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MEASURING AND INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

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MEASURING AND INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE,
Washington, DC, Thursday, October 18, 2007.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:03 a.m., in room 2212, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Vic Snyder (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. VIC SNYDER, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM ARKANSAS, CHAIRMAN, OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Dr. SNYDER. The hearing will come to order.

Good morning. I appreciate you both being here. Welcome to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations' hearing on measuring and improving the effectiveness of provincial reconstruction teams, that we know as PRTs.

Over the past one and a half months, the subcommittee has held a number of hearings and briefings to examine PRTs in Iraq and Afghanistan, as part of an interagency case study. These sessions have included military and civilian personnel who have worked on PRTs, government officials with PRT oversight responsibilities, and outside experts who specialize in civil-military affairs and reconstruction-related activities. We are so impressed with these really magnificent and thoughtful and brave people who serve on these PRTs.

One question that we have not heard sufficiently addressed to this point is whether PRTs, as currently constituted, are effectively accomplishing the missions they have been given. Some of you may recall at a hearing a couple of weeks ago, Mrs. Susan Davis from California put this question directly to our Department of Defense witnesses: How are we measuring the effectiveness of PRTs?

Their answer was that there are no standardized metrics for determining whether PRTs are effective, because it is too difficult to establish such standards in a way that also accounts for the different regional conditions faced by each team.

I am pleased that we have the opportunity at today's hearing to consider the newly-released third report of the special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction on PRTs. SIGIR has played a leading role in examining the development of PRTs in Iraq, and today's report is an important step along the way to measure the effectiveness of PRTs.

Our witnesses today are Mr. Stuart Bowen, the special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction; and Mr. Robert Perito, a senior pro-

gram officer with the Center for Post-Conflict Peace and Stability Operations at the U.S. Institute of Peace.

Thank you both for being here.

Mr. Akin, I will recognize you for any comments you want to make.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Snyder can be found in the Appendix on page 33.]

STATEMENT OF HON. W. TODD AKIN, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM MISSOURI, RANKING MEMBER, OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. AKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome to the committee here. We have had some very interesting hearings on PRTs. This is the third public hearing, and the focus is on measuring the effectiveness of PRTs. While the subcommittee has studied the concept of how an interagency team comprised of civilian and military personnel works to extend the reach of the government in regional provinces and local areas, we have not investigated how the PRTs in Iraq and Afghanistan are performing.

Measuring the PRTs, it would seem to me, is an art and not really a science. As our witnesses' testimony reveals, each PRT faces a unique set of challenges that make it difficult to judge one against the other. As a result, success in Ninewa province in the northern region of Iraq may look entirely different from an effective PRT in Baghdad or Anbar province.

The ethnic composition of a province, the relative permissiveness of the area, and the education and skills of the population are just a few variables that will shape the conditions and challenges a PRT will face and determine its potential for success. Thus, what may be a great success in one province may look like marginal progress when compared to another province. Nevertheless, as the Congress continues to fund PRTs, it is our responsibility to assess the effectiveness of the project.

I would thank both of our witnesses. You have done an admirable job in completing this task.

So finally, the subject of stabilization operations generally is critical to transitioning a local area from a combat zone to business and development zone or a quiet residential neighborhood. In my view, sufficient troop strength, combined with increasing the numbers of PRTs, is a formula we should continue to use to stabilize both Iraq and Afghanistan. The exact moment when the PRTs' work is done, however, is unclear, as these countries will be in a perpetual state of improving governments and increasing economic development. I would like our witnesses to comment on how they would determine when a PRT's work is done.

Thank you very much for joining us.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for another interesting hearing topic.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Akin can be found in the Appendix on page 34.]

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Mr. Akin.

Your written statements are made a part of the record, as is your complete report, Mr. Bowen, from the very beginning introductory page to every attachment, will be made a part of the written

record. When you are done with any oral comments you want to make, we will ask questions. We will put ourselves on a five-minute clock, and we will go in order of people here at the sound of the gavel, in the order in which they come in.

We will put the timer on you so when the red light goes off, it will be at the end of five minutes, but we want you to, if you have other things to tell us beyond the red light territory, you go ahead and do that. That is primarily just to give you an idea of where you are at.

So we will begin with you, Mr. Bowen.

STATEMENT OF STUART W. BOWEN, JR., SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR IRAQ RECONSTRUCTION

Mr. BOWEN. Thank you.

Good morning, Chairman Snyder, Ranking Member Akin and members of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you to present the findings of our latest report on PRTs, a review of the effectiveness of the provincial reconstruction team program in Iraq.

I am pleased to be joined this morning by the lead auditor, Pat Dickriede, who traveled all over Iraq and visited over 20 of the PRTs and really did an outstanding job of putting together one of our very best audits, and a very important audit because, as this committee rightly has recognized, the PRT program is an essential element to success in Iraq.

As SIGIR as described it in our quarterly reports, the PRT program is the most important nationwide—that is country-wide—capacity building program the United States is supporting right now. Its focus is on building government capacity among the provincial councils and promoting recovery, economic and otherwise, within each of the 18 provinces.

About $2 billion has been appropriated already by the Congress to support this program. Another $1 billion, roughly, is in the mix, and 600 persons have been identified and deployed on the ground or enroute to Iraq to work in this program. So this is a good moment to have a detailed review like this of what has happened and what has been achieved thus far.

The PRT program is a civil-military integrated program run by the Department of State and the Department of Defense. It is a joint effort, an integrated effort to assist Iraq's provincial and local governments to develop democracy. That is the core issue economically, politically and otherwise. It employs integrated multidisciplinary teams composed to U.S. and Coalition civilian and military personnel to teach, coach and mentor provincial and local government officials in their core competencies.

It has evolved since it started in November of 2005, when the first three PRTs were stood up in Mosul, Kirkuk and Hillah. As of this past August, the program comprises 10 PRTs from the original program, 7 provincial support teams which help provide additional capacity building in those provinces that don't have a permanent standing PRT, and 15 of the recently deployed embedded PRTs, or ePRTs, part of the surge program. Those ePRTs are focused primarily in Baghdad and in Anbar province.

This report is our third one, and it provides a detailed review of what has been accomplished in each region and looks at each region's PRT performance in five areas: governance, rule of law, economic development, reconstruction and reconciliation. The core finding is that there is work to be done in developing effective and measurable strategic plans and milestones for the existing PRTs. That was a finding we had one year ago. It was renewed in our July report, and we renew it again here.

The other finding we have is the need to coordinate Commander's Emergency Response Program funding within the PRT system, especially now that the quick reaction force funds, QRF funds, are moving out. These are the PRDC funds and others that will help build and recover each of the provinces.

With respect to each of the subject areas that we looked at among the PRTs, in governance the prevailing theme was that the key obstacle was the failure of the council representatives to pass the provincial powers law. It is the enabling legislation that authorizes what the provincial councils and local councils will be able to do once stood up. It is a long-overdue piece of legislation and one of the five key elements that are currently being pushed by the embassy with the Iraqi government right now.

Rule of law, it speaks for itself. It has been problematic for the last four years in Iraq. General Jones's report identified the challenges within the MOI at the national level. Those challenges, of course, filter down to the local level. When I was in Baghdad this last August, I met with a judge who complained about continuing intimidation, and that is not just in Baghdad, but it is elsewhere.

Economic development, there is some progress there. The microloan program has been working reasonably well, and we have seen signs of new factories open and employment, but unemployment continues to be a key issue and will be essential to making progress.

Reconstruction, the PRDCs continue to move forward on projects, continue to build their own capacity locally to execute and oversee key reconstruction elements. Political reconciliation, the PRTs played a significant role in the Anbar awakening, if you will, the fact that Anbar, once a place where the provincial council could not meet at all and the PRT could not even operate. They would operate from Baghdad, and now operate in Ramadi and progress has been made there significantly.

This is a key update on what has been going on nationwide among the various PRTs. The staffing issues I know continue to be a concern of this committee and are a valid concern. The funding is appropriate to push this initiative forward, but for you to understand how they are doing, specific plans need to be developed for each PRT that provides metrics and milestones, and thus provide you feedback on that progress.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bowen can be found in the Appendix on page 37.]

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you.

By the way, our ranking member, Mr. Akin, has responsibilities on another subcommittee so he will be jogging in and out of here.

Mr. Perito.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT M. PERITO, SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER, CENTER FOR POST-CONFLICT PEACE AND STABILITY OPERATIONS, U.S. INSTITUTE OF PEACE

Mr. PERITO. Good morning, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much, members of the subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the subcommittee and to talk about the U.S. experience with provincial reconstruction teams in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

I would like to share with you some observations that I have on the U.S. PRT program and some recommendations I have as to how it might be improved. I am required to say that these are my own views and not those of the U.S. Institute of Peace, which does not advocate specific policy positions.

Provincial reconstruction teams, as we heard, are small civil-military units that assist provincial and other levels of government to govern more effectively and deliver essential services. The original PRTs were started in Afghanistan in 2002. The idea was to combine Army civil affairs teams, called "chiclets" at the time, with a force protection unit and with civilian representatives from government agencies. The idea was to provide a platform which would allow civilian government agencies to operate in secure environments.

As we have heard, there are now 25 PRTs in Afghanistan operating under a NATO-led international security assistance force. These PRTs are led by the United States and 12 other NATO and Coalition partners, and another dozen or so countries contribute personnel, financial and material support.

On November 11, 2005, Secretary of State Rice inaugurated the first of ten PRTs in Iraq. Unlike their counterparts in Afghanistan, these PRTs are mostly civilian, led by the State Department. They include private contractors and Iraqis. Then on January 10, the President announced the creation of ten additional PRTs as part of his New Way Forward in Iraq. These PRTs, so-called "embedded" PRTs or ePRTs, are part of military brigade combat teams that operate in Baghdad and Anbar province. In addition to the U.S. PRTs in Iraq, there are three PRTs that are operated by our Coalition partners, the U.K, Italy, and South Korea.

It is difficult to discuss PRTs because there has been such a proliferation of styles and models. In Afghanistan, the U.S. practice was to establish PRTs and then hand them off to Coalition or NATO partners. The result has been a proliferation of different kinds of styles and models. For example, the German PRTs, in contrast to our own, have over 300 people, a very large civilian component, that operates very separately from a small and highly restricted military component.

The U.S. has three models for PRTs. The Afghan model has 80 personnel. All but three of them are military. Civilian representatives are from the Department of State, generally a junior officer or retiree, a USAID contractor, and a volunteer from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The force protection unit is a U.S. National Guard platoon, and then there are two teams of civil affairs.

In Iraq, the original ten PRTs were composed mostly of civilians from State, from the Justice Department, and from the Agriculture Department. The only military were a couple of civil affairs teams,

some odd civil affairs soldiers that did jobs that no one else can fill, and somebody from the Army Corps of Engineers. There were also civilian contractors and some Iraqis that provided translation and other services.

And then the new PRTs, the embedded PRTs, are very small. Each has a core group of someone from State, DOD, civil affairs, and a translator-interpreter cultural affairs adviser. And then there are from 8 to 12 civilian specialists who make up the team, and they operate as almost advisers to the commander of the brigade combat team.

PRTs not only have different organizations, but they also have very different missions. In Afghanistan, the mission of U.S. PRTs is to extend the authority of a weak central government into the provinces where warlords and what the military called "regional influentials" have traditionally held sway. In Iraq, it is the exact opposite. The mission is to strengthen the provincial governments against the traditionally strong center.

Beyond some rather vague mission statements for the embedded PRTs and talk about enabling moderates and dissuading extremists, there is really no agreement within the U.S. Government or between the U.S. and its allies on what PRTs should accomplish. The priorities and programs often reflect local conditions and obvious opportunities. There is no interagency-approved concept of operations for PRTs. The Army's lessons learned program recently published a PRT playbook on its website, but this playbook was not approved by the civilian government agencies State, USAID, et cetera that participated in drafting the document.

PRT priorities, programs and effectiveness are strongly dependent on the personalities of those who serve on the teams. In the absence of an overall concept of operation doctrine or other guidance, personalities are able to determine what the teams do. It is also very important that personalities get along. In teams that gel, things go smoothly. In teams where people have their own agencies or can't get along for some reason, then things go very badly.

The staffing of PRTs has highlighted a problem that affects our government particularly. U.S. civilian government agencies do not have any kind of surge capacity to staff PRTs or any other kind of post-conflict operations. This does not just involve providing bodies. It involves providing skilled specialists who are Federal employees with a broad range of critical skills who can go out and represent their agencies and do the job.

In the new ePRTs, because the State Department did not have any people to take the civilian slots, the slots were filled by Army Reservists and members of the National Guard. State now has the funds to hire contractors, but the handover will not be completed until next summer.

There is a myth that PRTs provide security because they involve military personnel, but this is simply not true. In Afghanistan, PRTs do form part of the ISAF general security presence, but PRTs have no offensive capability, and their only security mission is to protect themselves. The role of the PRT platoon is to provide convoy security when people decide to go outside the wire.

PRTs in Iraq live on U.S. military bases and depend on base security and on U.S. military forces to provide their security. Under

a February, 2007 MOU, State and DOD finally agreed, after a year of wrangling, that the military would provide convoy security for PRTs, but this was not before incidences where State was very disturbed to find that when convoys were attacked carrying PRT members, soldiers did what they were trained to do—they stood and fought—or that they combined escorting PRT members with patrols against insurgents.

PRTs have contributed to improved governance and economic development in some areas. PRTs have been successful in facilitating cooperation between provincial governors, representatives of central government ministries, and elected provincial councils in Iraq. They also have been able to prod the central government to approve funding for provincial-level project proposals and to release funds so that projects can be implemented. Increasingly, PRTs are demonstrating that these efforts have resulted in improved conditions in provinces in Iraq.

EPRTs, which operate at a sub-provincial level dealing with municipal and district officials, perhaps are just too new to be able to demonstrate such success. In Afghanistan, PRTs work with provincial governors and the provincial police chief on the general assumption that since these people are appointed by the central government, they represent President Karzai and his priorities and his programs. In some cases, this is true. In others where regional leaders or provincial leaders have their own agendas, then PRTs are either stymied or they use all their energy to try to get these officials removed.

While PRTs vary in size, organization and function, they share several common problems which could be solved if they receive proper attention. The first of these could be summarized under the phrase "improvisation is not a concept of operations." PRTs really need an agreed concept of operations and an agreed organizational structure with a single chain of command.

In PRTs in Iraq, there is a bifurcated chain of command. A State Department official is responsible for political and economic issues. His military deputy is responsible for security and movement. There is no one in charge, thus no one to referee disputes. Even simple things like who gets the security escort to go out on a daily call can be an issue of some concern and dissension.

The second problem might be summarized by the phrase, "Without agreed objectives, it is difficult to judge effectiveness." There is need for an agreed set of objectives for PRTs and an agreed set of measurements for measuring their performance. Absent a means of determining whether PRTs are effective, it is difficult to determine whether alternative mechanisms might better achieve our purposes.

As one colonel in Afghanistan told me, "Well, we just sort of look at the province. If it is doing well, we figure the PRT must be doing its job." The lack of means for evaluating PRTs, however, has not prevented their proliferation. As we have seen, there are five new PRTs operating in Iraq without any real judgment having been made or any real scrutiny applied as to whether this form of organization does a better job than perhaps others.

The next problem might be summarized with the phrase, "Stability operations is not a game for pickup teams." U.S. civilian agen-

cies need to recruit Federal employees with expertise and the skills required to staff PRTs. This is a new requirement for government service. The government needs to create the capacity to meet this need.

Permanent agency representatives can serve and train alongside their military counterparts and represent their agencies. This is not possible using commercial contractors or relying on military reservists and National Guardsmen to staff civilian functions.

If I could digress for just a minute, when I came into the foreign service way back in the late 1960's, in the midst of the Vietnam War, we were involved in something called the CORDS program in Vietnam. There were 15,000 AID foreign service officers at that point. Thousands of them and hundreds of my fellow foreign service officers served in CORDS in Vietnam. This is a capacity which we had and we have lost. We need to regain it.

Finally, I would say that "Silence is not a public information program for PRTs." The U.S. PRT program suffers from a lack of public information on the nature and the results of its efforts. Other than these very helpful reports produced by SIGIR, it is very difficult to tell what PRTs are doing. In the massive amount of media reporting that is going on about Iraq and Afghanistan, it is very difficult to find articles that are written about what PRTs are up to.

AID recently has published a magazine called "Iraq PRTs," both in English and Arabic, which talks about PRT operations. This is a commendable step forward, but long overdue. In this regard, I would like to express my appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman and to the members of the subcommittee for this series of hearings. I think it is very important to shed light on this operation and to raise questions about this program and to subject it to some kind of systematic analysis and scrutiny.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Perito can be found in the Appendix on page 48.]

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you both for your testimony.

Our systematic analysis will be delayed for a few minutes while we go to vote. We have one vote. I will come back, and with the arrival of the first Republican member, we will begin our questioning. After that, we should have well over an hour before we are interrupted again.

We are recessed.

[Recess.]

Dr. SNYDER. We will come back to order here. We will go ahead and start the five-minute clock. If we don't have any other members return by the time my five minutes is up, I will just keep rolling.

We appreciate your testimony. I just want to make a comment before I ask a couple of questions. I was struck I think it was a couple of weeks ago in the newspaper by a newspaper photo of an Iraqi man holding the body of his three-year-old son that was wrapped in a carpet. Apparently, the boy had been kidnapped, and I don't know what the result was, if this was what he received in return for a ransom, but anyway he ended up with the dead body of his three-year-old son. If you think about the expectation of peo-

ple somehow trying to do economic development and raise a family and get their kids educated in that kind of environment.

So I was struck in response to your report, Mr. Bowen, the suggestion that perhaps some people should be removed from some of these areas for security, and the embassy came back and said, "No, they shouldn't; we think that our people need to keep working in those areas." I think it is consistent with the impression we had from some of these really fine people working on PRTs that they are very committed to what they are doing, and they understand the risks, and they understand that they can only do their job when they are out on the road. So once again, I commend them for their work.

On page 34 of your report, it seems to be the whole gut of the thing. In fact, I think I will read it. "We recommend the U.S. ambassador to Iraq and the commanding general MNF Iraq take these actions: number one, in an expeditious manner, jointly establish a comprehensive plan for the PRTs, including embedded PRTs, with elements tailored for each PRT.

"At a minimum, the plan should, (a), clearly define objectives and performance measures; (b), clearly define milestones for achieving stated objectives; (c), be linked to funding requirements; and (d), identify the organizations within each agency that are accountable for the plan's implementation.

"To provide senior-level attention to this issue, the plan should be approved by the office of the chief-of-mission and the MNF Iraq commander to demonstrate each agency's commitment to this effort; two, develop guidance on the use and synchronization of CERP funds to support the U.S. government's capacity development mission."

My question for both of you is, at what level should these clearly defined objectives and performance measures, clearly defined milestones, at what level in these agencies should this occur? This has been one of the concerns of the committee, I think, on the broader issue of a lot of folks in this town about the lack of coordination between different agencies. At what level should these kinds of objectives and performance measures and milestones be established?

Mr. BOWEN. Well, we raise it up a level here in our recommendation, asking the ambassador and General Petraeus to review it and sign-off on it to give it the authority that we think it needs, given that this is the third time that this, or a recommendation like it, has been put forward in our reporting.

There is an Office of Provincial Authority over there already. It is administering the program. OPA was stood up in the spring, succeeding the previous organization, but it is still getting its own organizational sea legs. It has a new director as of six weeks ago. That is why it is important to get a higher level buy-in in-theater about how to measure the progress so ultimately you in the Congress can ascertain, is the PRT program achieving its goals.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Perito.

Mr. PERITO. As someone who has served about 35 years in the U.S. Government, including a stint on the National Security Council staff and at both State, Justice and Commerce, I believe very strongly that this should be done in Washington at an interagency

level equivalent to, say, the deputies committee currently, if not the principals committee on the NSC.

It is very difficult and perhaps somewhat unfair to foist this off on an embassy or on a field staff without Washington providing any kind of direction. I was invited to participate in the interagency working group that came up with the PRT playbook. I was struck by the fact that people at that level simply did not seem to want to engage. It just seemed too hard to them to do this.

Based on my own experience in government going back years, this strikes me as somewhat unusual. In previous Administrations dealing with previous problems that also looked extremely difficult, the interagency engaged and decisions were made and they were brought to high levels of authority and signed off on by people with real responsibilities in their agencies. So I don't see why this should be any different. It is difficult, but why should this be any different. Without that, then people in the field are really left to their own devices.

Dr. SNYDER. I would like us to continue to have a conversation about this, because I can understand, Mr. Bowen, why you say what you said, which is different than what Mr. Perito said.

Mr. PERITO. But it is not inconsistent.

Dr. SNYDER. No, it is not inconsistent. I guess that is right. You could still have your Washington group and then have your group at that level.

Mr. PERITO. Right. It has to go out to the field. What is decided in Washington has to reflect input from the field and has to go out and be acceptable to the field.

Dr. SNYDER. We currently have wars in two nations and PRTs in two nations, Afghanistan and Iraq. If I understood what you said, that it ought to be at the General Petraeus-and Ambassador Crocker-level, then we are not going to have the kind of, I don't know if you want to say lessons learned or consistency. I mean, I recognize that Afghanistan and Iraq have some dramatically different challenges.

On the other hand, I think we would all agree that there are lessons to be learned from work done in other countries, and if everything is decided at the country commander-level, don't we lose out on the kind of consistency or the lessons learned? Help me with that, Mr. Bowen, and your thinking there.

Mr. BOWEN. It is a great point. It is exactly what our latest lessons learned report is focused on, and that is the need—but this is a bigger need—to develop within the interagency a more effective approach, a more effective structure to taking on post-conflict contingency relief and reconstruction operations, of which the PRTs are a big part.

If the story of Iraq reconstruction tells anything, teaches any lesson, it is that the U.S. Government is not well structured and was not well poised in 2003 to engage in the kind of post-conflict relief and reconstruction operations that we have faced for four years.

Lessons have been learned. We have done three: one on human capital management, one on contract procurement, and the latest one on program and project management. They have been applied, but they have been applied along the way or ad hoc. That is not the way to run a post-conflict operation. In our latest lessons

learned report released last March, and the focus or our next one—our capping report will come out next year—we be in putting forth the body of evidence that will allow this issue to be addressed and solutions to be developed.

We will provide some recommendations on that, on how integration—we call it the "beyond Goldwater-Nichols" initiative—how the integration of agencies can be more effectively structured so that the execution of these problem doesn't have to be figured out while the problem is being addressed.

Dr. SNYDER. I know there is a lot of interest by members of this committee on that issue, as you are probably aware. Mrs. Davis and Mr. Davis from California and Kentucky have an ad hoc group, their working group on interagency reform, but it is to get at that. I think it came out at one of our hearings, but I think you discussed it some in your statement, Mr. Perito.

When we met with some of our folks from Iraq and Afghanistan who were working on PRTs, one of their very specific—or at least one of them kind of overstated it—but just said, "you need to change the names; we use 'provincial reconstruction team' in Iraq and 'provincial reconstruction team' in Afghanistan like they are doing the same work."

And they say, they are not. In their view—and this is from the people on the ground—the provincial reconstruction teams in Afghanistan were like project builders. They did bricks-and-mortar projects. They did water projects, and it was all good stuff. In Iraq, folks felt like, no, what they were doing was kind of government capacity building, that they are helping other people decide, local people, how they are going to do a water project and find funding and sustain it and get it repaired and all that kind of thing. But they felt like they had dramatically—and "dramatically"—I don't think it was an overstatement, it was dramatically different functions.

And yet, I am not sure we are getting—and I don't think the American public understands that, and I don't think the Congress understands that—and that may come from what you are talking about, Mr. Perito, that we don't have that kind of whatever up-the-stovepipe somewhere interconnection coming across.

Mr. PERITO. One of the ways this works out is that you hear a lot of loose talk within government circles about, well, why don't we send a PRT off to this situation or that situation, with people not really understanding what you just said. And that is that PRTs are kind of amorphous. We really need something which is much more descriptive to describe the kind of capacities that we are going to provide. PRTs are a misnomer. That term is often misleading. In Iraq, many PRTs don't even work with provincial-level authorities.

Dr. SNYDER. Yes. That is a good point.

Let's see. I have lost page 34. Mr. Bowen, this is your chance to educate us at a very basic level. I don't know what the difference is between a performance measure and a milestone.

Mr. BOWEN. A milestone is an interim achievement along the way to an ultimate goal—in other words, a chronology of milestones eventually leads to success. That is the plan. Performance measures are a finer calibration, perhaps, between milestones.

They are related, obviously. It is about the PRTs doing what they need to do to achieve those goals. It has to do with the performance, the personalities involved.

As we have seen, absent a strategic plan, the story in Iraq has been somewhat personality-driven, as Mr. Perito pointed out. Having more concretized performance measures and defined milestones will hopefully limit a personality-driven enterprise.

Dr. SNYDER. Before I go to Dr. Gingrey here—I will give him a minute to get his thoughts together—could the two of you put your heads together here and give me a couple of examples, let us say one from economic development and one from education, of a clearly defined objective, a performance measure, and a milestone?

I will throw one out. If I am a PRT, my objective would be, I need to have a functioning educational system for grade school children to age 12, and then would some of my performance measure objectives be—I have to have in this area, I need 10 schools in secure areas, with teachers that are getting paid.

Is that the kind of thing we are talking about? And then a milestone—I don't know what the milestone would be. I guess the milestone would be we actually made it through a school year, and everybody was safe. Is that the kind of specificity? I see some heads nodding behind you, so maybe I am not totally off-base here. Is that the kind of thing we are talking about?

Mr. BOWEN. Yes, sir, I think it is. I think the key element in this recommendation is they have to be tailored for each PRT.

Dr. SNYDER. Right.

Mr. BOWEN. The provinces vary greatly in north, central and south, by region, and by locale.

Dr. SNYDER. I am with you there. I just need to——

Mr. BOWEN. You are right. Concretizing it like that is good.

Dr. SNYDER. Because you are asking these groups in a very difficult environment to come up with things measurable, and I just want to get some specific examples, because I didn't see that kind of specificity in your statement. I assume that folks that do this work have an understanding of this kind of specificity. I just don't. But am I in the ballpark of what we are talking about? Mr. Perito, do you have any comments?

Mr. PERITO. Yes, although I want to kind of bring this down to what the realities are, particularly the realities in Iraq. Just looking at a report yesterday about PRT activities, the PRT in Kirkuk, its objective is to get the provincial council to meet. The provincial council has not met for a long time and there are divisions between the various ethnic groups in the provincial council.

What the PRT has been doing is working with two of these groups, talking to them about how to do negotiations and actually has now gotten them to engage in negotiations, and they are working out an understanding between them so they will agree to come to a meeting.

That is the level, I think, on which a lot of this work is being done. As one fellow from Fallujah told me, "Our job, what we are doing now is we are trying to go out. Our rule of law work right now is we are going out and we are trying to find the judges that are still alive and still around, and get them to come to work." I

mean, it is not in Iraq very often that we are setting up education systems. The PRTs are doing these very, very fundamental things.

Dr. SNYDER. But let us use that as an example. So your objective would be in this town, you want to have an ability of citizens to see a judge on a relatively regular basis—weekly or monthly or something like that. And your objective is, you have to find this many judges, be sure they are paid, be sure they are secure. And your milestone is going to be at the end of the year, have we had them meet 30 times in a year. Is that a reasonable way to look at that of thing?

Mr. PERITO. Or have we got a working court.

Dr. SNYDER. Have we got a working court, and what does that mean.

Mr. PERITO. These are very rudimentary, often.

Dr. SNYDER. I understand.

Mr. PERITO. At this point in Iraq, PRTs are working at a very rudimentary level, often.

Dr. SNYDER. Yes.

Dr. Gingrey.

Dr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

I want to thank the witnesses for being with us this morning. I apologize as usual for the break.

Mr. Bowen, in your testimony, of course you were talking about the five measurements. I want to have you speak a little bit more to that.

Mr. Perito, I really enjoyed your testimony as you kind of explained to the committee once again how these PRTs work, both first in Afghanistan, and then subsequently in Iraq, and then you explained the difference in embedded PRTs versus another. There are a lot of different models out there. We have heard about that from other witnesses, but I think you did a very excellent job of summarizing that for the committee, and I appreciate that.

Inspector General Bowen, the first report, I guess, and you were asking for both the Departments of State and Defense to get some metrics and some measurements that we could evaluate in a better way. I think that was back in October of last year, so here we are October of 2007, a year later. It seems that we are not really getting the kind of information that we need in regard to performance.

One of you testified that it seems that the measurements are based almost anecdotally on the personalities of the different PRTs, particularly civilian members. Of course, you have these different models in the two countries, and even within the country of Iraq, you have these two different models of the embedded being so different from the original ten that we created.

So I want some information on why we don't have good metrics to measure, and not just hoping that the personalities gel, and you get good people, and they all get motivated and they are fired up and it is a good team and they do a good job, but you don't really have any standards of measurement. So you have bad personalities that don't gel, and they don't accomplish anything and maybe make matters worse.

I think I probably would have done very well in the military because I like rules and regulations and standards of behavior in reg-

ular order. I don't see that we really have that yet in these PRT teams. So I would like for both of you to speak to that.

Mr. BOWEN. You asked directly the core finding of our audit. It is full of information about what the PRTs have done, but that is not helpful in to unless you have some standards to determine whether those activities have achieved milestones, have achieved the goals of the PRTs. That, as you rightly point out, was our recommendation of a year ago.

I would like to have been able to come today and tell you that those plans have been developed and those metrics are being applied, but they haven't. Our audits speak for themselves, and it is information for you that that is job one, I think, for the new OPA director to ensure that there are well-tailored, clear, fundamental metrics, measures and milestones for measurement of how the PRTs are doing.

The other important issue is that it is not one-size-fits-all. As you noted, first of all there are two very different groups. The ePRTs are reporting to the battalion commander and are part of the surge element. The original ten PRTs are carrying out their mission, that is governance-oriented capacity building. And so the tailoring has to be very specific.

Mr. PERITO. Yes, I think in order to establish metrics, you first have to establish objectives. You have to know where you are going before you can measure where you got there or not. As we have discussed before, there really are no objectives for this program. And so beyond a rather vague series of mission statements and beyond things like "bolster moderates, assist with counterinsurgency" and things of that general nature, there really are no objectives here.

I had a conversation which I thought was very instructive yesterday with someone from the State Department who said, "Well, we now have a metric. We have demonstrated in Iraq that PRTs can be very effective at the provincial level in assisting the Iraqis to go through the budget process, produce proposals, take them up to the center, get the center to release money, and actually have the money come down to the provinces and distribute it. Now we have a metric. We can say this proves it works."

Well, you know, that is sort of circular reasoning. What they discovered sort of through trial and error is that PRTs can do this, and it is very useful and it helps, but that is very different, and that is not really a metric. That is just kind of, well, you know, through trial and error we have done this. Now, that is very useful, but maybe you should be doing other things.

It takes a kind of objective top-down view, like we have talked before, of setting objectives, deciding what PRTs should be doing, are we best utilizing these resources that are available, and then coming up with measures to see whether we have achieved these objectives.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Akin for five minutes, followed by Mrs. Davis.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am sorry. I have these committees going on at different times, and I missed some of your statements.

It seemed to me that what you are saying would probably help at least in certain ones of the PRTs to have a very clearly defined statement up front that this is what we are trying to do, and this

is some way of measuring. I used to do a lot of that when I worked in the business world.

Even things that are simpler, like one of the things I was responsible for was railroad tracks and a steel mill. Well, you know, if you have a lot of trains off the track, you know something is going wrong, and you would think that is something you could measure.

But even so, trying to put specific measurements and everything on it can be pretty tricky. I think that it would be even more so with the diversity of the different environments where these PRTs are working. That shouldn't be an excuse for not having a clearly defined mission, though.

Are the PRTs that are—and I don't know where we came up with this "capacity building" word; it sounds like political correctness to me. I mean, we are just trying to help stand up local governments, I gather. Those PRTs that do that, who do they work for?

Mr. BOWEN. They work for the chief of mission. The ten original PRTs that are in the provincial support teams have PRT team leaders that report.

Mr. AKIN. What is the chief of mission? Who is the chief of mission? What does that mean?

Mr. BOWEN. The ambassador.

Mr. AKIN. So that is going through State, then?

Mr. BOWEN. That is right.

Mr. AKIN. Okay. In this case, that would be Ambassador Crocker?

Mr. BOWEN. That is right.

Mr. AKIN. So these ten teams all report directly to him?

Mr. BOWEN. Through the OPA. There is an ambassador-level appointee who works for Ambassador Crocker who runs the program.

Mr. AKIN. Okay. So in other words, there is an in-between guy?

Mr. BOWEN. Yes.

Mr. AKIN. That is the chain of command for these.

Mr. BOWEN. That is the program. That is right.

Mr. AKIN. Now, is there a clear-cut definition for what they are supposed to be doing, written down on paper somewhere?

Mr. BOWEN. There is a generalized objective, as Mr. Perito pointed out, that is a bit vague, to use his term, but what is missing, what the core of our finding is that there are not comprehensive plans for what the PRT should be doing to achieve building the capacity, which is really, as you say, teaching the Iraqis how to do local government.

Mr. AKIN. In addition, did I gather from just before we got called out at the bell, is it also true that the financing that comes from the parliament and the central government is completely at their discretion, whether they are going to give that to the local provinces?

Mr. BOWEN. If it comes from the minister of finance?

Mr. AKIN. Right.

Mr. BOWEN. About $6 billion, as I recall, is allocated and has been distributed. That is an area of progress, as our report points out—budget execution, another term of art—how are the provinces doing in spending the money that is committed.

Mr. AKIN. Here is my question. To put it in our terms, if the Federal Government controls all the money, then the state government

basically, they are just going to be a lapdog for whatever the Federal Government wants. So my question is, is there in the distribution of the oil money to the local provinces, is there a guarantee that they are going to get a certain percent of the cut based on population or something, so that they can start working federalism? Because federalism doesn't work if your local government, every last penny they get is coming out of the centralized government. Is that problem being dealt with?

Mr. BOWEN. That is the revenue distribution portion of the hydrocarbon law that has yet to be passed by the council of representatives. They are using an interim measure now.

Mr. AKIN. Yes. So there is no federalism until that gets fixed, is there?

Mr. BOWEN. That is right. And then next year when the regions law kicks in, a very much strengthened federalism will occur in Iraq.

Mr. AKIN. Say again?

Mr. BOWEN. There is a provision in the constitution for the formation of regions that will concentrate power in two or more provinces that choose to form a region.

Mr. AKIN. So that is going to become even more centralized?

Mr. BOWEN. No, that will decentralize.

Mr. AKIN. It will decentralize it?

Mr. BOWEN. Yes, sir.

Mr. AKIN. Okay. Is there anything in their constitution which specifically forbids the central government from doing certain functions so that you can guarantee, for instance, police and hospitals and schools or whatever are done locally, as opposed to centrally? Or do we not have any limitation on what the central government can do?

Mr. BOWEN. Those limitations will accompany the formation of regions. So when the regions law begins, that sort of dual system like we have, divided federalism, will begin to develop.

Mr. AKIN. Is there anything in the constitution which guarantees certain areas to be local responsibility, as opposed to be central, or not?

Mr. BOWEN. I don't know if it is that specific with respect to regions. I will have to get back to you on that.

Mr. AKIN. I am just trying to get a handle on how you drive federalism in that environment.

I am out of time, and Vic is going to throw one of his hammers at me.

Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. No.

In fairness to Mrs. Davis, I need to let her know that I quoted her in my opening statement, and then referred to you and Mr. Davis and your ad hoc working group on interagency reform, because you asked a question at one of our hearings about how do you measure this stuff.

You mentioned, I think, metrics, Mr. Perito. I was in a discussion several years ago at a full committee hearing. I think it was Secretary Rumsfeld, and he used the term "metrics," and I thought he said "matrix," and we had like the movie with Keanu Reeves. And he talked about his metrics room, and I thought he was talking

about a room like in the movie "The Matrix." We start pretty basic here in the House of Representatives.

Mrs. Davis for five minutes.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your reference, and I am going to read it in a minute so I know what you said.

Thank you very much for being here. I know that the issue of metrics and how we evaluate it has been addressed. I am not sure that it has been addressed thoroughly, but I wanted to just go to another question for a second.

Mr. Perito, you mention that this should not be a game for pick-up teams, and we should have a surge capacity. You have a lot of experience in multiple agencies. How would you do this? And also you mentioned that Germany has about 300 folks on the ground doing this. How do they organize this? Is there anything that we can learn from that?

Mr. PERITO. Just to take the first one, I have long believed that what the United States government means to do, and it can be done by the State Department of it can be done by a group of agencies, is that we need to recruit professionals who have these skills, who are a part of the Federal Government, Federal employees that we deploy in times of need.

The Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization in the Department of State now has a plan to do this. The plan calls for the creation of an active reserve corps, which will be made up of civil servants, of Federal employees who would have these skills, be located around government agencies, would be on call, and could deploy rapidly. The money for that, unfortunately, is being held up by the Senate at this point, so that plan isn't going forward.

That active reserve corps would be supported by a civilian reserve corps composed of Americans from across the country who would be trained, equipped and prepared to deploy on a more lengthy timetable. All of this reflects some work that I did and the USIP did several years ago, which recommended that this kind of capacity be created. So there are plans and they need to be actualized and they need to be funded, and they need to be funded at a level where we would have several thousand people ready to go. Right now, the plans call for 200, I think. So that is one answer to this.

When you look at the way other countries approach this, other countries bring to the PRT equation their own strengths and their own weaknesses. The German PRTs reflect the strength of the German economic assistance programs, and so you have this large economic assistance team.

They also reflect the weakness of the military component. On the German side, the German military component in Afghanistan is highly caveated and there are very few things that it can actually do. One of them is take risks at all. So the German military hardly goes out. That is not because they are not brave, but just because they are heavily restricted by their own government.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. When you think of this reserve corps, are these people who would sign up and would have every two

months that they would be coming together and doing some training across the board?

Mr. PERITO. Yes, this concept is still kind of unfirm at this point—that is not a word, probably—but the idea would be that these would be people who would have required skills. They would sign Federal contracts. They would be available to deploy. They would be trained and equipped. They would exercise to the point where they would be able to function together, and then they would move out.

But more important than the civilian corps, which I think is critical, is this idea of creating a corps of Federal employees who have these capacities and who are there working in the government and on call and can go. That is something we just don't have at this point.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. And you said the funding has been tied up.

Mr. PERITO. Yes.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Also, it is the will, too. Is it because we can't quite envision this group of people doing this or putting them at risk in some way? What do you think is underlying the fact that we have not been able to get this together?

Mr. PERITO. Specifically, as I understand it, and I haven't checked in the last week, there is a single senator who has a hold on the money. There was $50 million in the Iraq supplemental that was provided to stand up this capacity. The bill required that an authorizing bill be passed as well, along with the appropriations bill. The authorizing bill has been held under a Senate hold now. The Administration has not been able to get the senator to release it.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. What I am really asking, though, is this has been going on for a number of years. It isn't just probably the senator. Part of it is education.

Mr. PERITO. And part of it—to go to a larger perspective—political will is a critical element here. We have not had the political will to go forward and create the kind of civilian agency capacity that we need. We do a very good job on the military side. The U.S. military spends a great deal of time on lessons learned and on improving its performance. We have the best military in the world.

Civilian agencies in post-conflict have operated on the assumption that this is a one-time thing and they are never have to do it again. They were that way in Somalia and in Haiti and in Bosnia and in East Timor and all the other places that we have been. And now we are paying the price.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. May I ask, Mr. Chairman, we have people who decide to go into USAID. They have development backgrounds. We have people who go into the Peace Corps, obviously. Is there something about incentivizing young people to think in this way? Or is that not the path? Is it just people who are already in a capacity already, that have the skills?

Mr. PERITO. I don't really think it is a matter of getting recruits. I think it is a matter of the size of these institutions. USAID right now has 1,200 foreign service officers. That is barely enough people for all of its jobs worldwide. That is barely enough people to provide people to every embassy.

When you go out to PRTs in Afghanistan and you meet the USAID rep, it is very likely to be a contractor, generally a young person, terribly enthusiastic, extremely brave, but brand new to the field, not able to draw upon expertise; not able to draw upon associations with the agency, a deep knowledge of how USAID functions, with a huge, steep learning curve. And that you find across the board.

And so, what we need to do is increase the capacity of these agencies. The foreign service of the United States can staff only 75 percent of its jobs worldwide. It just doesn't have enough people. They do a very good job of staffing Iraq because there is a lot of emphasis on this, but the Foreign Service Association told me the other day that 40 percent of the foreign service has already served in Iraq.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you.

We will go around again, gentlemen, if you want to start the five-minute clock again.

Just a follow-up question, Mr. Perito, from the line of questioning Mrs. Davis was going. We had a hearing earlier in the week about this whole issue of staffing and the issue of the civilian reserve corps came up. In your statement, you specifically were critical of using military reservists.

Now, I can understand that kind of across the board you don't want the Army Reserve and Marine Corps Reserve to be a substitute for trained people. But in fact, we have certainly had occasions where military reservists might be the perfect person.

We have a mayor of a fairly vigorous, rapidly growing city who has been mobilized more than once, and I suspect he has some pretty good thoughts on capacity building. Now, he was not selected for a PRT, but just because somebody is a military reservists rather than a civilian reserve corps, they may in fact—you know, we have had thousands of guard and reserve members over there at any one time.

They may in fact be the perfect people for some of these tasks, would they not? They certainly would have a different background than your 23- or 24-year-old who has been in the military for 4 or 5 years. Is that a fair statement?

Mr. PERITO. It is a fair statement.

Dr. SNYDER. I assume what you are saying is that we should not rely on somehow having guard and reserve.

Mr. PERITO. But there are other considerations which go beyond what you said, which is true. Police is the area I know best. In the beginning in Iraq, when we activated the guard and reserve to get police officers, we got people who, in their civilian lives, were police officers. Those people came, and they served once.

Now, when you look at the police transition teams in Iraq, you will find military police. They are mostly guard and reservists. They were artillerymen before they were given a two-week training program and made military police. These people are not police officers.

The fact is that you can get on a one-time basis the person you need for the job, but over a five-year effort, you end up with people

that are—you know, the classic is the guy who is sent off to advise the provincial education representative, and while he works in education, but he is a schoolteacher. And that happens again and again.

Dr. SNYDER. Right. I understand what you are saying.

Mr. PERITO. Yes.

Dr. SNYDER. One of my towns a few years ago had both their mayor and their police chief mobilized in the same unit.

I am thinking of how to pursue this. At the hearing a couple of days ago, we had representatives from different agencies. I don't know if you heard anything about that, but we had in the written statements of the persons from the Department of Agriculture and the person from the Department of Justice talking about—this was a hearing on the incentives for their civilian folks to go to Iraq and Afghanistan, not just in PRTs, but in other capacities as well.

There was a paragraph that I go onto him a little bit about, because it had the exact identical language in both paragraphs that they acknowledged had apparently come from an National Security Council staff person who reviewed the testimony and inserted that language and suggested that language. I actually have no problem with the language.

I am going to read it again and see if that is the direction you think that we should be going in, Mr. Perito, and any thoughts you have, Mr. Bowen: "To improve our ability to respond to overseas challenges and provide the personnel expertise needed will require that we increase our numbers of available, trained and deployable personnel within our department and others, and that we support them with a structure in Washington that conducts planning and coordination."

And then in this particular situation, this one means Agriculture, but the other one was Department of Justice. "Agriculture is working with interagency partners and the coordinator for reconstruction and stabilization at the Department of State to build that capacity and to support development of a civilian reserve corps of outside experts that we can also call on to fill additional requirements."

Well, basically we came out of that hearing and we had both the Department of Justice and Department of Agriculture and apparently NSC thinking this should be as a fairly strong statement of where we ought to go. But I read two things into that, or three things into that. One, civilian reserve corps—everybody seems to be behind that, although it is still being fleshed out—but then the first sentence was we need to increase our numbers, a redundancy.

I talked with Richard Armitage, who said there needs to be redundancy so that when you pull people for emergencies that come up, you are not gutting the mission in Africa or China or Latin America or wherever it is. But that is different than a civilian reserve corps that actually has people working in agriculture projects in Mongolia that you can pull out and say, "We have to have you now for the next year."

And then the third part of that, which I think gets back to the questioning some time ago, where it talks about "we support them with a structure in Washington that conducts planning and coordination," which may get to the guts of your report, Mr. Bowen,

which is, your criticism today and your suggestions may reflect the fact that we don't have the structure in Washington that does the kind of planning and coordination, still sensitive to on-the-ground decision-making and the kind of vagueness of some of these relationships in provinces and so on.

I am not sure what kind of structure we are working on right now in Washington. You may not have any comments about anything I have said, but if you want to comment on that. Was that paragraph a pretty good paragraph, from the written statement?

Mr. PERITO. If we had that capacity——

Dr. SNYDER. Maybe you had that in your written statement, too, Mr. Perito, and I missed it. I don't know.

Mr. PERITO. No. But in other things I have written, yes. If we had that kind of capacity, it would be excellent. There needs to be a place in Washington that has the authority to coordinate post-conflict interventions, particularly on the civilian side, and to be a partner to the military, which we don't have right now.

There is no place in the Federal Government where you can go and have somebody who can say, "Yes, I can bring together all of this expertise and all of this capacity and deploy it and direct it." That doesn't happen. We have debated about where this should be located, but my personal preference is it should be a new independent agency, which would be created with its own culture and its own staff, and would be made up of professionals who do this professionally.

We would do it over time, so you would have the benefit of people who gained experienced moved up in the ranks and could direct these operations. Currently, what we do is we rely on contractors. Contractors come and go. The firms change. There is no residual. There is no learning that takes place. Or we don't do it at all, or we pass it off to the military, which is unfair because it places ever-increasing burdens on the military and forces them into areas where it is just not their expertise.

Dr. SNYDER. You made a pretty strong statement. There is no place in the Federal Government where that is being done now.

Mr. Bowen, do you have any comments before we go to Mr. Akin?

Mr. BOWEN. Yes, that is exactly the point of our lessons-learned program and our latest report recommends addressing this. Our next report will present that kind of recommendation to the Congress to create a new entity. If it is a balkanized problem, we want to beware of a balkanizing solution.

NSPD–44 creates SCRS and has done some good things and our lessons-learned report supported their civilian reserve corps efforts, but 3000.05, the DOD parallel directive, also is moving forward with bolstering the Department of Defense's approach to post-conflict relief and reconstruction issues, a new entity that coordinates those elements and brings them together, and the other agencies' interests as well.

It is not just AID, State and DOD. Those are the primary players, but as you learned, Ag and DOJ have interests as well and they need to be addressed appropriately and filtered in. SCRS has done good work, but it is still awaiting authorization of its own and its own appropriation. That has been a continuing challenge for it.

So we will continue to speak to it through our lessons-learned project.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Akin for any further questions.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I didn't hear anything, Mr. Bowen, just at a gut level, taking off the very specific measurable things. What is your sense of how the PRTs are doing? You probably have seen more and looked into it pretty far. Do you feel like just a little American ingenuity is being applied and that we are making some progress, even if that is a little bit checkered or varies a little bit from place to place? What is your overall gut sense as to how we are doing?

Mr. BOWEN. Absolutely, our report demonstrates areas of progress within the PRT program. There is no doubt that the progress in Anbar is attributable in part to the work of the PRT out there. The microloan process, which is helping employ Iraqis locally and get businesses started up, is having an effect.

The provincial reconstruction development councils, which are Iraqi group-managed and advised by the PRTs, are approving and submitting projects to the embassy for Iraqis to manage and construct in their provinces. That is $1 billion in U.S. construction aid that they are helping to decide how to spend. A key lesson learned is get buy-in from the host nation to ensure that what is being provided is what they need. So I think that the PRTs just in those three instances, as our report points out, are making an enormous difference.

The other issues on federalism I wanted to follow up is the provincial powers law, as I alluded to in my opening statement, is a key element to promoting federalism locally. They need to have that law passed so they know what their powers are.

Mr. AKIN. So that is not defined yet either. That is all part of that whole piece that has to come together. Are they trying to bite off too big a political project of doing that? Can they break it into pieces or not? I mean, we have that problem here in D.C. Sometimes we say, well, we are going to fix all of Social Security or we will fix all of Medicare or something, and the thing just gets too weighty and basically it would be probably better to surgically go in and fix different pieces.

Mr. BOWEN. They have broken them up into pieces for the hydrocarbon law, which has the revenue sharing issue you were talking about; the provincial powers law which defines local powers; and constitutional reform; provincial elections are a key element that needs to happen. But the challenge is none of the pieces, other than de-Baathification, and it is not moving very fast. It is moving forward.

Mr. AKIN. Okay. But your bottom line is you are saying you do think the PRTs are providing valuable service.

Mr. BOWEN. Yes.

Mr. AKIN. There are very measurable successes in various areas, maybe not as well coordinated or defined as it might be. Is that a fairly accurate assessment?

Mr. BOWEN. That is very accurate. The challenge, of course, is the lack of a permissive environment. The place where the PRTs are struggling the most is in the south, as our regional recommendation alluded to. The Basrah PRT is having to work from

the airport because of the dangerous situation in that very large city, and is having minimal impact at this point.

Mr. AKIN. I thought the south was one of the safest areas. How far south are you talking about?

Mr. BOWEN. There are parts of the south and the mid-south that are safe, but Basrah is not.

Mr. AKIN. Is that Sunni?

Mr. BOWEN. That is Shia.

Mr. AKIN. Shia.

Mr. BOWEN. It is intra-Shia factions that are fighting there.

Mr. AKIN. Okay. They have to have some level of—there has to be some kind of civilization before these people can get out and make the contacts and all.

Mr. BOWEN. That is right.

Mr. AKIN. Right. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Mrs. Davis for five minutes.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You just mentioned al Anbar. I was wondering, have the PRTs been able to help bridge the gap between what is happening there with the local efforts and the government as a whole, and the Iraqi government? Is that part of their role at all? What specifically have they done to help bridge that gap so that in the end you do have that movement?

Mr. PERITO. It is my understanding that one of the things that PRTs have been able to do in al Anbar is get the central government to respond to requests for funding from the province, in what was a very strong reluctance on the part of the central government to respond to al Anbar because of the Shia-Sunni divide. PRTs have been able in some circumstances to overcome that and get the central government to release funds down. That is one of the things that PRTs can do effectively.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Is that because they are educating people to ask for those things?

Mr. PERITO. Well, one of the things they have been able to do, the PRT in Ramadi, for example—the big provincial-level PRT, not the ePRTs, but the original one—a year ago had six people in it. It was a non-permissive environment and they were able to do very little.

I talked to somebody who was there a month or so ago, and he said, "Now, we are up to 25 people. The environment is permissive enough that we can get out. We are getting the provincial council to move back from Baghdad to the province. We are trying to reconstitute the judicial system and the police and get the organs of government up and functioning." So that is one thing that the PRT has been able to do. So yes, they are effective there, and that is the sort of thing the PRT can do.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. I missed some of the discussion about metrics. What role do you see public opinion polls playing? There are public opinion polls that seem to state generally that people don't necessarily like our presence. But in areas in which PRTs are actively involved, what is the reach there?

If you went in to a PRT area that you thought was pretty successful, would you expect those opinion polls to be a lot different?

Do they do them? Do they use them as a tool to try and register generally what is going on? How far does it spread in terms of people's general sense?

Mr. BOWEN. I don't think that PRTs are doing polling themselves, but I think it is an idea to consider, to judge the impact locally. But it wouldn't be a metric. I think it would just be another element of feedback for the PRT team leader to see that the 50 projects that the provincial reconstruction development council approve and execute actually help change the community spirit with respect to how things are going with respect to the council, not the council, not the PRT, but with respect to how the council is doing its business—the provincial council.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. And are you saying that they probably don't have much idea about that right now? That they haven't done that kind of base——

Mr. BOWEN. The PRTs don't do polling, and part of it is simply the non-permissive environment. But it would be useful feedback for the provincial councils, I think. In many areas, the PRTs have to be careful about revealing themselves and revealing an American face on any project that is U.S.-funded or ongoing because of the potential controversy and conflict it could stir.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Yes.

Mr. Perito, did you want to comment on that?

Mr. PERITO. Yes. I think that overall, public information and public affairs programming for PRTs has been a shortcoming. In the Iraq PRTs, there is supposed to be a State Department officer who has that responsibility and whose job is to get the word out. Sometimes that officer is present; sometimes he is not. There is no counterpart in the Afghan PRTs at all.

One of the things that, of course, PRTs try to do is they try to put an Iraqi face on success. So in a certain sense, that masks their participation. But I think in terms of just getting the word out about what the PRT program has accomplished, that has not happened.

I find it very difficult in Washington to actually find out what PRTs are doing, and I am sort of inside the government and very often get invited to government meetings. But it is not open. So I think public affairs could be something we could do better.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. You are saying that it is a pretty well-kept secret. It sounds like a well-kept secret there. It is also a well-kept secret here. Is that by design, to again not have an American face on that?

Mr. PERITO. No, I don't think it is by design. I think it is by a sort of inadvertence. It is something that people haven't focused on, but should.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you very much.

Dr. SNYDER. We have been joined by Mr. Cooper from Tennessee, for five minutes, for any questions you may have.

Mr. COOPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to continue the gentlelady's line of questioning. How do I explain to my taxpayers back home that the American face on a project makes it unappreciated? They would probably say that it is like people biting the hand that is feeding them. They would probably say, "Why are we doing this?"

Now, we don't need to stick our chests out and want too much credit, but is the United States reduced to being the world's anonymous donor today? So we get no credit for anything and it makes everybody happier? People are out there risking their lives in these PRTs to help people and we can't say they are U.S.? You certainly can't wear a uniform because that would militarize it.

This is an untenable situation. So why are we doing it? We are humanitarian. We are good folks and we want to help the world, but if they don't want the help. In fact, an economist would say decrease their marginal utility or something. If they actively despise us for it, why are we there?

Mr. BOWEN. To the extent that that is answerable, I would say that it depends on the region in Iraq where the PRT presence is. Just by definition of how the PRT program is structured is reflective of the difficulty of being there. In the south, there are very few permanent PRTs.

They are supported by the provincial support teams, the PSTs, because of the danger of a U.S. citizen traveling across the country. It is not just being disliked. It is being shot. That has been the struggle in Iraq with respect to reconstruction for four years.

Mr. COOPER. I know in the scheme of things with government, it is a relatively small amount of money. For our own self-image and self-esteem, we would probably do this because we perceive ourselves as the good guys. But if so few other people do, particularly the folks that we are directly trying to help, isn't this counterproductive?

Mr. BOWEN. Well, I think that it is a cost-effect balance, is the question that you are asking. Our report catalogues a series of successes as well, in light of all these limitations. I think the PRT program is aiming at building democracy at the grassroots level by teaching provincial councils, which didn't exist before in Iraq, how to do local government.

That, in conjunction with trying to build some sort of local capacity to plan a recovery and reconstruction program, and then sustain it—a continuing weakness—are all worthy goals of the overall PRT objective. The point of our audit is those goals need to be better defined, better tracked, and better measured.

Mr. COOPER. You are speaking as an auditor. I am detecting a marked chamber-of-commerce attitude here. I love chambers of commerce, and they work well in America. I am not sure they work well overseas. For example, corruption—it is endemic, and we are not going to eliminate it in our lifetimes. We are the infidel. We are not going to persuade them otherwise in our lifetimes. Other things—tribal, ethnic relations matter far more to them than they do to us, and we are not going to change that in our lifetimes.

It almost seems like we are doing this for our own purposes, and not to actually have an impact. If we wanted to have an impact, we would have to channel the aid through third parties and have no U.S. fingerprints on it, no U.S. presence, and have it delivered by non-infidels. This is a strange situation we are in. I am not aware of in history an effort that is so unappreciated, in fact actively scorned. Has anyone proposed terminating it, the PRTs?

Mr. BOWEN. No.

Mr. COOPER. At least in those areas where——

Mr. BOWEN. Oh, yes. We did in our original draft report. We proposed pulling personnel out of the dangerous areas in the south, but as a result of the responses we got from MNFI and from the embassy, we modified our recommendation.

Mr. COOPER. So you yielded to their pressure?

Mr. BOWEN. No, we were persuaded that they have a plan that is calculated to succeed, and therefore it is worthwhile to keep those open for now.

Mr. COOPER. The chamber of commerce-type plan that is completely not understood in many parts of the world.

I see that my time has expired, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you.

Why don't we go ahead and start the clock again.

I wanted to ask, and I have several questions that may not take so long. Mr. Bowen, not in your report, but in your written statement you made mention of the five of your folks that were wounded or injured. Were all those U.S. Government employees?

Mr. BOWEN. Yes, they were.

Dr. SNYDER. Were you satisfied with the care and the follow-on care that has occurred for them?

Mr. BOWEN. Yes, I am.

Dr. SNYDER. One of the issues that you bring up in your report is the issue of the CERP money, where the local military had some money, our military had money and they could do projects, and you make the point that it actually seemed to work against ourselves when you are trying to build capacity of local people to do projects. How does that get resolved?

I know on my first trip back when General Petraeus was our commander in Mosul, one of the things he talked to us about was he wanted the ability to have more money for local projects. That was, I think, probably the early acute phase of the situation. Is that how you would look at this, that there would be a progression in a fairly rapid amount of time from when the military has funds to where it would need to be coming through the local government? How do you see that?

Mr. BOWEN. The Commander's Emergency Response Program is separate from the PRT spending. However, it is operating in similar locales addressing similar projects. The PRTs now have a quick response fund program, the QRF program similar to CERP, actually, to rapidly turn around high-value, high-need projects.

The point that we make in our audit is that better coordination between the PRTs and DOD with respect to the use of CERP funds is necessary because we ran into situations where the PRTs were addressing a project through the provincial reconstruction development council, and suddenly it was completed independently by CERP program.

Dr. SNYDER. That is certainly an indication of the lack of coordination.

Mr. BOWEN. Yes. It is another example of just the need to communicate more clearly on the ground.

Dr. SNYDER. Yes. In one of your introductory—I don't know the page, 9, I guess it is—of your report, I will just read this statement which I think is probably stating the obvious, but I quote: "Despite the best efforts of PRT civilian and military officials who are work-

ing under dangerous and austere conditions to accelerate the rocky transition to self-reliance, resolving these problems will likely be a slow process. It will require years of steady engagement and will depend heavily on a security environment and political settlements at the national level."

I assume by that you are not saying it will take years of PRT involvement, but the hope is that at some point we can transition from PRTs to the normal State Department, USAID, Department of Justice relationship.

Mr. BOWEN. Yes. That is what I am referring to.

Dr. SNYDER. Right. My last question, Mr. Bowen. We have had some ongoing discussions in this committee, but there have also been press discussions about the issue of staffing, the civilian side of things. In fact, there was a reference in either the Post or the Times yesterday in which is kind of rehashed the criticism that had come from the military and from Secretary Gates about the inability of the civilian side to staff up some of these positions.

From our testimony from our civilian side as recently as Tuesday, we had somebody from the State Department, the Justice Department, Treasury, Ag and USAID, they felt very strongly that they were meeting the needs now in terms of what they had been asked to do in terms of staffing these PRTs.

That is contrary to what Ginger Cruz testified before us a few weeks ago, or a couple of months ago, I guess, now, in your previous report. This report did not cover that, but we seem to have either a breakdown of information or there is new information. Do you have any thoughts about that issue in terms of the staffing on the civilian side?

Mr. BOWEN. I do. I have some new information on that that I got from my staff over in Baghdad today. With respect to phase two of staffing of the ePRTs, that phase concluded on August 31. The goal was to fill 133 slots; 104 are on the ground there now, and 16 are enroute; 13 still need to be employed and deployed.

With phase three, which we are in now, the deadline is the end of the year. The goal is 111. There are 20 on the ground right now, 47 enroute, and 44 yet to be filled. So obviously there are some significant staffing issues pending with respect to ensuring that the ePRTs can do their mission.

At the same time, the ePRTs are about 300 and the existing PRTs are a little bit over 300. Those existing PRT tours—I don't have information on that, but we need to look into it—are going to expire. There oldest one has been around for two years, and so I expect there will be some turnover issues ongoing in the existing PRTs as well.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Akin, any further questions?

Mr. AKIN. That was a good question, and I don't have any additional.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Cooper.

Mr. COOPER. No, thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. We appreciate you all being here today. I am sorry we got interrupted the one time. Members may have questions that they would like to have you submit a written answer to. I will just give you an open-ended question, if when you get back to your office you realize you should have said something differently, or your

staff says, "you know, what you said was really dumb," you should feel free to submit any kind of written statement in response, and we will be glad to add it to our record.

Thank you both, Mr. Bowen and Mr. Perito, for being here.

Yes, Mr. Bowen?

Mr. BOWEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PERITO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:57 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

October 18, 2007

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

OCTOBER 18, 2007

Opening Statement of
Chairman Dr. Vic Snyder
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Hearing on "Measuring and Increasing the Effectiveness of Provincial Reconstruction Teams"

October 18, 2007

The hearing will come to order.

Good morning, and welcome to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations' hearing on measuring and improving the effectiveness of Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

Over the past month and a half, this subcommittee has held a number of hearings and briefings to examine PRTs in Iraq and Afghanistan as an interagency case study. These sessions have included military and civilian personnel who have worked on PRTs, government officials with PRT oversight responsibilities, and outside experts who specialize in civil-military affairs and reconstruction-related activities.

One question that we have not heard sufficiently addressed to this point is whether PRTs, as currently constituted, are effectively accomplishing the missions they have been given. If you recall, at a hearing two weeks ago, Mrs. Davis put this question directly to our Department of Defense witnesses: how are we measuring the effectiveness of PRTs? Their answer was that there are no standardized metrics for determining whether PRTs are effective, because it is too difficult to establish such standards in a way that also accounts for the different regional conditions faced by each team.

I am pleased that we have the opportunity at today's hearing to consider the newly-released third report of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction on PRTs. SIGIR has played a leading role in examining the development of PRTs in Iraq, and today's report is an important effort to measure their effectiveness.

We are joined today by:

- Mr. Stuart Bowen, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction

and

- Mr. Robert Perito, a Senior Program Officer with the Center for Post Conflict Peace and Stability Operations at the U.S. Institute of Peace.

Welcome to both of you and thank you for being here.

Statement of Ranking Member Todd Akin
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
House Armed Services Committee

Measuring and Increasing the Effectiveness of Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan

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October 18, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good Morning to our witnesses, we appreciate you being here today.

Today's hearing is this subcommittee's third public hearing on Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan. The focus of today's hearing is on measuring the effectiveness of PRTs.

While this subcommittee has studied the PRT concept– how an interagency team, comprised of civilian and military personnel works to extend the reach of the government into regional provinces and local areas – we have not investigated how the PRTs in Iraq and Afghanistan are performing. Measuring the PRTs, it would seem to me, is an art – not a science. As our witnesses' testimony reveal each PRT faces a unique set of challenges that make it difficult to judge one against another. As a result,

success in Ninewa Province in the northern region of Iraq may look entirely different from an effective PRT in Baghdad or Anbar province. The ethnic composition of a province, the relative permissiveness of the area, and the education and skills of the population are just a few variables that will shape the conditions and challenges a PRT will face and determine its potential for success. Thus, what may be a great success in one province may look like marginal progress when compared to another province. Nevertheless, as the Congress continues to fund PRTs it is our responsibility to assess the effectiveness of the project. I think both our witnesses have done an admirable job in completing this task.

Also, we must keep in mind that the PRTs in Iraq and Afghanistan are alike only in name - - their respective missions are fundamentally different. Afghan PRTs focus on classic development projects, such as improving road networks, adding to the supply of electricity or water, and building schools and clinics. PRTs in Iraq, by contrast, place a stronger emphasis on capacity building rather than reconstruction. Capacity building is defined as mentoring and training in good governance with the emphasis on building and growing local and provincial government. I'm curious how this difference affects the way our respective witnesses measure the progress of

PRTs. Moreover, I wonder if our witnesses would explain how they measure whether a PRT is improving the capacity of a province.

Finally, as I've stated previously, PRTs, and the subject of stabilization operations generally, is critical to transitioning a local area from a combat zone to a business development zone or a quiet residential neighborhood. In my view, sufficient troop strength combined with increasing the number of PRTs is a formula we should continue to use to stabilize both Iraq and Afghanistan. The exact moment when a PRT's work is done, however, is unclear as these countries will be in a perpetual state of improving governance and increasing economic development. I'd like our witnesses to comment on how they would determine when a PRTs work is done.

Again, thank you to our witnesses for being here today. I look forward to your testimony.

[*Yield to Chairman Snyder*]

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STATEMENT OF STUART W. BOWEN, JR.
SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR IRAQ RECONSTRUCTION

BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

"EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM PROGRAM IN IRAQ"

Thursday, October 18, 2007

Washington, D.C.

Chairman Snyder, Ranking Member Akin, and members of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, I am pleased to appear before you today to present the findings of a report released today by my office, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), entitled "Review of the Effectiveness of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq" (SIGIR-07-015, October 18, 2007). Today's report and my accompanying testimony follow up on two previous SIGIR reports on the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Program in Iraq[1] and the testimony by my Deputy Special Inspector General, Ms. Ginger Cruz, who appeared before you on September 5, 2007.

Summary

SIGIR's oversight work on the PRT Program to date has found that it has made incremental progress in developing Iraq's provincial and local capacities to govern and to manage its own recovery. However, the serious problems of complex and overlapping sectarian, political and ethnic conflicts, as well as the difficult security situation, continue to hinder the program's overall progress. The varying degree to which these serious problems afflict Iraq across the country has, proportionately, affected progress.

[1] SIGIR-06-034; *Status of Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq*, Oct. 29, 2006; and SIGIR-07-014, *Status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program Expansion in Iraq*, SIGIR-07-014, July 25, 2007.

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For example:

-- the failure of the Council of Representatives to pass a provincial powers law that defines local governments' rights and responsibilities has limited provincial councils' effectiveness in managing their governmental institutions;

-- weak and uncoordinated rule of law programs within the provinces and at the national level have been a continuing problem. In most provinces, there is little cooperation among the police, courts, and correction facilities, and judicial orders are routinely ignored;

-- efforts to increase local living standards and reduce unemployment have been undermined by the dangerous security situation, but micro-lending programs, agribusiness development, and small-business development programs are beginning to make headway;

-- provincial governments have limited capacity to manage and sustain infrastructure and to budget for operations and maintenance, but some improvements have been noted in Iraqi management of local reconstruction projects; and

-- local political reconciliation efforts have been undermined in some areas by rival Shia groups, a sense of alienation among Sunnis, and growing frustration over the inability to obtain government services.

Given the complexity of these problems encountered, SIGIR has recommended that a comprehensive plan be developed, with elements tailored for each PRT, addressing program objectives, performance measures, funding requirements, agency responsibilities, and reportable milestones toward achieving initiatives.

Program Goals, Objectives, and Evolution

The PRT Program in Iraq is a U.S.-led, civil-military effort to assist Iraq's provincial and local governments to govern effectively and deliver essential services. It employs integrated, multidisciplinary teams, composed of U.S. and coalition civilian and military personnel, to teach, coach, and mentor provincial and local government officials in core competencies of governance and economic development.

The initiative has evolved and expanded considerably since the opening of the first PRTs in Mosul, Kirkuk, and Hillah in November 2005. As of August 2007, the program comprised seven PRTs led by the United States and three led by the coalition; seven provincial support teams (PSTs)—small cells of advisors that provide advice to provincial officials[2]; and 15 recently deployed ePRTs—the latter being PRTs

[2] In commenting on a draft of our most recent report, Headquarters, Multi-National Force - Iraq stated that PSTs for the most part have been converted to PRTs, with two PSTs incorporated into an existing PRT.

"embedded" with brigade combat teams (BCTs) in and around Baghdad and Al Anbar province.

How We Approached Our Work

SIGIR's new report on the PRT Program in Iraq examined five selected areas the program has emphasized: (1) assisting Iraq's provincial and local governments in developing a transparent and sustained capability to govern; (2) promoting increased security and rule of law; (3) advancing economic development; (4) providing the provincial administration necessary to meet the basic needs of the population; and (5) promoting reconciliation and shaping the political environment. Our report provides some general findings applicable to each area of emphasis as well as an assessment of the program's progress across the country.

SIGIR auditors visited the existing 10 PRT and seven PSTs, as well as nine of the new ePRTs. Our work entailed discussions with senior-level military and U.S. Embassy officials in Baghdad and interviews throughout Iraq with 274 civilian and military officials and officers, including senior leaders in the BCTs, team and deputy team leaders, technical specialists, bilingual bicultural advisors, civil affairs members, and Iraqi and third-country government advisors. We did not systematically obtain the perspective of Iraqi provincial-government officials on the effectiveness of the PRTs.

What We Found

SIGIR's work shows that, in many locations, the PRT Program in Iraq has made -- and is making -- incremental progress in developing Iraq's provincial and local government capacities to govern and to manage its own recovery below the national level. This progress has occurred despite continuing political and ethnic conflicts and the difficult security situation.

More specifically we found the following:

Governance—At the sites we visited, PRT officials provided mixed judgments of their provinces' effectiveness at governing and managing their governmental institutions, but noted that each had improved incrementally over the previous year. They told us that a key obstacle to developing governance capacity was the lack of a Provincial Powers Law that defines the rights and responsibilities of government offices and holds provincial officials accountable. At the same time, PRT officials told us they are coaching their provincial counterparts to execute their province's capital budget allocations. Most of the provinces report that they are ahead of their 2006 spending pace and generally on course to spend their 2007 funds. The provinces were generally spending their funds on construction projects, although issues with procurement complexity and lack of

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We have elected to retain the PST designation in our report and this testimony to generally reflect the status at the time of our review both in name and size relative to other PRTs.

contractors have caused some provinces to focus instead on spending to stockpile materials for future projects

Rule of Law—Numerous PRT officials identified rule of law as their most problematic core function. In many locations there is little cooperation among the police, courts, and correction facilities, and judicial orders are routinely ignored. With a few exceptions, the local population views police officers with suspicion because of suspected links to local militias and criminal activity. Judges and other participants in the judicial process are subjected to intimidation, and courts are often unable or unwilling to hear cases due to inadequate security.

Economic Development—The dangerous security environment continued to undermine efforts by the PRTs to increase living standards and reduce unemployment. It is difficult to ship raw materials into provinces and transport agricultural and manufactured products to markets, and there is little Iraqi or foreign investment. Many of the provinces suffer from shortages of fuel oil and electrical power. PRT economic advisors report that it will be difficult to create employment opportunities without a stable power source. The PRTs are engaged in a number of efforts to foster economic development, including micro-lending programs, agribusiness development, small-business development centers, and plans to resurrect state-owned enterprises.

Reconstruction—PRT officials generally believe that the provinces effectively manage the construction phase of infrastructure projects. However, provincial governments have little ability to manage and sustain existing infrastructure projects; further, they are not budgeting for operation and maintenance requirements. The use of the military's Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) exacerbated the problem. We documented frequent instances of CERP projects that conflicted with the PRT capacity-development mission by performing tasks that properly belong to local and provincial governments, rather than teaching and coaching local officials to assume responsibility themselves for carrying out government functions

Political Reconciliation—PRT officials reported little progress in this key area at the local and provincial level. One notable exception was Al Anbar province, where the tribes banded together to oppose al-Qaeda and support the national government. Efforts toward reconciliation have been undermined by tension between rival Shia groups, a sense of alienation among Sunnis, and growing public frustration over the inability to obtain government services.

The chart appended to this testimony summarizes the results of our work for the five functional areas we reviewed and the regions we used for analysis purposes. PRT civilian and military officials are working under dangerous and austere conditions to accelerate the Iraqi transition to self-reliance. However, despite their best efforts, we believe resolving these problems will be a slow process. It will likely require years of steady engagement and depend heavily on the extent to which the security environment can be improved and political settlements can be reached at the national level.

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Prior Reports also Identified the Need for Management Action

As we have previously reported, management actions are needed to improve sustainment capacity for reconstruction programs. This problem continues to exist.[3] We noted that the provinces struggle to staff and maintain buildings and facilities, such as clinics, schools, and water treatment plants, once they are constructed. One PRT team leader characterized the problem as a future "train wreck" unless steps are taken now to begin budgeting for and deploying the systems needed to sustain the new construction.

We previously recommended that the U.S. Ambassador, in coordination with the Commanding General, Multi-National Force – Iraq (MNF-I), formulate and implement a plan, with clear goals and objectives for monitoring and assisting the Iraqi effort to ensure sustainment of Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund projects, and review the Iraqi government's leadership in this area to determine its adequacy and shore up any shortfalls. Our two previous reports on the PRT Program also recommended the development of clearly defined objectives and performance measures to guide the PRTs and determine their accomplishments.[4] We believe those recommendations still require full implementation and are particularly relevant for those provinces where the PRTs access and engagement with Iraqi officials has been limited. We also found frequent instances in which the military's use of CERP to perform tasks that properly belong to local and provincial governments conflicted with the PRT Program's capacity-development mission.

Recommendations

Building on our prior recommendations, we have recommended that the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and the Commanding General, MNF-I, take these actions:

1. In an expeditious manner, jointly establish a comprehensive plan for the PRTs (including ePRTs), with elements tailored for each PRT. At a minimum, the plan should: (a) clearly define objectives and performance measures; (b) milestones for achieving stated objectives; (c) be linked to funding requirements; and (d) identify the organization(s) within each agency that are accountable for the plan's implementation. To provide senior level attention to this issue, the plan should be approved by the Chief of Mission and the MNF-I Commander to demonstrate each agency's commitment to this effort.
2. Develop guidance on the use and synchronization of CERP funds to support the U.S. Government's capacity-development mission.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Akin, and members of the Subcommittee: our staff is working hard on producing our 15th Quarterly Report to Congress, covering the quarter ending on

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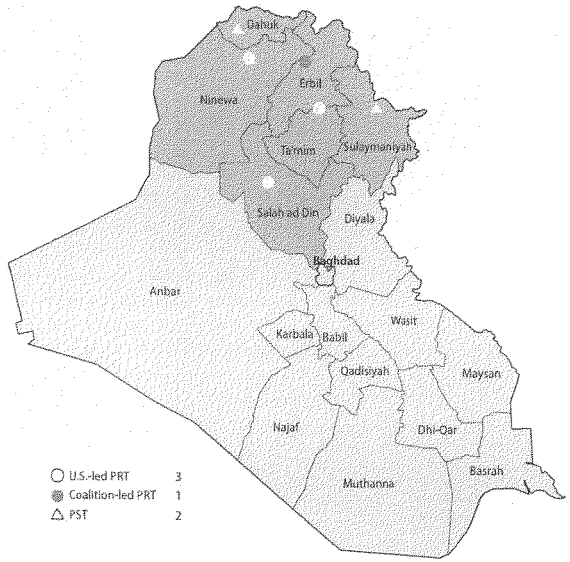
[3] SIGIR-05-022, *Managing Sustainment for Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Programs*, Oct. 24, 2005.
[4] See footnote 1.

September 30, and which we plan to release on October 30. In early November I will return to Iraq for my 18th visit, which is scheduled to last most of that month. That time will be spent working with our 35 brave and dedicated Baghdad-based staff – five of whom have been injured as a result of gunfire or rockets at some point this year – with my colleagues in the civilian agencies and the military, with our friends in the Iraqi government, and with others who are involved in the reconstruction effort.

Let me close by thanking the members of the subcommittee, on behalf of my colleagues, for your support of SIGIR's work. It is deeply appreciated. Mr. Chairman, this completes my statement, and I look forward to responding to your questions.

Progress Viewed Across Regional Areas of the Country

Regional Areas		PRT Officials Report	PRT Initiatives
NORTHERN PROVINCES Better security situation with relative peace and stability in Kurdish provinces. Concerns exist that situation could worsen if insurgents flee north.	Governance	Progress in governance skills of Iraqis. Better links between provincial officials and counterparts at the local/central levels. All provinces were making progress executing 2007 budgets and were ahead of 2006 pace.	Teaching and coaching provincial officials on governance issues.
	Rule of Law	Mixed assessment of provinces' law enforcement and judicial systems' effectiveness. In Ninewa public confidence in judicial system increased from 6 to 25% this period. Establishment of Major Crimes Court in Ninewa with other provinces in progress.	Actively assessing the justice system by visiting judicial, prison, and police facilities.
	Economic Development	Healthy economic growth in Kurdish region because of ability to attract international donors and investors. Shortages of fuel and reliable power constrain development in other provinces.	Efforts underway in all provinces to develop financial sectors and assist small businesses and agricultural efforts—but efforts are fairly small.
	Reconstruction	Provincial officials are now able to identify, prioritize, and coordinate projects. Provincial reconstruction process has expanded to include GOI funds and is slowly transitioning to full Iraqi control.	Teaching management skills to provincial officials rather than funding construction projects.
	Political Reconciliation	Efforts have failed to significantly influence sectarian and tribal leaders to address the issue of reconciliation. Uncertainty created by upcoming Article 140 referendum to determine if Kirkuk and Northern Iraq's disputed territories will be part of the Kurdistan region is casting a shadow over the region.	Trying to assist in finding common ground between parties.



Regional Areas

Western Province

By spring of 2007, tribes had banded together to oppose Al-Qaeda, improving the security situation. Many who fled are returning and seeking their former positions.

With improved situation, PRTs/ePRTs expect their efforts will begin showing results in the next 4-6 months.

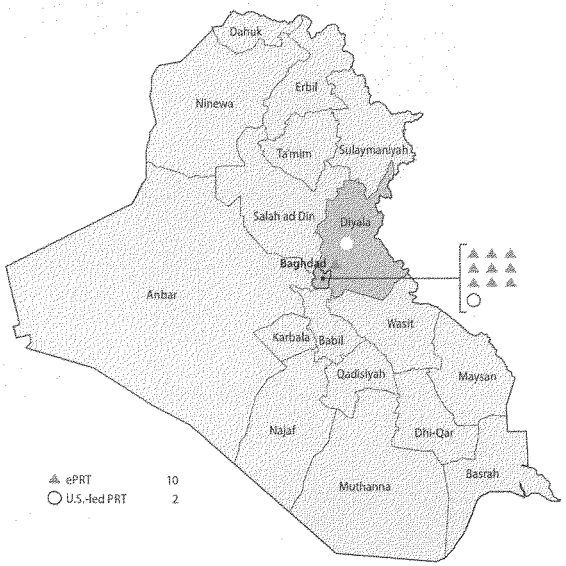
	PRT Officials Report	PRT initiatives
Governance	Integral components of provincial government are in place; however, ineffective linkages and relationships are limiting effectiveness. Governance is in formative stages as key stakeholders remain in a state of flux.	Trying to improve communication between various levels of government.
Rule of Law	Although civil courts had been functioning, security issues prevented judges from hearing major crime cases. Little linkage or chain-of-command relationships between police, courts, and correction personnel.	Initiatives limited because PRTs/ePRTs lack a sufficient number of experts to provide the needed legal and judicial assistance.
Economic Development	Efforts to foster economic development are underway now that large-scale combat operations have ended. However, the lack of programs to create permanent jobs, lack of fuel, and sporadic power access undermines factory restarts and other development.	Efforts since arrival of economic specialists in mid-June include restarting a factory and reopening the city's main market.
Reconstruction	Progress is slow in beginning to spend GOI funds for reconstruction involving essential services. Ramadi and Fallujah infrastructure remains largely destroyed from years of fighting.	Teaching management skills to provincial officials.
Political Reconciliation	As a result of the tribes having mobilized to align with coalition forces against al-Qaeda's presence in Iraq, officials are optimistic that measurable progress may now be made. However, concerns persist about dormant tribal issues that could emerge.	Efforts to impress on predominantly Sunni provincial government officials the need to obtain funding and services from the central ministries.

Regional Areas

Central Provinces

Significant security challenges remain. However, PRT Baghdad made more than 1,500 trips during the past year to areas outside the International Zone.

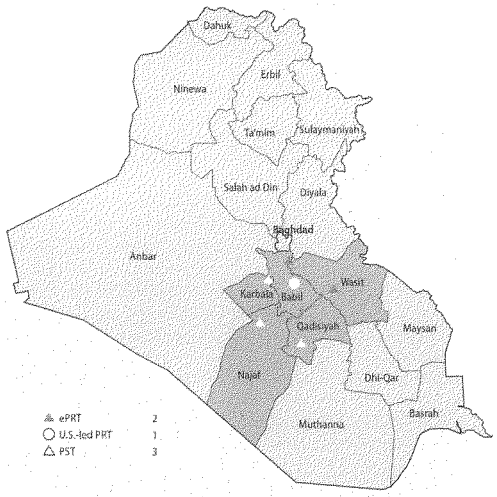
New ePRTs have expanded U.S. interaction with Iraqis at the neighborhood, district, and municipal levels. BCT leaders seem convinced that ePRTs constitute a tangible benefit.



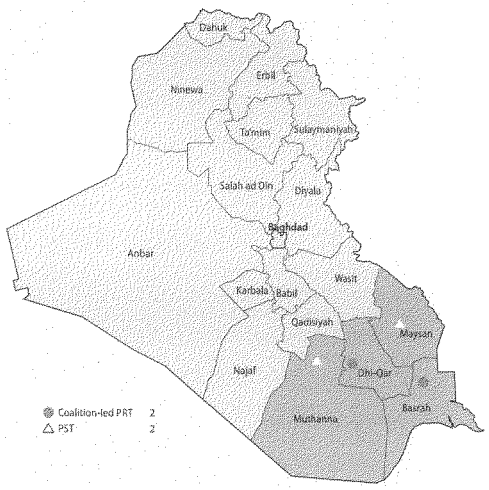
	PRT Officials Report	PRT Initiatives
Governance	Governance remains extremely contentious; Shia parties continue to fight any structural changes that might weaken their position. Some areas of governance have improved, but challenges remain in keeping provincial and local officials on task to solve problems and take ownership of their government.	Working to establish links between local and provincial officials. Assisted Baghdad province in submitting a budget resulting in district funding for the first time.
Rule of Law	Concern that focus is too short-term at the expense of long-term needs of the judicial system. Iraqi police have not earned the trust of the population, and judicial orders tend to be ineffective.	Upgrading technical skills of judicial personnel and addressing overcrowded conditions in prisons.
Economic Development	Security issues and sporadic power supplies continue to hinder growth in Baghdad. North Diyala has had stable growth; South Diyala is dysfunctional because of the tenuous security situation.	Although insecurity hinders PRTs, efforts made in securing/re-opening Baghdad markets, promoting micro-lending, and assessing state-owned enterprises to determine viability.
Reconstruction	Baghdad's institutions are assuming functions formerly carried out by U.S. officials, but getting them to take responsibility for maintaining facilities remains a significant challenge. In Diyala, the sectarian divide undercuts efforts, and the province is having difficulties executing its budget.	Managing reconstruction efforts and working with provincial counterparts, encouraging them to take responsibility for maintaining their infrastructure.
Political Reconciliation	Despite reduced violence, officials are pessimistic that lasting reconciliation is occurring and expressed concern that a departure of U.S. forces would result in ethnic cleansing. In Diyala, there is a desire to work toward reconciliation, but it will take years to overcome ill will between tribes.	Projects implemented through the provincial reconstruction process split roughly 50-50 between Sunni and Shia neighborhoods.

Progress Viewed Across Regional Areas of the Country

Regional Areas	PRT Officials Report	PRT Initiatives
SOUTH-CENTRAL Provinces Fundamental issue facing PRTs is movement security, limiting their ability to effectively engage Iraqi counterparts and assess progress. Tangible progress being made in Babil, but officials in Najaf, Karbala, and Qadisiyah are less optimistic. Region is known as the Shia heartland: security is generally calm for Iraqis and Iranians, but dangerous for coalition forces, civilians, and PRT personnel		
Governance	All five provinces are finishing Provincial Development Strategy plans and modest improvement to budgeting, strategic planning, and forming civil societies.	Limited ability to teach, coach, and mentor because of tenuous security situation.
Rule of Law	Governments are marginally able to provide law enforcement and judicial functions that openly and fairly protect and serve the population. Advisors believe wholesale reform of Iraqi law is needed to bring coherence to the law and fill many gaps in political and regulatory practices.	Judges and lawyers are reluctant to work closely with U.S. personnel. Some progress has been made (i.e. distributing laptops to judges with software capable of searching Iraqi law).
Economic Development	Region is economically stagnant with little evidence of growth or permanent job creation. Religious tourism and small-scale agricultural production constitute main economic activities. Pressing need to reduce unemployment to counter recruitment by militias. Security has restricted commercial credit and Iraqi and foreign investment in small and medium-sized businesses. PRT Babil reports an acute need for business development training.	Opening of business development centers and plan to use quick response funds to increase agricultural production.
Reconstruction	Provinces are doing a reasonably effective job of managing reconstruction efforts despite poor performance in staffing and sustaining facilities once built. All provinces are on course to execute their 2007 capital budgets. Karbala and Najaf are generally able to provide basic services, but the other provinces struggle to do so.	Security situation limits ability to teach, coach, and mentor Iraqi counterparts
Political Reconciliation	Provincial elections are planned, and political parties are working to consolidate power. Political dialogue is scarce and civil society too weak to mediate. Predominantly Shia, this region does not face the sectarian problems of the mixed areas in and around Baghdad. One exception in the northern districts of Babil and Wasit, where sectarian fighting and insurgent infiltration have become endemic. Provincial government has largely abstained from working to solve problems in the north.	Limited. PRT officials on the ground question what role and effect they can have on the reconciliation process.



Regional Areas		PRT Officials Report	PRT Initiatives
SOUTH-EASTERN Provinces The political and security situation in Basrah, which is home to 2/3 of Iraq's oil resources, casts a political and economic shadow over the other three provinces. Security situation has stifled PRT in Basrah; PST personnel in Muthanna feel that their province offers the most relaxed security environment and the key to their footing in the southeast region.	Governance	Provinces possess generally functional governments that were on track to expend entire 2007 budgets. However, officials lack hard skills in areas such as administration, management, planning, and accounting. Also, officials have shown themselves incapable of providing and sustaining essential services. Most of the region suffers from low literacy and a lack of skilled labor.	PRT coaching and mentoring to encourage government officials to develop overall provincial plans and transition to a more participatory, transparent mode of governance.
	Rule of Law	Differences among the provinces. Police officers are viewed with suspicion by the local population because of their links to local militias and corrupt activities.	PRT Basrah has made some headway (i.e. funding for new courthouse and prison), but its inability to work in the city due to security concerns limits its effectiveness. PRTs in other areas have only a limited understanding of rule-of-law activities in their provinces.
	Economic Development	Until the violence in Basrah subsides, they do not expect much economic growth. Except for the oil industry and ports in Basrah, there is little new economic activity. Unemployment is estimated at 40-60%, and subsistence agriculture is the main source of jobs. Before 2003, small to medium-sized business flourished but then stopped. Efforts to restart them are stymied by a lack of skill or interest.	PRT Basrah has tried to relax travel and commercial restrictions between Basrah and Kuwait, and started a bankers association. PRT Dhi-Qar plans to introduce a micro-lending program to encourage the start of small and medium-sized enterprises.
	Reconstruction	Provinces recently developed their Provincial Development Strategy. However, most reconstruction projects have been carried out by coalition forces with little Iraqi input. Provincial officials have little ability to manage and sustain those projects.	Focus on raising local management skills, encouraging provincial ownership of the reconstruction process, and getting the province to spend its own budget resources.
	Political Reconciliation	Reconciliation, in terms of sectarian considerations, is not an issue in this region because the vast majority of the population is Shia. Conflict between political parties is nonetheless a concern in some areas. Shia political groups are locked in violent struggle in Basrah, leaving the city in control of militias and criminal gangs. Recent violence in Dhi-Qar broke months of relative calm. In Muthanna, tribal loyalties take precedence over political parties.	PRT efforts are constrained by ongoing violence.



THE US EXPERIENCE WITH PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

Testimony before the House Armed Services Committee

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

October 17, 2007

Robert M. Perito

Senior Program officer

US Institute of Peace

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the invitation to testify before this subcommittee on the US experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in Iraq and Afghanistan. I am Robert Perito, Senior Program Officer in Center for Post Conflict Peace and Stability Operations at the US Institute of Peace (USIP). I would like to share with you my observations about the effectiveness of PRTs and offer four recommendations on ways to improve the PRT program. These are my own views and not those of USIP, which does not advocate specific policy positions.

Scope and Mission of the PRT Program

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are small, civilian-military units that assist provincial and local governments to govern more effectively and deliver essential services. The first PRTs were established by the US in Afghanistan in 2002. The purpose was to combine military leadership with representatives of civilian government agencies, Army Civil Affairs teams and force protection units to enable civilian agencies to operate in insecure areas. There are now 25 PRTs in Afghanistan operating under the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, (ISAF). These PRTs are led by the US and 12 other NATO and Coalition partners; another dozen countries contribute personnel, financial and material support.

On November 11, 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice inaugurated the first of ten PRTs in Iraq. In Iraq, PRTs are led by the State Department and staffed primarily with civilians, including private contractors. On January 10. 2007, the President announced the creation of ten additional PRTs as part of the "New Way Forward." These "e-PRTs" were embedded in US military brigade combat teams (BCT) operating in Baghdad and Anbar Province. There are now 25 PRTS operating in Iraq. Included in this number are three PRTs led by our Coalition partners: the UK, Italy, and South Korea.

In Afghanistan, the PRT's mission is to help extend the authority of the Afghan government into the provinces in order to develop a stable and security environment, enable security sector reform and economic and social development. PRTs are located in provincial capitals where they interact primarily with the governor, provincial level representatives of the central government ministries and elected provincial councils. Their task is to help insure that traditionally strong

local authorities promote the aims of the central government and not pursue independent agendas.

In Iraq, PRTs are expected to assist Iraqi provincial and municipal officials and civil society groups to improve governance, reconstruction and security through capacity building and by creating political space for moderates to operate. PRTs are also expected to assist the U.S. military by providing the political component of the U.S. counterinsurgency strategy. The role of PRTs is to help strengthen provincial authorities and assist them in undertaking local initiatives in an historically centralized state.

PRT Organizations Differ Widely

Beyond contrasting missions, PRTs in Afghanistan and Iraq have a variety of organizational structures. The US has three models of PRTs:

- In Afghanistan, the US model for PRTs has 80 personnel: three are civilians representing the State Department, USAID and the Department of Agriculture. The military component includes the PRT commander and his staff; a force protection unit (usually an infantry platoon of National Guard); two Army Civil Affairs teams, each with four soldiers; and several small units of military police, intelligence officers and other specialists. Not all US PRTs have all these parts.

- In Iraq, the original ten US PRTs were led by a senior Foreign Service Officer and had up to 80 mostly civilian personnel from the Departments of State, Justice, Agriculture and USAID. The military component included the deputy leader and military liaison officer, civil affairs soldiers that performed various functions and a representative from the Army Corps of Engineers. The PRT also included USAID civilian contractors and Iraqi personnel. For these PRTs, force protection was provided by the US military or contact security.

- The new embedded PRTs (e-PRT) feature are led by a State Department Official who is one of a four-member core group that also includes a representative from USAID, Army Civil Affairs and a cultural advisor/translator. E-PRTs may have a mix of 8-12 civilian subject matter specialists depending on local requirements and there may be military officers assigned directly to the PRT. This year most civilian slots in e-PRTs were filled by members of the National Guard and Army Reserve. The State Department is now recruiting replacement civilian contractors who will begin arriving in Iraq in November. The changeover from military personnel to contractors will be completed by next summer. The BCT commander is responsible for security and movement. His troops provide force protection for PRT personnel.

In Afghanistan, the US followed the practice of handing off established PRTs to NATO and Coalition partners. These nations often invited other countries to contribute personnel. The result was the proliferation of organizational structures reflecting national policy preferences and bureaucratic configurations. As an example, German PRTs are large with over 300 personnel and a sharp division between a robust civilian development component and a small, highly restricted military unit.

PRT Operations Reflect Locales

In Iraq, US PRTs receive operational guidance and policy direction from the newly established Embassy Office of Provincial Affairs and support on military and logistics from the Multi-National Force Iraq headquartered in Baghdad. In Afghanistan, PRTs receive operational direction and policy guidance from the PRT Executive Steering Committee in Kabul, which is co-chaired by the Afghan minister of the interior and the commander of ISAF. Operational issues are addressed by a subordinate PRT Working Group, which also includes the UN and relative embassy representatives. ISAF has produced a PRT Handbook that provides general guidance and useful information on the organization and work of PRTs. For Iraq, the Army Lessons Learned Center has posted a PRT Playbook on its website, but this document has not been cleared by the civilian government agencies that participated in the drafting process.

In fact, beyond the mission statement, there is no agreement within the US government or between the US and its allies on how PRTs should be organized, conduct operations or what they should accomplish. Actual decisions on priorities and programs reflect local conditions along with national priorities of participating governments. In Afghanistan, PRTs located in the relatively peaceful north and west of the country conduct classic peacekeeping operations and emphasize economic development and reconstruction of essential infrastructure. In the south and east along the border with Pakistan, PRTs are engaged in counter insurgency operations to counter the Taliban resurgence. In Iraq, the original ten PRTs have been highly restricted by security conditions and by the early inability of the State and Defense Departments to agree on arrangement for administrative and logistics support and for providing security. Within the past year, these PRTs have expanded operations following a February 2007 memorandum of understanding between State and Defense on support of PRT operations. The new e-PRTs function as part of the BCT commander's staff and have benefited in terms of receiving administrative and logistic support from this close association with the military.

In both Afghanistan and Iraq, PRT operations are strongly influenced by the personalities of team members. PRT have a bifurcated chain of command with the State Department in charge of political and economic issues and the military responsible for security and movement. Operational priorities often reflect the personal expertise and interests of team members and can change with the rotation of personnel. They also reflect the ability of team members to work together and compromise on common objectives. With no one in overall charge, disputes are referred to more senior officials up separate 'stovepipes' of authority. Given the limitations on PRT resources even seemingly small decisions can be important. For example, since all movements "out side the wire" require force protection, decisions on the availability and scheduling of security escorts can significantly affect the ability of PRT members to perform their functions.

In Iraq, the creation of the new Office of Provincial Affairs (OPA) in Embassy Baghdad has yet to fully resolve the problem of coordinating PRT operations. OPA got off to a rocky start, but has improved its performance under new leadership. Similarly, the new e-PRTs, which operate at the sub-provincial level, have had problems coordinating with the original PRTs in Baghdad and Anbar, which have responsibilities for the entire province. E-PRTs report to the Embassy bypassing the provincial PRTs. This has created disconnects in reporting and project

development and implementation.

In both Iraq and Afghanistan have suffered from the inability of U.S. civilian government agencies to provide personnel. The State Department has been able to fill its limited number of assigned slots, but has been forced to rely upon junior officers, retirees or civil servants Most USAID slots are filled with contract personnel who often have only a limited knowledge of their sponsoring agency and government regulations and requirements. Other U.S. civilian agencies have relied on random volunteers or have opted out entirely.

PRTs Have Three Essential Functions

While emphasis may vary, all PRTs concentrate on three essential functions: governance, reconstruction and security.

Governance: In Iraq the primary focus of PRTs has been to improve the ability of provincial and sub-provincial governments to function effectively and provide essential services. USAID civilian contractors provide training and technical assistance in strategic planning, budgets, management and project implementation. Where they are successful, PRTs are able to facilitate cooperation between the provincial governor, representatives of central government ministries and elected provincial councils. They are also able to prod the central government into approving provincial project proposals and releasing funds for project implementation. Among the primary challenges is getting local authorities to assume responsibility and to take initiatives in the absence of laws, regulations and enforcement mechanisms that provide for accountability. In turn, e-PRTs that operate at the sub-provincial level are able to get district and municipal governments to coordinate effectively and to prod provincial governments to make funds available for implementing projects.

In Afghanistan, PRTs efforts to promote good governance have involved working with the provincial governor and police chief who are appointed by the central government. In cases where these officials are competent administrators and support central government programs, PRTs have provided logistic and financial support. PRT commander have escorted provincial governors on tours and have undertaken infrastructure improvement projects designed to reflect favorably on local authorities. In cases where local authorities are corrupt, involved in the drug trade or have their own agendas, PRTs have either been stymied or have used their influence with higher U.S. authorities to try to remove these officials.

Reconstruction: In Iraq, PRTs play an important role in Provincial Reconstruction Development Committees (PRDC) that include Iraqi officials. PRDCs identify and prioritize provincial development projects, obtain approval, insure they receive funding and oversee implementation. The focus of these projects is primarily on job creation through the development of local businesses and industrial and commercial enterprises. PRT resources come from the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP), the Development Fund for Iraq and the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund. Recently, the State Department has initiated a Quick Response Fund, which enables the PRT leader to make small, quick dispersing grants to enterprises and civil society organizations to promote economic and social development. It should be understood, however, that PRTs exist in a larger assistance universe and must conform to national level development assistance plans. There is no shortage of development assistance funding in Iraq. The challenge has been to encourage the Iraqi government to release funding

obtained from petroleum and other revenue sources for provincial development efforts.

In Afghanistan, PRTs initially focused on quick impact village improvement projects designed to demonstrate goodwill and encourage a favorable local reaction to the presence of foreign military units in rural areas. At times, PRT projects, which were implemented through local contractors, were ill advised, leading to shoddy construction and the building of schools without teachers and clinics without medical personnel. Such efforts produced criticism from private humanitarian and relief agencies. They argued that involvement of soldiers in development violated "humanitarian space" and endangered the aura of neutrality that relief workers relied on for their protection.

Over time, particularly following the arrival of USAID representatives, PRT projects conformed to provincial and national level development plans. As in Iraq, PRTs rely on CERP and a variety of other sources for development funding. Effective PRTs are expert at mixing funding sources to accomplish their objectives. Increasingly, PRTs have tried to use development aid to neutralize local sources of conflict and to provide incentives for Afghans to oppose the Taliban. Here again, PRTs operate in a larger 'aid universe.' PRT are responsible for only a small percent of the U.S. assistance budget and have limited influence over projects that are supervised from the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.

Security: In Afghanistan, PRTs are part of the security presence in their areas of operation, but they have no offensive capability and their only security function is force protection. PRT military elements provide convoy security for movements of PRT personnel. PRTs are co-located with U.S. and Afghan combat units on which they rely for protection from hostile forces. PRTs have no responsibility for counter narcotics or other types of law enforcement. They can contribute to local security by funding construction of police stations and providing equipment and advice to Afghan police and military units.

In Iraq, eight of the first ten PRTs were located on U.S. Forward Operating Bases and relied upon the U.S. military for convoy escort and force protection. Since the February 2007 memorandum of understanding between State and Defense, U.S. commanders have more willingly provided dedicated armored vehicles and soldiers trained in providing close protection for civilian personnel. This is in contrast to an earlier period when U.S. military escorts stood and fought when attacked rather than rushing their civilian charges to safety or combined PRT escort service with counter insurgency patrols. Provision of military security for PRTs has virtually eliminated State Department's reliance upon private contract security guards with a resulting improvement in service and a marked reduction in cost. E-PRTs are part of the brigade structure and rely upon the brigade commander to provide for their protection. Civilians serving in e-PRTs remain subject to highly restrictive State Department Diplomatic Security regulations, but, in fact, more lenient Defense Department security regulations actually apply. This permits e-PRT personnel to operate more effectively and to more often engage directly with Iraqi officials.

Conclusions and Recommendations

While US PRTs vary greatly in size, organization and functions, they share several common problems, which require immediate attention. These can be summarized as follows:

- **Improvisation is not a concept of operations**: PRTs need an agreed concept of

operations and organizational structure with a single chain of command. This should be developed by concerned agencies in Washington and vetted with the field and our allies. It is unfair to expect personnel from various government agencies and the military to agree among themselves on mission priorities in the most difficult operating environments without such guidance.

- **Stability Operations is not a game for 'pick up' teams:** U.S. civilian agencies need to recruit federal employees with the expertise and skills required to staff PRTs. These permanent agency representatives can train and serve alongside their military counterparts and effectively represent their agencies. This is not possible using commercial contractors or relying upon military reservists to staff civilian functions.

- **Silence is not a public information program:** The U.S. PRT program suffers from a lack of public information on the nature and results of its efforts. This month, USAID published a magazine, *Iraq PRTs,* in English and Arabic, which details the activities of PRTs in Iraq. This initiative is commendable but long overdue. In the overwhelming wave of media reporting on Iraq and Afghanistan there are few reports on PRTs. This seemingly is the result of the fact that information is either classified or not readily available.

- **Without agreed objectives it is difficult to judge effectiveness:** There is a need for both an agreed set of objectives for PRTs and an agreed set of metrics for measuring their performance. Absent a means of determining whether PRTs are effective, it is difficult to determine whether alternative mechanisms might better achieve our purposes. Lack of a means of evaluating PRTs has not prevented their proliferation in Iraq and Afghanistan and talk of creating them in various new operations. Before this occurs, it is time for some objective scrutiny measures of effectiveness.

In this regard, I would like to express my appreciation to you Mr. Chairman, and the Subcommittee for holding this series of hearings on the PRT program. I look forward to your questions.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

OCTOBER 18, 2007

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY DR. SNYDER

Dr. SNYDER. Please provide one or more concrete examples of possible objectives, measures of effectiveness, and milestones as those terms apply to the PRT program.

Mr. BOWEN. As discussed in our report, each PRT has differing needs and the plan for each PRT would contain elements tailored to the needs of the province.

An example might be that a particular province has difficulties in budgeting. The objective might be to help the province develop budgeting and fiscal policies. The steps leading up to improving the province's budgeting capacity might be to (1) help it learn financial forecasting, (2) develop and adopt financial policies, (3) identify the costs of government services, (4) set government charges and fees, (5) develop a strategic plan, and (6) develop a capital asset support plan. Each of these steps would have an achievement plan that identified the steps planned and a timeline for accomplishing each step. This would give senior management and the Congress a sense of what we are trying to accomplish, whether progress was being made, and whether sufficient resources were in place.

Dr. SNYDER. In your discussion with Mr. Akin regarding central, regional, and local government authority under the Iraqi constitution, you stated that you would get back to the subcommittee with additional detail. Please describe your view of the current state of "federalism" and how it affects relations between the different levels of Iraqi government under Iraqi law, and your view of how that might change under a provincial powers law.

Mr. BOWEN. Iraq's central government has a predominant role in decision-making, including decisions related to the allocation of resources, especially outside of Iraqi Kurdistan. In the rest of Iraq, significant decisions must usually be made in Baghdad—the powers of the provinces are vague *de jure* and scant *de facto*.

Three legal elements directly affect the state of federalism in Iraq today: the "regions provision" in the Constitution; the nascent new provincial powers law; and the nascent new elections law.

The effect of the Constitution's "regions provision" was suspended at the end of 2006. It is scheduled to become effective on April 18, 2008. Once effective, the provision permits two or more provinces to form a region, reducing the central government's power over the provinces within the region, particularly in the areas of security and fiscal affairs. One reason why there have been delays on a number of significant pieces of legislation long pending before the Council of Representatives is that the regions law will create a significant shift in the balance of power between the central government and regional governments, and political forces whose support is concentrated in particular regions appear to be awaiting a shift in power which may make concessions within the national legislature unnecessary. The regions law (rather than the provincial powers law, discussed below) will be the catalyst for potentially fundamental change in the balance of power between the central and provincial governments.

The US Mission in Iraq has identified passage of the provincial powers as one of the five most important priorities in our political engagement with Iraq. Among other things, the law will clarify the authority of provincial councils. Passage of the provincial powers Law will enable US Provincial Reconstruction Teams to provide capacity building programs more clearly focused on the mechanisms to help provinces use the powers they will have in the new dispensation.

A new elections law will permit the holding of new provincial elections, which will correct the imbalances that now exist in a number of provincial councils. The imbalances occurred because the Sunnis boycotted the January 30, 2005, elections. The problem is particularly acute in Diyala Province, which has a majority Sunni population but has an all-Shia council. Similar problems exist in Nineveh, where the Sunnis have no representation on an all-Kurdish Council, despite having a significant presence in the populace.

Dr. SNYDER. Are you are aware, from your investigation of PRTs, of whether the U.S. conducts or sponsors Iraqi public opinion polls to determine the local impact of U.S. programs, specifically whether PRT operations have resulted in increased positive opinion towards the U.S.? Would such polls be a useful tool to help evaluate PRT progress?

Mr. BOWEN. In October 2006, SIGIR recommended that the Secretaries of State and Defense take action to define PRT objectives and performance measures and to develop milestones for achieving program objectives. To date, OPA and the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF–I) have not clearly defined PRT objectives and performance measures. Therefore, neither we nor, we believe, PRT management at any level can easily report on what the PRTs and ePRTs are accomplishing, individually or collectively.

Assuming that the PRT program, as a whole and in individual locations, has clear goals, it may be possible to use polling to help determine if those goals are being met—changing perceptions may be good evidence of meeting goals. Polling is carried out in Iraq but it may be difficult to poll a sufficiently representative group in certain geographic areas.

Dr. SNYDER. You provided information regarding current staffing of PRTs in Iraq. What is your source for those numbers, and have you received additional updates since then?

Mr. BOWEN. The current information on staffing of PRTs was derived from information provided by the Office of Provincial Affairs (OPA), which oversees the PRT program at the US Embassy, Baghdad.

Dr. SNYDER. In its September 10, 2007, response to the draft SIGIR recommendations, the Embassy stated that an interagency working group was actively updating objectives and developing performance measures, and expected to complete the task with [sic] a month. Given that it has been over a month since that response, are you aware of whether they have completed this task?

Mr. BOWEN. SIGIR has been told by OPA and State Department officials (as of November 9, 2007) that work is nearly complete on updating objectives and performance measures for PRTs. We have asked for copies of those documents and await their receipt.

Dr. SNYDER. Do you have any specific observation regarding the role to be played by PRTs in areas that have been turned over to Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC)? At what point should we consider security to have progressed to where non-governmental organizations or traditional USAID missions would be capable of taking over for PRTs?

Mr. BOWEN. In meetings on November 9, we were informed by State Department officials that there have been assurances from the Multi-National Corps-Iraq Commander, Gen. Odierno, has committed to provide military support for PRT mission in provinces which have transferred to PIC. PRTs will continue to have an important role around the country as military presence is reduced, but military security is still needed by PRT staff. When PRT staff have been able to live in and move around within their areas of responsibility without military support, other modalities for providing assistance to Iraq, which may include traditional USAID missions, could be substituted for PRTs.

Dr. SNYDER. Is there any additional information you would like to provide to the subcommittee for the record, or any corrections or clarifications you would like to make with respect to your testimony?

Mr. BOWEN. While we appreciate the opportunity offered by this question, we have no additional comments at this time.

Dr. SNYDER. In your testimony you stated "There is a need for an agreed set of objective for PRTs and an agreed set of measurement for their performance." Please provide one or more concrete examples of possible objectives, measures of effectiveness and milestones as those terms apply to the PRT program.

Mr. PERITO. One goal for all PRTs in Iraq and Afghanistan are self-sufficient, transparent, accountable and capable provincial governments. For Iraq, one practical objective on the path to achieving that goal has been budget execution. PRTs have been able to assist some provincial governments to develop and implement provincial budgets utilizing funds obtained from the central government in Baghdad. Milestones have included the number of provincial governments that can accomplish this task. Metrics include the amount of money obtained and disbursed and the number of projects completed.

Dr. SNYDER. Are you aware if the U.S. conducts public opinion polls in Iraq or Afghanistan to determine the local impact of U.S. programs, specifically where PRT operations have resulted in a more positive attitude toward the U.S.? Would such polls be a helpful tool to evaluate PRT progress?

Mr. PERITO. A far as I know, US authorities have not conducted public opinion surveys in either country to access popular attitudes towards PRTs. For Iraq, State Department officials believe such polls might indicate that PRTs were trying to upstage Iraqi officials to take credit for providing services. In Afghanistan, NATO or ISAF may have done polling. US PRTs are under ISAF. This may affect popular attitudes toward US PRTs.

I believe polls would be useful in assessing popular attitudes toward PRTs, if done appropriately. It is not in our interest or either the Iraqis or Afghans for the role of PRTs to be invisible to the general public. Both governments will require our assistance for the foreseeable future. Host Government officials should get the credit, but the public should understand that we are providing assistance.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Cooper discussed whether it is worth the U.S. continuing to sponsor PRTs when in parts of Iraq the U.S. is "actively despised." Would you care to address Mr. Cooper's concerns as to whether it is counter productive to continue this work in the face of a lack of consideration for U.S. generosity?

Mr. PERITO. In a counterinsurgency, it is important that citizens identify progress with the efforts of their own government and not with its foreign supporters. US PRTs try to give credit to the host government whenever possible and to emphasize the role of local officials.

The opposite approach can be counterproductive. At the start of the PRT program in Afghanistan, US PRTs built schools without first determining whether the Afghan education ministry could provide teachers. The response from villagers was: "The US helped us by building a school, but our government failed to send a teacher."

PRTs need to coordinate their efforts with local authorities, reflect local concerns and meet local needs. The target audience is not the small group of extremists that despise us, but the majority that is looking for reasons to support the government.

Dr. SNYDER. SIGIR and many PRT officials have observed that rule of law issues are problematic. Are PRTs the appropriate organization to deal with these issues? Are they adequately resourced and staffed in Iraq or Afghanistan, or do they require additional support from the Department of Justice, military Judge Advocates, or others?

Mr. PERITO. In Iraq and Afghanistan, US assistance for police training, assistance to the justice sector and support for corrections is provided through the US military training commands and not through the operational commands, which are responsible for the PRTs. In Afghanistan, US PRT support for rule of law is generally limited to paying for construction of police stations and courthouses and advising the Afghan police, if the PRT has a US military police officer assigned.

In Iraq, the PRT rule of law officer is usually a lawyer from the Justice Department or a commercial contractor working for the State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. PRT Rule of Law officers have access to PRT project funds, but their ability to influence the Iraqi judicial system is limited. PRTs would need substantial increases in staffing, funding and authority to make an impact on Rule of Law performance. This assistance should be provided by the Department of Justice and not by contractors of a commercial firm.

Dr. SNYDER. Do you have any observations regarding the role for PRTs in areas that have been turned over to Provincial Iraqi Control? At what point is security sufficient to justify turning over PRT operations to traditional USAID missions?

Mr. PERITO. In Iraq, the Italian PRT is located in Nasiriyah, Dhi Qar province, which was transferred to Iraqi control in September 2006. The Italian PRT has a USAID component that is staffed by American and Iraqi contractors. The Italians call the Dhi Qar PRT a "Reconstruction Support Unit." The staff is entirely civilian. The Dhi Qar PRT has no military component.

For security, the Italian PRT relies upon foreign contract guards and the Iraqi military and police. It is located in a Shia area that has not experience insurgency or sectarian strife. As the PRT operates in a permissive environment, it does not use armored vehicles, nor does it restrict its activities to the provincial capital. The PRT has successfully established excellent working relations with Iraqi officials and tribal leaders. The PRT carries out a wide range of development projects. As security improves, other PRTs could transition to this type of operation.

Dr. SNYDER. Is there additional information you would like to provide or corrections to your testimony?

Mr. PERITO. No.

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