

Weekly Report
January 7 – 11, 2008
Michael Maxey

Summary of Activities

I reported to duty on January 7th at USAID and was sworn in as a Foreign Service Officer under a non-career, 5 year limited appointment. My duty station is USAID Iraq and I am on TDY for the training in USAID/Washington. On January 7 and 8, I underwent security training, obtained government identification badges, and took care of personnel administrative matters. On Wednesday, January 9, I started the FACT (Foreign Affairs Counter Threat) Area Studies and Language course which is a three day course. I completed this course on Friday, January 11.

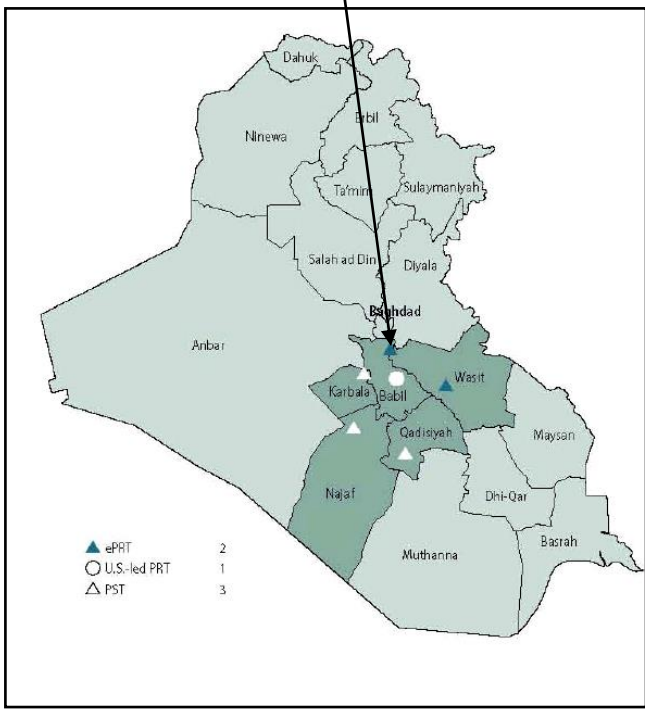
FACT Area Studies course provided a useful overview of Iraqi politics, local customs and basic Arabic. Lectures were given on how we should interact with counterparts, highlighted cultural sensitivities and discussed Iraqi customs, courtesies and social practices. The last day provided a summary of various deployment related issues ranging from pay/benefits, family support and casualty assistance to counter intelligence and stress issues. This was a good course providing some valuable information by people who either worked in Iraq or interacted closely with people who have. Jerry Thompson was the course director and gave many of the lectures with an eye to practical matters. Jerry's stress on Respect, Courtesy and Comfort was important in that achieving results in Iraq depends in large part in the personal relationships that one is able to build. He said to achieve strong relationships we must communicate to our counterparts, hosts and FSN staff the respect that they deserve as the primary leaders in the reconstruction of their country. We communicate respect by demonstrating knowledge of local customs and showing courtesy from an Iraqi perspective. We need to show everyone that we are comfortable in the environment (i.e., never complain in public!) and we were cautioned to "...watch out for how much you think you are in control." There were a couple of good sessions on basic Arabic with a focus on Iraqi dialect for basic vocabulary, greetings and courtesies which included handout audio material (2 cds – (1) audio that tracked with the written material and (2) an interactive cd that can be used with an Internet browser). The final day sessions included a briefing by Nan Leininger, Unaccompanied Tours Support Officer, which provided good information on family support services that are available from the State Department for family members in the Washington DC area.

During the week, USAID Iraq confirmed that I will be assigned to the ePRT North Babil (see attached map). I will replace North Babil USAID Representative Lewis Tate. Lewis provided me with my mailing address (copy attached) and gave me useful information on the security situation in the North Babil area and emphasized the professionalism of the US military and the unity of mission. Very exciting stuff.

Plans for Next Week

I will attend the FACT (Foreign Affairs Counter Threat Course) held from 01/14 – 01/18. During the week, I can be reached on my cell phone at 703 343-0300 or by email at Michael@Maxey.Info. As requested by USAID/Iraq, I will submit my time and attendance for PP #1 and sign for my supervisor, Kent Larson. .

ePRT North Babil Iraq



Google Earth Satellite Image



My mailing address:

MICHAEL MAXEY
HHC 4th BCT 3rd ID
EPRT
UNIT 40621
FOB KALSU
APO, AE 09312