



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

*An initiative of
the National Academy of Public Administration,
and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs
and the Bobst Center for Peace and Justice,
Princeton University*

Oral History Program

Series: Policing
Interview no.: A17

Interviewee: Robert Perito
Interviewer: Gordon Peake
Date of Interview: 19 November 2007
Location: US Institute of Peace
Washington, DC
USA

Innovations for Successful Societies, Bobst Center for Peace and Justice
Princeton University, 83 Prospect Avenue, Princeton, New Jersey, 08544, USA
www.princeton.edu/successfulsocieties

PEAKE: I have here Robert Perito from the United States Institute of Peace. Before we begin the interview, Bob, I just want to confirm that you have read the paperwork that has to do with the interview and you have given your consent to the interview.

PERITO: *I've read the release form and signed it, so we can proceed.*

PEAKE: Thank you. I'd like to begin first of all by just thanking you for agreeing to take part in this interview but to move on then to talk a little bit about your career and your role in policing. What institutions have you worked for. What is your role? What countries have you worked in?

PERITO: *I became involved with police and post-conflict interventions in 1994, actually 1993 just after the Blackhawk Down incident in Somalia. I was at the State Department, I was an office director. My office was tasked with creating a police training program to stand up a new Somali police force to take the hand-off from the US military which would depart in March 1994. So we went through and created a program to train Somali police.*

The following summer I led an effort to create a police training program that would stand up a Haitian national police following the US intervention in Haiti in September 1994. The next year in 1995, I moved from State to the US Department of Justice where I was first the Deputy Director and then the Acting Director of the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program which is the US government's international police assistance program. In that capacity I was responsible for providing policy guidance and management support to US police programs in Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor.

PEAKE: Thank you. What I'd like to do now is walk our way through certain functional areas and talk about some of the experiences that you've had and to bring those out. I'd like to begin by talking about the question of recruitment. You mentioned in your opening remarks your involvement in the Somali Police and the Haitian National Police among others, such as Kosovo in which there was also a need to recruit a large number for a newly established police.

PERITO: *We're talking about indigenous police.*

PEAKE: We're talking about indigenous police. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about your involvement in recruiting indigenous police services.

PERITO: *The best of these programs was the Haiti program, based on a well-organized campaign that was planned largely before the intervention. We were able to obtain written applications for the police from over 60,000 people, of which we were in the end able to select 5,000. The key there and in all subsequent operations is vetting which is both the most important and the most difficult thing to do. Vetting involves establishing criteria and then using those criteria as determination for who actually gets into the police. These criteria are the obvious ones of educational level, physical condition, general intention of the applicant. But also the more tricky parts of it involve the applicant's previous experience and in some cases, for example, in Bosnia where most of the people who entered the training program had actually been police before, the issue there was to determine who may have been guilty in the past of human rights abuses and criminal behavior and to identify those people and exclude them from the police.*

In doing vetting, it's very useful if you have written records but this is often not the case because written records are often destroyed in a conflict or they're

destroyed by people intentionally at the end of the conflict. So in the cases where we did vetting, in Haiti and in the Balkans, we were forced to use a variety of different kinds of techniques and sources. These range from utilizing US government sources, CIA, FBI, etc., to using the international war crime tribunal in the Hague, using databases for other international organizations down to actually putting names in newspapers and inviting people to come forward if they had derogatory information, organizing groups of concerned citizens and town clergy, civil society representatives, educators, anybody who might know the identity and the background of various people.

Then in every case where we were successful and could do it we made the acceptance into the police-training program conditional upon the candidate being able to serve for a year without having any derogatory information surface. In Kosovo we actually had situations where classes were convened and students stood up and pointed across the room at another student and said, "That man killed my brother." Or "That man was in the group that came and destroyed our village." So a person would have to be removed, his background checked out. So basically the first challenge in doing recruiting is vetting.

The second challenge in doing recruiting is often quotas or arrangements that the intervening force or the intervening organization makes. In Kosovo, for example, the UN without any prompting and probably without any real requirement to do so, early on made a deal with the Kosovo Liberation Movement to establish quotas. The UN agreed to accept 50% of the people entering the new Kosovo Police Service would be KLA veterans. This gave the KLA a preponderant influence in the new police force. Also the UN determined that at least, I think it was 14 or 15% of the new force would be minority representatives primarily, ethnic Serbs and another 10 or 12% of the new force would be women. By the time we got around to adding together all of these quotas, there was almost no room in the force left for what were called RAMs, Regular Albanian Males, or ordinary people. Unfortunately or inevitably, the general population, ordinary men, produced the highest levels of education and physical fitness, etc. But, for the first couple of years of the program, these people were almost virtually excluded by the quota system. I think that's pretty much it for recruiting.

PEAKE: Thank you for that. You mentioned in the beginning of that statement that the most positive recruiting in your view was the work that was done in Haiti. You mentioned the amount of pre-planning that was done. I wonder if you can talk a little bit about what pre-planning actually was done which made that intervention more successful in your eyes.

PERITO: *An even better example was Kosovo. We had about a year to plan the Kosovo intervention as it turned out. By the time we arrived in Kosovo, we had literally several three-inch thick, looseleaf binders full of information on the recruiting plan. We had worked out a recruiting strategy. We had developed applications, we developed recruiting posters, ads for newspapers, ads for radio, broadcast, and posters to go up on walls in villages. We worked out a set of criteria for new applicants. We developed the plans and actually identified participants to be on review committees. We made arrangements with the UN and the OSCE which would jointly run the recruitment program to provide personnel to do the screening.*

In the end, the UN police and OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) established a joint program whereby the UN representing the UN police force and OSCE representing the training program would jointly vet

incoming students for the police academy so that they would meet both the requirements of the academy and the future police force.

This all required a great deal of work in the beginning, everything from working out what would be the physical requirements and identifying doctors, working out a sheet the doctors could use in giving the physical exam, down to figuring out what we would do in order to determine identities. So that was very useful. On the basis of that work we were able to very quickly recruit the first incoming class and get the academy up and running within a matter of weeks after we arrived in Kosovo.

PEAKE: Thank you. Do you recall when you were developing the Kosovo plan, were there any lessons that you drew from other countries? Were there any models that you were aware of that you looked favorably upon? Were there other information sources that you used whether that be in books, literature, the early days of the Internet?

PERITO: *There's nothing available on this. The Haiti experience was instructive. One of the things—when we went into Haiti we realized, or we quickly learned the following. First of all, local records were almost nonexistent. The program in Haiti was to vet the Haitian military, the FAD'H. As it turned out we discovered that the Haitian army did not have a name list for enlisted men and noncommissioned officers. There was literally no list; the Haitian army had no idea who was in the Haitian army. They did have a list of people who were in the officer corps although the first thing we encountered were Haitian names. Haitian names are all very similar. You have people named Jean Felipe and then people named Felipe Jean and then Jean Felipe Jean and so on. We found there were people on the list who had only their first name or perhaps their last name. So identifying people was extremely difficult. Also there was no personnel system so there were no personnel records on anyone.*

In the end, other than a few really notorious characters and people who were in the very senior ranks of the army, we realized it was virtually impossible to make real distinctions about who people were. The fact is though, in Haiti, it didn't matter very much because the members of the previous security forces were used only on a temporary basis until new recruits who had come through a very formal vetting process and training at the academy were able to come on duty. So these people were only on temporary service and then they were demobilized.

In Bosnia, we found out that by establishing a vetting program and making it clear that it was credible and that we really could identify people, we discovered that the Bosnian police sent forward only exactly the number of people that would be permitted into the new Bosnian police force and only about 10 or 15 people were actually identified as being not acceptable. They had self selected. People who they knew would not be permitted to join the force because of criminal behavior or human rights abuses simply didn't apply. I'm not sure what happened to those people, I think they probably went into private security forces or goon squads. But the people self selected.

PEAKE: You really talked about a number of different types of obstacles. If I may try to summarize them. They exist on a number of levels. One, there's a very practical level that you're talking about, the absence of records, the unfamiliarity with the context. Then there is this political level as well, the micro-politics of the Bosnian police, down to the deals that are made on a higher political level, with political

leaders. You mentioned that in Kosovo. How did you try to surmount those obstacles?

PERITO: I think the most important thing is making acceptance into the police force contingent on people being able to serve a year or two without derogatory information becoming available and under the supervision of international police. It became very clear in some cases in Bosnia that there were people who had gotten through the original screening who should not be in the police. In fact, in Bosnia the UN two or three years later did a second vetting and excluded several hundred members of the police. Vetting has taken place in the Haitian police on several occasions. There was a review that was just completed by the United Nations in the new Haitian National Police leadership recently and 700-800 members of the police were expelled. This is something that should be done on a regular basis over time as the people who are running the program, the international intervention force or the local authorities, become more familiar with the people and staff.

Also part of the vetting process is making it possible for people to retire. What we found is it is very difficult for people who have been in the police before to adapt and to serve under new conditions, particularly in police forces that were used to protect the state and oppress the citizenry. So it is very important to make it possible for these people to retire honorably, to leave, to go off to do other things.

PEAKE: Can you talk a little bit about some of those furloughing programs that you were involved in to help those who were near the end of their time and who worked in a different context to retire with honor as you described it.

PERITO: In Haiti we had a program that was run by the International Organization for Migration under a contract with the US Agency for International Development. We took the existing Haitian army, vetted out the really notorious bad guys and used the remaining group of about 3,000-4,000 soldiers as interim police officers and they served for maybe as much as a year in some cases under the supervision of the international police who came in as part of the intervention force. As new classes of cadets graduated from the police academy and came on duty, equal numbers of the interim public security force were demobilized and sent into a training program. The training program was run by the International Organization for Migration. They interviewed people who had served. They asked them which one of a number of career specialties they'd like to pursue. Mostly it was skilled labor. Do you want to be a carpenter, do you want to be a plumber, do you want to do this, do you want to do that?

They were then given a six-week to two-month training program in that particular skill. The theory was that these people were going to come out of these training programs just as the Haitian economy took off, benefiting from the intervention and the reduction or elimination of international sanctions. The problem was that the Haitian economy didn't revive so most of these people emerged from the training programs with new sets of skills but became unemployed. That's also pretty much the situation in most post conflict interventions. The lack of resources makes it very difficult to find employment for people who have been in the police and then are sort of sent off into retraining programs and then put back on the street.

PEAKE: You've talked about these extraordinarily complex recruitment strategies that you've worked on in Haiti and Kosovo, Bosnia and Somalia. I'd be interested if you could talk a little bit about how you evaluated these programs and what was the impact and the effect of these evaluations?

PERITO: There never was a formal evaluation. My experience in government is that agencies are very, very reluctant - if they don't absolutely refuse - to pay for evaluations. Given the fact that resources are always very, very scarce, funders always look to what is the next problem, what is the thing we have to get done. That's where the money goes. It really doesn't go to an academic exercise in evaluating what we did. In these programs you know the proof is in the performance. If the police force, as in Kosovo say, graduates from the academy and does its job, then the assumption is that the procedures for selection worked. If you're getting the right kind of people in the police, if they're going through the training program in an efficient and effective way, if they're coming out and actually able to do the job, then you figure you've got the right people. If that's not the case, then obviously there's something wrong with the program. But formal evaluations are almost never done, particularly not in the early days when it is the most critical.

PEAKE: Thank you. If I may, I'd like to move on now to talk a little bit about some of the issues that you'd mentioned, training and professionalizing some of the police forces that you've worked on. Can you describe some of the training programs that you worked on, that you helped design and create?

PERITO: Probably the best international policing training effort that has ever been done by the United States was the effort that was done in Kosovo because it drew on all the experience of Haiti and Bosnia. The curriculum was actually developed before the intervention. It was developed by police officers, American police officers who had a great deal of experience in previous operations. The curriculum was actually written down in a series of thick three-ring binders. It was developed partially in the United States and partially at the OESC headquarters in Austria. It was vetted with a number of international institutions.

That curriculum was available when the Kosovo police school opened and that program run by the OSCE in the end had about—it had several hundred instructors, about a quarter of whom came from the United States, the others came from other OSCE member states. The Europeans that taught there then worked on the curriculum and improved it and refined it, made it more applicable to local conditions. The basic program is a matter of public record, you can go see it, but it looks at basic police skills. The Kosovo curriculum has two parts to it. First of all there is an in-classroom part which runs for four months and then there is a field-training part that runs for another three months. It is critical to have both I think.

The first part, it is very important that cadets receive a good grounding in basic skills. This is everything from how to interview suspects, how to do basic criminal investigation, how to do patrol, to more how to control traffic, all of these basic skills. Then they get a chance to actually utilize these skills on a day-to-day basis on the street under the supervision of a trained field training officer who has a curriculum that he is following. There's a feedback loop to the academy so that the academy benefits from the experiences of these cadets when they get into the field.

In Kosovo it worked like this, four months of classroom training. The cadets then left the academy and did one month of field experience under the supervision of a veteran and trained police training officer. They then returned to the classroom for two weeks of instruction, went back out on the streets for another month. Then returned to the classroom for two more weeks of instruction, back in the street for another month, and then back in the academy for another two weeks.

So there was a constant mix of practical on-the-job experience and classroom training with an opportunity to reaffirm lessons learned and to spot evident gaps and to fill those gaps.

The second important thing is that successful programs like the one in Kosovo do more than just provide basic training. There is an assumption made that somehow or other, perhaps like military training, you can give somebody basic and then they go out and they can perform, but, in fact, you can't really have a police department that is made up of people who have only been through the basic course. You need people who have specialized skills and you also need people who are trained to operate at different ranks and exercise management. So the program in Kosovo very quickly began to include courses for sergeants, lieutenants, captains and majors. Of course there were stress management skills as well as management and personnel skills as well as policing skills.

Also cadets or police officers after a period of time working on the streets were brought back into the academy for refresher training on basic skills on use of firearms, etc. Also then they were given advance training in a specialty. They were asked to choose criminal investigation or traffic control or whatever. Then they were given more advanced courses in those so they improved their skills over time.

PEAKE: Thank you. I want to take you back a little bit to, you mentioned that this curriculum was developed in Washington, DC and Vienna with an amalgam of experts. You weren't in Kosovo at that point so how did you identify what was needed in the curriculum at that point. Then once you arrived in Kosovo can you talk me through some of the changes that were made to the curriculum based upon circumstances?

PERITO: *The people that did the curriculum for Kosovo had the advantage of the experience of having worked extensively in Bosnia. These were both parts of the former Yugoslavia, so the legal system and the environment, the policing environment, were very similar. So the people who did this had a lot of background and they knew pretty much what they were getting. So the basic curriculum reflected that. There was also an understanding based on involvement in previous police training programs in Latin America and other places about what basic skills were.*

Then there was a vision, which is the most important thing in many respects about what we were trying to create. What we were trying to create was a professional community-oriented police service that would serve citizens, much the same way police operate in the United States and Western Europe. This then colored all aspects of the training.

Once the school opened and once the Kosovar students began to arrive, then the instructors, both American and European began to tailor the course to those people that they were dealing with. One of the problems that was encountered immediately was the education level of trainees. Even though this was Europe, Kosovar Albanians had avoided participating in the Yugoslav school system. So education levels were lower than might have been anticipated. Also the curriculum had to be modified to take into account the fact that many trainees were not accustomed to spending long periods of time sitting in a classroom. These were adults and like all adults they learned more quickly in sort of participatory exercises rather than simply listening to lectures and so on.

PEAKE: You alluded to this that took place in Kosovo and it may have taken place in some of the other countries in which you served which is blending together of new recruits, rookie police officers, with those that have longer experience. I wonder if you can talk me through some of the strategies, the problems that you may have encountered, some of the strategies that you used to overcome this blending together of different police with different levels of experience.

PERITO: *Actually, what we discovered, having worked in countries where we tried to retrain existing police forces and countries where we started from scratch, it might seem counterintuitive, but it is actually easier to train from scratch. It is actually much easier as we did in Kosovo and in Haiti, to go into a situation where there is no existing police force and to recruit a bunch of people who have never been police before but who are bright and interested, and turn them into police officers. It is much, much more difficult to take a group of people who have been police under a previous undemocratic or anti-democratic system and get them to change their ways of doing things and adopt a new approach to policing. That requires a great deal more supervision and training and monitoring once people deploy to the field.*

PEAKE: Something that you mentioned when we were talking about vetting was the importance of knowing the context of a country. I'd like to ask you a question about language. Often trainers are—in what language has some of the training that you've worked on taken place and how have you managed to get around the problem that the instructor may speak one language and those who are being instructed are learning in one, maybe two different languages.

PERITO: *In international police training programs, the instructors never speak the local language, never. It's just—it seems that these operations are conducted in areas where it is just very hard to find international police officers that speak the local language. For example, even in Haiti which is officially a French-speaking country, the police recruits actually spoke Creole which is a language that is only spoken by Haitians. In Bosnia and in Kosovo instruction was done in either Serb or Croatian or in Albanian. But actually, in fact, the training is quite effective using instructors who primarily spoke in English with local translators who translated from English into the local language. Over time the translators became very expert in the training procedure.*

In terms of field training we discovered that early on it was best to train local police who had gone through the training program and who had served for a while in the field, to bring them back into the academy and to train them to be field training officers. They actually proved to be extremely conscientious and actually better than the internationals because they could speak the language. Language doesn't turn out to be such a major problem. It is something that just has to be dealt with because there is really no way to find international instructors, or enough of them, that speak whatever language happens to be demanded at the time.

PEAKE: I'd like to ask you to finish off the section about training with a question about cost. Often the kinds of programs the international community likes are very expensive, too expensive maybe for the budgets of many communities or countries. Looking back upon your experience with training, can you think of a couple of cost saving measures, suggestions that may be incorporated into future programs?

PERITO: *International police training programs are always paid for by the intervention force, not by the local community. This is either done directly by the major*

countries that are participating or it is done by a fund created by the United Nations to which donor countries are asked to contribute. All of these police forces turn out to be too expensive for the countries in which they're located. The worst one is probably Afghanistan today, where the cost of paying police salaries far exceeds probably the budget of the entire government. This is just a problem that has to be dealt with.

The forces, and the forces in the Balkans are going to require some sort of international contributions to their salaries for the foreseeable future. It is very important at the beginning of an intervention to pay police commensurate with the cost of living so they are not forced to turn to petty corruption in order to survive. As you know, the beginning of operations when the international community floods into a place, salaries skyrocket, rents go up. Cost of living, food goes up because the internationals come in with lots of money and drive the prices up. So it is very important that police that get recruited into the new force make a living wage so that they don't quit and go to work as drivers or building guards for NGOs or the UN or somebody else. But this also, always, inevitably ends up with police officers making a higher salary than is sustainable by a local economy. The only exclusion to this is surprisingly enough Iraq which has a tremendous amount of money because its government is funded almost entirely by oil income, income from oil exports.

PEAKE: Thank you. I'd like to move on to talk a little bit about integrating and amalgamating different police units, different militia and national police into one civilian police unit. Is that something that you've worked on, had experience working on?

PERITO: *First of all, it's really a bad idea to bring in units or groups as entire entities into a new force. In Haiti the standard was that anyone who had been in the Haitian army could join the new police force as long as they passed the same entrance exams as any other cadet and agreed to not only take the exam and pass the exam, but actually go through the academy. The same was true, I believe, in East Timor. The fact that everybody went through the academy and everybody had a common experience in terms of training and preparation meant that the force had a better chance to succeed.*

In El Salvador for example, the US pressed the UN, actually successfully, to accept into the Salvador police in the beginning, units of counter-narcotics police that had been trained by the United States. As it turned out, these units were full of criminals who were involved in armed robberies and other kinds of behaviors and eventually had to be forcibly removed from the police force and imprisoned. It is almost never a good idea to allow police to come in or have militia forces or anything just brought into the police. You don't really solve the problem of what to do with illegally armed groups by incorporating them in the official security forces. That said, that's exactly what the US is proposing to do in Iraq right now, to take people who are coming forward under the Sunni awakening program and sign them up and put them in the police.

PEAKE: Thank you. If we can move on a little bit to talk about management because it is one of the elements that is often talked about in building a police institution, but sometimes one of the more neglected ones. Can you talk a little bit about some of the experience that you have had working in developing managerial systems? You mentioned Kosovo when you were talking about some of the training on management. If you could expand on that.

PERITO: *The big mistake that the international community always makes, they made it again in Iraq and Afghanistan, is that they decide that the most important thing is to come in and train a bunch of police officers and put them out on the street. Almost never in an intervention, is any thought given to the institution that will be responsible for managing and supporting and administering the new police force.*

In Kosovo for example, no thought was given to that and indeed for years, the Kosovo police service operated as part of an auxiliary police force to the United Nations police force. The UN steadfastly resisted creating any kind of a Minister of Interior or police department for the Kosovo police. Actually, if it were possible, the best thing to do would be to start by creating the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Justice that would have control over the police, drafting the basic police law and then training the managers, accountants, personnel people and others that would run the administrative structure for the police. Then the last thing you should probably do is train the cops. It is very important that the international intervention force have with it people who are skilled and have the technical expertise to work with their counterparts at whatever the ministry is that has responsibility for the police. We've made a terrible mess of this in Iraq, where we paid almost no attention to the Ministry of the Interior. We spent billions of dollars to train Iraqi police only to find that the Interior Ministry is now controlled by various militia groups that have no interest at all in democratic policing but a lot of interest in graft and corruption and in using various parts of the police for ethnic cleansing and pursuing whatever objectives—political objectives—they might have.

PEAKE: You mentioned a catalog of mistakes that the international community has made in terms of management and not prioritizing it. Are there any examples that you can draw upon from your own career of when there is perhaps some hidden success stories or hidden elements in which managerial systems have been put in place that have worked, that have stood the test of time?

PERITO: *Over time, in the beginning in Haiti, ICITAP was able to work with the Ministry of Justice which had authority over the police to prepare basic police law. They were then able to work with one particular individual who became the inspector general of the police to establish an internal review program for police that actually was effective, until that person was fired, in reducing police abuses and dealing with citizen complaints against the police. But even in Haiti, President Aristide resisted any efforts to train a group of police managers and police executives, wanting to put his own people in charge of the police. So that effort in the long run failed. Almost nowhere is there an example of a situation where the international community was able to come in and work effectively with the government involved in the police to make sure that that entity functioned effectively.*

PEAKE: I'd like to ask you a question. One of the elements in internal management is discipline, creating a disciplinary mechanism within the police for investigating complaints about officers, whether that be internally or externally from the public. I wonder if you can reflect a little bit upon—if there are any programs that you've worked upon which emphasized building up this internal managerial function and maybe reflect upon its effectiveness.

PERITO: *ICITAP has been very successful in doing this in a number of countries where they have gotten buy-in from local authorities. The most important thing of course is that the local Interior Ministry and his counterparts in the government really believe in the importance of ensuring the credibility of the police force and will support the person who is chosen as the police Inspector General and will make*

it clear to police officers that there really are going to be in fact punishments for transgressions. Also that the government will not attempt to politicize the police and use the police for political purposes. The actual technical task of standing up an inspector-general or internal review board is not all that difficult. The difficult part is the political will.

In Bosnia the ICITAP program was able to develop an internal review mechanism for the police in both parts of Bosnia. The one in the Republic of Srpska was particularly interesting because the person who was in charge of the police there supported the effort and the review mechanism was stood up. There were rules and regulations and procedures. An operating manual was developed. A number of cases of officers who were the subject of complaints were reviewed. Some of them were actually dismissed from the force. Then the test was that the head of the police in the Republic of Srpska was accused of malfeasance and his case was actually brought before the review board and he was actually expelled from his job as the head of the police. That was an amazing performance, actually.

PEAKE: We talked a little bit there about international accountabilities. I'd like to ask you a couple of questions about external accountability taking the conversation down to two particular routes. The first one I'm going to ask you to reflect upon is external oversight of the police, ombudspersons and committees that work on that. That's the first one. The second element that I'd like you to reflect upon is these community—they have different names, community safety forums, community partnerships, all part of a community policing strategy in which the public get the chance to input into police decision making and reflect upon police performance. So maybe in relation first to the question about an external oversight agency, an ombudsperson. Have you ever worked on—?

PERITO: Yes, we actually created one of those in South Africa. The South African Police Service, the Ministry level entity that supervises the South African Police Service wanted to create a review mechanism that would supervise the police. ICITAP went in and actually wrote the rules, regulations, office procedures, training manuals for this new entity. We trained the investigators and the office staff and got the entity up and running. The idea in the beginning was that it would handle all citizen complaints about the police but in the end it actually only was able to deal with cases where prisoners had died in police custody. There were so many deaths in police custody that became a full-time job. The people who worked for this entity all became trained homicide investigators.

It is possible to do this. Once again, the most important thing is the political will on the part of the government to allow an organization like this to function. Citizen oversight of the police is that it is much more difficult than you might think. In so many societies there is no tradition of citizens having anything to do with the police. The last thing a citizen would do is talk to a police officer, or go to a police station. Normally that means is then you have two problems, the original problem and then you have to deal with the police who want to either bribe you or steal your goods. So in most societies it is very, very difficult to communicate the idea that citizen groups should be interested in what the police are doing and should actually take it upon themselves to help the police improve.

Where organizations like USAID have been able to work with civil society to oversee the police, very often that has meant that resources that should have gone into training the police and building police institutions get siphoned off into creating good oversight groups. So the oversight groups are successful because they're able to point to the fact that the police are ineffective or abusive.. But one of the reasons that the police are abusive is that they're not getting the resources

they need. So we have very strong oversight groups and very weak police departments. It's very tricky.

PEAKE: From your own experience can you talk a little bit about—you mentioned some of the obstacles, some of the challenges in marrying together police and the community. You mentioned the gulf of distrust that there was. In your work in the countries that you've mentioned, can you think of your own strategies for marrying together police and community?

PERITO: *One of the most successful programs was done in Bosnia. It had a number of parts to it. There was no tradition of this in Bosnia at all. Police protected the state, people were afraid of police. There was a story about one little girl who learned her father was going to be a policeman and she burst into tears. Her whole experience with police was these were the guys who came and beat people up. The ICITAP program worked a long time on getting the police to relate to the community. It took various forms.*

One form was police going to Parent-Teach Association meetings in schools and talking to community groups about the police, the new police program, what police were like and introducing neighborhood watch programs. When we introduced neighborhood watch in Bosnia, the Bosnians said, "Oh yes, this is what we had before, we know all about this. Yes the police officer is in the local community center and he watches the neighborhood. He knows everything that is going on and reports on everybody." No, that's not what we mean by neighborhood watch. We had to come up with a different name for it.

The first thing was sending police into the schools, getting police to relate to the community by actually going in and talking to people. Another thing was bicycle patrols. When we introduced the idea of police on bicycles the police were so much against this idea that the first group of officers that were trained on bicycles refused to wear their uniforms. They trained in civilian clothes because they thought people would laugh at them. But when they appeared for the first time in their brand new spandex uniforms with the neat helmets and the Ray-Ban sunglasses and on the bright, shiny new bicycles, they attracted such a crowd of admirers, they became instant celebrities. Soon every police station and every department in the country wanted to have a bicycle patrol. Of course, putting police on bicycles meant they were easily available to people.

We created a program called Safety Bear. Safety Bear was the mascot of the Alaska State Highway Patrol. They had a costume for a bear which looked like the kind of costume that mascots wear on the sideline of American football games. They brought the costume to Bosnia and some clever person created a Bosnian police hat and jacket that fit the bear costume. Once again the guy who was dragooned into being inside the bear was frightened to death that if he ever walked outside in the bear costume he would be ridiculed. But the first time he walked outside in the bear costume he was immediately surrounded by admiring little children and adoring parents. It was such a smash that Safety Bear began going to schools and giving lectures to the children about safety. This was an enormous success.

One day a child from the Republic of Srpska called the police station in Sarajevo which was in a Bosniak area and asked to talk to Safety Bear. That led to a Safety Bear hotline where kids all over the country could call in and talk to Safety Bear. It was a prerecorded message where Safety Bear would give them a little speech about obeying their parents, not picking up unexploded ordinance and watch crossing streets. This was a tremendously successful program. The

Safety Bear program was married up with a new Walt Disney movie. The police would go around the country showing the Walt Disney movie to school children and then at the end of the movie Safety Bear would appear, give a little lecture, hug a few kids.

There were television and news stories about Safety Bear. Safety Bear appeared in newspapers around the country. It was a tremendously successful program in putting across the fact that the police were your friends.

PEAKE: You mentioned previously in your remarks about the difficulty of evaluating them when the next crisis is on the horizon and resources get devoted to that. Reflecting back upon other works in the past, how did you evaluate say for example this Safety Bear program, what were the criteria that you used for success? You may not have had an external evaluation, but what were the criteria that you used and, if I may—.

PERITO: *Let me just cut you off here and say this program proves the point. People are not willing to put resources into evaluations. As soon as this program is up and running, hundreds of kids are calling the hot line every day, thousands of students are seeing Safety Bear in their schools and in local movie theaters, newspapers are running feature stories, the Department of State decided that this program was fluff. The Alaska Highway Patrol wanted their mascot costume back and funding was cut off for this program and it stopped. No evaluation, no follow up. The State Department decided it would be hard to explain to Congress that we were using money for this kind of purpose.*

PEAKE: One more question then with your permission. I'd like to take a break. The question pertains to something that you've alluded to a couple of times which is the difficulty of changing the relationship between the police and the community. You mentioned the gulf of distrust that there is in certain places. One of the things that we've seen is that at the interface between police and community there tends sometimes to be, let's call it work-a-day corruption. It could be a road toll, it could be a traffic charge, etc. Is this something that you've noticed in your career and can you maybe talk me through some of the ways in which you've attempted to mitigate that, obviate that, reduce that common interface so that the police community interaction is better.

PERITO: *There are two kinds of police corruption. There's petty corruption--the police officer stops the taxi and demands the taxi driver give him a few pennies to go on. Then there's major police corruption where the senior police officer sells out to the drug trafficking mob. Petty corruption is best taken care of by paying the police a living wage. It's almost impossible not to have petty corruption in a situation where police officers cannot live on their salaries and are forced by dint of circumstances to shake down the public.*

In Liberia where we trained 500 police officers to be members of a new police force. This was following the Liberian civil war. Throughout the fourteen years of the civil war, the police in Liberia had not been paid. No one in Liberia had been paid. So the police resorted to petty corruption in order to survive, as had all other members of the government who had stayed on the job. We selected 500 officers who seemed to be of good character and we put them through a training program and issued them new uniforms. We had no money to pay their salaries and no money was forthcoming from the existing government. We found that these officers would wear their new uniforms when they were on duty, but if they had to resort to petty corruption, they would take off the new uniforms and put on

their old uniforms. They didn't want to sully the new uniform by wearing it at a time when they had to go out and shakedown motorists in order to survive.

The cure for petty corruption on the part of the police is paying police officers a living wage. This is much, much more difficult than it sounds. One of the problems with the program we now have in Afghanistan is that public opinion polls in Afghanistan show that people are more wary of the police and police corruption than they are of the Taliban.

PEAKE: Thank you very much. At this point we'll take a break.