

FW: DAY 5 TRAVELOGUE TO IRAQ

From: Jill Iscol [redacted]

RELEASE IN PART
B6

To: Hillary Clinton hr15@att.blackberry.net

Subject: FW: DAY 5 TRAVELOGUE TO IRAQ

Again, I appreciate your time constraints. If interested, read the bold. Big hugs, Jill

From: Zachary Iscol [mailto:[redacted]]
Sent: Sunday, January 25, 2009 6:59 PM
To: zachiscol
Subject: DAY 5 TRAVELOGUE TO IRAQ

B6

Hey family and friends,

Once again, so great hearing from all of you and please check out our blog and leave a comment. <http://editorialproject.wordpress.com>

And, well, some of you write that I shouldn't apologize for writing such long emails, well, you asked for it...

Two nights ago we arrived back in Camp Ramadi, a Marine camp bordering Ramadi. It is astonishing to see how close it is to the city. Camp Fallujah and the Marine FOBs (Forward Operating Bases) around Fallujah were miles outside the city, but Camp Ramadi pushes right up to the city that shares its name. While many Americans are familiar with the battle of Fallujah, I'm in awe of the Marines who served in Ramadi. The insurgency was largely defeated in Fallujah in late 2004, but in Ramadi the fight lasted years. Marines, insurgents, tribes, former regime elements, and Al Qaeda fought protracted battles from 2004 to

2007. When I saw how close the Marines lived to Ramadi (and this doesn't include all the Marine posts inside the city) it brought chills to the back of my neck. The city begins right outside the camp's walls and I'm sure so did the gunfire.

Back in Camp Ramadi, Brad and I had dinner with Chad and Georgia Parment. Chad went to Cornell Law School and met his wife, Georgia, when they were both lieutenants in Quantico, Virginia. After they completed their tours, they both got out and went back to school. They then volunteered to return to Active Duty to deploy together to Ramadi for the year. They've got another 3 weeks left before they head home and say that the deployment has made them incredibly close. I met both of them electronically a year ago. They were working on helping their translator get to the states and a mutual friend put us in touch. Incredibly smart, well intentioned, and full of energy, we became electronic buds of sorts. They also tried getting Cornell or another US college/university to adopt and mentor Al Anbar University. Unfortunately, even after reaching out to numerous schools none showed much interest. It is unfortunate because there could have been tremendous potential to such an effort. Student and professor exchanges (well at least sending some Iraqi students/teachers to the US), curriculum development, and, well, the sky could have been the limit- especially in the digital age. Perhaps in the age of Obama this will be possible.

After hauling our gear across the camp, we headed out to the Rule of Law center in Ramadi. The Marines have developed five "lines of operation" to ensure stability and success in Al Anbar. They are the key terrain in an environment where you are not fighting for a beachhead but for building a stable society and helping return daily life to normalcy. They are- governance, economics, security, rule of law, and essential services. For much of the last 6 years we've been in Iraq, the military has been in the lead with all of them. In 2008, they began turning them over to State Department Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and the Government of Iraq (GoI). In Al Anbar, the Marines are nominally on the periphery providing overwatch in each area, but being Marines, they are still in the lead. When the transition took place to the State Department teams, many Marines were transferred to augment the PRTs. We got to head out to the Rule of Law Center with one of them.

Col Daugherty can't seem to stay out of Iraq. He's a reserve officer and is a district attorney in his real life. He also had over 32 months in Iraq. He's deployed here in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2009. In 2004 and 2005, he was on a Civil Affairs team responsible for reconstruction projects. Over the course of the next few years, he continued to volunteer to return to Iraq and is now a Marine augment on the PRT. He is getting ready to head home in a few weeks, but took us out to see the Rule of Law Center. Worried about the security and authority of judges, General Petraeus ordered a number of Rule of Law Centers to be built throughout Iraq. They are secure compounds, where judges and lawyers can operate freely, immune from threat. The compounds have houses for the judges, offices for prosecution and defense attorneys, barracks for the marshal service, and temporary holding cells for defendants. The buildings are distinguished looking and are often former regime palaces to give the judges authority and to symbolically show that this is a new Iraq, ruled by laws. The project is astonishing in its scope and is being completed by a large Iraq construction company. Jobs are provided to local laborers and the US Government is only paying for a third of it, the rest is coming from the GoI and from money captured from the former regime.

Walking around with Col Daugherty was truly educational to hear his thoughts on the last 6 years in Iraq. There is no doubt that Iraq has changed for the better since 2004, what the future holds, I have no idea, but the question persists- why did it change? I wondered why we didn't reach out to the tribes earlier or why they didn't approach us earlier. In 2004, we ran all reconstruction projects through the CPA instituted city councils instead of the tribes. I could work with tribal leaders, but only to try and influence the willingness of the Iraqi soldiers I worked with. In hindsight, we should have tried working with the tribes from the beginning, but I also have trouble faulting the CPA for trying to build a legitimate government that was more representative than the tribal leaders. On the 31st, Iraqis will go to the polls again in their provincial elections. Though the Marines are significantly reducing their presence in Al Anbar, they will also face this dilemma again. Do we continue to work with the tribes? Or the democratically elected officials, councils, and government? Maybe both? The tribes deserve much of the credit for the peace that has broken out in the province and they have developed significant relationships with the Marines, but we have to be careful we don't cut off the head of the elected government. Then again, many of the tribes have members running for election. If they do well enough, maybe Al Anbar will just have democratically elected Sheiks?

In the afternoon, we went out with Lt Gilliland, an artillery officer who has served as a civil affairs officer for the last year in Ramadi. Artillery, known as the King of Battle, is used to destroy, instead Lt Gilliland gave us a tour of the projects he has done over the last year to help rebuild the city- schools, irrigation, water treatment plants, soccer fields, and business centers. Truly astonishing and a great commentary on how the Marine Corps has adapted to this environment.

Finally, last night, Brad and I hopped on a helicopter and flew to Camp Baharia outside of Fallujah. The Marines have already turned over Camp Fallujah to the Iraqi army and have displaced their much smaller force to a camp on the outskirts of Camp Fallujah. Tomorrow we hope to get into the city, meet some of the local leaders, and take some pictures...

Love ya all and keep sending your emails and comments!

XX00Z