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in Baghdad’s Red Zone, did not mean “safe”. We still had to get them back into the Green Zone. After about an hour, they were finally on their way.

I rushed to the U.S. Army Combat Surgical Hospital near the U.S. Embassy to greet the two Canadians as they were brought in by helicopter. They were dazed and disoriented. They had no idea who I was, but I felt I had known them for years. I had been looking at their photos every day for months. I had been reading about them, listening to interviews by friends and colleagues, and hearing about them from other CPT members in Baghdad.

The three were brought to the British Embassy compound where we were told that the Prime Minister wanted to speak with the two Canadians. When I relayed the request, I had to explain that it was Mr. Harper and not Mr. Martin who had asked (neither had heard that there had been an election in Canada since their kidnapping). But there was a glitch, the PM was put through to my cell phone and I had the opportunity to speak to the Prime Minister while literally running the length of the compound to where James Loney and Harmeet Singh Sooden were sitting.

When they returned the phone to me, I was surprised to find the PM still on the line. He expressed his appreciation

and asked that I pass on his thanks to the team.

Nothing that I experienced in Baghdad can compare with what James Loney, Harmeet Singh Sooden and Norman Kember endured. Tom Fox’s last photos are firmly etched in my memory. Like most foreign service officers, I had been a consular officer earlier in my career and had had my share of prison, hospital and morgue visits. I had been on murder scenes with the New Delhi police, had done crematorium duty in Nepal, and had viewed autopsy photos in Japan. But nothing in my career could have prepared me for what happened one November night in Baghdad, and what would transpire the following 117 days and nights.

*Stewart Henderson has recently returned to Headquarters after seven years abroad. He is assisting with the creation of the new Emergency Management Bureau within the Consular Services and Emergency Management Branch. He received the Foreign Service Award in 2006 and the Foreign Minister’s Award for Consular Excellence for his leadership during the CPT Hostage Crisis (see Congratulations page 24).*