

# 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”

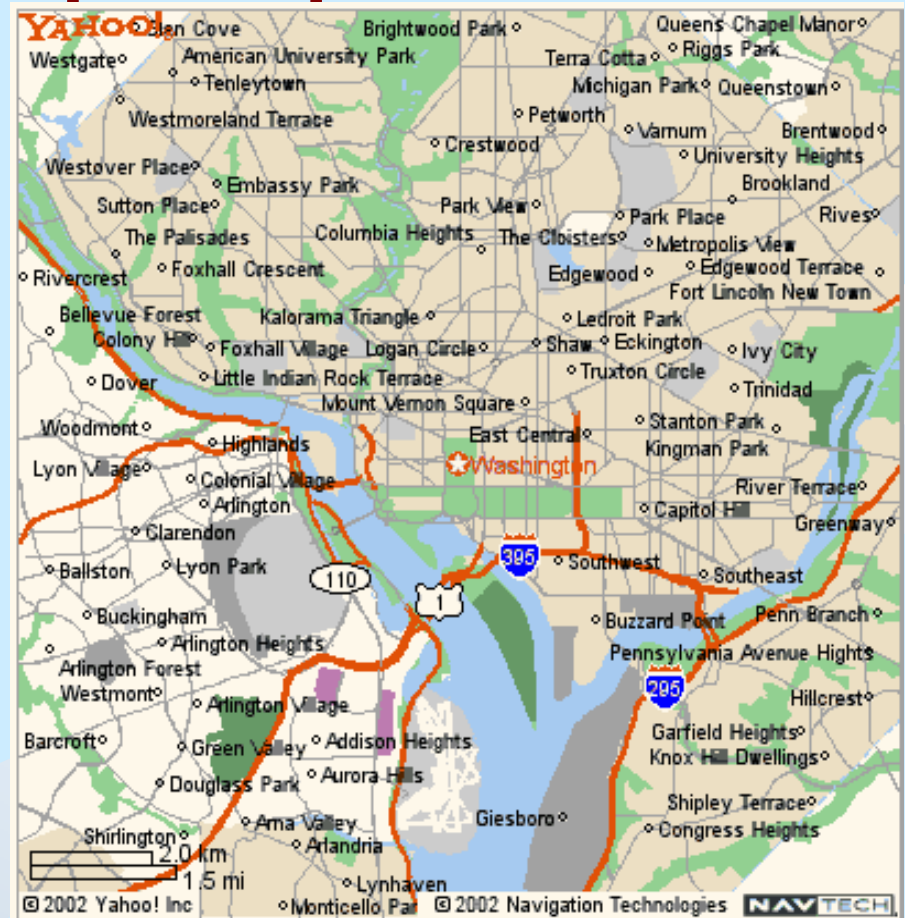


September 2007

Baghdad 2006-2007

# 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

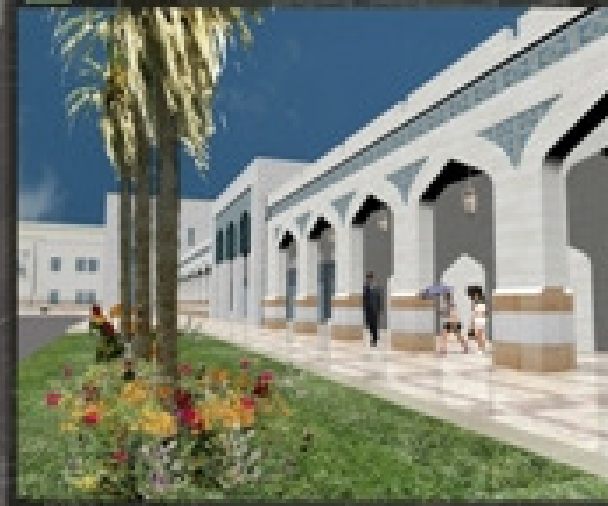
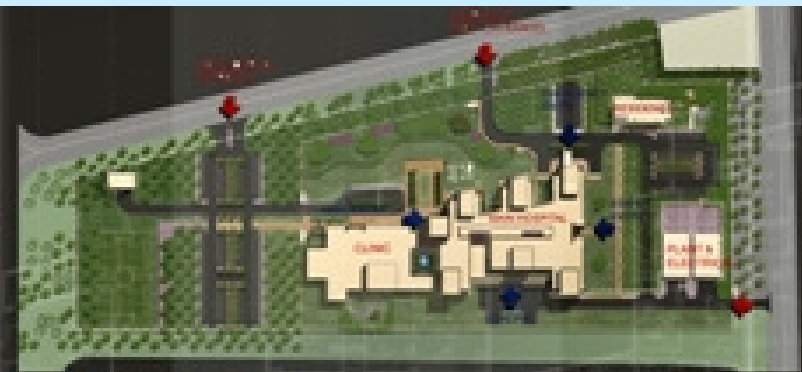
- ❑ Iraqis are highly educated, very pleasant and upbeat, in spite of unspeakably bad conditions
- ❑ Long history of use of, and innovation in, standards and engineering fields. Great pride in their history.
- ❑ Iraqis generally understand that they have been cut- off for 25 years, and know they need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

# Basrah 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

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 \$3million toward lab rebuilding.
- ❑ Training and calibration August- November 2007.
- ❑ 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

# Water Quality & Environment

- ❑ 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...





September 2007

Baghdad 2006-2007

# 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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