



PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS: *Building Iraqi Capacity and Accelerating the Transition to Iraqi Self-Reliance*

President Bush announced on January 10 that the United States will expand its Provincial Reconstruction Team program to support U.S. strategic priorities in Iraq and help accelerate the transition to Iraqi self-reliance. Under the plan announced by the President, the expanded Provincial Reconstruction Team program will double the U.S. civilian presence outside of the International Zone in Baghdad.

The front-line operatives in the campaign to stabilize Iraq are the American and Coalition members who comprise the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, or PRTs. These are relatively small operational units comprised not just of diplomats, but military officers, development policy experts (from the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Justice), and other specialists (in fields such as rule of law, engineering, and oil industry operations) who work closely with Iraqi provincial leaders and the Iraqi communities that they serve. While PRTs dispense money for reconstruction projects, the strategic purpose of these civil-military field teams is both political and economic. By building provincial governments' ability to deliver essential services and other key development projects to local Iraqis, PRTs help to extend the reach of the Iraqi government to all corners of the country and help build the stability necessary to complete the transition to full-Iraqi control.

How do Provincial Reconstruction Teams Work?

Provincial Reconstruction Teams bolster moderates by establishing and strengthening relationships with local Iraqi leaders — business leaders, community leaders, and elected officials — who are committed to building a prosperous, peaceful, and democratic Iraq. PRTs support these Iraqis through targeted assistance (e.g. microloans and grants) to help them start new

small businesses and create jobs, provide services that meet the local needs of their communities, and develop the capacity to govern in an effective, sustainable way.

The expanded PRT program will provide targeted assistance to communities rather than helping to implement large scale reconstruction projects. Also, there is a new emphasis on creating civilian-military teams that work toward common objectives. The civilian and military leaders will create a common plan for each region, which will draw upon combined civilian and military resources. The military command is responsible for providing life and operational support, as well as security, for U.S. civilian personnel collocated with brigades in the field.

Where are the PRTs located?

The announced expansion of the PRT program will create at least 8 new PRTs, in addition to the existing 10 (i.e. at least 18 in total): five new PRTs in Baghdad, two in Anbar, and one in Balad in addition to the already existing U.S.-led PRTs in Ninewa, Kirkuk, Salah ad Din, Diyala, and Babil and the Coalition-led PRTs in Basrah (UK), Dhi Qar (Italy), and Erbil (Korea). (see map)

