

**15. Thinking again of ALL of the projects for which your Provincial Reconstruction Team was responsible, please describe below the THREE MOST COMMON METRICS you used to measure the effectiveness of the reconstruction and stabilization projects that your team completed.**

**FREQUENCIES**

	Frequency	Percent
Response Provided	58	64.4
No Response Provided	31	35.6
Total	90	100.0

**COMMENTS**

For Water it was the amount of water pumped from treatment plants. For Civic/Cultural sector it was attendance at cultural events. For Health Sector it was number of patients who received service.
N/A
"Number" of people the project would affect;
Improving GOI [government of Iraq] capacity. That's the only metric.
We never really got around to having good metrics.
Reliable metrics were difficult to come by. This gave a free hand to write reports to Baghdad that were essentially subjective evaluations. This lead to self-serving and inflated assessments of progress in the area of safe water and sanifation. A colleague raised this issue during my time in Anbar.
Process Local buy-in / sustainability Ultimate service delivery levels
Unfortunately the metrics changed with the miitary units.
1 Timeline 2 Budget 3 Sustainability
12 months is not long enough to measure effectiveness. We sought local government buy-in, which we did very effectively.
I wasn't closely involved enough in project work to have been involved in evaluation of projects.
Buy-in by local authorities or orgs; local support indicating sustainability of program after USG involvement; mid-to-long term impact
Reduction in violence in areas where projects were conducted Number of local participants in projects Level of local enthusiasm and sustainability of projects
None
Actual outcomes: Was there noticeable improvement?
It depended on the project--we built a road which dramatically improved commerce and development but was roundly criticized (it was simply overused --it was so popular). For a governance improvement project, the fact that the opposition and fundamentalists attended the

<p>sessions was a key but after-the fact metric used to measure its usefulness.</p>
<p>I don't recall that we actually used any metrics.</p>
<p>Was a program sustainable, could the Iraqis gain the expertise to carry out the project themselves.</p>
<p>Completion or delivery of project on time and on budget. Number of people effected by project. Security gains in the effected neighborhood.</p>
<p>1. extent to which economic alternatives to crime were created 2. whether local actors were able to maintain and manage what we built 3. whether civil society actors such as women's groups and agriculture associations had gained the respect and primacy as project partners in the eyes of local political and tribal leaders</p>
<p>Feedback from provincial government Public Opinion Survey Feedback from Local National Contractors</p>
<p>The metrics were not usually common, as each set of metrics was tailored to a specific project.</p>
<p>The level of Iraqi management of a project, the transparency maintained in executing projects, the second and third order effects of projects on either governance capacity or economic development.</p>
<p>1. Number of people project reached. 2. Length of time the project/program/facility remained operational after initial set-up. 3. Acceptance by local government officials of the project/program, and their willingness to oversee it or similar projects in the future.</p>
<p>Dollar value of investments in the region, literacy rate and freedom of press.</p>
<p>how this will impact positive publicity for US-Iraqi Partnership; use or need for the general population; and can the Iraqis sustain the activity once US support was gone.</p>
<p>Metrics always proved difficult. By the time I arrived at the PRT, we were much less project focused than before. I would argue whether the project functioned, and whether it was something that was actually used by Iraqis or the government of Iraq was a good indicator.</p>
<p>What is the sustainability of the project? What are results? What has been the impact on the community?</p>
<p>I don't know.</p>
<p>Sustainability, Meeting an urgent need of the people, casting the United States in a positive light.</p>
<p>1) Personal observation and testimony of participants. We could usually only do one followup at the close of the project. In some cases, we had to send our staff out, due to security restrictions on U.S. staff mobility, and trust our staff's judgment. 2) Continuation of the project, once our funding left off. We encouraged our grantees to plan ahead of our departure, and develop their own funding, be it government or private. This was considered a metric of success, the survival of the project after our monitoring was over. 3) Comments from other NGO partners about our work. (Believe me, they know what is going on in their neighborhoods, too!)</p>
<p>Baseline Quarterly assessment tool, capacity building reports, local resident reports / surveys</p>
<p>We tried to look at the sustainability. Was the program still working a few months after we helped set it up. The most effective was the soils laboratory and the Diwaniyah Agricultural High School. Esp the high school, they really put in a lot of effort and their own funding to make sure projects were done right and fit the long term needs of the school</p>

Employment reports, Security situation reports and evaluations of the costs and benefits of our funded programs.
1. Measurable outcomes based on plan 2. Local government/contact reaction 3. Local participant reaction
number of viable schools built or refurbished number of households impacted by literacy or income generation schemes non-violent character of public protests (yes or no)
It depended on the project. Water flow rates in the Euphrates, additional kilowatt hours of electricity generated, number of inoculations delivered, scale of participation in an event, number of voters in an election. There was no metric that could be applied evenly across the spectrum of projects, apart from dollars spent, and this was not a reliable indicator of effectiveness or success.
employment, economic development, reduction of violence
1) Amount of money spent. (We were encouraged to spend money.) 2) Whether the money went to worthy organizations. 3) Number of people potentially reached by the project.
Follow up with the organization, pictures taken, etc. Overall, it was very difficult to measure long term effectiveness, since the projects (and personnel) changed constantly.
1- Sustainability and Longevity 2- Cost/Benefit Ratio 3- Overall strategic relevance and priority of project to both Iraq and US
Money Spent; Observation of effective local governance; Customer satisfaction;
Personal observation and validation of activities. Feedback from beneficiaries Feedback from Chairmen of various PC committees
Sustainability of project beyond time of project Impact on those involved in the project (e.g., capacity building, better relations with PRT and Americans) The project went as planned
1. reduction of violence 2. reduction of violence 3. reduction of violence
Did the Iraqis take ownership of the project? Did they budget O&M funding to sustain the project? Did the Iraqi people realize any benefit from the project?
crop production employment food price and supply variation throughout province
1. Project's ability to materially impact the lives of a highly vulnerable population. 2. Project's sustainability after USG funds exhausted. 3. Provincial government's willingness to match fund USG expenditures or otherwise support the project.
Metrics? The Embassy and the Army never stopped asking us to quantify our "progress". But realistically -- and given the difficulty of measuring improvements in quality of Iraqi life (and the fact that nothing we did seemed to actually improve more than a few peoples' lives) -- the most common metrics we used were probably: 1) US dollars spent; and 2) [to a lesser degree] number of Iraqis employed by virtue of a given project; and 3) estimated number of Iraqis who might benefit from a given project (though this figure was usually very hard to estimate reliably, except when we were giving away humanitarian assistance items (or similar)).
How good it sounded on paper, how well the funding officer could write, and how well we could minimize public complaints afterwards about how the money was ill-spent.
Decrease in violence Children in school Increase employment returns of displaced
During my time there, as the PRT was closing, we measured completion of the terms of the

grant. We did not have the resources to follow-up on grants that were already closed out, unless there was a follow-on grant.
We employed USAID's "Results Framework" to set up the parameters for designing our activities and checking on their effectiveness, but most of the time our sense of success (or the lack thereof) came through personal observations and Iraqi feedback.
-- Completion of immediate goals. -- Feedback from recipients -- Sustainability
none of the projects really shared common metrics. measurement was often anecdotal or hearsay, as security situation didn't allow for close monitoring.
sustainability, feasibility, support mission goals
1. GOI's capacity to provide essential services 2. Effects on tribal reconciliation 3. Effects on local economy
There was no formal monitoring or evaluation of projects supported by our Team. Personal observation by PRT staff or locally engaged employees was the most common form of evaluation.

**16. What do you believe were the THREE MOST COMMON metrics used by the Embassy to measure the effectiveness of projects in your area?**

**FREQUENCIES**

	Frequency	Percent
Response Provided	60	
No Response Provided	30	
Total	90	

**COMMENTS**

For Governance it was budget execution at the Provincial level. For Energy it was power generation. For Agriculture it was either output or land utilization.
N/A
"Number" of people the project would affect;
Unclear. Same goes for MNF-I Core's metrics from the brigade.
The OPA maturity model was about it. There weren't any hard, underlying metrics feeding into it.
The embassy was focused on consolidation and wordsmithing field reporting to justify enormous amounts of staff down time.
Dollars spent Visibility (good news stories in areas deemed of interest)
Long-term effectiveness of projects - i.e. did the sewer work and continue to work Responsiveness of Iraqi citizens to their own government & trust in same Positive change in attitude toward U.S. and other sects
1 Civil impact 2 Fit current policy 3 Sustainability
This question is laughable. The Embassy had NO idea what we were doing. We might as well have been on the dark side of the moon. This is understandable as they had to feed the Washington beast every day.
Immediate impact/ photo op; credit to USG; local support indicating sustainability of program after USG involvement
unknown
Reduction in Violence Amount of Money expended Number of persons employed
None
Effectiveness and sustainability
MAWS [money as a weapon system] meant that the Military liked to measure things in terms of money spent which was reported up to the embassy. Number based metrics like people attending an event or newspaper reporting were other metrics.
I don't believe that the Embassy used metrics to measure our effectiveness. Instead they allowed us to rate our own progress with a matrix.

sustainability. Though precise metrics were never developed to my knowledge. I do not recall meeting a M&E expert who assessed the effectiveness of projects.
Amount of money spent (the more the better). How fast money was spent (the fast the better). Inventiveness of project (the newer the idea the better).
1. amount spent 2. minority groups engaged 3. degree of political rapprochement among the parties
Uncertain..... Supply of Electricity Unemployment Level of Violence
The metrics were not usually common, as each set of metrics was tailored to a specific project.
Progression of a province in the maturity model of development: capacity developed, transparency, and social/economic stability created.
1. Number of people impacted by the project/program. 2. What group was the main beneficiary of the program/project. 3. Amount of money spent.
Unknown
This was often hard to determine. Some projects that we thought as some of our best were not always viewed the same by the responsible parties in the Embassy. But if I have to pick three, my guess: did project get intended result; is the result a magnifier; sustainability (not one of the metrics used until the end of my tour).
I never had a good idea whether the Embassy measured the effectiveness of our projects. OPA [Office of Provincial Affairs] required SitReps, but I was not party to whether or not they added much to the Embassy's view of the effectiveness of the PRTs.
Don't know.
I don't know.
Casting the United States in a positive light, meeting the needs of the people, sustainability
1) Alignment with overall mission goals for the country. (Although, perceptions can be sometimes "centralized," and ignore regional differences. Thus, what is important in the region, may not be as important with U.S. staff, who have their perceptions of importance shaped by contact with central authority contacts.) 2) Timeliness of execution, and meeting reporting deadlines. 3) Perceived need, vice other areas requiring support. We often heard from the OPA staff that we had sent in great grant opportunities, but that our projects were not being chosen because that other areas had greater perceived need, even if the projects were less viable. (Projects not standing on their own merit, but a sense of overall "fairness" of distribution sometimes got in the way of us launching projects.) It could have been argued that a project, even in a fairly prosperous area of Iraq might have had a greater chance of success, but this argument was dismissed.
QRF [Quick Response Fund] monies spent, projects proposed, projects started
Was the project completed, did the PC [provincial council] approve of it, was there a story out of it.
I am not exactly sure how it was done. However, I believe that the embassy relied heavily on our reports
Unsure
I think you should ask the Embassy about this.

See above.
It was very difficult to assess the effectiveness of our projects and whether or not the embassy felt that our projects were successful. Metrics changed constantly.
employment, reduction of violence, economic development
I did not sense that the Embassy really applied any metrics to our projects.
I do not know of any, the DOD had a team that measured effectiveness of the projects completed, I have not heard of DOS initiative (but it is possible that I just was not aware of it)
Random selection.
Money Spent; Washington Satisfaction; level of violence
Quarterly assessment tool - forgot the name Visits Weekly reporting
if it got good press if it could be done quickly and without complexity if it met some Embassy goal
1. reduction of violence 2. reduction of violence 3. reduction of violence
Maturity Model was used but that didn't apply to individual projects, just the effort as a whole.
not sure, embassy usually didn't ask
Same as above. The Embassy was tough but fair in reviewing the projects I presented, and I had an excellent working relationship with those who reviewed my 27 project proposals (even though I never traveled to Baghdad after my first few days in Iraq).
See above. [I suspect that most PRTs found it equally difficult to measure the effectiveness of projects in a country where it was often impossible to see how a given project improved the lives of any Iraqis (other than the contractor who won the job, and the few people he employed, and of course the power-brokers he paid a share to). So I figure most PRTs tried to measure effectiveness roughly the way we did.
How good it sounded on paper, how well the funding officer could write, and how well we could minimize public complaints afterwards about how the money was ill-spent.
Decrease in violence Return of the displaced increase in employment
To my knowledge, the Embassy never sought to examine the effectiveness of a project at my PRT beyond asking us about it.
Do not know
Do not know.
heresay, speculation, wishful thinking.
Sustainability, feasibility, support for mission goals
1. Amount of money spent 2. Number of pictures taken at grand opening ("IO effects") 3. Whether there was some demonstrable effect on the GOI's capacity to provide essential services.
The Embassy relied heavily on reporting rather than specific metrics.
Not a clue. I'm not sure they knew we were there.

**20. What indicators led you to believe that some CERP funding was lost to fraud or corruption? Please write in your answer.**

**FREQUENCIES**

	Frequency	Percent
Response Provided	66	73.3
No Response Provided	24	36.7
Total	90	100.0

**COMMENTS**

<p>Contractors and NGOs simply changed names usually to benefit the most powerful local tribal clans in order to win grants and contracts. It was impossible for PRT to keep up with the level of fraud given the lack of local knowledge and the inability to move easily in the province. With little ability to do real oversight we opened ourself to abuse and waste of funds. We also found employees who worked for several organizations, to include PRT, local government, contractors, and NGOs. Employees who did not operate under our immediate supervision on the compound could easily escape normal duties of an 8-hour day.</p>
<p>I did not participate in project nominations, nor did I evaluate programmatic outcomes.</p>
<p>Inflated costs for poor quality work</p>
<p>Projects that involved building things (which includes everything except for the reconstruction of the airport passenger terminal in Mosul which happened to be on the FOB) were subject to contractor fraud, which even in the U.S. is 1-9%.</p>
<p>the low quality of the projects and Iraqi interview narratives.</p>
<p>Lack of tangible results in the context of my knowledge of Middle Eastern culture. Where did the money go? We essentially bought the loyalty of Sheikhs in Anbar to the detriment of the future generations of Anbaris. Perhaps we had no better options given the enormity of the undertaking.</p>
<p>While I certainly saw some less-than-stellar control mechanisms and less-than-fully-effective usage of funds - I can site no specific examples of fraud and/or corruption; I would have reported them at the time. Any percentage noted is at best a guess based on unverifiable second hand information - usually stories about a Sheik or two being awarded a contract for a questionable (perhaps non-existent) project in exchange for a decrease in hostile acts against coalition forces (but if that was the ultimate goal - I can certainly support THAT as a both a legitimate and worthy aim and would not categorize that as fraud) or more commonly, comments from local officials complaining about poor performance (or extreme over charging) by USG funded contractors. Occasionally these comments were accompanied with the suggestion that their choice of contractor would have been a much better choice.... While QRF [Quick Response Fund] monies had reasonable process and controls associates with them, I am not so confident of that with CERP monies - and again, the DoD had, on occasion, a different set of priorities.</p>
<p>The higher than market rates paid for projects. Comments from government officials.</p>



Lack of project management controls by the implementors or NGOs.
Back channel attempts by local/provincial politicians to "assist" certain projects over others.
No concrete indicators but there was always a point after which every small expenditure may not be able to be verified.
Many of the resources funneled through US Army, which often indiscriminately handed out money to local actors. Most money from PRT or USAID was accounted for.
Some corruption existed and NGOs had to pay funds at a higher rate because people knew they received funds from the USG. In addition, the UN had set a certain standard for payment of salaries and services that was higher than the KRG [Kurdish Regional Government] norm, but required because of historic basis.
The nature of the contracts, the relationships between senior Iraqi government officials and the contracting companies, the number of contracts individual companies bid on, the fairly loose nature of financial transactions and the inability to exercise adequate/stringent oversight of funds disbursement and utilization.
Money was in cash -- no accountability. PRT members were given oversight of projects and handed money with no accountability or follow-up.
Higher than expected costs for project estimates that were later reduced by as much as 50 percent when challenged. Also, the very fact of cash payments was problematic at best.
For example, half of a CERP purchase of computers worth \$2.2 million went missing from Basrah port. Allegedly the computers were sold as abandoned, at the same time the PRT was working with customs to clear the items. Some project partners were poorly selected with Iraqi accusations, some proven true, of malfeasance.
Leaders in the Anbar had become accustomed to skimming off the top of any aid given. The U.S. Marines had set this bad precedent in order to get the tribal leaders to help them achieve their goals, including defeating the insurgents. Once the insurgency was defeated, tribal leaders and elected officials continued to skim money. This practice was already established during the time of Saddam but the Marine's actions triggered the go-ahead to continue this corrupt behavior.
After money was given, a project was not completed. There was little accounting for what happened to the money if the project was not completed.
Americans who had never written or administered a grant before were doing so for projects worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. Americans soliciting and accepting grants often did not have technical expertise or any background in the particular area for which they were writing grants. Without this experience it was easy to push up costs and slip in items that were not needed and the American officer was none the wiser. Additionally, when making cash payments on some grants, "fees" were offered to PRT members (who refused to accept the money) in exchange for having selected a particular organization's bid on a given grant.
too much spent for too little observed result - sanitation was the biggest offender. like mafia in U.S, trash collection was a prime organized crime and corruption target.
I do not have information on projects that other sections ran. As mentioned before, our section did not spend money on projects.
Bold statements by local politicians. "This is my project." (Inference that promotion of such will promote his own political aspirations. Evidence of life style imbalance vs. govt salary. Police

<p>chief driving \$100,000 BMW?! Inability to effectively compete projects. Over-reliance on foreign national employee (contractors) working for PRT. Rumors from variety of sources. Complete failure of projects (variety of reasons).</p>
<p>I make the assumption that most contractors skim off the top. The construction projects were subject to many delays, which I am guessing had some connection to corruption.</p>
<p>While we made every effort to ensure that fraud did not occur, I am sure that at some point we relied on information we should not have without knowing it was not truthful. When blatant attempts to defraud were observed, we called our Iraqi counterparts out and worked diligently to structure projects to prevent it from occurring. Most of our projects were relatively small, so I estimate fraud losses can not have totalled a very large percentage.</p>
<p>Reports from various individuals and groups. Results of some of the projects did not meet the goals on budget or on time. Some actors came to the new PRT asking for money or non-bid grants for various ill-defined projects or purposes, indicating that in the past they had been funded.</p>
<p>Questionable invoicing</p>
<p>When I arrived, the USG was using US standards of what things/projects might cost vs. what the actual cost would be in Iraq. We superficially inflated costs for projects and most projects resulted in those receiving the money to use some of those funds for personal gain. Also, we were relying to heavily on our PRT local employees to bring in contacts. This, I believe led to kickback payments to some of our own staff. We could have avoided a lot of this fraud if we were allowed to change our methods, such as purchasing equipment/products from legitimate US or Western providers and having them delivered to us through our military channels. This would have also guaranteed product/project quality. Many equipment/products that the Iraqis purchased were Chinese made and produced. They were prone to breaking or generally substandard. We often had to go back and buy more products to ensure operations could continue. Simply a complete waste of money. You get what you pay for but, for a little more we could have purchased from US or Western companies and obtained better quality. We just made the Chinese richer.</p>
<p>This is difficult to answer. I avoided doing "projects" and attempted to implement standard Public Diplomacy programming using established standards and procedures. I was not party to purchasing "media rooms" for DACs [District Advisory Councils] or the PC [Provincial Council]. I did not fund a performance of an Arabic adaptation of Macbeth by Iraqi actors. I can only estimate the amount of money lost to fraud or corruption. It seems most projects I saw budgets for had an inflated "mark-up" to compensate whoever was helping implement it. I had suspicions that there were ties between contractors and PRT local staff on certain projects, which often did not include multiple bids, based on calls I received from said contractor and a former PRT local staffer who'd moved on to the US related to a project I put a stop to. But in my year, I did not have direct knowledge of fraud or waste, or I would have reported it.</p>
<p>One such indicator was discussions of our local Iraqi employees who had heard things "through the grapevine" and shared this information with us after-the-fact.</p>
<p>The only case I know of concerned a grant from my section in which a key project official was closely related to a provider of services in the grant (he provided long-term housing). I am not aware of any other suspect cases.</p>
<p>I believe that some members of our locally-engaged staff were on the take. I never had any</p>

proof, but there was talk among citizens I knew that our locally engaged staff that worked on contracts were cutting side deals with folks.

Too much was spent on salaries, purchase of equipment that could be diverted to other (personal) uses by grantees. As I mentioned above, particularly in the projects to develop women's capacity, men took over these projects/money/equipment for themselves, and diverted the resources to their own use. I discovered that personally, when I went back a year later, because the "group," this time of men, wanted a second tranche of funding, which I refused to submit. I also felt there was an overwhelmingly lack of gratitude shown by a larger percentage of the population served than I found comfortable. They seemed to feel they were entitled to support, and it was often difficult to get some of the beneficiaries to invest the "sweat equity" needed in their projects. Please don't misunderstand me, this was not the case in all instances, but it occurred enough for me to consider it a trend.

Money went out, no progress on projects or significant differences were noted. Buildings went up, but were never used as intended.

Iraqi provincial or local level government sometimes prevented PRT eyes-on or direct involvement during project implementation. Minimal PRT long-term follow-up (ex. women's sewing training: we buy the sewing machines, see they are set up in a classroom, then we find out the local "NGO" we has sold the machines and disappeared). USG favoring of short-term projects with easily articulated metrics over long-term or deeply thought-through projects with more difficult to articulate metrics led to poor oversight practices. In my province, we relied heavily on remote reconstruction (reconstruction implementation by proxy NGO, civil society group). PRT was sometimes blocked by RSO [Regional Security Officer] travel restrictions or provincial government's reluctance to allow access to ongoing PRT programs and projects. I believe the implementation of some projects without direct PRT involvement or oversight led to loss of fiscal energies (skimming of funds, unfulfilled promises to implement) that might have been applied to the intended programs or projects.

Simply the games that the Iraqi NGOs and Provincial leaders played. Super inflated price quotes halted many projects, when I arrived I implemented more stringent monitoring and implemented partial payments on completion many local NGO's complained and kept insisting the internal controls weren't the "Iraqi way". Project proposals submitted by PC members and local NGO's were rife with gaps, etc in the projects that would make it possible to misuse funds. Our PRT spent a significant amount of time tightening proposals, projects, monitoring the activities to prevent loss. But just based on the Iraqi's efforts, reactions, etc my gut knows they were scheming to profit as much as possible before we pulled out. Especially the sheiks.

I don't have any specific indicators in mind. It did seem to me that a few contractors got a lot of the CERP construction work. It may well have been because there were few qualified contractors working in the area.

By consulting with many Iraqi professionals and from my experience working with them on daily bases, I have concluded that that corruption is a way of life for the Iraqis especially when it comes to contracting. For example, a ten million Dollar contract with a reputable Iraqi contractor could end up as low as \$ 100K sub contract. The PRT have cancelled several small contracts for this very same reason. Another example is the monthly payment for the Iraqi displaced people where their money often disappears on its way between the GOI ministries and the banks. And the list goes on as the Iraqi officials are spinning in an endless orbit of corruption.

I have no way to estimate money lost to corruption.
Site visits showed very unvibrant environments. I visited women centers and chicken coops. Nothing really going on, Some greenhouses showed very vibrant programming but it was hard to know if this was genuine or s how for us. Also, Iraqi expectations of cash hand outs and reports from the press (with whom I spoke regularly) on possible fraud (i.e.- X stole a tractor from a cop, this NGO representative requests a kick back for programming).
I became personally aware of fraud taking place, and made the RSO, OPA, and the IG aware of my concerns. Some areas, I could see evidence myself. In other places, I heard credible claims of mismanagement.
I arrived in 2009, so most of the funds that were lost to fraud and corruption had already been spent in the 2005-2008 time frame. DOD steered millions of dollars to key [provincial] political and tribal leaders through lucrative construction contracts to purchase their loyalty and cooperation in fighting insurgents and Al-Qaeda operatives in [province]. Unfortunately, many of the tribal sheiks who received these payoffs fled the country and took up residence in Jordan. By the time I arrived, this was no longer USG policy, and both DOD and the PRT had developed more effective controls to ensure that money we spent on projects, particularly in reconstruction and infrastructure, was not lost to fraud and corruption.
subsequent review of projects
I sensed that we were paying a lot of money for what we were getting. For instance, we funded an individual who set up a website to disseminate news in Arabic. But I did not sense that the impact was that great but we did so, if memory serves, with thousands of dollars.
I think that it was possible that the funds were not used properly by the recipients, but as a Cashier I had the opportunity to monitor payments and did not notice any indication of corruption from the U.S. side. There were errors though.
All projects were coordinated by Iraqis partners, and the everything went through the top man. We assumed that the top man, regardless of the institution, was using projects to give jobs/cash to family and friends.
inconsistencies between cost and outcome.
Project delays and cost overruns. Poor quality of construction materials and techniques. Inability to monitor projects properly due to security concerns.
Cross checking prices, we occasionally found that recipients of funding overcharged by up to 25%. This was reduced by our local staff providing pricing data BEFORE formally reviewing budgets for approval. large-scale CERP projects were routinely found to be overpriced - some by 300 percent.
The lack of being able to do site visits and provide oversight of projects, especially USAID, INL [International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs], DRL [Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor] projects. And leaving the projects entirely to implementing partners and relying on written reports. The microgrant projects where the PRT members were directly involved with the project with the grantee probably had 1-5%, because the Iraqis would inflate costs or cut corners on the projects, but it was harder to do.
poor quality of projects, lack of acknowledgement that US Taxpayers paid for the projects, poor solicitation process
Bids received for projects were often very high relative to the scope of the project. Reports were

received from laborers claiming they never got paid for their work on projects. Contractors reported being shaken down by GoI officials. Quality of work was very poor due to the cheapest materials being furnished. Iraqis were 'double-dipping' on micro-grants, i.e. receiving a payment of US funds for work done and getting micro-grants. Probably every contract and project sponsored by the USG had an element of fraud or corruption or both.

Follow-up visits to some project sites found little progress. A lot of "neglect" more than active corruption.

Many payments to the NGO leaders were made in cash. This always poses a "leakage" problem, especially in an impoverished nation. Also, Iraqi culture sometimes demands that small extra payments be made to local officials to get something done that is crucial to the project's success. That said, I never once heard a rumor or report from anyone (and I was in constant contact with many layers of government and society in my province of Dohuk) that my project funding was misspent due to fraud or corruption.

Other than the standard kickbacks that we believed to be a common part of Iraqi contracting process (e.g., the Iraqi contractor pays some percentage to local/national Iraqi politicians, police, etc.) -- I have no reason to believe that any funds that we spent were lost to fraud (at least, I don't think any of my American colleagues committed fraud). But I'm confident there was corruption among and between Iraqis, and that some portion of the money we spent was used by Iraqi contractors to line the pockets of other Iraqi power brokers. And beyond that, my general sense is that the vast majority of what we spent was simply wasted -- not stolen per se -- but certainly not spent in any way that would confer a meaningful benefit to more than a few uniquely positioned Iraqis.

The fact that all that money was spent, and there is NOTHING to show for it. What other explanation is there than that the money was lost to fraud or corruption (and, not just on the Iraqis' behalf, there was plenty of fraud and corruption on our part too as people purposefully blinded themselves to the efficacy of programs we funded while knowing full well there would be no benefit in the end).

I am not certain any money was lost to fraud. I do believe that there was some skimming by contractors early on, but over time working with the GOI we managed to weed out most if not all of the bad actors.

I saw corruption of a certain kind in the decision making process of giving grants. There was a 3161 at our PRT who managed many grants, and very clearly made decisions to give grants to people he personally liked without any regard to value to the USG. I consider this corrupt. We also had a few large-scale construction projects that were failures... Jadriyah Water Park, a poultry plant that only ever operated when we visited, and the Rusafa Palace of Justice, which was falling apart within a year of completion. These are only the ones I am aware of.

If your question is directed toward whether USG employees either in the military or on our PRT were involved in fraud and corruption, then my perception is that there was none. On whether the Iraqis misused or absconded with U.S. funds, that is an altogether different kettle of fish. But even in the latter instance, most of our PRT and military effort was directed toward making sure any USG-funded project or initiative was spent appropriately. The Iraqis themselves constantly complained of corruption. Our idea was to get them to police themselves on these questions. To some extent, we were successful, particularly when we helped them put together a list of reliable contractors for their infrastructure projects who could be counted on to get the job done well

without running off with the money. Nonetheless, there's still a long way to go before corruption becomes a dying practice in Iraq.

-- Price mark-ups to Coalition members. -- Procurement problems: "new" items received sometimes proved not to work or lacked parts. -- End use verification problems due in part to difficulty in conducting site visits. -- Indications that some interpreters may have colluded with contractors in hiding inferior performance in contracts. Example: Iraqi PRT staff members were asked to translate the Arabic-language PRT newsletter as an English exercise. The Arabic was so substandard that they could not do it. PRT had been relying on an interpreter to track stories that appeared in it; the interpreter noted the headlines but failed to acknowledge the language problem in the articles themselves..

At times, when we call it "corruption," the Iraqi's would term it "commissions" - We did our best to limit them, but you know they happen all the time (I would submit that they were on par with a mid sized American city). To the best of my knowledge, not one dime was mis-appropriated by coalition forces.

NGOs would come to us who had had projects funded in the past for large amounts that did seemingly very little -- indicated that much of the costs associated with those past projects were inflated and that someone had made money off the project.

The answer to your question turns on the definition of "corruption." I think 100% of any project we worked in conjunction with the GOI was skimmed at multiple levels. USAID oversight of projects subbed out to local contractors (through implementing partners) was also poor. Projects passing funding through NGOs were fraught with overpayments for "laptops," multiple levels of supervisory personnel, inflated commodity costs, etc.

Funds allocated to some Iraqi NGOs and government officials did not result in any observable activities. But, it was difficult to gauge fraud/corruption versus incompetence.

I did a protective mission to a chicken farm, that was "critical to US diplomacy." I was raised in the country so I know what a chicken farm should look like, smells like, etc. I didn't see one indication that that this farm was operational.

USACE was unable to finish most of the projects they were funded to do.

**21. Please provide below any additional comments you may have on the use of CERP for reconstruction and stabilization, or the measurement of its impact that you feel would be beneficial to this project. Please DO NOT enter any personal information in this field.**

**FREQUENCIES**

	Frequency	Percent
Response Provided	55	61.1
No Response Provided	35	38.9
Total	90	100.0

**COMMENTS**

<p>I continue to go back and forth as to how effective our reconstruction and stabilization efforts were in Iraq. I felt we were the right (and only tool) available for this purpose at this point in time. The PRT did add value in the sense that projects were evaluated somewhat, albeit at different levels depending on the timing and other issues going on in the province at a particular time. While stabilization and reconstruction can not be measured in months, the PRT at least expanded the military's planning horizon to beyond the immediate horizon. Our projects inevitably seemed arbitrary at times and lacked overall strategic direction, but given a war continued to rage and no real partner existed in the local government, I think we did a good job. My theory was that, as frequently happens with humanitarian assistance, we rushed way too much money into the field without having the basic infrastructure, security, and governance necessary to absorb it. As a result we witnessed high levels of waste and high levels of corruption. On the other hand, our money most likely did buy us some peace and provide cracks and openings for real Iraqi civic leaders to make a difference.</p>
<p>No comments.</p>
<p>By 2007, I was shocked that we we still doing stuff, especially with CERP. OTI [Office of Transition Initiatives] was perfectly able to operate in [province] and, because they did everything in the name of the GOI, they should have been doing all the well-digging and street-fixing projects. Our PRT was focused on getting the provincial government's capacity up.</p>
<p>Of course my opinion is very subjective and based on my own perspective - but I did see the divergent self interests of individuals and/or agencies impede overall effectiveness. (Or at least what I as a simple Governance Advisor would categorize as effectiveness.) The relationship with the Brigade - to include the Military Support Unit associated with the PRT - on my first PRT was completely dysfunctional and I am convinced we worked at cross purposes on most, if not all, initiatives. It was counter-productive relationship, completely within the USG, that could not / should not be used as best-practice or emulated by either another PRT or the Iraqis. Results / impact reporting seemed inflated, apparently to maximize percieved accomplishments (either individual or organizational). Dollars spent was apparently the sole measurement of effectiveness. Both with DoD, and within the PRT with 3161 contractors (their effectiveness judged based on what they report) we seemed to ignore sustainability / long term effectiveness of projects / over-arching USG goals - in favor of "I have been effective this rating period by</p>

spending \$ XXX and the situation is improving in this LOE (lane of effort)" - which allowed the PowerPoint slide to be updated and sent on to Division. My second PRT enjoyed a much better relationship with our DoD colleagues and had a much more dynamic PRT Leader. I believe that difference made us more effective (in comparison) across all areas including a more comprehensive approach to projects and project management - but also increased due diligence, transparency-of-process and efforts towards a common goal.

The project work done by USACE was often substandard. For example, a slaughterhouse in Basrah was designed that did not have dedicated sources of water, electricity, or waste removal. Another example is the design problems encountered in the construction of the Basrah Children's Hospital.

Use of the US military as the primary drivers of reconstruction was a grave error. The embedded PRT model was extremely useful to orient resources and couple money distributed with our broader US policy goals. But PRTs were late in coming to the field which limited the benefits the civilian/military partnership provided. In addition, the absence of a true presence of USAID in the field was startling. Our foreign development agency was not there in many instances, leading to State and US Mil officers having to use lesser expertise on projects. This led in turn to waste of time and resources.

The ideals were noble but the actual disbursement of funds and the projects funded lent themselves to many opportunities for fraud and corruption. More stringent measures for oversight and project approval would contribute to significant reductions in opportunities for fraud and enhance probabilities of mission accomplishment.

I believe the use of these funds was a commendable effort, notwithstanding its vulnerability to pilferage.

By and large, projects that I saw were thoughtfully produced and executed. In some cases, the lack of Military-Civilian cooperation produced projects that were appropriate at an earlier time, but should have been better thought through as circumstances had changed. For example, continuation of support for Government Owned Enterprises programs should have been stopped or altered if proved without utility but either Mil or Civilian leadership thought otherwise or were not able to alter prior commitments. At times, the different Tour of Duty time frames themselves caused problems as leaderships--either Civilian or Military -- were out of sync in terms of seeing the same problem. It would take some time to get together to either sync or to understand the differences in the solution sets. For example, in the later stages, the Military seemed to focus still on tactical economic projects while State/AID seemed to want to focus more on more strategic projects.

My take-away from my experience in Iraq was that there was too much funding, too much redundancy, and too many contractors. Too many people had the same mission and people were running around looking for duplicate information in order to justify their jobs. This was not just a contractor problem but one the military experienced, too. It is true that civilians on the PRTs did not use metrics but it would have been difficult to do so. There was little to control the process of a project and some of the projects were long term and beyond our mandated time allowance in province

QRF funds distributed by the PRT were on sometimes misappropriated. Unfortunately, in an attempt to place greater control on the funds, my PRT inserted another level of bureaucracy that often became a venue for petty personal grievances. Sometimes these personal considerations



would block the funding of valuable projects. Overall, much closer between the military and USAID (and their NGO implementers) is absolutely essential.

The Baghdad PRT was the largest and had the most money the majority of which was spent on tons of small grants. Grants covered the gamut from funding the creation of a agricultural co-op, to funding NGOs to teach women how to sew, to putting a security wall around a court house. During this time, the public in Baghdad continued to have approximately 7-9 hours of electricity per day (we received weekly reports based on ground surveys), many neighborhoods did not have potable water or functional sewage systems, and garbage was not being picked up regularly. While the small grants were all great projects, the idea that we were going to bring stability to a region by teaching women to sew was absurd. The PRTs should have focused on the basic necessities and left the small grants items for NGOs to do in the coming years. Despite all of the money the PRT spent, Iraqis were constantly asking us what we had done to help them because they could see no tangible improvements. They were not interested in playgrounds next to the police stations, they wanted consistent electricity, running potable water, functional sewage systems, and regular garbage pick-ups. We accomplished none of this.

effectiveness of USG funds used for development depends on a few simple variables, which are often difficult to grasp at a distance in Baghdad or Washington: - unity of effort among USG actors with money to spend. we created a mechanism whereby all actors had to coordinate, but this appeared to be the exception rather than the rule. - "think small" - small drip irrigation projects or hoop houses of \$4000-7000 proved extremely effective in providing local value chains and economic alternatives, which reduced the appeal of cash-bearing insurgents. huge mega-projects generally were ineffective, and provided more opportunities for corruption and financing insurgents. - filter - we are asked for so many things, with local actors ready to profit on projects nobody really need over the long term. must filter and empower civil society voices, like women's groups and ag groups. - need greater flexibility with USG/DoD funds to provide seed capital for small trade-based credit unions and local banks. - focus on the long term - if Iraqis cannot maintain or manage a project, don't do the project, because it will later become a visible symbol of resentment, "look what the Americans left us"

Further direction and guidance from Embassy and military Divisions to focus efforts would have been helpful. For example, rather than trying to solve all the problems in the province, it would have been a source of pride and achievement if we could have said "We took the electrical grid from zero to 98% effectiveness" or "The US efforts have restored medical services in this region." Or now 100% of kids in the district have new textbooks and classrooms.

I believe most or all of the projects that require any maintenance, such as water compactors and any kind of generators, will fail quickly for lack of maintenance.

I am proud of my service there and what we as a team, including our local staff, accomplished.

The impact of our projects in Iraq cannot and should not be solely measured on the basis of funds spent or defined "project effectiveness measures." Never counted were opportunities for Iraqis to participate in rebuilding their country or learning a different way of thinking or acting through their interaction on U.S.-funded projects. Also never counted were the moments of pleasure associated with U.S.-funded cultural activities and personal interactions with U.S. civilians and soldiers. We brought a real face and more importantly, real behaviors, that defy TV and propaganda views of Americans. That is something that money can't buy.

As I am sure you have heard from a number of sources, uniformed DoD personnel had different

metrics and expectations when planning projects. Since the vast majority of the money came from DoD, and the local commander had the final say on what projects were to be funded (usually from CERP funds), long-range goals often came second to the "quick win." Funding projects, often several \$100K's worth, for the quick win often resulted in making it more difficult to achieve the long-term win. Also, even to the brigade level and beyond, DoD personnel did not always understand the need for approval (or at least buy-in) from the provincial authorities, resulting more difficult relations with the local government. However, I must stress that in Ninewa province, during my time, our relations with the military were excellent, but we still occasionally ran into these types of issues.

Not sure what you are looking for in this survey. Reconstruction and stabilization could be in two categories: 1. spend money because it will keep people from trying to kill us, 2. actual reconstruction efforts where we assist at the point where they really need it re: they don't have their own money or resources to complete a project themselves.

The overall police training program (in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region) has been ineffective in my opinion. The U.S military and followed by DoS/INL [International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs] pushed basic training programs on the Kurdish authorities without regard to what the Kurds actually wanted. The Kurds wanted a "Train the Trainer" type approach, and the USG focused on "basic training" for the forces. More attention should be given to the actual needs of the entity that we are trying to help.

The manner in which these funds were used and disseminated were not necessarily in the best interest of the USG. These funds should have been funneled through USAID, which has more than 50 years of experience in development work and have the systems in place that are better organized to determine what would be effective under the circumstances. In our bid to rush money out, that 50 years of experience was thrown out and rushed into the hands of people that did not have the project/program management experience to make competent decisions on which projects were going to be sustainable. Overtime, this did get better at my PRT because of my experience as a former government contractor, but one week into the job, I knew that there would be tremendous waste and fraud. Our sole focus for these funds should have been the necessities of life: food, water, medicine and electricity as well as business development, so the Iraqis could sustain those necessities once we left.

By the time I got to the PRT, we were primarily out of the project business and used our time and influence doing more typical diplomatic work - trying to leverage our relationship built over time to build more lasting progress and reconciliation among Iraqi actors (between the PC, the Governor and the rural Qadhas for example). The most effective projects I witnessed were the low-budget, high value work done in Agriculture. Measuring these successes is nearly impossible. Is progress being made because of "projects" or the "surge", or because the Iraqis have decided to stop killing each other after the bloodletting of 2006-2007? When your baseline is "zero" effective governance, any improvements are progress - but it is hard for us along to pin this progress on the fact that we spent considerable sums purchasing programming on satellite channels focused on anti-terrorism or pro-reconciliation themes.

Nothing to add

I don't have any first hand knowledge of improper use fo grant funds or poorly executed or used grants. It was my impression that on the whole grants were properly used in my region, and I visited some schools and a health care facility and verified they were really being used. The

grants that I was personally involved with were closely monitored and properly implemented.

Sustainability was the one thing that dogged us in my time on the PRT. We needed to get the projects completed so quickly that we often pushed sustainability aside for expediency. Having worked in Africa, I know that sustainability is always tough to achieve. You really can't know how sustainable a project is until years later. But, I fear that with the push to spend-and-build, we sacrificed our ability to build things that would actually be sustainable. That said, I am a big believer in the PRT program. It was the most meaningful tour of my diplomatic career and am glad I served.

Please reconsider the strategy of having generalists do more than smaller, short-duration projects, particularly in dangerous postings. The military has a corps of engineers that can address immediate, catastrophic stabilization necessary, much better than DOS can. If needs must be met non-militarily, please consider outsourcing to private contractors, who specialize in the various construction/field work necessary to accomplish these goals, with a mind to possibly hiring some locals, and developing a private sector capacity. And finally, please use NGOs for social, grassroots efforts. These programs are usually done by specialists, and can be monitored, or supported by DOS officers.

Use of U.S. government funds for reconstruction and stabilization would have been more effective in my province had they been used to fuel a long-view. Longer tours would have helped. One year on a PRT is not long enough to get traction on appropriate goals or develop appropriate metrics. Using a PRT-generated framework derived from a deep understanding of local needs and approving projects based on that deep local understanding rather than a frantic scramble for short-term projects derived from a need to generate short-term “results” (that don't really result in much substantive reconstruction) would have greatly benefited both the effectiveness of U.S. funds and led to the eventual emergence of meaningful metrics.

Military were told to spend, spend, spend. Every new troop that rotated in needed to show they had spent money on some project, rarely received local/community needs assessment. No consulting with local Ministries of Education for school buildings, etc. PRT did not have same access to funds as the military, so therefore did not have the same power. Little to no coordination between PRT and U.S. command forces, definitely no respect nor reason for military to defer to PRT judgement on effective use of funds.

Overall, I think a lot of our efforts were highly successful for the long term business and economic development. In the Province I worked in the biggest problem with our projects was the disconnect between the needs of the province versus the tendency of the Army and DOS to want to move along on the maturity model. I.E. the USARMY decided to stop building schools, yet school projects were highly demanded by the provincial government, local government, communities, NGOs, and from our site visits, schools were in incredible disrepair and rebuilding a significant number would have had a much more significant impact on the province than handing out backpacks, or microgrants for solar distillers, or even hospitals.

U.S. government funding for reconstruction and stabilization was generally not put to good use because we as Americans did not have a good feel (neither military nor State) for how to conduct such programs or how to put funding to good use. I saw or heard of Schools that were built on flood plains and never used, women's empowerment programming bought equipment and (paid) participants to a workshop, but the follow through was lackluster at best. Ideas at committee meetings were thrown about and sometimes quickly implemented, but almost never

with Iraqi buy in. It was a black hole with no way out. Intentions were good but expertise from team leader on down was just not there. Corruption was also endemic on the Iraqi/grantee side and was almost a profession within itself. Much of this we heard of, and we did not or could not see. Please take this also into consideration when noting this comment. PRT was often told that it would have been better to build one huge project rather than a litany of small ones. No one really had the answer.

It was a difficult environment, made more complicated by shifting expectations and requirements during the course of the PRT experience. During the "Money as a Weapons System" phase, my sense is that any money inserted into the local economy was considered a positive, with few questions asked. As time went by, more documentation was required and more oversight was put into place. Long-timers (contractors staying for more than one year, 3161's, ...) may have had more trouble making this shift than those of us who dropped in at the end of the program. As for the measuring of impact, this is extraordinarily difficult. So many of the reports extolling the virtues of a project or policy that passed through my hands were transparently self-serving.

PRT [province] was an exception in that the majority of funds out our disposal were DOD CERP funds (Commander's Emergency Response Program). Over time, the PRT managed an increasing share of these funds, first in cooperation with [unit], then with [another unit]. Many of our PRT 3161s were former military officers and NCOs, particularly in the PRT's Infrastructure Section, and they maintained a fairly good working relationship with their active duty colleagues on reconstruction and infrastructure projects. USG projects in water treatment and distribution were particularly important as [province] faced increasing challenges due to draught, upriver damming of the Euphrates river, and poor water management practices. While the USG spent over \$100 million to address this issue, we developed a sustainable system that provided fresh, clean water [province's] 1+ million people. Our efforts to improve [province's] electricity grid, however, were thwarted by conflicts between [province's] provincial government and the central government in Baghdad. Had there been greater cooperation between these two entities, I'm confident that the PRT could have significantly improved [province's] electrical generation and distribution network. On the other hand, Department of State Quick Response Funds (QRF) were generally insufficient to undertake significant projects. This was partially attributable to the gradual decrease in USG funding during the 2009-2010 timeframe, and partly attributable to the Department of State's general dearth of resources. As a DOS officer, I used QRF for most of my projects. The upshot of limited funding, however, is that it compelled me to manage smaller, more focused projects and maximize contributions from our Iraqi partners. I believe PRT [province] was among the best PRTs in Iraq because it was composed of experienced civilian and military members, including a large contingent of 3161s. Many of our 3161s had previously served in the military, and several others had served at PRT [province] for 3 years or more. In addition, we were fortunate to have a solid crop of DOS officers at the PRT, which helped to ensure sufficient civilian oversight of the PRT staff and its integration with the larger USG framework. This civilian, non-3161 leadership was critical to maintaining the PRT's quasi-independence and avoiding its complete subordination to DOD. The PRT's overall depth of experience allowed us to identify projects that would have the most benefit to the Iraqi people and see these projects through to completion despite the immense challenges we faced in [province]. I understand many other PRTs did not have these same advantages, and I would strongly recommend the USG follow this model when deploying other PRTs in the future.

<p>There was a program (whose name I can't remember, they had an office in the green zone and it seems to me it may have been named after someone in US) that provided funds for economic development: they would come into provinces (at least into ours) and drop significant funds (millions dollars) on projects (in our province they did work with state owned enterprises) and then they would leave. In general this did not seem to be a well thought out program.</p>
<p>I believe that one of the vulnerabilities was that sometimes the work was performed by companies that were not honest while performing work. In addition, some of the projects did not benefit the Iraqi population, as intended. It is possible that more research into what is actually needed would be helpful.</p>
<p>Employees should be provided better guidance on what is a reasonable cost for items or services in the areas worked. By paying huge inflated salaries to locals we ourselves added to the economic problems. But some sort of oversight should be provided to ensure that we are paying reasonable amounts for what we are building. Schools built for 250k actually could be built for 30k. But due to military regulations of taking the low bid, if 250k is the lowest of three bids, it seemed the military was happy just to check the box and not question the inflated price. For the most part the military worked with the same group of contractors, who themselves were not even in the business of construction. They were just writing, submitting, obtaining, and selling contracts to the next in the chain, who would then sell it down the line till you had some poor group of basic laborers making next to nothing to build a school. Employ common sense when awarding contracts, and ensure that the prices paid are not more than 10 percent over what the company would do for an Iraqi wanting to build.</p>
<p>The biggest problems were with the biggest projects - USAID, INL, DRL, USACE. QRF grants, if properly monitored, were the best tool the PRTs had. Unfortunately, they were frequently slapped together haphazardly by people who did not have prior grant experience and not monitored properly. The ones that worked well were ones in which the PRT member worked closely with the Iraqi grantee on a project that had a concrete purpose. Street cleanups, trash pickups, canal cleanings were a waste of time and money. Likewise so were large donations of equipment and supplies without the buy-in of the Iraqis.</p>
<p>n/a</p>
<p>Lessons learned: 1. No USG funds should be given out without a measurable 'quid pro quo' from the recipient. 2. Corruption in a cash economy is impossible to eliminate. Whenever possible, USG should do the purchasing ourselves and deliver equipment, supplies, etc. instead of cash and expecting the recipient to do the purchasing. So much of what was purchased with USG funds turned into junk. 3. In Iraq, it was a mistake not to have restoration of electrical power as the number one priority for reconstruction and stabilization efforts. It is very difficult to make gains in governance, agriculture, economic growth, rule of law, communications, etc. without reliable electrical power. Much of the USG money spent on non-electrical power projects never could have achieved its potential return on investment simply for the fact that the lack of power inhibited progress. What sense did it make to pour money into schools, hospitals, government buildings, factories, etc. when the electric power was either absent or unsustainable (expensive generators)?</p>
<p>Military colleagues were very effective in implementing projects, but often gave little thought to long-term economic and social consequences (local leadership and economic structures distorted by USG largesse). Money was spent (and wasted) for short-term objectives without regard to</p>

long-term consequences.

Nation building in the Middle East is a futile exercise, and the war in Iraq was arguably the single worst decision made by a U.S. President in U.S. history. The USG helped many people in the most stable area of Iraq (the Kurdish region), but the country itself will soon revert back to strongman rule by corrupt Shia leaders bent on dominating the Sunnis and Kurds. America's "elites" and neocons need to stop believing in our ability to reshape other societies in our own image. Otherwise, we will continue to waste hundreds of billions of dollars in borrowed money, and throw that enormous financial burden on succeeding generations of Americans who will undoubtedly be forced to learn from our mistakes. The best way to improve the USG's reconstruction and stabilization efforts is to never begin them in the first place. Let's reconstruct and stabilize the United States first, before we look abroad for special projects and other foreign policy misadventures.

As should be apparent to the SIGIR's office, the vast majority of US funds spent in Iraq were spent on projects that conferred little or no value to the Iraqi population. The number of poorly conceived, poorly planned, poorly overseen & poorly performed projects is surely a far larger number than those that were intelligently conceived, planned, overseen & performed. We've spent enough funds in Iraq to fix pretty much everything that was ever wrong with that country - yet oddly, very little has been fixed. The reasons for this are too numerous to list. You've been looking at this longer than I did, so I'm sure you know the reasons without me listing each (too much emphasis on metrics encourages massive spending in effort to show "results"; inability to focus on the REAL issues (electricity, sewage, water, employment) causes reconstruction teams to spend funds on trivial projects that do little to improve life; absence of competent, reliable, honest contractors to perform projects results in massive amounts spent on poorly performed work; very few reconstruction specialists with competence in negotiation contracts (quickly results in overpaying for projects, which in turn inflates the cost of each future project); little competent oversight of projects -- and even when a person wanted to oversee a project properly, the lack of competent contractors leaves no real alternative when the initial contractor does a terrible job. And on and on. Bottom line: actual professionals need to be managing contracts from day one, and there should be a meaningful reconstruction strategy that's being pursued, starting with the issues that matter most to Iraqis (electricity!), and working down the priority list from there. The focus on "metrics" is what happens when you don't have a big picture strategy in place. If you have a common sense strategy toward reconstruction, then you don't need to invent a bunch of metrics to "measure" your progress -- your progress is measured by whether or not you've executed the strategy or not. If the electricity grid is rebuilt, and all Iraqis have power -- then that's your measure of effectiveness (you don't need to invent questionable metrics if you're actually accomplishing something -- actual accomplishments are their own measures).

As management officer, I disbursed monies but was not involved in the decision process of projects nor their implementation. If the paperwork was correct and signed by the appropriate authorities, the money was disbursed. If the paperwork was not correct, it was rejected. I was not involved in the implementation or the evaluation of success or failure of any projects. My colleagues were consummate professionals and I never felt they were supporting any projects they did not believe would further US goals. Very odd to say this survey is anonymous then asking the question the survey did. By these questions, it is simple to identify the respondent. It appears a little disingenuous from my perspective. Keep up the good work.

I though DoS had told SIGIR it had no jurisdiction any longer in conducting oversight of projects in Iraq? Why is SIGIR then sending out this survey?

I think the teams' success overall was very dependent on the Team Leaders. A good team leader managed to build relationships with the Embassy, their partnered military command, the Provincial government, USAID, USACE and all the other entities involved. They also had to focus on the strengths of the staff they had and not pine for the staff they wished they had. Good team leaders made a huge difference. There were people in Iraq who should not have been there, but too much attention has been focused on them and not near enough on those that were successful against all odds. Thank you.

Prior to serving in Iraq, I served in an Embassy with minimal grant funds. Through that tour and my tour in Iraq, the biggest lessons were that the larger the grant, the less effective it is and that congressional mandates generally decrease the effectiveness of grant programs (the minority earmark is the most ineffective USG funding mechanism I have seen in almost 10 years of service).

I believe the premise behind much this survey is incorrect. Implicitly, the questions are asking us to assess whether CERP and QRF funds had a measurable development impact and whether they were used transparently/effectively. From a traditional development perspective, I am confident that the PRTs were largely a failure. The true contribution of the PRTs was supporting the military's stabilization mission and providing local diplomatic engagement. CERP/QRF was designed to put a lot of money into the community quickly and give our diplomats entry into a variety of Iraqi communities and local power centers. In short, the funds were intended to buy 1) the goodwill of the local population, and 2) access to useful political intelligence. By those measure, the PRTs were an unequivocal success. Separately, I would just note that whatever money was wasted through failed programming initiatives is nothing compared to what was spent on 3161 hires, who were often incompetent and unprepared to work with the DOS or Military.

I have outlined many specific areas where I believe our PRT team was highly effective in my previous answers. As I indicated there, our primary focus was to get the Iraqis to spend their own money through better budget execution--they certainly had plenty. In those instances where we used QRF or other USG funding, the amounts were relatively small and had to go through a thorough process of justification and vetting.

-- Limited mobility largely frustrated the ability to witness how resources were invested. -- U.S. projects largely driven by Embassy priorities; our PRT's ability to tap European funds and its leadership's jealous independence of U.S. policy direction left us well-placed to respond more directly to perceived provincial priorities. -- The big picture is that (by the time of my departure) the province twice voted the incumbents/expected winners out of office. They are holding their leaders accountable, something the people of Dhi Qar province have not been able to do for generations.

By the time I got to Iraq most of the big projects were either completed or nearing completion. The only new ones that we undertook were smaller projects with at least a 50% Iraqi government financing component.