actually survived injuries related to attempts on their lives. But it is not like it was. It is not anywhere close to like it was back in 2005 and 2006.

Q: So you have seen a lot of improvement, then, over time?

A: They have made leaps and bounds from that first tour that I was there.

Q: Anything else special on that assignment you want to talk about for the record?

A: No, I do not think so.

Q: Okay, let us turn to the work with the ePRT in Baghdad Province. You already defined this area. You were team leader?

A: Right, that is correct.

Q: And how was your ePRT organized? Were you on a base with the military?

A: Yes, we went in with one of five surge brigades. We went into a fully kinetic area, an area that if you told people that you worked in that area, an Iraqi, they would be mortified and fearful, because of the history related to the area.

As soon as the military would go and semi-secure an area, we were right there on the ground with them and then we would engage with the local sheiks and the local population that were present.

You figure there were no books for this when we got in there, so we initiated a concept. Looking at it 13 months later, it worked, because we mirror-imaged it and refined it as we cleared more areas during the year.

What you did was, you started out to build basic governments and then you carried out your economic assessments to assist in providing training and assistance, getting them reenergized. In our area, it was predominantly a farming area, so we helped establish eight different farmers unions that were recognized by the Iraqi Department of Agriculture.

Q: How were you organized, first, before we get into particular programs, how was the ePRT organized that you led?

A: Your relationship is, you are in partnership with the Brigade Commander, a full Colonel and you have Senior Service Staff rank, of course, and so it is that first initial relationship that was built. Essentially, what he provided for me staff-wise was he gave me his entire support battalion. So the Battalion Commander of the support battalion was essentially my *ad hoc* deputy.

And then, also, directly on my team, I was given three young captains. Then I had some Bicultural Bilingual subject matter experts (BBAs). I had a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) representative and a USAID representative. That was our team. Out in the field, I had a young captain or a lieutenant or a senior NCO in each of the companies out of the three battalions that were in our area who would work in conjunction with us.

Q: So, this is different from some of the other PRTs.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: You did not have a governance person and an economic person and a rule of law person?

A: What you have to understand that this whole thing is based on relationships and our marching orders were to build from the bottom up, and, then, the provincial teams, like the Baghdad PRT were to build from the top and we would meet in the middle.

So in order to effectively accomplish what you have to do, as a team leader, you have to spend the majority of your time in relationship building and I am talking about a well rounded spectrum of relationships and that is with the subject matter experts on the PRT, like, in my case, in Baghdad, who are dealing with industrial development, dealing with governance, those are just a couple of the examples, because you are interfacing with them and also with the Provincial Council, you are building up connectivity.

But also you are down in the field, meeting with the sheiks and connecting with the newly formed town councils, with the *nahiyah*, which are the governing body over a particular area or the Baghdad district that covers that area. You are working on the connectivity of people. So you are working those relationships.

You also have to work the military relationships, because you have to keep those relationships tight, because without them you cannot perform your job and your job is to keep that balance and give the direction, basically heading in the direction of not only nation building but to reach towards normal diplomatic relations.

In other words, you work yourself out of a job. And initially it is like raising a kid, you have to spoon-feed them before they start taking their first steps. And that is exactly how you have to approach it, because conceptually none of these people, very few, have had the exposure to the Western world in how this works to where they do have a voice in the

new system. It will adjust several times but not like the old way; if you did not say it a certain way, you never knew what was going to happen to you.

Q: When you were working with the local people on their governance business, what did you try to help them do?

A: What you do, first, is build a relationship. You will not get anywhere without a relationship of trust. It has to be a sincere relationship.

Q: And once you establish that?

A: Then get their cooperation; they are quite savvy. Then there are training mechanisms, where you have Iraqis train Iraqis on governance, which is, of course, a mirror image of the Iraqi government and how it is set up. So you provide the training and help them get their tools to enhance their efficiency and their knowledge base.

Q: Could you use RTI for training?

A: We used the USAID Local Government Program (LGP). We used Research Triangle Institute (RTI).

Q: And they were doing the training for the local people?

A: Right, and also, too, we used them for training, we used this same methodology, which was to build the relationships —sometimes that takes time — but you have to get that relationship of trust. And once you get that, you organize the body, whether it is a small council or whether it is an agricultural union or it is a business association. We did all three. And then as they gelled, you worked with them very closely on the basics such as setting an agenda. Once the group gelled, then you would schedule them for training. And as they came back from training, you saw that they immediately applied the training. They got it and they rolled with it and that happened on all of those levels.

Q: Iraqis picked it up pretty quickly?

A: And then you had, at that point, a knowledge base established. On the business associations, they are autonomous now. The agricultural unions are autonomous now. They are connected to the government, but the government does not own them, so you have free enterprise.

With the governance, the local councils are not recognized and paid councils, but what you have done is you have educated them to where now they can approach, representing their community, the governing body and present their needs in an appropriate way; this brings connectivity to local governments. And then what you do is you connect that body of the *Nahiyah* to *Qadha* and then the *Qadha* up to the Provincial Council.

Q: So you were helping them make these connections?

A: Absolutely, and then you would arrange, working with your counterparts in the Baghdad PRT, you would arrange visits from high ranking officials on the Provincial Council to come down to these areas and meet the locals and connect them with the different governing entities there.

Q: Did you work with them on budgets and funding?

A: We were getting into that right before I left; they were progressing very well; they were starting to get the concept on it. You have to understand, between the Tigris and the Euphrates, that is a bad area. There are a lot of al Qaeda and a lot of Sunni dissidents there.

What you have in that particular *Qadha* was several *Nahiyahs* that cover vast areas. Now those *Nahiyahs* are supposed to report their communities' needs in a fair and equitable manner to the *Qadhas*, and, then, the *Qadhas* put together their budget that goes up to the Provincial Council from there. They put it through their vetting process to identify projects, and then the funds are dispersed to the ministries that are the action arms for implementing the projects and spending the money.

Q: In moving around province, you had to go with a military movement team?

A: Right. Because I had a battalion, I had two movement teams, and we were out in the field five to seven days a week, from daybreak to sunset. We worked the same battle rhythm as the military; we worked 15 to 18, 20-hour days.

Q: You had no problem getting in touch with and working with the Iraqis, in spite of the security issues and the movement teams?

A: By the grace of God, you go out there and it is based on trust and you do not do anything stupid.

Q: You talked about business associations. Can you describe what they were trying to do, or what kind of business they were working on?

A: It is an association. An association is the gathering and coming together of multiple businesses.

Q: What kind of businesses were they trying to promote?

A: They had dry goods to manufacturing and food processing and farm implements, milk delivery businesses, egg processing, chicken house, and multiple businesses.

Q: And these were beginning to get started and were beginning to thrive?

A: Yes, they were cruising. After the training, like I said, they would come out and they would apply these principles; they got it and it moved quite rapidly.

Q: So you had a fair amount of success getting businesses organized?

A: Yes, but it is not for me to go out there and know everything. So what you do, you ask, “Hey, who are the businessmen?” You get their advice. How did you people do this before?”

It is just like with Governance: “How did you people do this before? Who was who?” It is just like with agriculture. I do not have to be a date palm expert. These guys have raised dates forever. “All right, how did you people do this before? What is the matter with the industry now?”

Q: And did you provide them with funds to do things?

A: Sure, we provided them with some grants, but, in a short period of time, the way I worked my funds, was that we would do a one-time assessment there, but if you do that in conjunction with the training and the concept that “You have to have buy in, too. What are you putting up? What are we helping you with,?” — all building to their independence, because the agricultural unions worked like a charm and the business associations the same way.

Q: What kind of agricultural projects were they undertaking?

A: They had everything from laying hens to beets, date palms, and other cypress projects.

Q: And your agricultural man was working with that?

A: Yes, and we connected them with the Ministry of Agriculture. They were all legitimate, as the Iraqi government recognized them. That was the whole purpose of these associations: they are not controlled, but they are accepted and recognized, because that gives them sustainability. Some businesses fail; they do here in the States all the time, but it gives the Iraqi associations and businesses credibility and a much stronger success rate.

One of the most successful, in which actually I take a great deal of satisfaction from being a part of, which was an objective from the very beginning, was to reach out to the Iraqi women. Now, once again, this is built on relationships. In other words, if the sheiks and the community do not trust you, then they are certainly not going to trust you if you go to them and say, “Look, would you mind if our women got together with your women?”

And that was the basic concept that we started off with; it was met with a great deal of support by the Iraqi community, by the sheiks; I attribute that to the trust that the team had built with them.

Q: You were able to get several women's organizations going?

A: Thousands of ladies. What we did and this is something to keep in mind is that it is a kinetic environment. As you secured one area you started formulating these economic programs and the women's groups. Then they would secure another area.

What we would do, as we built relationships and as these other groups matured, we would introduce them to the new group and they would mentor the new group. Now you started to have cross-territorial economic links and also tribal reconciliation.

The tribal reconciliation came about mainly from the women's groups and through the women's groups. These ladies wanted a diverse number of things. The main thing was health care for their kids and, of course, schools. But some of them were interested in government. Some of them did get elected to local councils. Some of them were interested in businesses, because a tremendous number of them were widows, and they were supporting a lot of orphans, as in any war area.

This once again goes back to the amount of trust that we had built in the area. Eight of these women that wanted to go to the next step on business were able to leave home for five days and go to a specially developed, first time, women's business training through RTI. We sat down with them and worked with RTI, said, "Look, we have this opportunity." They said, "Wow, we have never done a training program for women." This program was tremendously successful. Essentially, what they have done is they have multiple sewing coops that are interconnected because of the way that they mentor each other. So you have almost established a semi-textile industry for the women and the widows. And so now they are able to go for various government contracts, because of the training and recognition that they have received from the Iraqi government.

Q: That was one of your accomplishments!

A: Have you ever seen anybody's eyes when they first drew a breath of freedom? Well, these ladies, the first time that the women on my staff met with them. (I was not there, there is an appropriate time for me to talk to the ladies and then there is not.) The first meeting, because they were apprehensive, fighting is still going on. "What is this all about?" but they are curious.

The only thing that I had asked my team to do was, "When you go there, do not have a set agenda or anything like that. You ask them one question. You ask the ladies, 'What would you like to do?'"

And when they came back, they said, "We asked them, just like you said and they started crying." So they thought they had insulted them and the ladies said, "Oh, no, no, no! Nobody has ever asked us that." It almost started us crying.

So, anyway, these ladies are very determined. Education was a big thing. We were able to get some things started. Right before I left, I had signed off on a grant proposal to do a pilot program. Of course, it would be Iraqi-taught.

Q: ...by a local non-governmental organization?

A: Right, exactly. So they are going to start a pilot literacy program that would address 200 ladies initially. The one thing that we did do on education: traditionally in the rural communities girls were only allowed to go up through what they classified as third grade, which I think is probably like sixth grade, in our terms and then, of course, further schooling was not made available to them.

What we were able to do was, working with the Ministry of Education and local school principals, once we got the schools secured. (Most of the schools were booby-trapped and had land mines, anti-personnel mines that had been set up by al Qaeda in the playgrounds.)

Keep in mind that we were moving with the surge brigade and the military offensive, because it was essential that we moved in right with them, as they secured patrol bases, secured an area and met with the people as soon as possible. And it made a big difference, because they were seeing people in civilian clothes. It provided that mental picture that things were getting better.

We worked with the Ministry of Education and renovated an entire girls' school, which was a biggie. In some of the more rural areas we were able to expand some of those schools with a building project where we would add two schoolrooms, which would then afford them the space to have a second class for the girls, which would allow them to attend school through sixth grade; it would take them up through middle school. High schools are located elsewhere.

Q: Did you work in the Rule of Law area?

A: The surge brigade that I was with, they left Iraq a couple of months before I did and so at that time I moved to a more central location, where the seat of government was located. I did get a Rule of Law advisor on my team and he started engaging with the local judge and getting a feel and assessment of the connectivity within the judicial system, between the police and others. He was one of the few that were able to get information back to the Rule of Law coordinators in Baghdad, because the outer reaches of the Rule of Law program are still very sketchy, but it is getting better all the time, but a long way to go.

Q: Were there other program areas you were trying to move on? You mentioned Agriculture and Business Development and Rule of Law.

A: We had the schools, of course, getting those up and running, getting the kids to school. Health clinics, we worked with the Ministry of Health. We were one of the few groups that were able to get cooperation from the Ministry of Health. Once again, it was based on relationships. You do not make promises unless you can produce and they build off

relationships. This is the cultural norm throughout the Middle East. It used to be our cultural norm, too: relationships and trust and a handshake meant something.

Q: You have covered the program areas that you were concerned with. Did you have an overall mission statement? They talk about mission statements for PRTs.

A: Pretty much a standard mission statement. It is no different than any other PRT's mission statement.

Q: And you mentioned you had BBA, Bilingual Bicultural Advisors?

A: Yes, we had two very good ones.

Q: They worked out well for you?

A: Yes. One worked on Governance with me, and the other one worked on Economic Development—a very stellar performance.

Q: Were these hyphenated Iraqis, in other words American-Iraqis or British-Iraqis or

A: One of them is from Canada, now, but they were all born and raised in Iraq and, of course, but had been out of the country for quite some time. And then my third one was a lady that was the right hand of my women's team. She is an American citizen. She was outstanding. So were the other two.

Q: Did you do much reconstruction work, actual physical building and projects of that sort? You mentioned some small projects, but it was not clear what they were.

A: Did I personally do any of that?

Q: Your team was involved in that?

A: We were, because we were as one with the military and they had their Commanders Economic Reconstruction Program (CERP) funds. The Battalion handled the infrastructure projects, which we were monitoring.

So I had one group that handled water, electricity; essentially we worked the relationships the same way. The way that it works in this culture is that whoever is the boss needs to make the first contact, build the relationship and then you hand them over to your subject matter expert.

Q: You had subject matter construction people, then, working with you, or were they from the Brigade?

A: They were from the Brigade, very capable. The Battalion Commander was an engineer.

Q: Was a lot of reconstruction accomplished in the area?

A: There was a significant amount that was applicable to essential services, because this is an area that is dependent upon canal systems. These canals affected a vast area and we refurbished major pump stations along the Tigris. You cannot revitalize a farming industry without the canal system and the water to irrigate. So, these were essential service projects like that.

Also, too, there is the inconsistency of power generation, which we really could not address, but we worked on the distribution with the Ministry of Electricity and eventually gained their cooperation, where they would supply the materials and we would supply the work force, or we would hire contractors.

So you had that initial phase, then the next phase was a partnership. Then it is like, "Okay, it is your ball game!"

Q: One of the things you keep emphasizing, of course, is building the relationships. If you were to advise new people going out, how do you go about building relationships? What do you do? What do you look out for? Who do you talk to? What would you say?

A: In building a relationship, each of us has our own style. Number one, you have to have sincerity. What was your motivation, coming to the mission? Did you believe in the mission? If you believed in the mission, then that should be conveyed in the form of compassion and understanding. Sincerity sees you through the relationship.

Q: Any particular techniques in meeting with Iraqis?

A: I have been in and out of the Middle East since 1992. Do not come with a ten page agenda and say, "Okay, I want to talk business right now. I need answers and I need you to jump through this hoop and this has to be done by tomorrow!"

They are just going to turn you off and say, "Yes, right!" I have seen it happen and you know exactly what they are doing to this guy that came in and acted really officious. They just let the guy go bonkers and then the guy goes off and he has the impression that they are lazy.

You just ended up with your short fuse: spending 25 grand on this building project and he still has his 25 grand in his pocket, because you were impatient and did not take the time for them to get to know you. They want to know a little bit about: who you are, as you need to ask them who they are, about their family and this and that.

In the first couple meetings, you might not even talk business. Do not worry about it. It is that relationship that is important; once you are accepted, especially in the tribal areas by the sheiks, you will get cooperation. But it is built on trust and if you start off by being the bully or the commander, that does not mean that you do not need to be firm, I am not

saying that you roll over, but it is that fine line. You want to get their input and let them participate. Do not be the dictator. You get their input and that gives you insight on how you need to adjust your approach and your program.

Q: What would you think were the major achievements of the time you were there, not just you but your group? How would you classify the major achievements?

A: I would say that in what we did was with the population, they regained their self-esteem, because now they were able to start providing a means to support their families, as opposed to picking up a gun and shooting at people.

Q: So you were an important part of quelling the insurgency?

A: Oh, yes, because once these people started getting it, and that trust was built, oh, yes, they coughed up the bad guys.

Q: Any specific achievements that stand out? You have talked about the work with women and business development. Anything else of that sort that stands out?

A: We stood by them, stood by them as a partner should, and they grabbed the ball and ran with it.

Q: Do you think that the general population was aware of your group and what you were trying to do?

A: In our area?

Q: Yes.

A: Oh, yes, once the community accepts you; they know who you are. Their communication network is very good. As a matter of fact, this is going back to my first tour, I was only in country a short of period of time when I was informed that there was a reward out for my capture by al Qaeda, because of the position I held as the deputy director of international narcotics. So they have a very efficient communications network, the bad guys and the good guys.

Q: Did you have a media advisor working with the press?

A: You did from Baghdad; we had the Public Affairs Officer (PAO).

Q: But locally you did not have a PAO?

A: Locally, you get the Iraqi press out there, because we had a public affairs person with the military. I not only worked with the brigade, but also with the Psychological Warfare Operations community, the public affairs specialists within that brigade that worked hand

in hand with us and that was all based on the relationship of trust with the Brigade Commander, because he was the senior Brigade Commander in the division.

Q: Did you report directly to him?

A: We did not report to each other. We worked as a team. He did not rate me and I did not rate him.

Q: To whom did you report to?

A: I reported to the embassy.

Q: To OPA, the Office of Provincial Affairs?

A: And that is very important. It kept a very professional working relationship between you and the Brigade Commander and his troops.

Q: Did you get good support from Baghdad?

A: One of the things that you have to understand is, now you are talking about the Baghdad PRT. That is a gray area.

Q: Did you report also to a main PRT in Baghdad?

A: No, essentially as a surge Brigade ePRT team leader you were out there working with your Brigade Commander and with his division headquarters. Now, that has since changed, to where ePRT team leaders now are more connected and overseen, and connected to the PRT team leader. But, initially, no, we were running our own operations. Administrative support came from OPA, with very little success as far as adding additional subject matter experts to our teams and meeting the needs that we had identified.

Q: You were getting State Department support?

A: No, we were not. Look, you were pretty much out on your own. If you were not accustomed to doing that, there was some that were not, some that were, if you are not accustomed to building a team and blending in and making decisions, you are going to be ineffective, because you are in the middle of a fight.

Q: You did not have much communication with OPA and the embassy?

A: Nothing of any substance. I would go there, but mainly I worked my own network of principal contacts at the embassy, with the political-military section, the economic section, as well as other military entities. You had to build your own network of doers. It was the same way with the Baghdad PRT. That is why I say a team leader going in on the initial phase has to be focused on connecting all of the relationships, from soup to nuts.

Q: Clarify for me the difference between an ePRT, which is embedded and a PRT that is on a military base?

A: An ePRT is not on a military base. It is out in the field. The regular PRTs, not all of them, are on bases. There are a few and some of them are on multinational bases. What they do is address the provincial level governance and development. In other words, they are tasked with building from the top down. ePRTs are out in the area of operations to build from the bottom up. But if you are not talking together and interconnected, then you cannot help each other and make an effective, cohesive operation that actually brings together the top with the bottom.

Q: Did you communicate with the PRT for Baghdad?

A: Oh, yes. That relationship was extremely tight and it just continued to evolve. The Provincial Council in Baghdad, as well as the Governor and also, of course, all of your connectivity, from the *qadhas* and the *nahiyahs* with that, that is part of bringing together governance.

Q: So you were part of the total effort to build up the Baghdad governance system?

A: And connecting it to our area between the Tigris and the Euphrates.

Q: Let me turn to another question: how would you appraise the quality of the staffing, the non-military staffing, that you had?

A: Well, my two principal team members, the USDA person was outstanding and the USAID representative, now he has gone full time, career, with them, was outstanding. They had never been in the war zone *per se* like that, so there was a little bit of adjustment, but they took to it very well.

As far as getting quality contractors to come in and fill, say, any subject matter expert spots: number one, if you even had any responsiveness from Washington to actually meet your needs, it was surprising. To give you an example, three of the people that I had asked for and selected back in January 2008, basically, when I was here, sat on a panel out at FSI talking to a new class of PRT team members, they were in that class in November, that is eleven months later.

Also, it is hit or miss, because the people back here that are tasked with recruiting and evaluating staff, they do not have a clue about the personalities, nor do I see a very effective process of them going out and recruiting the type of people that we need for the different phases.

In this operation you have three phases. You have that phase that we went into with the surge brigade, which is boots on the ground. Now, this is going in with unknown factors

all the way across the board. A certain type of personality has to go in there as a team leader, as well as your team members.

Hopefully through that year, it will evolve into where it is ready for the second phase, where now you have people with some of the same characteristics, but then it is coming into a more mature development of your environment, where now it is more mentoring and further development of programs, not necessarily starting from scratch and building from scratch. Then what starts happening is that those people will evolve more connectivity to the Baghdad PRT, which will start having more and more connectivity to the Embassy and the entities of an Embassy, like your political section, your economic section, etc. Because that is a natural evolution, as the ePRTs go away, the PRTs go away, a consulate is established, the Embassy is fully functional and then what you have at that stage is a move into normal diplomacy. Now, the people going into those phases, of course, then would be more your shirt and tie diplomatic policy writers.

Q: Did you and your team have any training or any preparation before you were assigned?

A: You had one week of training, which was totally ineffective. I was able to get something out of that, because I had spent a previous tour over in Iraq. But for the most part, it really did not provide you any meat. You had to draw on what your personal resume and experiences had been.

Related to that, there have been some modifications to the training program, which, unfortunately, because contractors performed it, we are not drawn upon to influence the course or to give our lessons learned. You would find this from the other team leaders as well as other State Department direct hires, it is like our knowledge and experience for lessons learned for future engagements are not even given a second thought.

Q: That is terrible!

A: Yes it is. And so what you have is you have contractors who are running the training program, that all they are doing is siphoning bits and pieces. They have no practical, on the ground, experience out in the field for this surge level type of development and then moving into the second phase and that is an atrocity and it is frustrating for all of my colleagues that I have talked to. They feel the same.

Q: What should be the main emphasis or the focus of a training, orientation type of program?

A: What you have to have on the training: number one, the military knows far in advance when brigades are going to deploy. You have to have at least your team leader and deputy team leader already selected that can go through and engage with the brigade command staff that they will be assigned to. They need to be in at least email contact and if at all possible spend a week or a couple of weeks getting to know the command staff.

But what has to happen before that individual team leader does engage on that level, there needs to be a special program just for the team leaders and deputy team leaders, that is all that needs to be present in that classroom. Because what has to happen is, even though some of us have military experience prior to this, it is dated.

You have to come in and be indoctrinated to how does the military dynamics work currently, in the current battlefield situations. What is the command structure? What are the elements of your brigade? How is the battalion broken down? How do the companies spread out? What are the assets?

A very good briefing and education on that; and, likewise, the mirror image needs to be passed on to your division commanders and brigade commanders and their deputies about us, so that we each understand the beast and we all fully comprehend that this is a U.S. mission and we represent the American people, all of us do.

And so in that class there at FSI with the team leaders and staff there has to be an emphasis on relationship building, how to effectively network within the multiple communities you are going to be dealing with. Not only with the indigenous folks who, of course, are your primary focus, but also how to effectively develop relationships that help fulfill the PRT mission. That is the key element of other agencies that you need to be connected with, back at, say, the Embassy, as well as the key folks within a division staff; then, how to work that environment.

These are some key things, you do not need to be the expert in everything, but you do have to be the best networker and relationship builder in the group, because you have to build the relationships and then steer the group and the experts into their particular areas.

Q: Is there any topic that we have not touched on that comes to mind?

A: Also, too, upon our return, especially with the team leaders and other Foreign Service Officers that have successfully engaged in that work, utilizing us when we return to engage with the different military elements, your different command staffs, your special operations groups and so forth, to share our knowledge, because what is happening is that you have the same contractor that is running our training program preaching to the military.

I have nothing against contractors, but there needs to be some kind of oversight from those that have practical experience and collective guidance from there, for these people to be readily available to participate in different military training classes, whether it be with the civil affairs command staff for lessons learned with the military, whatever, but to use the people that have come back and that are available, because not all of us have gone on to other overseas assignments. Even those who have remained overseas after a tour, I know, would be responsive in answering questions, because we care about it.

Of course, as time goes on, talking in front of a group about what Iraq is like, our lessons learned will be obsolete. However, our lessons learned are very unique from the

standpoint that we went in with the surge, an invasion group and we were right in behind them. As they got the first toehold, we were on the ground and that is where the valuable lessons learned come from, because we are going to be doing this again.

Q: That turns us to the next question, which you have already covered, but it is lessons learned, two or three, one on management of a PRT. Are there any lessons that you have not touched on that relate to your job managing a PRT?

A: I would say what you need, if you have the full cooperation and integration into the brigade, is that you have to have the team leader, the deputy team leader, you need to have a political reporting officer and you need to have your USDA person and you have to have a USAID person. They are the basic core group, who should be the first ones on the ground.

And then what has to happen, on the support entity end of it, they need to be ready, because as soon as the dust starts to settle a little bit, then they need to have in the mix the next wave and what you are going to need is a bicultural bilingual economics specialist, but, once again, they have got to be able to get out into the field, but understand at a higher level. In other words, very diversified, because you have to be able to work from the higher echelon all the way down to the grassroots and have a full understanding that in these cultures these individuals have zero knowledge of how any type of new democratic change and form of government and free enterprise works, they have zero education on that. You have to always maintain that realization.

And that is where, I think, from the military standpoint, it is very difficult to grasp how deep down in the grassroots that they have to go, in order to reach the Iraqis, because on the various levels, what happens is that you forget, even though you are thinking that you are going all the way back to third or fourth grade on how government works.

No, no, no, you have to get all the way to preschool and you have to catch yourself, pull them back, because they are trying to comprehend; they are not dumb, but you have to take little steps to get the comprehension; that is painstaking. Team leaders and deputy team leaders have to be in tune and focused on that.

Q: Any other lessons that come to mind

A: You have to have support; that is the military's lifeblood. They understand logistics and logistical support. The State Department lacks that mentality and preparation and planning, so therefore they do not realize that prompt action on staffing, they are losing these valuable lessons as to what increments that they might need to be immediately staffing these ePRT teams with subject matter experts.

Q: Looking at your experience overall there and giving your assessment, how would you assess the effectiveness and the efficiency of a PRT?

A: The ePRTs were extremely effective in direct correlation with a fluid relationship with the Brigade Commander. There are dysfunctional ePRTs when the command and control by the Brigade Commander is driven solely by the military personality and the unreasonable metrics that were set by the Division Commanders. They were ineffective and what happened was built-in frustration within their brigades and the company commanders that were out in the field, because they were not being responsive, they were forcing us to get results, and, as a result, the people in the field encountered great resistance ...

Q: This was the military getting this response?

A: Right, the military has a very difficult time, because they are trained and you have to understand how the military is trained: command, control, secure and move forward. So in a non-kinetic environment, this blows their mind, because these Brigade Commanders are used to total control and they are used to kinetic results: “Okay, take that hill, take that building, secure it!”

The non-lethal is a chessboard. You cannot define progress in terms of: “Okay, we will be here next Tuesday, we will be there next Thursday.” On a daily basis, it changes and progression has got to be built on a balance.

The basic concept that I applied with our team from Day One was building a table. The very first table leg is your ground troops go in and semi-secure an area. That is one of your legs and that is security. Security cannot hold the whole table up. So when you go in there as an ePRT team, what you have to do is, number one is you have to have governance, in other words, some form. You have to assess the economics and the essential services. Those are the other three table legs.

Now those things have to be built on an even scale. In other words, you cannot just emphasize governance, because the table is not going to stand on two legs. They have to be developed concurrently. That is very, very important and you have to keep that balance. That has to come in as soon as security is established and I am just talking about minimal security, because we had sniper issues. There were times where early on, going into an area, really some of our first contacts we were actually dressed in green, because, number one, you do not want to jeopardize your military escorts by attracting too much limelight on you as a high profile target.

And you also, as a team leader, have to be fully cognizant. In a battle, in a kinetic area, one of the things in building your relationships, you must never undermine the role of that battlefield commander, that Brigade Commander and the Battalion Commander, because they are out there for security and you do not jeopardize their authority in that sphere, but, at the same time, you maintain your own personal status.

Q: You think that the commander understood what the PRT is about?

A: My commander (and at least one other team leader I have talked to) and his commander understood that. I think a few of the other teams encountered that as well, but there were a lot that did not, because what happens is, especially early on, these tribal sheiks and leaders in that community, as you encounter them, all they need to do is see you and the colonel show up together as partners. In other words, you are dressed in civvies and he is the boss on the military side.

That is all they need to see. It is that visual perception and that identifies your status, it identifies the colonel's status and plays a big role. There is a whole lot of subliminal, non-verbal communication that if approached early on, sets the stage. And this has to be placed into a training program that emphasizes these lessons to new team leaders and deputy team leaders going out.

Then, on the follow up training, where they have all the other potential team members, yes, you can integrate the team leaders into that, because then they start gelling and then they can pass the word and they go in there with confidence, because they have already been given some information, they have participated with a military exercise after this initial indoctrination.

So with these other team members that are coming in to the basic PRT course, that are going to be other staff members, you are going in there with confidence. When the team leader goes in there with confidence and has x, y and z experiences behind him and can talk with authority, that is going to strengthen them and comfort them. Also it is going to start putting them in line as far as how they need to conduct themselves when they get out to a PRT team, because the integrity of your team is important.

It is very important that those people assigned to your team do not go native and what I mean by going native is that all of a sudden they have an issue and they just go totally military. That breaks up the integrity of your team. They have to understand that they are a bridge builder, too, but they are part of the team and you have your team leader and your deputy team leader who gives them overall direction.

Q: Do you think the PRTs are accomplishing their missions?

A: Yes, I do, from the standpoint of when I first went into the country, 2005 to 2006 and then I returned in 2007. By the time that I left in fall of 2008, it was a remarkable difference than when I returned in 2007, but it was going into that next evolution by the time that I left in the fall of last year, 2008.

Q: Do you think what you started will be sustained after you pull out?

A: Yes, it is already being sustained, because in my particular area, there are no longer any brigades there. There is just a battalion left with the PRT team that is basically doing more of the mentoring and program oversight and they are getting engaged with some new things and further expanding the programs. But the agriculture unions, business

associations, the councils and the further development of the *qadha* and the *nahiyah* continue to grow.

Q: Would you recommend that the PRT concept and approach be used in other situations, as appropriate?

A: Oh, absolutely, but you have to have those precursors. Number one is the Department (DOS) has really got to get off of its tail. In other words, establish a database of proven operators out there. Also, they need to be recruiting for the future. In other words, they need to identify a team leader's replacement; as soon as a team leader has arrived at post, they need to identify the next one, so that then they can link up that new team leader and the deputy team leader with the brigade that is going to be replacing the one operating there now. In other words, we need to do our strategic planning with the same mindset as the military, so that we have got our key players, who the team leader is and the deputy team leader and their connection with the brigade that is going to go in.

I know that that will be an inconvenience, because most of these people are already assigned to other positions, but that should be understood, that time will be blocked out for these people to get engaged for their onward assignment, whether it is a couple of weeks or whatever.

Q: I think we have covered the topics pretty well, unless there is something you want to add. I appreciate your time.