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Fact Sheet: Success of the Surge Allows Political Improvements in Iraq

President Bush Receives An Update On U.S. Efforts To Help Improve Governance, Economic Development, And Budget Execution With Local And Provincial Governments In Iraq

 [President Bush Participates in Video Teleconference with Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Team Leaders and Brigade Combat Commanders](#)

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Today, President Bush received an update from Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) leaders and Brigade Combat Team (BCT) Commanders on the important progress they are making in communities around Iraq. The President spoke to representatives from PRTs and BCTs in Ninewa, Maysan, and Sadr City. PRTs have been a key element of the surge strategy for Iraq announced by the President in January 2007. They are made up of hundreds of personnel from the State Department, USAID, the Departments of Justice and Agriculture, Coalition forces, and others. They are working to further secure military gains by helping Iraq achieve economic and political stabilization.

PRTs Have Seen Significant Success Working With Local Government Officials

- **Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team has contributed to the following results:**
 - Securing funding for 39 reconstruction projects that will employ 6,000 young Iraqis and distribute 200 metric tons of wheat seed to struggling farmers in drought-afflicted areas in the province.
 - Increasing coordination with the Iraqi Government and their local counterparts on reconstruction.
 - Working with the Iraqi Government to place new judges willing to convict terrorists in the province.

- **Maysan Provincial Reconstruction Team has contributed to the following results:**
 - Distributing food and clothing to more than 1,000 of the province's poorest citizens during Ramadan this year.
 - Obtaining furniture and equipment for two secondary schools and supplied Maysan University with a computer lab, internet, and donated books for students.
 - Continuing to encourage reconciliation with tribal leaders and government officials.

- **Sadr City Provincial Reconstruction Team has contributed to the following results:**
 - Partnering with local leaders to provide 265,000 school uniforms and backpacks for students – an initiative that is also helping local community businesses grow.
 - Rehabilitating four health clinics, supporting youth soccer leagues, and helping support a women’s clinic that provides medical assistance, education, and domestic violence counseling.

The Government Of Iraq Has Taken Over Reconstruction And Is Working To Respond To The Needs Of The Iraqi People

- Since 2003, the Government of Iraq has appropriated \$85 billion for reconstruction and security costs, as compared to \$50 billion by the United States. The United States has not appropriated any funds for major reconstruction since 2005.
 - The Iraqi Government continues to increase its budgets across the board – a base budget followed by a supplemental passed in August of this year brought the total to \$72 billion, a substantial increase from 2007’s \$41 billion.
 - The Iraqi Government’s budget execution has picked up in 2008 – the total government expenditure through June 2008 was \$19 billion, compared to \$10 billion through the same period last year.
 - The Government of Iraq recently took over responsibility for paying the salaries of approximately 51,000 Sons of Iraq serving in the Baghdad area. Iraq’s security ministries are paying for more than 80 percent of the annual cost of the Iraqi military and police under the 2008 budget.

Iraqi Leaders Are Working Together And Making Further Progress On Political Reconciliation

While security gains remain fragile, the Iraqi government is making political progress. The Council of Representatives has passed several major pieces of legislation, including a pension law, De-Ba’athification reform, an amnesty law, and a provincial powers law. Neighboring countries have begun restoring diplomatic relations with Iraq – a true sign of the country’s increasing reintegration into the region.

- Iraq’s Parliament passed a Provincial Elections Law, enabling Iraq to hold provincial elections by January 31, 2009. Elections in Iraq can now be held under a new system that will give Iraqis more say in choosing their elected representatives.
 - The national government is sharing oil revenues with provinces despite the absence of a hydrocarbon and revenue-sharing law.
- Iraq’s neighbors are reestablishing diplomatic relations – Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), Bahrain, Syria, Jordan, and the League of Arab States have all named ambassadors to

Iraq. The U.A.E. became the first Arab nation to post its ambassador to Baghdad and give Iraq 100 percent debt relief of approximately \$7 billion.

- Regional leaders are traveling to Iraq to pursue productive dialogue – Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, King Abdullah of Jordan, Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed About Gheit, and UAE Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Zayed have all visited Baghdad.

Iraqi Security Forces' Capacity Continues To Improve As Security Incidents In Iraq Remain At Their Lowest Levels Since Early 2004

- Successful operations led by Iraqi Security Forces in Basrah, Mosul, and Sadr City to take on Al Qaeda in Iraq have helped improve security in cities once plagued by insurgents.
 - High profile attacks have decreased by 70 percent in Iraq, ethno-sectarian violence across Iraq has gone down 96 percent, and civilian casualties have gone down 76 percent since this time last year.
 - Return on Success continues: All five surge brigade combat teams, two Marine battalions, a Marine Expeditionary Unit, and many of our coalition partners have left Iraq to return home – made possible by the sustained security gains we have seen in Iraq.

Participants in today's meeting included:

- Ted Andrews, PRT Team Leader, e-PRT Baghdad, and Col. John Holt, 3rd BCT, 4th ID, Sadr City
- Dan Foote, PRT Team Leader, and Col. Phil Battaglia, 4th BCT, 1st Cavalry Division, Maysan Province
- Alex Laskaris, PRT Team Leader, and Lt. Col. Robert Molinari, XO of 3rd ACR, Ninewa Province

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