



U.S. EMBASSY - BAGHDAD

2008 Provincial Reconstruction Team News

-U.S. and Iraqi Doctors Teach Each Other-

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TIKRIT, Iraq — For the first time in years, 24 Iraqi physicians had the opportunity to learn new medical technologies, clinical techniques and life saving skills during the Salah ad Din Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and the U.S. Army's 345th Combat Support Hospital (CSH) basic life support techniques course.

Excitement was palpable as the Iraqi and U.S. doctors greeted each other and interacted through lectures, hands-on practical exercises, and a guided tour of the hospital on Combat

Operations Base Speicher. And the learning wasn't one-sided—at day's end the Iraqi doctors shared medical techniques rarely practiced in the United States with their Army counterparts.

“Iraqi doctors are thirsty for new knowledge, and these interactions [with the U.S. Army doctors] are not satiating their thirst, but rather intensifying it. Once their eyes are open, they are an insatiable force of learning and improvement of the healthcare system in Salah ad Din,” said Staff Sergeant Andrew Haggard, a member of the PRT's Health Section. The section works closely with the Salah ad Din Directorate of Health to improve provincial health services. The section also helps the CSH coordinate training for local medical personnel.

Iraqi doctors are eager to see and learn new information and techniques relatively unknown here. An attendee noted “...Basic Life Support is known by Iraqi doctors, but not widely practiced. We certainly need refresher courses.”

This last training session, number four in the series, is the largest and most successful to date. The first course, held two months ago, was attended by three timid Iraqi physicians. As word spread, more Iraqi doctors are clamoring for training and interaction with their American counterparts.



U.S. Army and Iraqi doctors working together during a Basic Life Support training course held at COB Speicher, Tikrit, Salah ad Din, Iraq on August 27, 2008. The course was sponsored by the Salah ad Din PRT and the 345th Combat Sup

The Iraqi doctors were grateful for the training and the PRT's dedication to improving health care in the province. "With the victory today, I consider myself starting the first step of my dream. So, thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thanks to all those who dedicated themselves to the future of peace in this region of the world; the region which will share with them the honor of writing a new language in the history of mankind; to be life-long friendly nations," said Dr. Sa'ad Hariz, Director of Salah ad Din General Hospital.