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Executive Summary

Began work late 2007 with six-member PRT for Najaf, Karbala and Diwaniyah, located at the REO, Hillah. Later, the PRT split into three separate teams. Diwaniya moved to FOB Echo. Karbala and Najaf were able to go to their provinces, which were PIC provinces. These were the first two established in independently controlled provinces. Meant they were removed from Coalition Force presence. I was with Karbala PRT, located in Husseiniyah, adjacent to an Iraqi military compound, 13 kilometers from Karbala.

Used contracted security escorts, either Blackwater or Triple Canopy. Another alternative was using DOD helicopters, which was preferred because it was simpler.

PRT mission: expand governance capacity and efficacy; expand economic development; help in the equitable execution of the rule of law; expand central services capacity.

Thought OPA worked OK, saw it as providing general direction and coordinating efforts of different PRTs. Especially appreciated their provision of excellent BBAs, plus good Justice and Agriculture people. OPA helped develop maturity models: where we are now, where we wanted to be in six months or 12 months, and what roadmap we would use to get from here to there, and what resources we would need to get there. Looking at the broad spectrum of PRTs all over Iraq, OPA would say 'They're doing very good in economic reform in Najaf, but I see in Karbala they're having a hard time getting industrial expansion going, maybe we should get them additional resources to meet their goal.' And that's what I saw as OPA's function.

PRT structure: Team leader; military deputy team leader from the unit (Third Infantry Division) that owned the ground. (Owning the ground is imperative, because you know everyone and have connections. PRT also had a project officer, governance officer, whose roles were often overlapping and not clearly defined.

The six BBAs were exceptionally important because they provided instant credibility in dealing with the local officials. Having a Department of Justice representative, a criminal prosecutor, doing Rule of Law was fantastic because he understood our system of justice and had credibility in Iraq.

Missing and needed: someone in medical and health services.

Stovepiping was a problem. A person from Agriculture Department might have divided loyalties for their department and to the PRT. And while Agriculture might be working on one project (honeybees) nationwide, the PRT's priorities might be different (carp fishing).

Also problematic is issue of who does your fitness report, who pays you.

There was a mis-fitting with USAID, which was acting independently in the province, doing parallel work but not in line with the PRT. We didn't speak with a unified voice.

There exists a caste system in PRTs, starting with foreign service officers at the top. DOS people look down on 31-61s. BBAs are universally respected.

Biggest rift is between PRT members and diplomatic security, with the PRT wanting to get work done, which means going out into the province; and the RSO wanting no one to get hurt, which means staying inside and safe.

Iraqi security was also involved. Once we moved, the perimeter of the location was secured by Iraqi security forces. When we moved by ground, incorporated in our convoys was always part of the Iraqi army and Iraqi police, to get through the checkpoints.

The more homogeneous the province, the more simple things are.

Karbala had a more convoluted dynamic. There was a more vocal Sadirist presence and you had a chief of security in Karbala that was seen as ruthless, so there was more tension in Karbala than in Najaf. And in Babel I think it gets even more complicated because you have a large Sunni population and a large Shiia population, and you have Sadirists. There is constant tension.

We did not have a dedicated public affairs officer for the PRT. The State Department, unlike the Army, is hesitant to engage the press, with very specific rules and only specific people can talk to the press. In the Army, we get reporters embedded all the time and you hang out with them. It's more open in the Army. It is hampering the State Department's ability to get the word out and let people know the good deeds that they're doing.

PRT did some outreach with Iraqi public. Did press events to show them what things were happening. Helped develop the press. Focused on Iraqi press, less on western press.

Counter-insurgency: Once a province goes independent, security belongs to Iraqis, so PRT had no official function in finding bad guys.

Economic reconstruction: We focused on budget execution, making sure the money that came in was actually spent. That was a disaster throughout Iraq. The budget execution when I left there halfway through the calendar year was at like 3%. The key to stability

in the province was a sound economy and assuring that the money was spent on the greater good of the people and not for a specific few individuals.

Corruption was a problem in almost all of the provinces. The political leaders are all from the big city. The political leader has no vested interest in taking money and establishing health clinics in a rural part where there are a lot of Sunnis that they don't really trust anyway.

Promoting democracy: Governance officer in our team was fantastic. He drilled down their budget and helped them with strategic urban planning. Our governance person would get them to think about how to take the money and come up with a plan to alleviate a problem. They came up with their own internal look, identifying and addressing their problems. They were making progress.

RTI helped the provincial council do their own internal estimate of what their problems were. The number one problem was budget execution.

Major achievements of the PRT: We were the first ones to go into a PIC province, and begin movement out by both ground and air out into the province on a daily basis. That was a huge step forward because before that they had not driven into Karbala in almost two years.

PRTs are achieving their goals in governance, economic, rule of law, and essential service expansion. Need to do better in establishing credibility. Before they want to hear your good ideas, you've got to gain bona fides through some sort of action or commitment of money or discretionary money.

Lessons learned.

1. It's better to have fewer people that are better qualified than more people to fully man the team and not have the expertise. A couple key people make all the difference, and it only takes one or two knuckleheads to lose your credibility.
2. The discretionary money. The PRT needs to have something as they go in to show that they are going to be worth listening to.
3. The PRTs need to be out in the provinces. You can't be at the REO or downtown Baghdad with a bunker mentality and think that you're going to understand what's going on in the province that's a hundred miles away. Co-located with the Iraqi army and integrated with the contracted security seems to work.
4. There needs to be a running estimate for the PRT strategic plan and the non-security lines of operation. We must take the time to reassess the plan and make sure that everyone's priorities are the same.

What are the priorities for the provinces for the coming 12 months? They can start doing things now that are going to affect things four to six months out.

6. Continued integration of expertise under the PRT, from the different departments, along with their financial resources. Money is a tool that we can use. When you help somebody after making a promise, when you actually come through, it's absolutely fantastic.!

Interview

Q: Could you tell us where your PRT was located, what its makeup was, and what its size and physical structure were?

A: I originally went down to work with the PRTs end of 2007. At that time the PRTs for Najaf, Karbala and Diwaniyah were combined into one element with a half- dozen team members. It was located in Hillah, and was headed by a Foreign Service Officer, SES 1 equivalent. They had just started to reform these PRTs so there was not yet a large contingent; they were waiting for the personnel to come in. Over time, the size of each of the teams matured and the teams broke off from one collective team to three separate teams, the first of which was the team for Diwaniyah, and then Karbala and Najaf were PIC (Provincial Iraqi Control) provinces. At first the PRTs were operating out of a solely Coalition structure and then through coordinated effort between the governments... the provincial governments on Najaf and Karbala and the Department of State and the Department of Defense, we were able to forward deploy the PRTs into the PIC provinces.

So the PRTs in Karbala and Najaf were the first two in all of Iraq where PRTs were established in independently controlled provinces. It was a big deal because that meant that they were very independent and removed from Coalition Force presence. The first one was established in Najaf with approximately 15 personnel and was located at an Iraqi army compound co-located with the MIT team, military advisory team. The Karbala PRT moved out to a town just outside of Karbala. We were located adjacent to an Iraqi military compound with a MIT team and we had contract security.

This was a big deal because before, when we were operating out of a REO, for us to move by ground we had to use contracted diplomatic security, either Blackwater or Triple Canopy, to move us by ground. Or, we could move by DOD helicopters which was much simpler to do because the diplomatic security people were very risk-averse because their main focus was not on accomplishing missions but on keeping everyone alive, which is obviously a good thing. But that also meant that if there was something in the general area, say an attack, they wouldn't want to move by ground because they wouldn't want to move. So we ended up doing most of our movement by helicopter. There was a lot of restraint on being able to move, but once we got forward deployed, the onus for the security fell on the Department of Defense, which had provided in each case military movement teams to move the PRT personnel into the town and throughout the province.

Q: What was the precise role or mission of the PRT that you ended up with?

A: The first was to expand governance capacity and efficacy. The second was to expand economic development. Third was to help in the equitable execution of the rule of law amongst the people. And the last was to expand central services capacity.

Q: And your role was deputy team leader?

A: I was deputy team leader at different times for both Najaf and Karbala

Q: Did you have a specific duty, or as deputy was your duty to just kind of be on top of everything?

A: Well, my job on paper was to synchronize actions of the PRT people to make it as efficient as possible so they could maximize their surface area in getting out to their surface area equivalents within the provincial government. And in my case specifically, because the camps were being stood up from scratch, I spent a lot of my time making sure these camps were being built effectively. I spent a lot of my time coordinating between the various interagencies between the Department of Defense, Department of State, and the Iraqi army and the Iraqi government to make sure the camps were going to be built on time.

Q: And with whose money were they being built?

A: Everyone contributed a different portion. For instance, the land was donated by the Ministry of Interior, the physical construction of the camp was DOD, the Department of State provided for the diplomatic security, the contracted security, and this was through negotiations up to the ambassador level and highest military levels.

Q: What was the PRT's relationship with the Provincial Affairs office?

A: The provincial affairs office, you mean the OPA? Office of Provincial Affairs? OPA was the headquarters for the State Department people, all reports went directly to our OPA representative.

Q: Did that chain seem to work effectively?

A: As an outsider, a non-State employee, I thought OPA seemed to work effectively. But the people who were in the State Department saw OPA as just another interfering headquarters. But that is the same thing as in the Army, where we tend to think our overseeing office is inefficient. But I'm neutral. I saw OPA as providing us general direction and then coordinating the efforts of the different deployed PRTs, because if you're a PRT in Karbala you don't see what's going on in Najaf, Nazareah, Alkou. The only thing they provided us was personnel management, some of the administration and making sure that we had the correct people to fill spots, especially for the Najaf and Karbala PRTs which were being stood up from scratch. There was a core of four in the

Karbala team, four foreign service officers, because it was difficult filling them completely with State Department personnel. They coordinated for the inclusion of the BBAs, Bilingual Bilateral Bicultural advisors. That was something OPA did for us in Karbala. They got six of those people who came in and they were excellent. They knew the culture very well. And then we had Department of Justice and Department of Agriculture people. Our Department of Justice person was actually a federal prosecutor; he was very good. They tried to get us an engineer. They also worked with us on these maturity models.

Q: Maturity models?

A: It was in our strategic plan. OPA was trying to work with each of the PRTs to work on where we are now, where we wanted to be in six months or 12 months, and what roadmap we would use to get from here to there, and what resources we would need to get there. And OPA, looking at the broad spectrum of PRTs all over Iraq, would say 'They're doing very good in economic reform in Najaf but I see in Karbala they're having a hard time getting industrial expansion going, maybe we should get them additional resources to meet their goal.' And that's what I saw as OPA's function.

Q: How was the PRT's relationship with the embassy?

A: When I think of the embassy, our link to the embassy was through OPA. I knew both the team leaders, the team leader for Najaf, and the team leader for Karbala. They would talk to their first-line supervisor who was in fact OPA, but they would also deal directly with the ambassador on specific relevant events. For instance we had a video conference that we did with the President of the United States so they had to cross-reference what they were going to talk about and with the Secretary of State and we had our ambassador come out on several occasions, so we had to coordinate with them.

Q: Can you talk a bit about the effectiveness of the PRT structure and the leadership tree? Did that work?

A: Yes, we had a team leader and a military deputy team leader that were from the unit that owns the ground. That was imperative. Third Infantry Division owned the ground that we were operating on, I was from Third Infantry Division, therefore for me to coordinate stuff through Third Infantry Division such as travel and security, was intuitive for me because I know all of the people. And the guy who replaced me was a fantastic guy, but it was more difficult for him because he wasn't from our tribe, so to speak. So it was much more difficult for him because he didn't know the processes or the people to get things done.

Q: So even though it is important to get someone "from the local tribe," it doesn't always happen, and that would be one of your recommendations?

A: Absolutely. The second one, though, with the PRT structure: There was the IPAO (project officer) and then there was the governance officer. I think, based on the

experience of the different team leaders, the role of the governance officer and the IPAO overlap and intertwine sometimes. And I think that as we grew -- originally the Karbala team was only four or five people, but when we got to 15 people -- these roles were not clearly delineated and they had issues with who was doing what jobs.

The inclusion of the BBAs was exceptionally important because it gives you instant credibility in dealing with the local officials. And we had six, and each person was fantastic. There was no weak link in the chain. Having a Department of Justice representative to do Rule of Law was absolutely fantastic because ours was a criminal prosecutor in the United States, so he understood our system of justice in both the good parts and the bad parts. So it gave him instant credibility with the local officials, because he's not just saying, 'Hey do it like us because we're great,' he'd say, 'Hey, we have the same problem and we need to work together to fix this.'

But what we didn't have on the team that we needed to add -- one of the things that the people required the most help in -- was in the medical and health services. Some BBAs come with that and some didn't.

Q: Are you familiar with the term stovepiping?

A: Yes. Back when some of the representatives on the PRTs come from different parent organizations, for instance a Department of Agriculture person, they might feel responsible to answer first to the Department of Agriculture and their priorities are perhaps fundamentally different from the PRT team leader. For instance, the Department of Agriculture might be working on honeybee production nationwide but the PRT leader because of specific economic issues is interested in carp fishing.

Q: Is there an issue with being answerable to the different agencies? Where would he be judged?

A: Absolutely. In one case, I know, with the USAID rep, we were trying to get a USAID rep onto the team, the original template did not have a USAID rep, but we realized that if we could get him included he would bring specific pools of money that we could spend on the province. USAID was acting as an independent agent in the province doing kind of parallel work, but again what they were doing, because they're doing it independently, might not be in line with the PRT.. So it's like having one person rowing by themselves while you're trying to get everyone else rowing together. And if you have one agency committing something and then the PRT goes and talks to someone and they say, 'Hey why aren't you going to give me money for this when this man over here is giving me money?' We don't speak with a unified voice.

Q: What about the funding of this? There have been some comments about, for instance members of the PRT making promises to the Iraqis...

A: Absolutely, in fact I've got an excellent example of this. I went down into Karbala, where elements of the Brinkley group had been given money to try to stimulate the

economic developments of the different provinces, especially with agricultural production. The Brinkley group had promised high officials in Karbala that he'd get a million dollars to build greenhouses. And on paper it was excellent. We were going to make this happen. The problem was, the stipulation was clear, it would have to go to a state-owned enterprise and not a private enterprise. The high government officials were not in favor. So the Brinkley group continued to say, 'We'll give you twice as much money, but we can't give you any money if you won't abide by the rules.'

We thought that money was the central issue, so we were saying, 'No, you can't have it.' And others were saying, 'yes, you can.' So who is held accountable? Either us living there and every time he sees us he says, 'Where is the money? This other man is saying we'll get it.' And we say, 'You won't get a penny unless you play by the rules.' And this happened several times in open forums. And he never did get the money.

Q: This question has to do with the relationships within the PRT. Describe the interaction of members within the PRT staff. Did it function effectively?

A.: There is kind of a caste system amongst the PRT. There's what I call the "made members," the parts of the foreign service corps, and each PRT had about four FSO people. And then there were the 31-61s, and most of the State Department people kind of looked down on the 31-61s, although they are like any other group of people, it's a bell curve of efficiency. Some are good and some are bad and some are just paste eaters. Our governance officer in Karbala who was a lawyer, former mayor in the United States, he was absolutely loved by the Iraqi people, he was really a top tour guy. Another person on another team was barely able to tie their shoes and had like zero credibility amongst the local Iraqis. So that tension is always there. The BBAs were universally well thought of, people respected their backgrounds and understood that they brought something valuable to the team, because they knew the language and the culture.

Q: Was there a tension between the State and the Pentagon people?

A: The biggest rift or tension was between the PRT members and the diplomatic security guys, the RSOs. It was a constant point of friction to the point that my team leader was called up to go see the director of OPA, right below the ambassador, because of an ongoing rift that they had with the RSO. And again, being a neutral player, I understand that the RSO's metric of success is that nobody gets hurt. The PRT's metric of success is accomplishing missions and expanding capacity. For this group to do stuff they have to go out in the village, for that group to be successful, nobody leaves the camp. So to get around it, I kind of understood the rules, I could get my people out in the town if I used the army, the DOD. Their rules said that they could not move with us.

Q: Was there a question about the number of vehicles?

A: No, it was not constrained. The original, the REO, was designed for five PRTs but there were only three, so there was an excess of diplomatic security personnel. The team that was going to work in Alkut and the team from Diwaniyah had not spread off, so

there were clearly enough resources. It was not a constraint on resources. It was more of a mindset of what is acceptable risk. The background is, the RSOs usually don't work with State Department people in a situation where you're at war. They're used to a situation like Moscow or Beijing, where you worry about a different level of security. If you expect Hillah, Iraq to be like Salt Lake City, Utah, you're insane. It will never be like that. So the question is, if you've recognized the level of risk, what actions have you taken to mitigate it?

Q: Did you rely at all upon Iraqi security?

A: Yes, in a couple different ways. One, once we moved, for example, to go to the offices of high government officials in either Karbala or Najaf, we would usually move by ground, with either the Iraqi army or the Iraqi police, and when we got there the perimeter, the cordon, was provided by Iraqi security forces. When we moved by ground, incorporated in our convoys was always part of the Iraqi army and Iraqi police, primarily to get through the checkpoints.

Q: Was there any reluctance to meet with you if you came with a lot of security people?

A: Some high government officials met with us regularly, and were comfortable being seen with us. There were judges, however, who were not. And we were trying to expand our ability to meet with all constituencies. We had to make sure we were reaching out to all the factions, but many were not comfortable meeting with us in a public setting because their constituency did not want to see them kowtowing to the Americans. So we met with them in neutral locations.

Q: When you met with these officials, did you go to their offices?

A: Yes, we went to their offices, or they came to our camp, or we met at neutral locations.

Q: Were businessmen willing to come in?

A: It was very rare that somebody would not meet with us at one of the locations.

Q: What was your interaction with the tribal councils?

A: We met with tribal members both in Karbala and Najaf. Part of what enabled that was, that we had a BBA from Diwaniyah, and his cult of personality was such that people would come out of their way to meet with him because he was a real intellectual. So it really made things easy for us in our location because of his charisma. We met with them both at the REO and out at both Karbala and Najaf. We had a bookwriter from a major U.S. newspaper and we used our connection to the tribal guys, because he was writing a story, and we got him out with the tribal chief to take him around.

Q: So you had a unique experience where you worked with three provinces. Were relations better in any one than the other?

A: The more homogeneous the province, the more simple things were. In Najaf, primarily a Shiia city, we had a Shiia-dominated population.

Because the government officials had a firm lock on the city, things were very equitable in Najaf. Now Karbala had a more convoluted dynamic. There was a more vocal Sadirist presence and some officials were seen as ruthless, so there was more tension in Karbala than in Najaf. And in Babel I think it gets even more complicated because you have a large Sunni population and a large Shiia population, and the chief of police was murdered and there were assassination attempts on the governor, so there was constant tension.

Q: Did you have a public affairs officer?

A: We did not have a dedicated public affairs officer for the PRT. In Najaf, the IPAO served as the public affairs officer. The State Department is different from the Army culturally. The State Department is hesitant to engage the press, they have very specific rules and only specific people can talk to the press. In the Army, we get reporters embedded all the time and you hang out with them and you eat with them and if they ask you a question you tell them the truth. You may have some specific talking points, but it's more open in the Army. I thought it would be inverse, but they were very concerned, for instance, when the bookwriter came down and stayed for a couple weeks with the one PRT and a couple weeks with the other PRT, and only certain people could talk to him. I think in some ways its hampering the State Department's ability to get the word out and let people know the good deeds that they're doing.

Q: Was there an outreach element to the Iraqi people?

A: We did a couple things once the PRTs had broken apart from one group. We started press engagements with the Iraqi press to show them what things were happening and help develop the press to make sure that they had different informational means available. And whenever we had a major event, for instance whenever the new camps were established and the PRTs were forward deployed, and the ambassador came down, we had government officials come down; we also brought the Iraqi press because we wanted to put an Iraqi face on the accomplishments that were going on. Low key on the western press, and high profile on the Iraqi press.

Q: What made up the PRT effort in the area of counter-insurgency?

A: We are in both Karbala and Najaf, which are both PIC provinces. We were careful only to paint a general security situation on the reports, because the DOD is responsible for the security before it went PIC because they had maneuver force. But once it went PIC, the security in the province was charged to the commander of Iraqi security. So the PRT had no official function in helping find bad guys. Their function, according to the charter, was more in terms of equitability and rule of law. For instance, if they were going after insurgents, they'd have the guy's name and they'd arrest 40 people and go "tuna fishing." They'd hold 40 people and try to get the one guy, and our rule of law guy would

go and say, 'When's their day in court, when are they going to be released, why have these guys been tortured?' But the PRT mostly has a wall when it comes to finding people, even though we did have a stipulation that if a raid was going to happen in the province, we had to notify the government officials within six hours.

Q: What about the idea of bolstering moderates through economic reconstruction?

A: Well I think that does have the same net effect, but we would focus on budget execution, making sure that the money that came in was actually spent. That was a disaster throughout Iraq. They liked to get money from us, not because they're cheap, but because we're more efficient in getting the money out. The budget execution when I left there halfway through the calendar year was at like 3%. So they had a hundred or two hundred million coming in but they couldn't get the money from the central Iraqi government to spend so they were trying to get money from us. But we knew the key to stability in our province was a sound economy and assuring that the money that was coming in was spent on the greater good of the people and not for a specific few individuals who would make money off the influx of money.

Q: So was corruption a big problem?

A: Corruption was a problem in almost all of the provinces. It was a problem in the three I worked in. And not to be cynical, but I think it's a problem, too, in any democracy, because of the decisions of who gets the money and who's politically connected. And it's not like one guy is taking all the money, but for instance in our province there was a rural part, a big city, and a suburbia farming community. The political leaders are all from the big city. The political leader has no vested interest in taking money and establishing health clinics in a rural part where there are a lot of Sunnis that he doesn't really trust anyway, because we had a \$10 million infusion of CERP funds and we were trying to show him the best way to spend this money. And the best way was to look at the problem areas and try to fix them. But he was like, 'Why would I give money? These people do not vote for me.' And we would respond, 'Because they have no fresh water.' And he would say, 'That's their problem.'

Q: Can you describe the PRT efforts with regards to promoting democracy?

A: The governance officer in our team was absolutely fantastic and was in a lot of ways our lead spokesman, our lead point of contact. He was a former mayor. He drilled down their budget and helped them with strategic urban planning. The provincial council is made up of good guys, locally popular guys that are not technicians. They're there because their brother Achmed is the nephew of the prime minister. That's why they're elected. They'd tell us that. They'd say, 'I do not know how to do this.' So we would say, 'How can we take the money we have and come up with a plan that alleviates these problems?'

So they came with the Provincial Regional Development Councils and came up with their own internal look, assisted by USAID, that addressed their problems and identified their

problems and came up with solutions. And they sort of messed up but at least it was something. At least they were taking that step. And we helped them take the next step, saying, 'Okay, you've identified these problems and you have this pool of money. How are you going to allot money to these different programs, and how are you going to have oversight to make sure that the money is being spent?

The other thing is, we started going to their weekly provincial council meetings, and to the governor's council meetings, and we also had LESs (Locally Embedded Staff) who were on the State Department payroll. They were local Iraqis and they would go to the places where we couldn't go, and give feedback. We met with all the major players at least weekly.

Q: And you dealt with RTI?

A: Yes, in fact the RTI guys were the ones who did the initial estimate, it's not the PRDC. RTI helped the provincial council do their own internal estimate of what their problems were.

Q: What about economic reconstruction?

A: The number one problem was budget execution, and in our province the top three things were the religious tourism, the agriculture, and the government employment through security.

Q: What was the religious tourism?

A: The Hussein and the Abbas shrines, two of the holiest Shiia shrines, during specific periods, Ashuura and Abayeen, depending on whose numbers you believe, between five and eight million people come, but here are four or five different religious holidays that pull people in, and we were trying to use that to expand international investment. Najaf won the lotto in that the federal government decided to put the international airport in Najaf, so that was an impetus to expand economic capacity. The airport itself was going to cost a couple hundred million dollars and then you had international investors coming in who wanted to build hotels and other things. So we were trying to sell, in Karbala, that you had these 17 religious holidays and security was now stable, because in the spring when there were uprisings we tried to show that this was a place where security was maintained. And we had several American investors, and we tried to show them what our economic case was to put a hotel here. And we said, there used to be hotels here, even under Saddam. We have a beautiful lake and the oldest church in all of Christianity. But we didn't pitch this, we coached the provincial council chair and the different mayors, the mayor of Antimor and the mayor in Karbala to give this pitch.

Q: This is an over-arching question. If you had to make a list of the achievements of your PRT, what would they be?

A: We were the first ones to go into a PIC province, and we were able to work with the State Department and the Department of Defense and the Iraqis to get the PRT there and begin movement out by both ground and air out into the province on a daily basis. That was a huge step forward because before that they had not driven into Karbala in almost two years.

Q: Because of security concerns?

A: Yes, exactly. You may remember in August 2006, five soldiers were kidnapped in downtown Karbala by the PJCC and executed, and so since then there has been a hesitancy to go back in especially when some of the leadership there now is associated with that incident.

Q: Overall, would you say PRTs are accomplishing their mission?

A: Yes. Again, given the charter, that it's governance, economic, rule of law, and essential service expansion, I would say: yes. I think what could aid them to do their job better is, when you deal initially with the Iraqi provincial government guys, before they want to hear your good ideas, you've got to gain bona fides through some sort of action or commitment of money or discretionary money.

PRTs need to have more discretionary money available to help the provincial leadership, to buy in to the provincial leadership. If you show up as just another guy in a suit who says they have a lot of great ideas, this guy lives in a political reality, so he lives in a world where he has to show some kind of action or progress or else he's just another guy who talks. And we got that on occasion, like we got a commitment of \$10 million under ICERP for Karbala and another \$10 million for Najaf, that's a powerful statement. Because it's Iraqi federal money, but how it was spent was given to the PRTs, so now I'm a player and I'm sitting at the table and people are listening to what I'm saying

Q: ICERP is?

A: Iraqi Commander's Emergency Relief Program. It's their own money; they have a budget surplus. It was decided that this money would be spent on behalf of the Iraqi people in the province, so we used it as a training tool for the Iraqi government. So we said, come up and tell us how you would spend this money. They had specific priorities. It was right after the ceasefire between the Sadirs and the Maliki government in Basra, so they wanted to see money getting into the hands of the people to show that the federal government of Iraq is helping the local person. So they wanted to do it through an ICERP program because they knew we'd be able to get the money into the hands much faster than an Iraqi system. But it was Iraqi money.

Q: If you were asked for a list of lessons learned, a couple points that you think were really important in continuing the PRT program, could you give some ideas?

A: Everything starts from the team members forward. The people on the team. It's better to have fewer people that are better qualified than more people to fully man the team and not have the expertise. A couple key people make all the difference, and it only takes one or two knuckleheads to lose your credibility amongst the leadership.

The second is the discretionary money. The PRT needs to have something as they go in to show that they are going to be worth listening to. Whether that's discretionary money or the access to additional funds, because the first thing that the Iraqi governing leaders are going to look at you for initially is, 'What can you do for me?' And a lot of it is the financial or the access to programs or investors.

The third is, the PRTs need to be out in the provinces. You can't be at the REO or downtown Baghdad with a bunker mentality and think that you're going to understand what's going on in the province that's a hundred miles away. I think that the PRTs have gotten better about that as the security situation continues to improve.

The fourth is that there needs to be a running estimate, as far as the strategic plan for the PRTs and the non-security lines of operation, instead of where a plan is developed and we just kind of ride along with the plan and we don't take the time to reassess the plan and make sure that the priorities that everybody are going after are the same.

As we go forward toward the end of the year, the provincial elections are clearly the biggest thing on the plate, and I don't know if anything has come forward to say whether the potential outcomes of these elections may change the priorities of what we're going to do at the provincial level.

What are the priorities for the provinces for the coming 12 months? They can start doing things now that are going to affect things four to six months out.

Fifth, the location of the PRT camps. Co-located with the Iraqi army and integrated with the contracted security, seems to work. Many people had significant trepidations on working with the Iraqi army and Iraqi police. My contention is that your safety is an order of magnitude greater when you work with them, because they have a vested interest in making sure nothing happens to you.

Sixth, the continued integration of expertise under the PRT, from the different departments. Whether monies specific to that department such as the Department of Agriculture having money specific to agricultural programs, or a medical person could bring in money from Doctors Without Borders. USAID brings in money, that's another critical aspect that the initial design of the PRT didn't integrate.

They thought about it in terms of expertise, but not what monies they could bring from their organizations. Money is a weapon. Money is a tool that we can use. And when you help somebody and make a promise to somebody, and when you come through, it's absolutely fantastic.

We told this guy at the agricultural school that we were going to fix up all his stuff, and he didn't think it was going to happen because he didn't see any work while we were trying to get the contracts let. But when he came in and they finished everything in a couple of days, he was crying, he was so happy.

Q: That's great, what did they do exactly?

A: We put in a \$600,000 security fence, and we rebuilt a bunch of dilapidated buildings, put in a new greenhouse, got him some tractors. In another province they had a surplus of tractors so we used CERP money and bought him a couple tractors and we drove the tractors over there and he was really happy.

But for a while he acted like he absolutely hated us. We had to fix up his school before we could set up his camp. And the two contracts were on different flight paths. So he saw us starting on the camp and he claimed that we had lied to him and he said he was going to get his 150 students and he was going to do a 1960s sit-in. And we said, 'You're going to get shot.' But once it all came together he was all excited and they had a little special day for us and everything.

Iraq is moving on... OAF 1 was all about breaking stuff, OAF 3 was all about starting on the road to fixing stuff by giving them a constitution and the democratic process. Now this time it's about defeating the insurgency and fixing the country so the Iraqi people can take it over and the PRTs are a vital component to making that happen.

Q: Thank you very much.

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