



a lot of fire power and the first road safety lesson I gave to everyone in the Green Zone was to “yield to khaki”.

A burst of three 7.76 mm shells had been fired from the turret-mounted machine gun on the last Humvee in line. Two shells made their way into the car’s engine block. One came through the windshield and into the passenger compartment, where it ricocheted and splintered around our heads. “Friendly fire: just another bad day in Baghdad,” an American soldier said to me.

There had been a lot of bad days in Baghdad recently—most notably for two Canadians, an American and a British national. And things were only looking worse.

We were down to three photographs on the ops centre wall. We went over every aspect of the case to try to find anything that we might have missed, misinterpreted or misplaced.

A little more than a month earlier, on November 26, 2005, Canadians James Loney and Harmeet Singh Sooden, American Tom Fox, and Norman Kember, a British national, all from the Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) were kidnapped outside a Baghdad mosque, where they had gone to meet members of the Muslim Scholars Association.

I had made immediate contact with my U.S. and U.K. colleagues. It would mark the beginning of close and intensive consultations. Canada had no permanent embassy in Iraq—our office was in the U.S. Embassy (the Republican Palace). We made arrangements with the British Embassy, who evicted an entire section of staff to provide us with a makeshift operations centre. As the senior Canadian representative in Iraq, I was designated by Ottawa to lead the Canadian effort to secure the release of James and Harmeet.

We enlarged passport photos of the four CPT members

and posted them on the ops centre walls. We looked at those photos each and every day, comparing them to the way the CPT four appeared on Al Jazeera videos broadcast on December 6 and 10 and on January 28.

There were days on end when there was simply no new information. The ongoing conflicts (there continue to be at least six different conflicts in Iraq) drew away U.S. and British resources. The absence of a functioning Iraqi police service made local consultation difficult. Incoming mortar rounds and rocket strikes (three of which narrowly missed Canadian staff), constant small-arms fire from the Green Zone checkpoints (500 metres from our operations

centre) and the restriction on physical movement should all have led to strains and complications but, amazingly, did not.

In early March, an Iraqi security patrol discovered the body of a male Caucasian. It was that of Tom Fox, the American CPT member. He had been shot to death. I had to go over the post mortem photos and was told in great detail how the shooting occurred, in which order, where and when. This was not a political act. This was murder.

We were down to three photographs on the ops centre wall. We went over every aspect of the case to try to find anything that we might have missed, misinterpreted or misplaced. In the early hours of March 23, we received at long last a credible lead on where the CPT team was being held. Things went very quickly after that and months of contingency planning were now in full play.

And then, we received a call saying that the three had been found alive. We were relieved, but cautious. “Alive”