Life in the “Green Zone”

NIST’s Standards Advisor for Iraq at Embassy Baghdad, 2006-07

David Karmol
NIST role in Iraq reconstruction

- Since 2003, NIST has been involved in providing assistance to the Iraq reconstruction effort
  - Electrical, construction, pharmaceutical, food standards gathered and provided, 2004-05
  - Standards in Trade workshop for Iraq construction sector- July 2006
  - March 2006, Secretary Rice requested a Standards Advisor from Secretary Gutierrez
Flying into Baghdad.....on a C-130
Arriving in Baghdad

- Baghdad Intl. (BIAP)- military side
  - arr: Amman, 8pm
  - dep: Amman, 1pm
  - arr: BIAP, 3pm
  - dep: BIAP, 1-3am (Rhino bus)
  - arr: IZ, 2-4am

- HELO alt:
  - dep: BIAP, 5-6pm
  - arr: IZ, 10 min. later
Arriving in the IZ
Daily Living

- Everybody at the Embassy:
  - Lives in a trailer
  - Eats in the dining facility (DFAC)
  - Works in the Palace (U.S. Embassy)

- A small town, where everyone works in the same place. Everything is provided free of charge, except:
  - Haircuts
  - Personal things from the PX, alcohol, etc.
The IZ-
“The heavily fortified Green Zone”
Baghdad vs. Washington
81 square mile map comparison

Metro Area Population: DC(exBalt)-5.3 Baghdad-6
Working in the Palace

Like a regular office, except:

– Regular announcements to “duck & cover” or incoming alert from C-RAM system

– Lots of military personnel in various roles, all carrying either M-4 rifle or 9mm handgun. Weapons are carried at all times, including the gym, Sunday services, dining facility.

– Checkpoints at every entrance, and in between some sections of the building, all require showing your badge to the armed guard.
US Embassy Baghdad-Republican Guard Palace
My office in the Palace
Providing Standards Assistance; What Worked:

- Having a plan of action – *before* deployment
- Preliminary assessment of Iraq standards situation - via Standards in Trade workshop before deployment
- Have a point of contact, with primary responsibility for liaison and support (Mary Saunders, Ajit Jilla, Kelsey Burns)
- Set definite and quantifiable goals, and reporting timetable
Outreach Efforts in Iraq - Priorities Based on In-country Review

- Interact with Senior Consultants across all areas of Iraq government
- Direct meetings with President of Iraq National Standards Body (COSQC)
- In cooperation w/ IRMO Senior Consultants, meet directly with Ministries, to determine specific needs
- Make rebuild of Iraqi Standards Body top priority, allowing it to provide assistance to other Iraqi ministries and agencies
Priority Sectors Identified

- National Building Code for Iraq
- Rebuild Central Organization for Standards and Quality Control (COSQC)- Assist w/ WTO accession
- Oil Metering and Codes plan for Ministry of Oil
- Product Distribution System Reform
- Water Quality and the Environment
- Quality, Health & Safety Standards
Leveraging Resources

- Working, on different projects, with partners from:
  - GRD (Army Corps of Engineers)
  - USAID, and its contractors
  - Embassy Econ Section
  - Multi-National Coalition- Iraq (MNC-I)
  - Private US SDO’s
  - Other USG agencies
  - Commerce ITA and IRTF staff, and USFCS
  - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Working in Iraq - Challenges

- It’s a war zone -
  - PSDs required for any Ministry visit - planning & coordination required well in advance of meeting
  - Entry into IZ difficult for Iraqis
  - Rocket attacks are disturbing and affect performance/morale

- Security requirements limit direct face-to-face interaction

- Iraqi use of internet and e-mail is not up to current standards - e-mail is apparently printed and delivered.

- Language is a barrier - few of us speak much Arabic, and Iraqi’s English is generally weak

- Cultural attitudes and practices affect acceptance of assistance
In line to catch a helo into the IZ
Baghdad
Baghdad- a big city
Baghdad
Working in Iraq - Positives

- Iraqis are highly educated, very pleasant and upbeat, in spite of unspeakably bad conditions.
- Long history of use of, and innovation in, standards and engineering fields. Great pride in their history.
- Iraqis generally understand that they have been cut-off for 25 years, and know they need to catch up.
- IRMO/Embassy environment generally collegial, and many dedicated people involved.
- Fascinating work, challenging assignments - like the Basrah Children’s Hospital.
Basra Children’s Hospital

- A project to build a state-of-the-art pediatric oncology hospital in Basrah, Iraq.
- Originally managed by USAID. Joint project of USG & Project HOPE, original contractor Bechtel.
- June 06 turned over to USACE, GRD, with added funds from Spain, through UNDP.
- I was tasked to coordinate UNDP, GRD, HOPE participation for IRMO- Dec 26,2006
BASRAH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
Arriving at BCH
Inside Basrah Children’s Hospital
Returning on a C-23 Sherpa with General Abt
Standards-related Projects

National Building Code-
- Inter-Ministry effort
- Builds on NIST SIT workshop results
- Iraqi experts reviewing IBC, and comparing to Iraqi codes/standards
- Structure of two committees to work on technical and adoption aspects was finally agreed to break impasse between COSQC and MOCH.
- 13 ministers and Prime Minister signed off on the concept.
Rebuild COSQC & assist in WTO Accession

- While COSQC has much leadership and top talent intact, building and lab were damaged and looted to some extent.
- S. Korea pledged $3 million toward lab rebuilding.
- WTO accession efforts moving slowly.
Oil Metering and Codes Scheme

- Oil provides over 90% of national income, supporting government and subsidizing public services. Refinery capacity is inadequate.
- Oil Ministry has 15 operating companies producing crude and petroleum products.
- Metering is out-of-date, and does not meet international standards for custody transfer.
- For Ministry SOE’s to engage in international commerce, they must adopt current standards and systems.
Product Distribution System

- System distributes food and staples to all Iraqis monthly as a right
- System, like many government administered programs, is inefficient, and prone to corruption
- PDS requires importation of large quantities of food, etc, which must be tested. The Trade Ministry manages all testing, and fraud is suspected when loads are rejected.
- Fair, honest lab results needed
- Little progress was made here because the Ministry was beset by other problems
Two meetings held w/10 Iraqi engineers, specialties in drinking water, water monitoring, soil and air.

Specific requests for standards from EPA, AWWA, NSF and ASTM

Excellent cooperation from U.S. partners-standards delivered Nov- Dec 2006

Iraqi engineers in Min. of Environment have high goals for air, water and soil quality, but not much funding
Quality, Occupational Health & Safety

- Initial meeting held with Ministry of Industry and Manufacturing DM and DG
- Great interest in ISO 9000 standard, training and certification
- Some interest in re-energizing Iraqi occupational health and safety division of the Ministry
- One of the Iraqi contacts and his daughter were killed, and progress slowed on this effort
Ongoing Projects

- Regional Training- in Jordan, w RSS, JISM, JNMI
  - Metrology (8-07 through 11-07)
- Regional/ Gulf States cooperation on building code issues, training, and certification programs. (11-07)
- Cooperation with Iraqi national standards body (COSQC) at ISO and other international forums
- Short term training and programs in the U.S. for Iraqi engineers (2-08)
- Scientists Re-direct Program - Iraq Interim Center for Science and Industry (IICSI)
Meeting Ambassador Crocker
Lessons Learned

- In a situation where reconstruction is a primary activity, early deployment of a standards advisor can benefit both donor and recipient nations.

- As is sometimes the case in the U.S., the role of standards, metrology and conformity assessment, while critical, is not well understood. Also like here, it is the absence of standards and conformity assessment that is usually noticed.

- Cultural and language differences will slow the process of adoption of international practices.
My row in Embassy Estates
...there’s no place like home... my trailer: R-219 Embassy Estates
Inside...
Path to the Palace
The street behind the palace
Signs around the complex.....
Signs.....
The Palace Pool
Outside the DFAC...
The DFAC
Recreational opportunities...
In line to catch a helo into the IZ
Flying into Baghdad
Tomb of the Unknowns
Tomb of the Unknowns - from the air
Questions?
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