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TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
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Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the role of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Iraq.

As you know, the mission of the PRTs is to assist Iraq's provincial and local governments with developing a transparent and sustained capability to govern, promoting increased security and rule of law, promoting political and economic development, and providing the provincial administration necessary to meet the basic needs of the population.

PRTs are a vital component of U.S. strategy in Iraq, and advance our counterinsurgency strategy by bolstering moderates, promoting reconciliation, fostering economic development and building local, municipal, and provincial capacity in ways that will benefit the lives of Iraqi citizens.

PRTs do this, in large part, by establishing and strengthening relationships with local leaders—business, community, and elected officials. They are

improving governance capacity by passing on the technical, managerial, and fiscal skills that enable local government officials to provide essential services and other key development projects to the Iraqi people. The result is a growing self-reliance at the local and provincial government levels. You have heard the term, “bottom-up” progress – PRTs are at the forefront of this progress.

State Department has the lead for PRTs in Iraq, but they are truly an inter-agency effort. They are helping Iraqis improve their ability to govern and develop their economy because of the experience and skills of those who serve on PRTs. State Department Foreign Service Officers, Defense Department civil affairs and engineer officers, USAID project leaders, Department of Justice rule of law experts and Department of Agriculture development specialists are working together alongside military units to achieve noticeable and rapid results in Iraqi communities.

Currently, there are 10 “pre-surge” PRTs, 15 embedded PRTs (ePRTs) and five Provincial Support Teams (PSTs) on the ground in Iraq. The 10 original PRTs were established in 2005 and 2006 and focus primarily on the provincial government level. Seven of these are led by the United States while three are led by our Coalition Partners from Great Britain, Italy and Korea. As part of the

President's January 2007 "New Way Forward" strategy, the President directed the number of PRTs be increased. These 15 additional embedded or "ePRTs" work closely with Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs), and focus on district and local level governance. The five Provincial Support Teams, comprised of one or two members, serve in areas where there is not a major presence of U.S. forces.

Although the Department of State has the lead in reconstruction efforts, DoD, due to its surge capabilities, provided personnel on an interim basis to expedite standing up the "New Way Forward" ePRTs. This demonstrates the need for a civilian reserve capacity. Civilian expertise is needed for PRTs to be successful. It is important that we increase the capabilities within civilian agencies and create a "civilian reserve" to draw on outside experts when needed.

ePRTs have only been in place for a few months, but early reports are encouraging and we are seeing positive results. Over time, we hope to see increased capabilities from the Iraqis to govern themselves at the provincial and local levels from the hard work of the U.S. men and women serving on these ePRTs and other PRTs.

I look forward to answering your questions.

