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**DoD Inspector General Lauds Bremer**

By Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample, USA  
 American Forces Press Service

ARLINGTON, Va., Nov. 15, 2004 -- Former Coalition Provisional Authority administrator L. Paul Bremer stopped by the Defense Department's inspector general headquarters today to receive the 2004 Joseph H. Sherick Award.



*Former U.S. civil administrator in Iraq L. Paul Bremer addresses DoD inspector general staff at their headquarters in Arlington, Va., Nov. 15. Bremer came to accept the 2004 Joseph H. Sherick award. The award is named after DoD's first IG and is the highest honor given by that organization to people outside the department. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample, USA*

(Click photo for screen-resolution image); [high-resolution image](#) available.

The award is named after DoD's first IG and is presented to an individual outside the IG arena "who contributes to the mission of the inspector general," said Joseph Schmitz, DoD's current IG.

Schmitz said that Bremer, who led the CPA for 14 months until his departure in May, was selected for the award because he was "a man of vision and a man of principle," who saw an important role for the IG in the transition process in Iraq.

Bremer was also noted for his support of early investigations, inspections and auditing efforts in Iraq by the IG office.

In accepting the award, Bremer said it was a great honor and pointed out the date on which it was presented. He noted that Nov. 15 was the date on which a year ago an agreement was signed giving Iraqis a path to sovereignty.

The former CPA chief noted that the inspector general was an important tool in Iraq because the Iraqi people deserve a government "which they choose themselves, and they also deserve a government they can trust.

"I felt from the time I got there how important it was, given the history of corruption under Saddam Hussein, ... to try to get this concept of trust in government established right from the beginning," he said.

In an effort to "attack corruption head on," he said, the IG there had three primary missions.

First, it had to establish a commission on public integrity, "a sort of national ombudsman with the authority to look into any allegation of corruption against any person in the government, anywhere in the country."

The Office of the Inspector General was also responsible for helping to set up a Board of Supreme Audit. In March he handed over the job of investigating the U.N. Oil for Food program to this office.

Finally, Bremer said, he decided to establish an Office of Inspector General in each of the Iraqi ministries, something that "had never been done before in Iraq or anywhere else in the region."

"We did get them (OIGs) established," he said, though he added that he is unsure "how effective" they will be.

"I think we have to be realistic. ... It will take time to realize our goals there," he said. "It's going to take time to flush the system of the corruption that became endemic for almost 40 years under Saddam Hussein."

How the OIC came into being in Iraq happened "haphazardly," according to Schmitz, who said he had bumped into Bremer briefly before the ambassador's departure for Baghdad.

Schmitz said he told Bremer that if he ever needed an inspector general while in Baghdad, "you can have your pick of any of my deputies." Bremer took him up on the offer the next day, selecting retired Navy Reserve Rear Adm. Larry Poe as the deputy CPA IG in Iraq.

Schmitz also pointed out he was amazed when he read Bremer had set forth as one of the conditions for the transfer of sovereignty that "every ministry in Iraq should have an effective Office of Inspector General."

"Not every department in the U.S. government has an effective office of the inspector general," he laughed.

Nevertheless, he said Bremer's order was a "tall one" that prompted a visit by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who told the IG staff that "when the CPA knocks on your door, give them your very best people."

**Biography:**

[Joseph Schmitz](#)

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