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UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE DISCUSSION ON EMBEDDED  
PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS IN IRAQ;  
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BAKKEN, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT; AND LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL ROBERT RUCH, U.S. ARMY MODERATOR: ROBERT PERITO, SENIOR  
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MR. PERITO: (In progress) -- small civilian military units that assist local  
authorities in Iraq and Afghanistan to improve security, governance and the  
economy and to deliver essential services.

There are now 25 PRTs in each country; 45 of them are led by the United States  
and 15 of them by our allies. PRTs are the cutting edge of U.S. efforts to deal  
with such critical post-conflict challenges as upgrading human capacity,  
promoting political reconciliation, creating personal security, reviving stalled  
economies and conducting counterinsurgency.

The United States has three different models for PRTs. In Afghanistan, U.S. PRTs have about 80 personnel; all but three of them are military. The civilian agencies represented are State, USAID and the Department of Agriculture. Among the military contingent are two teams of Civil Affairs soldiers and normally a platoon of U.S. National Guard. In Iraq, the original 10 PRTs which were established were assigned to assist provincial governments. They were led by the State Department and they were composed primarily of civilians. The military participation in these original 10 PRTs was limited to the deputy commander and to providing logistics and force protection.

In January of 2007, President Bush announced that the United States would double the number of PRTs in Iraq as part of his new way forward. These new PRTs would be embedded with brigade combat teams, the brigade combat teams that were part of the surge, into Baghdad, Anbar and Erbil. The new EPRTs, Embedded PRTs, would begin as small interagency teams that would expand over time to include civilian experts in a broad range of specialties, everything from small business developers to large animal veterinarians. These new PRTs were staffed initially with members of the Guard -- National Guard and Army Reserve until funds became available and the State Department began to recruit civilian contractors.

The process of deploying these civilian experts is no under way, but the timing is somewhat awkward because the brigades to which they will be assigned are preparing to come home. Under the schedule outlined by General Petraeus last fall, the surge brigades will be returning to the United States starting this spring and completing their rotation back to the States in July.

In their one year of existence what have these new unique organizations, the Embedded PRTs, accomplished? And with the rotation of forces back in the United States, what is their future? To answer these questions and others, we have convened a panel of PRT veterans. You have their bios in the handout that was on the table, but I'd like to introduce them in the order in which they'll make their presentation.

Stephen McFarland from the United States Department of State. Stephen returned to the United States in October 2007 after serving in Iraq as the team leader of the al Asad-Al Anbar PRT, which was embedded with the Marine Corps Regimental Combat Team 2. Jeffrey Bakken from the U.S. Agency for International Development returned to the United States recently after serving as the senior development adviser to the PRT embedded with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division in Baghdad, is with the PRT that had responsible (sic) for Sadr City. And finally, Lieutenant Colonel Bob Ruch, who

served as the deputy leader of the provincial level Provincial Reconstruction Team in Baghdad, and it was his organization and his good work that helped set up the other PRTs, the Embedded PRTs, in that city.

So welcome again. To any of those who arrived late, I'd ask you to turn off your cell phones, and I'll introduce Stephen.

Please.

MR. MCFARLAND: Well, thank you very much.

Thank you very much, Mr. Perito, for the invitation to join you all at the United States Institute for Peace.

I'm going to do this briefing State Department style. When I was with the Marines, they taught me two useful things, which sadly, through lack of practice, I have forgotten how to do. One is how to load and operate a crew-served weapon and the other is how to do PowerPoints. So I will do this the old-fashioned way, just speaking from notes and scribbles.

I'm a career Foreign Service officer, Department of State, and I'm also currently the director of Stability Operations Training at the Foreign Service Institute for Department of State, which includes the training for people going to Iraq and -- to do PRT work.

As a Foreign Service officer, I served for seven years in Peru and El Salvador during their insurgencies, including some memorable years with Jeffrey Bakken over here. And that is -- because of that experience, that's one reason that I answered the call a year ago to help set up the initial -- one of the initial 10 embedded PRTs.

So my objectives are to brief you today on how the EPRTs were designed; how they work, keeping in mind that Iraq's a big country, there are a lot of differences between the places, differences between units, and so you don't have a sort of a cookie-cutter -- a role model EPRT, you have many different kinds; what you need for success for an EPRT and what the state-led EPRTs offer for the future.

As Mr. Perito said, this started as part of the surge strategy announced by the president and which was, of course, complemented by the arrival in Iraq of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker. There is a State-DOD agreement on how to actually carry out the EPRTs, and the concept of the EPRTs, as much sense as it makes and as simple as it sounds, anything like that to carry out,

particularly in a war zone, requires an enormous amount of interagency cooperation and background. I think we who are -- who did the stuff don't probably fully appreciate all the effort that went into it back at State, DOD, AID and others who made it possible.

The particular mission that EPRTs were charged with were to -- as a counterinsurgency resource, to assist Iraqis in reconnecting their people to their national government by strengthening local governments, and in turn strengthening and in some cases establishing ties between district and subdistrict authorities, on the one hand, and provincial authorities and central government authorities on the other. And again, sounds simple, but nothing is that simple in a large country which is undergoing war.

Another thing we were charged with doing was promoting reconciliation at the local level. Reconciliation is something that means many different things in different parts of Iraq. Where I was, it was largely intertribal, Al Anbar being a(n) almost entirely Sunni province. Another was to promote economic development, to the extent that you can, from the local level, keeping in mind that a lot of the big decisions about economic development are made at the national level rather than at provincial or district.

How are EPRTs constituted? Well, we start off with the meaning of "embedded." You are a part of your regiment -- regiment, in my case; I was with Marines -- or brigade. The military provides life support, security and movement assets, but truly, you are embedded. You are living in the same quarters. You are eating the same chow. You are walking around in same heat and same dust. You know, you are part of a team. I think that actually gives you an awful lot of opportunity and -- because as a civilian going to a military unit, if you're not part of the team, and certainly if you're not adding value, they kind of wonder why you're along.

The core team of the EPRT -- we started out with four. I actually arrived at al Asad by myself. That was an EPRT of one. It was a State leader -- State Department leader, usually senior Foreign Service, USAID deputy leader, Army civil affairs officer, and an Iraqi bilingual, bicultural adviser -- for those of you accustomed to embassy operations, someone sort of like a political Foreign Service national, someone who is much more than an interpreter, somebody who can actually interpret the culture for you, somebody who can listen on to the conversation with the interpreter and tell you, "This is what -- sure he's saying this; this is what he really means."

Additional members, task organized, but they could include and frequently did include specialists in governance, business, budgeting, rule of law, agriculture. There was a fair amount of flexibility from the National Coordination Team,

followed -- which was succeeded by Office of Provincial Affairs in terms of staffing. They would -- they assigned you people, but they were pretty good about providing additional personnel as needed.

These were originally filled by DOD civilians and reservists for periods up to a year. And they're being replaced as we speak by State Department special hires. And some of the people actually who came over under the DOD program are finding ways to stay on, some of them, and we're glad of it.

The actual numbers and focus depend on the needs of each location and the joint brigade regiment EPRT assessment. And in addition to that, brigades or regiments would often provide their own personnel. If they thought that you were adding value, they would provide somebody -- they'll say, this'll be your, sort of, liaison; this'll be your person who can truly interpret your needs and our needs and be your nexus to, in this case, the operations office of the regiment.

EPRTs, like PRTs, report to the ambassador and deputy chief of mission through the Office of Provincial Affairs. EPRTs and the provincial level PRT coordinate with each other, but EPRTs do not report to the PRT nor the other way around. It's a concept that took a little bit of getting used to by some in the sort of higher staff echelons of the military, but I think it's one that has been pretty successful. It actually can work, and EPRTs and PRTs do coordinate, do share information, do work out what their boundaries are and do support each other.

EPRTs get policy and security guidance from Embassy Baghdad and the military, respectively. And in practice, I would say that the NCT followed by Office of Provincial Affairs did an excellent job in terms of trying to make sure that we got just enough guidance but, you know, not telling us how to really do everything. They weren't micromanaging it. And there's somebody in the audience who was in part responsible for that happy course of events, and I certainly wish to thank General Olson.

EPRT team leaders and brigade regimental commanders develop a joint common plan to address governments and economic objectives in their AO, their area of operations. And that plan -- that planning process, I think, sets the stage for your, you know, your steady personal interaction which makes or breaks the EPRT-brigade relationship.

EPRTs are in full -- are full participants in the brigade regiment's battle rhythm, maintaining a productive relationship between the brigade regimental CO, commanding officer, and the EPRT team leader.

Ultimately this, like most of the rest of counterinsurgency, is about building

relationships. I think, by and large, it's been tremendously successful.

What are the requirements for an EPRT to work? I'd start with, based on my experience and based also in terms of what I saw about what worked and what didn't work in counterinsurgency in El Salvador and Peru, and say a high-level policy commitment to counterinsurgency strategy; in other words, protecting the population, earning their trust, isolating insurgents and getting certain groups to switch sides, and being able to live with the fact that people who have switched sides were probably responsible for some casualties and, you know, deciding, well, we're going to have to accept this, because it will help us attain our larger objective, which is to achieve stability in Iraq and achieve a point in which we can begin drawing down forces.

I would say another essential thing is, buy in by your military partner. It will happen. It should happen. It will happen if you, the EPRT, add value. If you don't add value, you're just not going to have that good a relationship.

Willing local partners: You have to have, in this case, Iraqis; tribal authorities in Al Anbar, new local governments, the Iraqi police, the Iraqi army, local population, even central government authorities. You have to have some willingness to work with coalition forces and certainly with the EPRT.

This was -- all the things I mentioned above, by the way, are in fact happening. There is that high-level commitment. That's why we sent the EPRTs. We are very much getting the local buy-in from the U.S. military, and there are increasingly willing local partners. There were a fair amount of them last year. There are even more today.

I'd say another requirement would be a reasonable ability to move outside the wire. Sending EPRTs anywhere is being willing to assume a certain amount of risk. Make no mistake about it. But if you're going to do it, you probably want to get in on the early side. I think, in retrospect, it would have been helpful if we could have stood them up even earlier than we did.

That said, we did not get in too late, but the earlier the better. Because as things -- when you hit that moment when all of a sudden, there's a window of opportunity, that's when you want to start being able to do things. And time is your -- you want time to be your ally there.

Finally, and this repeats what I mentioned before, decentralized execution: You need to have clear rules and expectations, provided by higher authorities, but you want the execution to be decentralized, much as the military does with their own operations. And I think that has also certainly been the case in Iraq.

Resources: Speed and flexibility are even more than the size of the amount of money you can give out. Keep in mind, of course, that we're not about giving out money; we're about trying to reconnect Iraqis to their government. And part of that is trying to get Iraqis to tap into the enormous amount of unspent government resources there.

To borrow somebody else's slogan: You can do it; we can help. Well, we're trying to help. To do that, to be able to help them, you need to spend some of your own money. You need to be able to get them to, need to be able to get people to know that they can actually ask for something, they can actually be trained.

So you need to have that flexibility and again speed. It's better to have the ability, as we have now, the EPRT, to do grants with enormous flexibility, up to \$25,000, and to be able to just pull money out of a safe and do it, rather than, you know, study it to death for months and get something larger, but then the moment has passed and then you're approaching the end of your rotation, and you've lost the moment.

So speed and again I think that this is the case with the QRF, the quick reaction funds that we have. They are not the only funds, of course, that we have available. And there are much larger U.S. funds out there, many of them disbursed in very able manner by AID contractors and grantees. That said, we need to complement it with our own money.

Staffing: You need some specialists but even more, I'd say, you need generalists. The key to working at the tactical level is flexibility. And so even your specialists need to have a certain amount, you know, you have to have somebody who can sit down with tribal authorities, sit down with various local officials, concerned citizens, and just think imaginatively and with patience and with some ability to relate to people across cultural and language barriers.

That, of course, raises the issue of language. You do need to have interpreters. Interpreters are a crucial resource. I can't tell you how frustrating it has been to have to use an interpreter. I'm used to speaking in the language where I'm assigned, but there you have it. You can do the work, but you do need to have those interpreters. And of course, it's incumbent on us to try to treat them as well as possible.

Adequate resolution of security movement needs. You can't -- I think one of the great things about EPRTs is that they, in fact, do rely on the military for movement and security. And it's a mistake, I think, to try to think of, well, you have your job, but how you get there and how you protect yourself is unrelated

to the way you do the rest of the job. It is an integral part of it. It is an integral part of it. And Marines and Army -- I totally get this -- they are certainly willing to do everything they can to protect you; at the same time, they are aware of their larger counterinsurgency mission, and they are not going to carelessly overreact and harm the local population. That, at least, is my experience.

But that's going to be more of an issue as you do have this drawdown. You're going to continue to have EPRTs paired or embedded in units, but there's going to be more demand, probably, for the kinds of military movement and security elements. I think it's really a question of deciding what your priorities are and then organizing -- you know, the task of organizing your military around it.

On training, I think training is certainly very good. I'll say that more as somebody who went through the course than as somebody who is now responsible for it. I think each PRT has different issues, so there's a limit to how much you can train somebody up for a particular place that you're going. There are different issues, different stages in political and economic development. I think for Foreign Service officers, the prior experience overseas and in the Third World is immensely valuable. You get people who have prior experience in the military, also prior experience in Peace Corps and NGOs, which is also incredibly valuable.

The one thing I would have liked to have had more of in terms of training was language training. There simply was no more time. The State Department is increasing the amount of courses in Arabic and Iraqi Arabic, spoken Iraqi Arabic, that are available. And I think that's going to be a great asset for those people who are given the time to take that training.

I'd like to go over a couple things -- some things that we did at the EPRT al Asad. We were embedded with Marine Regimental Combat Team 2. We had 12 members. I believe it's grown since we left. It covered western Al Anbar from al Qaim on the Syrian border down through Haditha on the Euphrates, to just east of Hit, abutting the AO of Ramadi, and then the deserts north and south.

There are about half a million people there in a province where there are about 1.4 million people. And one of the problems with covering an area that large is getting around. And so one solution to that was to station three people at the three large towns, small cities I just mentioned, permanently to be with the key battalions and local leaders that they had to interact with. So that was sort of a work-around, and it's something that Baghdad supported when we did it. But, you know, you just sort of have to think on the fly there.

Interesting thing about our AO, the tribes around al Qaim organized even before the Ramadi-centric Anbar Awakening, and it worked with U.S. forces to



marginalize insurgents, 2005, 2006. And the tribes in Hit followed suit about a year later, and Haditha, which is more unsettled, after that.

So the security situation is increasingly of the semi-permissive sort. Even so, our regiment continued to take casualties throughout the year, as did the Iraqi police and the Iraqi army.

A very conservative area, dominated by tribes. And tribes and municipal government and the police and interactions with provincial authorities were all intertwined. I remember vividly meeting with one sheikh and he was saying, "I don't know why you want to meet with me. You should be meeting with the mayor, here to my left, whom, by the way, you know, I picked him last month."

Yes, sir. Yeah. Yeah, very -- yeah -- of course it was precisely why we wanted to meet with them.

Insurgents had considerable support or acquiescence of the population until about 2006. This -- insurgents -- this -- you know, it's always a mistake to underestimate your enemy, but sometimes your enemy can make enormous mistakes, and in this case they did. They really overplayed their hand with the local population, and I think they have done so permanently. I just don't see how they could come back and assume the role they did. And to their credit, the Marines and soldiers who were there at the time took advantage of that opening very well.

Municipal governments and police forces have started up throughout the AO. The biggest -- one of the big challenges is overcoming the centralist tradition that Hussein had and reinforced. The EPRT worked considerably with the provincial PRT and Marines to try to reconnect district and sub-district governments to the provincial government, central government. There was increased -- certainly increased resources given by the central government to the provincial government. That, by the way, is not an EPRT accomplishment; that was Marines of the provincial and Embassy Baghdad.

But the EPRT was -- along with the RCT, and all of this is -- you know, you're part of a team. I'm reluctant to say that the EPRT did this because we did everything as part of a team. But there are -- the things that were focused on, including training of municipal leaders, encouraging the formation of district and sub-district councils, tribal engagement, inter-tribal reconciliation, working to promote small businesses.

I think, you know -- let me conclude with the -- you know, by a state-led PRT. Clearly you can do it other ways, and the other ways have been very successful.

You have military-led PRTs in Afghanistan, and they've done a great job. I think one -- some reasons for a state PRT would be our end state in Iraq; includes a decreasing military presence, a robust civilian presence. EPRTs give state and other agencies exposure, boots on the ground, as they say, and as the security situation permits, a reduction of military presence.

State leadership of the EPRTs offers, I think, additional reach back to the central government and to USG civilian resources, experience with working with foreign local governments and groups. We have no monopoly on these abilities, but it's something we can bring to the table. It can be useful, I think, at times to have an EPRT with a little more autonomy and with a combined civilian-military perspective to provide a broader range of proposals to the military unit that it is part of.

And on a personal note, I'll conclude by saying I think the EPRTs are making a very valuable contribution as part of a military-civilian team. They deserve the excellent support they are receiving. We should look carefully at the lessons learned since we may well wish to or have to apply them some other place some other time.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

MR. PERITO: I'd like to invite people standing up in the back, there are some -- four chairs here, chairs there, so if you want to come down while we're changing speakers, go ahead.

MR. BAKKEN: Good afternoon, everyone.

First off, I'm a bit surprised there was Super Tuesday going on today; there are any cameras anywhere in Washington -- (laughter) -- so I'm truly honored, although I do have a face made for radio, as my wife always says. (Laughter.)

My purpose today is to talk a little bit about EPRTs from a USAID perspective, explain how we worked, and I think I'll add on a lot to what Steve just said.

But certainly I'll probably be mentioning a lot of the good, bad and ugly as well. So bear with me.

First off, I'd like to welcome Lieutenant Colonel Bob Ruch, who was a pillar of support for those of us dependent on Baghdad PRT while we were out in the field, and Steve, an old friend from many years ago. It was good to hook up with him again as well.

General Lynch, thank you again for all your leadership and guidance while we were in Iraq. You did a great job there.

And Bob, thank you for inviting me.

I would like to start with one caveat, in that my opinions are the opinions of a development professional with about three decades of experience. But I don't intend on speaking for USAID, necessarily. A lot of my opinions I have expressed up the food chain, however.

Just a little bit of background on me: I'm a career senior Foreign Service officer. I volunteered for service in Iraq. I'm currently -- and have been since 2005 -- the director of South American Affairs in USAID's Bureau for Latin America and Caribbean.

The reason I volunteered was, I had spent an awful lot of time working in crisis situations throughout the world, mostly in Latin America -- Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador -- and also in South Africa after the transition.

The reason I was there for nine months -- I had volunteered for six months. That's what my bosses said I could go for. But the work was so challenging and so interesting, I decided to stay for nine.

Now, AID asked me to do a recruiting video while I was in Iraq. So I did the video, which was published on our Intranet worldwide. But it was heavily edited, and the only thing that they left in there was, "Don't anyone tell my wife, but I'm going to stay longer than six months. I think I'll stay for nine." Well, somebody told my wife, and so she made me come home earlier than expected -- (laughter) -- but nonetheless, they were nine very good and productive months.

Just real quick, on USAID's involvement in Iraq and in the PRTs and EPRTs, I believe we have about 11 PRTs right now and 13 EPRTs that are stood up with AID development folks. One of our contractors is providing, through our local governance project, about 33 subject matter experts to some of the PRTs and EPRTs.

I was embedded with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, the 82nd Airborne Division, up in Camp Taji, under the command of Colonel Don Farris, who is just a great leader. He was wounded for a time and was replaced by Colonel John Castles, who was also just a fantastic leader.

Our battlespace was Adhamiya and Sadr City, two of the most volatile and dangerous neighborhoods of Baghdad, for different reasons, which I'll get to in a

second.

And then, as of December, we also assumed the qadhas to the north of that area.

I'd just like to say that I'm extremely proud and honored to have served with the young men and women of the 82nd Airborne.

They embraced us as brothers. And when I say young, they were young. And I felt really old, and I think that's why everyone called me "Sir." But -- (laughter) -- they took good care of us, provided us with everything we needed, and above all, kept us really safe.

As Steve was saying, an EPRT is really a civilian organization embedded within the brigade combat team. The first stage when we got there, there was a core group of four people. Steve described that, so I won't go through that. I'm not sure that really functioned well in that -- at least, it didn't function the way it was set up to function.

Stage two, we added in augmentees, Reservists and National Guard people, because State and AID couldn't find the civilians needed to staff up the PRTs. As luck would have it, five of the specialists that we got -- Reservists, National Guard people, were all O6s, colonel level. That was very challenging for us as managers and leaders, and it was also challenging, I think, for Colonel Farris to manage that. And especially when we would push out into the different battalions, where they were, of course, led by lieutenant colonels, and having a bunch of colonels running around telling people what to do or asking people to do things could be challenging at times.

And then in stage three, we started to get some Department of State civilian specialists. By and large, these folks did not have a whole lot of overseas experience and certainly didn't have a whole lot of development experience. So that was a challenge for me as the development person on the team.

We were able to draw an awful lot on the CMO in the brigade. Believe it or not, the brigade surgeon and all his people, they really helped us out on health issues, and these guys were really kind of naturals at doing this. Civil affairs folks in the brigade and out in the battalions were fantastic, a great resource for us. PsyOps people, and then a new addition, which I guess showed up in summer were the (human train?) teams. And the -- I think that was probably the most valuable asset added to the brigade, and we tapped into that right way. A bunch of people, historians, mostly, and anthropologists, who really started giving us some of the keys to unlock the mystery of Iraq and what was going on there.

Our interaction with the brigade combat team, relations were excellent, as I said before. We were viewed as valued members of the team and the commander really appreciated, I think, our input, as did others, especially in the political realm, and that's where having a State team leader was so important, because they understand the political dynamics and were able to provide an awful lot of advice to the brigade commander in that respect.

And then, of course, the movement support, as Steve mentioned before, was very important to us, although it was cumbersome at times. It's always a challenge being dressed up in full gear and getting into a humvee that's 200 degrees in the back and then driving around at five miles an hour.

Interaction with Baghdad PRT, we -- I don't know if Bob knows this, but we called Baghdad PRT the mother ship, and they were a valuable resource to us, especially for institutional memory of what had happened.

They tended to focus on provincial-level issues, we focused on local-level issues, and of course there were a lot of areas where those two intersected and we coordinated very closely there. When we needed heavy lifting at the province level, they did it for us. So no major problems with the mothership and good division of labor.

That's probably a little bit different than Steve's experience, because they were a little bit more dispersed, I think, throughout Anbar, and Baghdad was very compact.

How did we work? We spent up in Taji, which is where our forward-operating base was -- it's actually outside of our AO. Steve said he learned two things from the military. One was to load a crew-served weapon and the other was to do PowerPoint. There were two things that our brigade told me that I would never be able to do, which was do a PowerPoint or use a laser pen without harming myself -- (laughter) -- but I'm going to try right here.

This is our area of -- our battlespace -- Sadr City up here, Ur, Shaab, Tunis, and this all Adhamiya, but this is old Adhamiya here, and then the qadhas, as I pointed out up here before. The -- very different areas. This is mostly all Shi'a, this is Shi'a-Sunni mix here, and this is Sunni, mostly. And there's an army canal which goes down through here, where the Sunnis -- I'm sorry -- the Shi'as will not cross this way and the Sunnis will not cross that way, generally.

So those were some of the dynamics we were dealing with. We spent about five days every week outside the wire in this area. Our base, I should show you, it's

like way up here, so we either drove down or flew down every day. Lots of times we would stay over in the battalion headquarters if we had a lot of work in the area.

What we did initially was rapid assessment. What are the needs? What's out there? We needed to know what was going on governance-wise, economic development, employment issues and then essential services.

We spent an awful lot of time developing contacts and relationships, and as all of you know who have worked there, that is key to establishing trust and actually working with people. It really required every ounce of cross-cultural experience all of us had. I'm an old Peace Corps volunteer, so a lot of the tricks I learned in Peace Corps certainly helped. In fact, I've called this -- before Peace Corps, it was kevlar.

So a lot of times, given the nature of the dynamics of the zone, we had to meet clandestinely with folks outside of the battlespace. The Iraqis who met with us were very brave people, and they did so at great risk. So we would sometimes meet with them in the IZ and discuss issues and then go back to our folks and discuss some more and then meet again a week later or so. And we just always kept pushing the rock up the hill.

We set up a team to survey a lot of the public works and essential services, things that were going on in the area.

The most surprising thing in the first meeting I had there was that we had a list of something like \$500 million in essential services projects in Sadr City, and we said, well, you've got this water thing, you've got the sewer thing; and everybody said it doesn't exist and that shocked us. So we started going out, and we found out, well, it did exist. The problem was that nobody knew about it. Some of it was underground, so you can't see it, but nobody had ever told the local officials that this is going on, so nobody knew it existed. So we set up teams to get word out to people to show them that these things were going on and your local government has helped produce this.

We spent a lot of time coordinating CERP funds because that was the only tool we had in our toolbox when we got there. We arrived in April. We opened up our toolbox; it was supposed to be full of QRF and all kinds of other stuff, and we open it up and there's just a little tiny fig leaf in there. So it took until about October to get QRF up and running, so we could tap into some of those resources.

I see Bob's getting ready to write his note that I'm going over time.

So we spent an awful lot of time through our specialists and others creating short-term and long-term employment opportunities, establishing community development programs, civil society programs, local governance development, some health and school refurbishments. We did a major emergency room planning and care project in Sadr City, which we hope to get funded fairly soon. We invest a lot of money in microloans to create jobs and other opportunities for folks at the local level.

We've got an observation tour of six DAC members, district advisory council members, from Adhamiya and six from Sadr City who will be coming up later this month. They'll be going out to Denver and to Oklahoma City and here to Washington to see how municipal government works here and how it connects the provincial government or state government, in our case, and we're very excited about that because it's a mix of Sunnis and Shi'as.

We -- we're probably one of the only PRTs to bring in a rule of law expert. Now normally rule of law activities would happen at the national level or at best at the provincial level, not a lot going on at the local level, but we saw a distinct need at the local level. We set up some women's centers, women's legal rights and health issues center through our rule of law adviser, which I think are very successful and will continue beyond our funding. We also funded improvements into courts and the local bar association, et cetera.

I feel in our first stage we were very successful. The metrics are difficult. If people start asking what did you produce, we produced a lot of goodwill. That's part of counterinsurgency. But the next stage we really have to start having more tangible results, having metrics to show people, people back home here what we're doing but also people folks on the ground in Iraq as well. We need to get the building blocks in place to continue development work because it is a long-term process.

Just a couple of take-homes, and then I'll conclude. But first, USAID is committed to the PRT concept as a relatively decentralized approach. And this means that the USAID rep on the ground can actually direct resources within certain parameters, and that's part of the whole team concept. But instead of having to go back to Baghdad and talk to, you know, the contracting officer who directs the contractor-grantee to do something, we have enough flexibility to do that within the PRTs. And that's where, you know, the rubber hits the road, as Steve was saying.

Second, PRTs should be viewed as platforms for coordinating all U.S. government programs. There's a lot more that goes on out there than just

USAID or QRF or Corps of Engineers. There's a lot of things happening. And so viewing a PRT as a platform to get U.S. government work done is, I think, what really works about PRTs. They're not just implementing mechanisms.

And as Steve said before, money isn't the problem. What we're really doing out there is helping Iraqis unlock their own resources, and helping them to access those resources. They have substantial resources available to them.

And the third thing is, the importance of working in tandem with our military on the PRT is that they provide the means to crack open the security door, so that civilians can get in there and work relatively safely. Our military will eventually leave when the conditions are right, but I believe that the civilians will remain for a long time. Development's a long-term process. It's going to take a long time.

And I think I will conclude right there, since I've gone over my time. But thank you all for coming and thank you for listening. (Applause.)

COL. RUCH: Oh, good afternoon and once again, thanks to USIP for setting this up. It's extremely important that we look at the evolution of PRTs, EPRTs because, as was said, I think we'll be doing this again. And we kind of have to look at what's right, what's wrong, and figure out how to do it even better next time.

Looking out in the audience, I want to say hello to Major General Rick Olson and to Matt Sherman. General Olson was the NCT director when I arrived, and Matt Sherman was the POLAD for General Fil, the commander of MND-Baghdad.

How many others here served in Iraq or Afghanistan? That's important, and it's really important that the story get back to the people who haven't that are setting up programs. And that's -- I expected to have a lot more of that so now I'm a little more intimidated. Having General Olson here, I can't tell all the lies I was going to. (Laughter.)

So, you know, just a little bit about my background, so you understand. I came from a very different background than Steve and Jeff. I deployed in September '06 as the division engineer for 1st Cav but I was put into the role as the deputy PRT team leader for Baghdad. What -- I don't have any, you know, USAID background, State Department background. It was, this is what you're going to do; you're going to go be the deputy of this team. Didn't have a lot of training or anything walking in, and walked into General Olson's office and said, what do you do?

I initially worked with a Department of State team leader, Joe Gregoire. He was



an FS-1. We had a real good relationship, but he only went through to about April. At that point, he left, and I had several months where I was the team leader. There was an underlap as the surge was coming on and as the EPRTs were coming on.

I think Joe met the EPRTs as they walked in, and then he was gone. Several months later, in June, Phyllis Powers (sp) came on board, somebody that I have great respect for. She's done an outstanding job over there. In fact, after seven weeks of training here, she was so good that Ambassador Crocker stole her from us and made her the director of OPA. And that was a good move and I think she's doing a wonderful job there. She replaced Ambassador Henry Clarke (sp).

I did get an immediate replacement, Andy Passin (sp), who was working up in OPA, very energetic guy, another guy, like me, from Philadelphia. and we got along great and he's still there doing a great job. I talked to him the other day. And I have remained in contact with both of them.

Prior to EPRTs, Baghdad PRT covered all of Baghdad. And this is Baghdad City. The qadhas have more -- each of the qadhas is about that size again, about 5 million inside the city, you can see here, and about 2 million in the outer qadhas, which are kind of like the counties around a U.S. city.

Human nature -- when they said they were going to bring EPRTs, I didn't really want them. You know, "We're doing fine without any help here." But after, you know, a very short time of looking at what they could potentially bring, we knew we weren't getting out to the districts enough. We were doing virtually nothing with the neighborhood councils. And we really needed to concentrate on getting the Provincial Council in Baghdad working. And that would allow us to do so. So, you know, a little bit of looking at ourselves, we saw that this would be a good thing.

We were only really just beginning to reach out into the qadhas at that time, and that's something that, once the EPRTs came on board, we were really able to accelerate bringing the Baghdad city government not so much but the provincial government out to make connections into the qadhas. And really important, as the work that Steve was doing and the folks out in Anbar was spreading into Baghdad through Nasir wa-al-Salam and areas out to our west, where they came together, we were able to -- as soon as the EPRTs were in there, we were really able to start connecting the government to the tribes and the sub- governments out there, the qadha councils.

EPRTs came on at a very turbulent time. You know, we know where the violence levels were in Baghdad at that point. I mean, this is why we had a surge. But at

the same time, the NCT was about to make a conversion to OPA, and I don't even think we knew that at that time. It was all very sudden.

PRT had a great relationship -- (inaudible) -- generals and in the NCT. We got brought in -- PRT team leaders got brought in and were asked about how we should bring the EPRTs on board, what would work best, and there was a lot of discussion between the MNDs -- and once again, 1st Cav Division, which is my parent unit, General Fil, was the MND-B commander, but the guy who really handled day-to-day governance and economics was Brigadier General promotable Vince Brooks. And, you know, I had the privilege of sitting in several meetings with General Olson, General Brooks, I think Ambassador Speckard at times, on how this was really going to work.

So we had some agreement. And right about that time, NCT started going and OPA started coming in. And Ambassador Clarke (sp) came in. He had a very decentralized view of what would happen, and some of that may have been a little bit out of sorts with what some of the agreements we made were, and that's just the way it works over there. It's very fluid. But it wasn't at odds with the U.S. and DOD memorandum, but there was a little bit of, you know, how are they going to fit into the BCTs? And, you know, just because I was up at a PRT, I wasn't really always a Department of State guy. I was still working for my Army bosses as well, trying to make it all work.

The key to Baghdad PRT was that as they came on board, EPRTs did not report to us. And we've talked about that. I would say certainly that every province and even every EPRT is in a very different situation. But we had an initial loss of situational awareness of what was going on. This is from the Baghdad PRT standpoint. They started doing their thing, and we weren't going out to district council meetings, we weren't going to any neighborhood council meetings anymore, and we lost some awareness.

Now, you know, we didn't have a real good reporting procedure set up as it came on, so what the EPRTs were starting to be -- and there's only four of them as they came on the ground, not an easy thing to do, but they were feeding up to OPA at the time, and needed to come back to us. All of that is correcting itself, but it was a very turbulent time.

EPRTs, in my view, were staffed very highly rank-wise. We had OCs, we had an ex-ambassador, we had ambassadors running EPRTs. Now, at that time, I'm leading the Baghdad PRT as a lieutenant colonel, and things as they are rank-wise, had to really do some pulling.

There are certain groups that we got along with, certain EPRTs that we just

instantly kind of jelled with. Paul Folmsbee and Jeff, we had a constant interaction with them. And in fact -- and I think you hinted it -- the way that we were able to hand off contacts that we had gained out there -- and there was kind of an instant these are good people, these are -- this is your EPRT -- and then we were able to back out. In fact, a lot of their meetings they had those people were comfortable with the Baghdad PRT, and they came in and did them in our building.

So in the end, personalities, you know, worked these things out, not so much the rank structure, but I do understand that the Department of State, once again, as I understand, will go to a little bit of a different rank structure as they refill those positions.

Lines of reporting, once again, were difficult. The EPRTs -- it was clear they did not work for the Baghdad PRT, so what was going back to the embassy and getting back to us, as I said, was a little bit of a challenge. As I understood -- and Jeff might be able to answer this a little bit better -- OPA came out as I was leaving and said that they were going to change reporting and communications that flow in -- like the weekly reports and things -- through Baghdad PRT and -- (inaudible) -- and then up to OPA, which to me makes perfect sense. It just increases that situational awareness.

The PRT's job is to fix the provincial government while the provincial government works for the districts and the people out there. So if we're not working for the EPRTs, then we're probably working at odds to what they're doing. So I thought that was a very good move. (Short pause.) And as I said, that really is getting fixed.

I'm just going to go over a few of the good points that I saw and a few of the things that I think we could work on a little bit, and then we can get on track really with the questions. These guys have really covered a lot of what the EPRTs brought to the fight, and we really needed the EPRTs when they came on.

So some of the good things, it was once again getting the experts out into the neighborhoods. The surge wasn't so much about getting extra people. The surge was about getting the brigade combat teams out into the neighborhoods. We set up JSS's, we set up COP's, and we had people living in every neighborhood. The difference now was when something went boom, something went bang, there was somebody there to go out and check in it, and there were Iraqis -- police and army living with them. And now we've got the EPRTs out there, you know, really on a daily basis gaining the trust of the locals and starting to connect civilians and starting to connect the military as good people. So that was extremely important.

They propped up the district councils, and I think maybe even more important they brought the beladiyas back into the picture. Now for those of you who don't understand, the district councils is something the U.S. created, and we spent our -- I spent my whole first year trying to prop them up and make the provincial government recognize that they brought something and that they deserves the resources, because they didn't have any resources. They were able to take resources into the district council, but more importantly, that beladiya -- which would worked through the Baghdad City Hall, the aminat, which had been kind of left out there -- they brought them in and got them working with the districts in many cases and were able to create, you know, actual links in the government.

And that's the problem over there -- there's lots of little groups, and it's creating links. You know, if you're getting people together and creating links, you're successful in Iraq, and that's a metric that Jeff's team did a very good job up in Adhamiya and in a very difficult place in Sadr City as well.

That is a synergy with the BCT and a common purpose. Remember, as they came in, it wasn't like there was nobody out there doing this work before. The U.S. military had their civil military affairs units out there -- and this is an important thing when we do this again; the teams who did it best took those assessments that had already been done and then went out and validated them.

They didn't have to start at scratch. So they gained the respect with the people they were working and moved out together.

They helped the BCTs spend their resources better. They came without resources -- and that's in the bad list here -- but they helped the BCTs, who have lots of resources, focus them better and, you know, that's a little bit less, you know, the kind of whack-a-mole thing you hear -- a project here, a project here. They helped us, you know, look at systems and things like that and get a better feel for delivering an overall project. It doesn't help to build a water treatment plant that has no distribution systems. They really helped out looking at the big picture.

I think incredibly important was getting USAID down at that level. BCTs were always asking -- you know, really badgering us: What's USAID doing? We know they have RTI here. We know -- we have all these great organizations out here doing things, but nobody's really tying it together for us into an overall strategy. So getting the USAID reps on the ground was incredibly important in Baghdad.

They were able -- they -- literally they would come in -- before, a BCT

commander would say: I'm in a neighborhood right now that has -- is not cooperating with us, but we're about to spend \$2 million, you know, on a trash cleanup and building this project. We were able to turn that kind of thing around, and then really everyone was doing effects-based projects.

So, you know, projects was used like a munition, then. You had an effect that you wanted out of that project, and by knowing what the brigade was doing and by being tied into USAID, we were really able to become a much better spender of the money and not reward the wrong behaviors.

Eventually, the resources were brought to the fight. I still think that those resources are difficult to use -- \$25,000, a brigade commander can -- what could your brigade commander approve?

Q Oh, a couple hundred bucks.

COL. RUCH: Yeah. I mean, so to bring these high-ranked people and let them put \$25,000 out on the street -- there were needs for things to do like that instantly. But certainly, you know, a brigade commander who's an O6 can approve a couple hundred thousand dollars. We need to get that to our EPRTs as well and to our PRTs. And the reason that we really -- people were concentrating on those \$25,000- and-below projects is they were easy to do. There were other monies available, but people didn't go for them, because they're harder.

Now, we begged for money in the Baghdad PRT. You know, we don't have any way to, you know, influence people. Once you get it, it's a pain. And you know, eventually it comes to you, and then you have to manage funds and manage projects, and it's a very difficult and time-consuming thing. So it's kind of a double-edged sword. We're asking an awful lot out of a 12-man EPRT to be tracking money.

But there were some good agencies brought in. Through -- USAID is helping out with that. So -- and once again, that linkage between the Baghdad government out to -- and I'll use the example of the qadhas. In the last couple months there, because of EPRT team leaders and EPRT teams, you know, I was able to get the governor of Baghdad, a Shi'a Badr -- you know, former Badr Corps member, still who he's affiliated with -- to go -- to, you know, hop on U.S. helicopters -- sometimes we'd follow him out there on his own convoys -- and go out and meet with Sunni tribesmen. And that's -- there's still not a whole lot of that going on, where we got somebody from downtown Baghdad to recognize the qadhas. And that's the kind of thing that has been bringing the awakening councils. And having them recognized by just having the governor go out there -- you know, he gets rock star treatment. It's incredible. And once again, he's a Shi'a going

out to meet Sunnis.

So we were able to do that in Nasir wa-al-Salam, Arab Jabour, Madain. Really, I think we got out for a visit to every one of the qadhas.

Now, the governor really focuses on the qadhas, and that's the example. We were able to do that on a more limited basis with the Provincial Council in Baghdad, but mostly with the governor out to the qadhas. And having those EPRT team leaders out there, (visiting the ?) governor, and I'm coming from Baghdad PRT with the governor and having the locals introduced by the EPRT and the troops on the ground was really, I thought, a wonderful outcome and I think it'll bear a lot of fruit.

Some of the things, once again, I think we can do a little better. Reporting and relationships with the provincial-level PRT just -- they weren't defined. As a military guy, I like everything in an order that tells me this is how you're going to do it. And, you know, thought processes went into all of that and in some places it was left fuzzy, I think, on purpose so that we could let personalities work it out.

Spheres of influence need to be well defined. Don't need six EPRT leaders -- you know, because Baghdad's compact -- going in to see the governor, going in to see the mayor. You really need to define them. And it's not that they can't go do it, but it's just that we all have to be working to a common purpose because we will be used against each other if we're not in step.

I thought the team leaders were overranked, and once again, that's my opinion. As I said, I understand that's going to be changed in the future. And that's nothing against those personnel with the rank. I worked pretty well with most of them. But it's just -- it was just a little bit out of sorts.

And at the time they came, they didn't have proper resources. We were fighting -- we were fighting to, you know, bring these QRF forces on line, and it would've been good if they had arrived with them. In the end, they did help the BCTs better spend their resources. And I think that was a good thing, but, you know, it's a national priority. If we're bringing them in, let's bring them in with all the tools, ready to go.

The initial surge was military personnel, for the most part. You know, you had that four-man core, of which one was a military person. You know, in Baghdad PRT I got 19 people out of the surge that were supposed to be civilians, and 17 of them showed up in uniform. In my view, civilians need to be teaching the civilian government how to run their government.

There is an awful lot of -- a lot of the people in Baghdad like to deal with the military. You know, they are kind of used to that, it's the way -- but it's really important for us to get our civilian leaders out front leading the teaching of governance.

And once again, that is correcting itself. We had discussions of whether those people should have come in in uniform or should have come in in civilian clothes. I don't know where that ended up, but they came in in military uniform. And having a bunch of O-6s run around was interesting. I mean, I had six on my team. So it's a very different place in Iraq.

The funding needs to work -- I know this is about just (AARs ?) and talking about PRTs, but you know, I can't come up here without giving a bit of a recruiting pitch. I think I heard that from the others a little bit. You're all here because you're interested. And it's great work.

I mean, where else does a lieutenant colonel or, you know, a -- I got to brief the president on a VTC with several of the EPRT team leaders. You know, we had the national security adviser come in and ask us pre-surge, "What do we need to do different?" You know, you get all the congressmen, all the -- you get more than you want, but it's a very interesting year, 15 months, six months, whatever you spend over there, and we need people to go bring that experience back so that we can do this even better in the future.

EPRTs work. And they're working even -- I think that we're getting better every single day. I think a year from now we won't recognize the relationships that we all started out in.

So, thank you very much. (Applause.)

MR. PERITO: I'd like to thank our very excellent panel for three really terrific and informative presentations.

I'd like to invite our audience now to participate. We have a microphone over here. I'd like people who want to participate to line up at the microphone so we capture your remarks. We have a very expert audience here, a lot of people with a lot of background. I'd like to ask that comments be kept to a minimum and that questions be well-formed and precise.

Please, let's start.

Q Good afternoon. My name is Murad Egvar (sp), University of Baltimore Center

for International Comparative Law. I have one brief observation to off to the panel, as well as those present, about the success that our university enjoyed with the University of Tikrit's School of Law earlier this -- during this phase of the PRTs' deployment. And I have question for any one of the panelists who wants to take the question.

The success involved the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the University of Tikrit's School of Law in Salahuddin province with the University of Baltimore's School of Law, which calls for exchange of faculty, students and academic programs, some of them distance learning, which we are in the process of putting in place, in order to support our personnel in Iraq and also to further friendship between the two countries, Iraq and the United States.

And that was signed, as I said, on November the 27th. And it could not have been signed had it not been for the involvement of the PRT in Salahuddin province. It is not an embedded PRT. It was the regular PRT. But the members of that team and our military in Salahuddin province could not have been more supportive than they in fact were. And had it not been for their support, it would not have happened. So that's one success story to relate to all those present here.

The question I have specifically -- and two of the speakers have -- well, actually, all three of our speakers have alluded to it -- is the importance of the PRTs and the EPRTs being able to get around, as we would say it in the vernacular, to be able to get out into the population and connect with them. That depends in large measure on the availability of mobile assets that the military has. It's been a problem in the last six months of 2007, and I'd like to hear your comments and observations whether this is being fixed, whether it's being addressed differently, and how it's being done. Thank you.

MR. PERITO: Thanks very much.

(Off mike.)

COL. RUCH: I'll just say that first off, the rule of law is an extremely important function of the PRTs, and we did have a pretty robust rule of law section. And we're working with universities, the jurists. We're working with the bar associations. So -- very important work.

As to transportation, in Baghdad, we were -- once again, we were blessed, because we were the largest PRT, but we also had access to great resources, being downtown Baghdad. Baghdad was not a safe place to travel when we got there. Pretty safe by the time I left, but you're still driving around in an armored



humvee with the doors shut and the windows up.

We had two ways of getting around, basically. One was through State Department. And you know, there's always some different -- military could go some ways; civilians could go some ways that military couldn't. It would be great if we could get that together and get that solved, so everybody had the same standards for movement. But some moved with Blackwater and State Department security. We generally moved with military. There was a military unit attached to the embassy, to the RSO, and we would move with them. And also, because we were partnered with Multinational Division Baghdad, they also provided us security teams that would move us in and about the city.

Now, the EPRTs, they were linked up directly with a unit, and they probably moved with pretty much the same people all the time. But you know, it's 48-hour notice -- it was for us -- to move. When something was cancelled, it was just cancelled. You kind of lost a resource.

I said, you know, we taught governance two hours at a time, because you -- that's about as long as you could have on a venue when we got there. And that's very difficult. It's -- you really -- that's why embeds are important. They get better relationships in the end.

But you know, we could get -- we could move where we needed to in Baghdad, as a rule.

There were, at times, some frustrations with, you know, with what we were allowed to do through the RSO. Once the EPRTs came aboard, that relaxed somewhat. Because since they were allowed to move with the military, then we were allowed to move with the military. So we could just call up the unit that owned the battlespace and say, hey, if you need help down there, give us, you know, come on over and get us. So we didn't have too much problem getting around.

Q (Name inaudible.) I'm retired from USAID. I spent four years in Vietnam in the CORDS operation. And so my question is formed from that but related specifically to, I didn't hear anybody say how the government of Iraq, at the provincial and lower level, receives advice from us and our allies in somehow a focused manner. PRT people aren't going and talking to the provincial governor, are they? Do we have municipal experts advising mayors and all that sort of thing?

MR. MCFARLAND: Let me comment on, first, that question from the perspective of Al Anbar. The relationship with the provincial government was handled by the

Marine division, principally Brigadier General -- I believe he's major general, promoted -- John Allen and the provincial PRT. And Al Anbar started just a little over a year ago with a governor of, with, you know, one governor and a security detail and the provincial council still located in Baghdad.

I think the Marines and the provincial PRT handled that relationship with, you know, consummate diplomacy, and the relationship was excellent. The provincial government welcomed the support. The success story was that the provincial government moved. There are now provincial council meetings in Ramadi. People are there, and I think it worked out.

But I think what your point goes to is, just because we're there and we have resources doesn't mean that we are necessarily, you know, that gives us the right to tell people what to do. And I think, again, I think the Marines and, in this case, the Anbar PRT just handled it exceptionally well.

On the movement part, I would add that in addition to the challenges of getting around by, first, by helicopter to the given battalion, and the difference between flying in a helo out to al Qaim and driving is about six-and-a-half hours, and you get out by humvee and seven-ton after that. The real test, I think, is your ability to walk around. And I think ultimately, you know, you've got to be able to walk around. If you're not able to walk around, that says something about your security situation.

I think the fact, you know, the Marines were very interested as part of this surge in trying to increase their relationship and their exposure to the local population. So you could join them, as long as they didn't think that you were about to get shot, on foot patrols and go around, and you'd talk to people. I mean, there's clearly limits to what you can get out of people when you're using an interpreter and you're surrounded by, you know, a dozen heavily armed young men. But people do surprisingly get used to that and open up to you.

And by the way, congratulations to the person who served in CORDS.

Q Hi, I'm Bob Dreyfuss. I'm a reporter with Nation magazine. And no one, everyone here has worked in the North or in Anbar or in Baghdad. No one mentioned the South, and I'm wondering though if someone could comment a little bit on that.

When I talk to people by telephone from Baghdad -- U.S. military commanders -- they say we have not been able to establish anything remotely like the CLCs or the awakening councils in the South, except for a little belt south of Baghdad. But in Kut, Amiriyah, Nasiriyah, Basra and all those cities in the South, there's

nothing doing. So I'm wondering if you could say a little bit about whether we have these PRTs or EPRTs in the South and if so, you know, what they're doing, what kind of success we've had, what's happening in that part of the country.

MR. MCFARLAND: Well, I can -- can I only answer part of it? We do have a regional embassy office in Basra and we do have additional PRTs and EPRTs that we're establishing, I believe, in Karbala to serve several different areas out of there. I'm afraid I don't have any information on where we are in terms of standing up CLCs -- Concerned Local Citizens groups.

MR. PERITO: Just to fill in a little bit. The PRT in Basra was a British PRT. It's one of the three PRTs in Iraq that are manned by our allies. In Dhi Qar, which is a neighboring province, the Italians had the PRT -- (inaudible) -- probably the most unusual PRT in Iraq. It had no military presence at all. It had a benign security environment. The PRT, which had embedded in it USAID personnel, was able to rely solely on the local Iraqi police and army for its protection and was extremely active.

So you're right, the South is a much different situation. Unfortunately, we don't have anybody who served there and so we can't be fully responsive to your question. But thanks a lot, that's a good question.

Q Normal's an achievable solution. Like Bill, I was in a CORDS Program as a PSA, and I noticed you have the same strengths, which is good interagency cooperation at the operational level and a lot of enthusiasm. You also seem to be making many of the same mistakes.

The thing that really jumps out at me as the -- what seems to me is enormous amount of restrictions. I was struck in reading the paper the 48 hours to go outside the wire. I know my operational thing is -- if we weren't inside the other guy's wire within 48 hours we were too late.

So question one is really could you have made -- would you have felt comfortable making your own security decisions about going outside the wire? Secondly, the thing that strikes me is the extreme slowness of the mobilization, whether it be money, personnel or that, and what can be done to speed up that process?

MR. PERITO: Thank you. Jeff, we haven't heard from you.

MR. BAKKEN: Is this on or -- ?

MR. PERITO: Yeah, The mike is live.

MR. BAKKEN: Oh, okay. I was perfectly comfortable going outside the wire without embassy approval. And it's important to explain what I mean there. We had -- for example, in Baghdad we had different aid- grantees or contractors doing work. RTI had its own training center outside the wire. IRD had offices outside the wire for CAP and for -- the Community Action Program -- and the community strengthening programs.

I found it very, very cumbersome to fly all the way from Taji to Baghdad and then request clearance to take a private PSD -- a State Department PSD -- just across the bridge to one of those compounds. As someone was pointing out, you needed 48 hours in advance sometimes. The PSD would get approved, sometimes it would be disapproved, and quite frankly, I wasn't comfortable travelling the way we had to travel.

Now RTI, for example, has their own PSDs. And I could have easily gone with them except I wasn't allowed to do that. And I think we should have been allowed to do that. There are inherent risks in working there; we all know that. We're all big people and we just have to realize that. You need to minimize risk, but you can't minimize risk so much that you can't get the job done.

And the second part of the question, I'm sorry, I forgot what it was.

Q (Off mike) -- mobilization recently, what can be done to speed that up?

MR. BAKKEN: Well -- (laughs) -- you have to get rid of a lot of the bureaucracy, and I think -- I don't want to go off on this one, but I think there are way too many people in some of the offices in the IZ who maybe don't have enough to do or don't know what it is they should be doing, and so they second-guess a lot of things. For example, on just QRF -- you got me started -- (laughs) -- you're going to have to stop me -- but on QRF, we would do proposals in the EPRT. We would vet those proposals within the EPRT. We would send them down to the IZ. There was a committee of wise people in the IZ who would look at the proposals and make comments. Sometimes -- they usually did it fairly quickly. It would only take a week or two weeks, but sometimes they got thrown back at us for more questions, more clarification or whatever. These are for grants over \$25,000.

Then, if the Baghdad folks approved that project, it would go to Washington to another committee of people up here, who would take a week or two weeks to review it, and these were generally people who were very smart, very well meaning, and most of them had served in Iraq before but had served in 2003. That's -- in Iraq time that's a hundred years ago. And so they said, well, we tried

that before; we don't think you should do that. So we're being second-guessed.

How do you do that, how do you speed things up? You get rid of that bureaucracy. It wasn't really needed, wasn't helpful. AID did bring in a contractor to manage that whole process, and I think as I was leaving in late December they were trying to streamline the whole process. So you know, hopefully we can get that down to a week or two weeks and, you know, get money out the door quickly so that you can capitalize on different circumstances as they come up.

MR. MCFARLAND: Yeah, the 48 hours, I think, is a -- it's a planning guideline, so if you want to plan something -- plan a movement, 48 hours is usually the minimum required, and they prefer more if it involves helicopters. But again, that's just for planning purposes; do have something critical going on, and particularly if you're out with a brigade regimental commander or a battalion commander, you can go fast. You're going with them, you can make decisions on the fly and you can get out and see people.

So I don't want you to leave with the impression that we're -- you know, we have this 48-hour turnaround. It's actually -- occasionally can be, you know, five or 10 minutes -- we're ready to go? Yeah, let's go. The -- and particularly if you're -- and then if you're down -- even further down and you're doing things on foot, it can be even faster.

On the resources, I'm hoping one of the lessons learned will be the need when we send people out to have the, as you mentioned, the toolkit packed and a reasonable amount of precautions. I've always found it kind of ironic that I can be entrusted with decisions on, well, should this person go out there? That's kind of iffy; you know, might get shot or not. You know, I have to take responsibility for that one, but -- and I do, but they're not sure I can be truly -- you know, they're not really wild about me having maybe more than \$25,000 to make a call. Twenty-five thousand dollars, though, out in the countryside can get you an awful lot of good things going, and I think it is possible to do the bureaucratic thing so that larger projects can be approved within a reasonable time period and with some level of checking.

MR. PERITO: Thank you.

Questions?

Q (Name inaudible) -- with USIP, and I was in Baghdad as a civil affairs officer and later with USIP. The PRTs are the latest in a long string of efforts to engage Iraqis and strengthen local governance and improve the quality of life. In many of those earlier efforts, while all had the best of intentions, a lot of them were

very badly thought out and executed and didn't have the right expertise to be effective, so they ended up doing more harm than good, though sometimes it would take us a couple of years to figure out what that impact was.

I'm curious how we've changed so suddenly to do this a lot better, especially when we have fewer resources, fewer people willing to go out there, more security restrictions, and the picture you're painting is very positive in terms of our impact. I'm wondering what factors you think explain that improvement. You mentioned having AID out at the field level. I'm wondering if there are other explanations that you wouldn't say have really how we changed from doing it rather poorly to as well as you've explained.

COL. RUCH: I'll say first off that the Iraqis started realizing that they're running out of time, and I think many of them -- many of the government people that I were working -- that I was working with, as I got there, they were still kind of ruling like they weren't in charge, they didn't expect to be in charge in a year or so. And I have no comment on what timetables mean or anything, but when they started getting scared about money getting cut off and about us leaving, some of them got much more serious than they had in the past. And I think in the large part, that was -- it's a pretty simple explanation, but they felt a need to listen and they felt a need to work with us. All suggestions were not taken, and there was a lot of give and take, but I think many of the people we worked with were truly interested in keeping us around, and they knew that is not an indefinite commitment anymore.

MR. PERITO: Anybody else?

MR. BAKKEN: Yeah, I'll just add to what Bob said. In addition to the Iraqis knowing that time was running out, the first meeting I went to with our brigade commander, when I first got there, he took our team leader, Paul Folmsby and me to a meeting with district council members in Adhamiya. And he had us sit on either side of him at the table, and he said, "Guys, I'm pleased to present you to my civilian advisors here." And the Iraqis across the table looked at us and said, "It's about time. Where you have you guys been?" You know, they were tired of dealing with the military on civilian issues. And so, the question is, you know, "We've been waiting for you to come for a long time. Where have you been?" You know, so I think that made a big difference to people.

Also, I think -- I know Bob said something about, and I think he was meaning to exclude present company, but he said, "PRT personnel overranked." We did have a fair amount of experience amongst us in this first group of people, at least on the AID side, I knew most all of my colleagues professionally and we were -- humility aside, fairly accomplished and knew, kind of, how to get things done.

And having worked with several of my state colleagues in prior posts, they also knew how to get things done. So I think maybe that made a difference. Also, just, you know, being there at the right time and being able to move and get out into these smaller communities made a huge difference.

COL. RUCH: And I would just say that that was surge-related, because as the troops moved out into the neighborhoods, they regained much greater access.

MR. PERITO: General?

Q First, an observation. I think the panel's very modest, critical -- by the way, I'm Rick Olson, and I am the chief of staff for the special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction. Everybody hold your applause -- (laughter) -- and right now I'm -- I used to be the director national coordination team. I want to make an observation. That's our panel, is very model and very humble because critical to success, the EPRTs and of the PRTs is superb people that we got in that first wave from the Department of State and from USAID, and courageous people, because they were going into a situation that was completely unprecedented and unknown and the courage that they showed -- both the moral courage and the physical courage was really impressive. And then guys like Bob Ruch -- critical to success -- and going back to this question here about how we mobilize -- if you can get a roster of guys like this -- and military guys who've got the experience and savvy that Bob Ruch has and get them activated quickly when we need to put these things on the ground, that's a step in the right direction.

And they're also being very kind. I think Steve said it when he said that we gave them a lot of latitude when they first went out there. Really, we didn't know what to tell them to do. There's no doctrine. We really didn't give them good guidance. And these great folks went out there to make it happen.

Now comes my question, which is, another place where we left you guys high and dry was metrics. We really didn't tell you, you know, how to define success, what it is that we want to measure.

When I left this past summer, we still hadn't done that well for you, and I was wondering if each of you could kind of comment on whether or not we got better trying to determine where it is that we were improving, which is pretty important, because it tells you how to adjust your mode of operations, and it also allows us to say yeah, we're getting something for our money here.

So thank you.

MR. PERITO: Thank you.

MR. BAKKEN: I think the metric we were left with was "Go out, do good and avoid all evil." And so we did our best there.

I think a lot has happened since you left, General Olson, and I know OPA had several meetings trying to establish metrics. I'm a big fan of metrics, but they -- I like to use them not as so much as a reporting instrument but as a management tool. Where can we get better?

And so some of the problems I had with the initial draft of metrics that I saw before I left was, geez, these are really for feeding the beast and not so much about helping us manage things better and make midstream, midcourse adjustments.

But Steve, you were probably more -- I don't know if that happened while you were still -- the meetings on metrics, while you were still there or --

MR. MCFARLAND: That happened -- I know it continued to evolve after I left. One of the key points that we were given by actually Dr. Barbara Stephenson, a deputy special coordinator for Iraq in State Department, was, remember, on metrics, try to focus on outputs, not just on inputs. And it's got to be relevant to your counterinsurgency fight.

The difficult thing in terms of establishing a program is that each EPRT and PRT has a somewhat different situation, and so you'll be measuring different things. And a lot of it is -- it's quality, not quantity.

That said, I think it's useful to try to establish some sort of reporting tool to force you to think about it and to make sure that you're not, you know, maybe going off on a tangent. I think something that's tailored to each EPRT/PRT is appropriate. In our case, it would be targeted on the quality of local government and ability of local officials to carry out their functions, ability to relate to the population. But each place was different.

I would like to follow up on one other question. There is actually no -- there is no shortage right now of volunteers to go out to Embassy Baghdad and certainly not to the PRTs. There was -- you know, there was some back-and-forth about whether service should be forced on people. I personally believe, when we signed up, we signed up to be worldwide available.

But that said, five years later, Embassy Baghdad for State Department and AID continues to be entirely staffed by volunteers. And so that makes us, I think, appropriate partners for, you know, the volunteers in the military.



MR. PERITO: Do we have another question?

Q Sure. I just wanted to -- my name's Rashad (sp). I'm a program assistant here with Iraq training as USIP. I just wanted to follow up on one of the points made in the introduction, which was to ask about how are these programs going to continue once the surge dies down.

I just heard very little discussion of that in the talks, so I just wanted to hear some people's thoughts.

MR. PERITO: Thank you.

Colonel?

COL. RUCH: You know, when I came in -- once again, we are from the world of PowerPoint in the Army, but I think this one was actually put together in the embassy. There were -- you probably remember the slide, there was one with PRTs getting wider in a bigger -- and, you know, USAID small, and as PRTs got smaller, USAID gets bigger. I mean, I think that's the way this country does it. And Jeff is probably better able to reply, but USAID and the civilians are going to pick this up as the military pulls out.

MR. MCFARLAND: Yeah, as I tried to say in my remarks before, we need a certain minimum amount of security to be able to operate. And I think once those conditions are present, we're going to be there for a long time. I mean, that's what we do. Every day I walk in to the AID building and I see the monument off to the side of all the AID officers who have died in duty and probably 90 percent of them were folks that were killed serving in Vietnam. So, Bill, wherever you are, I honor your service. And it's, you know, this is what we do. We need to minimize risks again, but I think we're going to be there for a long time doing development work. We just need to have the security door cracked open far enough so that we can get around and work.

MR. PERITO: Someone want to take shot at the future of EPRTs, now that we're in the drawdown?

MR. MCFARLAND: The future of EPRTs. I think in the immediate future -- this is -- it's an excellent question, and the answers, I think, are still being studied. The one issue, as Jeff has mentioned is -- movement and security, how do you do it? And one option, of course, is to go private. And there are certainly some pluses to that from the perspective of the military because it reduces their footprint. I think one of the potential drawbacks of it is that, you know, the military -- the

movement and security is part of -- you know, we probably don't fully appreciate how complex a package it is. It's not just the HILA (ph) that's moving to the Humvee that's taking you someplace. It's, you know, it's other air assets that can cover you if something goes wrong. It's search and recovery. It's the being able to take you back to medical facilities. It's the intel that drives and permits the whole operation. It's a big package, and it's hard to replicate that from the private world, and it's even harder to do it with the kind of counterinsurgency mind-set that you need to conduct these operations in Iraq.

MR. BAKKEN: Can I just add real quickly here, too? It's also the kids that are out there doing root clearance the night before for us to get to a meeting. Those are the guys who are getting hurt, and we need to recognize those folks. They're very brave people, and those are the ones who are finding the IEDs, the EFPs and so -- just adding to what Steve said, they're very brave and valiant people and we need to tip our hats to them as well.

COL. RUCH: I'd just add on there that I had 120 people by the time I left and everybody came home and we had people out on the road four, five, six missions a day a lot of weeks, and we had had, I think in excess of 2000 missions outside the wire in my time there by the Baghdad PRT, and everybody came home. We're putting 466 soldiers' names from MND-B on the memorial wall when we get back, so that's kind of how it is. They make us able in our PRTs and EPRTs -- they make our safety their number one priority, and they did a good job.

MR. MCFARLAND: I think you can draw down the number of -- clearly, you can draw down the number of brigades and regiments, and then it's a question of deciding exactly how important PRTs and EPRTs are to the overall strategy and task-organizing around that and saying, if you need it, then -- if they're going to do this, and that of course, means that state AID and all the other civilian agencies have to be fully committed, as they are, to staffing them and supporting them. But the military would have to, I think, provide at least some sort of support.

Of course, even as we go into drawdown, the military is still going to have large numbers of people out there doing other missions, the transition missions, working with the Iraqi army and with the Iraqi police. And I think that actually -- this is a personal observation -- is an area where probably some sort of state or other civilian agency involvement would also be appropriate.

MR. PERITO: Thank you. Another question?

Q My name is Sajat Palev (ph). I am the senior administration specialist in

Baghdad USIP office. Actually, my question maybe comes from the field, because as the speaker said, he mentioned al-Shaab (sp). Al-Shaab (sp) is my neighborhood in Baghdad. I'm living there, a -- (inaudible) -- neighborhood.

My question is, is PRT delivering the message that they are doing something, through the media, through those TVs that's well-seen by the Iraqi people, or not? If I answered this question, I would say maybe no. Maybe you have a different point of view. It's important to diffuse your accomplishments through those media, particularly those TVs that's well-seen by a big portion of the Iraqi people, like Iraqi ATU (ph), which is (semi-formal ?) TV, and the Al Hurra TV, which is seen by many of them.

Another thing, the PRT actually is sometimes confusing the Iraqi people, because from the beginning, with Jay Garner when he came to Iraq, he created an administrative (cell ?), let us say, like the CMOC, if you are aware about that, the Civilian-Military Coordination Center. Those were visited by Iraqis. Now PRT is dealing with provincial councils. It's good to have a link between the Iraqis and their government -- (inaudible word), but with new structure, are the Iraqis aware about this new structure?

I would appreciate your comments. Thank you, sir.

MR. PERITO: The issue of media and public affairs and public information is a very important one. Who wants to start?

MR. BAKKEN: Well, since al-Shaab (sp) was one of my neighborhoods, I'll start and recognize that we certainly were not doing enough, as you rightly point out. It's a very fine line that you walk. We had to be very careful about publicizing projects and things because people get killed. Contractors would get killed if they knew it was an AID project or if they knew it was a Corps of Engineers project or a brigade (CERP ?) project. So we had to be very careful.

The other thing we were trying to do -- and I think at least I failed to mention this -- was what we're really trying to do is stand up the Iraqi government at all levels and make them look good. So we went out of our way to not be in the limelight so much and to give as much limelight as possible to Iraqi government authorities.

For example, up in northern Ur, there's a big -- the R-3 water project, which should have come on line by now. That was a huge project, most of it done by Army Corps of Engineers with Baghdad PRT. And a lot of effort went into that. And it's going to provide water for all of Sadr City and, I believe, Shaab and Ur.

We're giving the Iraqi government most of the credit on that, and it should be given to them because it, you know, also helped with their support.

I think as things get better, we will be able to go out more and say, here's what we've done together.

This is what we bring to the table. This is how the United States government and the people of the United States are helping the people of Iraq.

MR. PERITO: Do you have a question?

Q Yes, you've mentioned that the PRTs --

MR. PERITO: Could you identify yourself, please?

Q Excuse me?

MR. PERITO: Who are you?

Q Oh, I'm sorry. My name's Jim Milachik (ph). I'm a research librarian.

You've mentioned that the PRTs are coordinating up to the central government. To what degree is that occurring? To what degree is the central government coordinating -- coming back to the provinces? And how much are they funding projects that are going on in the provinces? And this includes the southern provinces that are not being discussed here too much and the Kurdish provinces in the north.

MR. PERITO: We'll ask Bob to take that since you were in the big PRT.

COL. RUCH: Once again, those linkages were a critical part of what we were doing, and we worked very closely with counterparts in the embassy to make sure that we were making those connections from the provincial level up to the -- up to the national level. Now, in Baghdad that was a lot easier because I could bring the governor into a minister's office to discuss a problem, so in a lot of ways we had it easier where when others came from Anbar or came from the Kurdish regions, you know, they'd bring down a host of -- a host of government officials and make -- kind of make the rounds. We could do it every day.

I won't get into the numbers because I don't remember them well enough, honestly, but this coming fiscal year there is a huge increase in the project money from the central government out to all of the provinces. So we are -- we are seeing the central government take that kind of interest.

Now, you know, the province -- at least my province, I think Anbar, they did a pretty good job spending their project money -- am I right there for Anbar? -- and they executed pretty well. It was the central ministry's projects that happened in all the provinces where I saw the greatest problems. The connections from the province, in my view, were pretty good to the national government. But it was the ministries -- the national ministries themselves -- that suffered problems with executing their funds.

MR. MCFARLAND: Just in the case of Al Anbar, I think in 2006, I think the actual project money given to Al Anbar was about zero because there was almost no provincial government to speak of, therefore no ability to execute.

In 2007, then, with the considerable support from the Marines, the Anbar PRT and Embassy Baghdad, the government of Iraq provided first a little over \$100 million, then an additional I think somewhere between 50 (million dollars) and \$70 million. This is on top of the stuff that the central government was giving to the directorate generals of the line ministries to spend out there. So budget execution at the provincial level was certainly one of the success stories.

Now, the follow-on objective after you get the money out to the provinces is to make sure that the provinces not only spend it within the law, but actually start spending it out in the districts in a way that provides a sense of ownership to the districts. So it's not just dropping a project on a district or sub-district and say here you are, but it's actually -- what we were trying to do is to -- you know, again, working with the Marines and the Anbar PRT, was to encourage, nudge, whatever, the provincial government to invite proposals, to even go out to them and say hey, we can do this much money with this much for a project.

You can actually, you know, tell us what you need and develop that sense of ownership that we think contributes to our political objectives. That's ongoing, but there's been a lot of progress, and so I think they'll continue to be some.

MR. PERITO: Well, we're almost out of time. So I think what I will do now is invite our panel to make any concluding remarks that they'd like to make. Can we just go down the row.

COL. RUCH: I'll keep it simple: The EPRTs were a good a thing -- and getting better all the time. Once again, we need qualified people to volunteer and get out there on the ground and to do their part.

I was immensely proud to have served this part of this effort, and really to have worked with the interagency folks that I've never had an opportunity to work

with before. I learned a ton from them -- my team leader Andy Pass (sp) and Joe Gregwire (sp), Phyllis Powers (sp), General Olson (sp). It's really been a wonderful experience.

And I will tell you, the military has a changed view, in many ways, of the agencies out there. And I know that my division, who I believe will be back in Baghdad before too long, is, you know, an important part of what we're looking at as we're capturing our lessons learned is how to even better integrate. How we can come in and train -- help train the people going to the PRTs and the EPRTs. And how we can get involved in their training and how we can get them out to our training so that we can -- you know, first time we're shaking hands isn't on the steps of the Baghdad Ominot (ph).

So I know that General Brooks -- who's currently running the division right now -- is very, very interested in furthering relationships. People are interested in, you know, coming out and working as experts in our train ups. Drop me a line and we would be happy to help make that integration happen.

So thank you very much.

MR. PERITO: Steve.

MR. MCFARLAND: Concluding remarks would be, you know, working on an EPRT and working with the other team members, working with Colonel Karety (sp) of Marine Regimental Combat Team II, was the most rewarding job I have had. It was also the hardest job I've had. You really appreciate the sacrifice being made by men and women of all the services out there, as well as the Iraqis.

And so I think it's incumbent that we try to learn the lessons from this EPRT/PRT experience to make them better out there and to make them better for whatever future scenarios we face.

MR. BAKKEN: I'll just mention two things, maybe. One is staffing, again, and the importance of -- from my perspective -- of getting true development experts out in the field. I think Bob, in one of his papers, said we shouldn't be bringing our B team to the game and that's true. We need to get people out there with the experience and the training that they need.

I know -- and correct me if I'm wrong -- but in Vietnam, the CORDS program, people were getting six months of training. We're giving our folks two weeks. And I know Steve is at FSI now, and he's made a lot of changes to the training program and made it much more relevant, but two weeks is really not enough.

I've also made this recommendation to senior staff at AID and I have a meeting tomorrow again with the deputy administrator of AID. And I will remind him again that we really need, as an agency -- AID -- we need to be getting junior, midlevel and senior-level people into language training and cross-cultural training right now with looking at getting them out in the field in two-year's time. It's going to take two years to learn Arabic and understand the culture enough so that we can go out there and work.

One of the -- Steve said it before -- one of the most frustrating things I found was being in an environment where I didn't understand the language or the culture. And you know, one of our fortes, I think, as Foreign Service officers is that we go places where we understand those things and that enables us to be more effective.

USAID needs to get people into training right now. They need to find the budget to do it, because as I've said before, we're going to be working in this part of the world, I think, for quite a long time. So staffing and training are really key points.

MR. PERITO: Thank you very much.

I'd really like to thank our panel. Two years ago, the United States Institute of Peace did a special project in which we went out and interviewed people that had served in PRTs in Afghanistan. Those -- the transcripts of those interviews are on the USIP website under the -- if you click on oral histories, you'll get the dropdown and you'll be able to read those interviews and the publications that resulted from them.

We are now launched on a new project. We will be interviewing hopefully more than 100 people that have served in EPRTs in Iraq and the mother ship as well. Hopefully, we will be able to find you and contact you, but if you'd like to be interviewed and you've served in Iraq and in and around a PRT, if you'll go back and look at the invitation and send me an e-mail, that would be appreciated.

Thank you again for coming. I think this was a terrific panel and a great audience. And we'll see you next time. (Applause.)