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**REVIEW OF THE**

**BASRA**

**PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM**

Stabilisation Unit  
3 September 2008

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review of the Basra Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) was carried out by the Stabilisation Unit, at the request of the FCO, in order to:

- assess whether the PRT's objectives are valid in the light of developments in Basra since March;
- evaluate the PRT's performance in delivering its objectives.

Set against the context of the new security and political environment since Operation Charge of the Knights in Basra in March/April 2008, and the British Prime Minister's parliamentary statement on 22 July, the primary purpose of the review is to ensure that the PRT functions to its full potential and delivers tangible and sustainable benefits to Basra over the next 12 months. There is an increasing supposition that the Basra PRT will not exist in its current format once British troop levels reduce significantly in early or mid 2009, and increasing likelihood that the US will take over the PRT at around the same time..

It is clear from consultation with stakeholders in London, Baghdad and Basra that all PRTs, not just Basra, face a challenging task, constrained to lesser or greater degrees by the security situation, lack of Iraqi capacity to absorb assistance and insufficient freedom of manoeuvre. The Basra PRT faces the additional challenges of having a part-time leader since January 2007, a dysfunctional structural legacy, limited resources, and an absence of a long term strategy due to the uncertainty over its future ever since its creation in April 2006.

Given these constraints, the Basra PRT has performed well in some areas, notably on governance where it has been ahead of the game in getting the Provincial Council to develop and own the Provincial Development Strategy, and in developing Iraqi capacity on budget planning and execution. The PRT also responded well to reconfigure itself to deliver the Prime Minister's new economic initiatives in November 2007. However, it is clear that the PRT is not performing as well as it could, and the team is not leveraging its resources to best effect. It also now needs to incorporate the direction given by the Prime Minister in his 22 July statement.

As a result of these opportunities and challenges, the review team have recommended the appointment of a full time leader of the Basra PRT. This acknowledges the increased expectations of the PRT since Operation Charge of the Knights and the need to deliver maximum benefits in what is likely to be its last year. Nevertheless, the appointment of a full time leader will not automatically address all the problems faced by the PRT, and the review team makes a number of other recommendations on strategy, access, objectives, structure, communications and personnel management which should be taken forward urgently. Given the timeframe, it will be important to act on many of these even before the arrival of a full time leader.

The Basra PRT has an important role to play in protecting and promoting the UK's reputation, and will need the strong support of its civilian and military colleagues in London and Iraq if it is to perform that role effectively. This review recommends practical steps which should be taken to allow it to do so.

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## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The PRT Head in conjunction with the Consul General should lead in developing a transition strategy for the PRT, working closely with the FCO Iraq Group and other Whitehall partners.
2. A full-time PRT Head should be appointed.
3. FCO's Security and Estates Directorate should conduct a further review of the security situation and duty of care arrangements in Basra before the end of September.
4. The PRT's resources should be reconfigured to give priority to economic development. Consideration should be given to enhancing the economics team with a member of staff from another workstream, to attract potential investors into Basra and make visit arrangements.
5. The BIA team should be embedded firmly in the PRT's structure.
6. CMOC should be used to complement the increased economic focus of the PRT through re-alignment of its consent winning/quick impact projects under the PRT and the Provincial Development Strategy.
7. Strategic communications must become central to the PRT. This requires a full time adviser working wholly on PRT communications, if necessary replacing the two part time advisers who currently focus on building Iraqi media capacity.
8. The PRT should begin to plan and manage the transition of its governance workstreams to UNDP and others.
9. The Infrastructure workstream should continue its current focus of building up Iraqi capacity for infrastructure projects, rather than taking on new projects.
10. The Rule of Law workstream should refocus resources from IPS/ Internal Affairs to Judicial and Forensics capability.
11. To assist internal understanding of the PRT's refocusing, the new PRT Head should arrange a session with the whole team to ensure clarity of vision and objectives for the next 12 months.
12. The PRT management should consist of a dedicated Head supported by two deputies. The US State Department officer and the Head of DFID Basra should fill the deputy posts.
13. To assist cohesion, CMOC should come under the control of the PRT Head.

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14. A chief clerk should be re-instated to assist the internal administration of the PRT.
15. The SO2/Major in the PRT should have a defined military liaison role, improving civil-military coordination and understanding, providing military advice, helping with messaging etc.
16. The Joint Common Plan Co-ordinating Group should be given a formal mandate.
17. Communication needs to be recognised as core business by the PRT and its leadership, resourced appropriately, and reflected in job specifications to ensure delivery.
18. Regular internal meetings should be held, with agendas and minutes produced, and opportunities to update the entire team on work-stream developments, risks etc.
19. The PRT Head should actively consult stakeholders on their requirements, recognising that current weekly reports do not meet all customers' requirements.
20. Consideration should be given to utilising external facilitation to address some of the internal communication problems in the team as soon as possible.
21. The Basra Support Office in Baghdad is a vital asset in improving PRT communications to stakeholders in Baghdad, and should continue to be exploited as such.
22. The PRT Head should receive appropriate pre-deployment briefings and guidance on delivering HMG strategy in the complex environment of southern Iraq.
23. The Consul General should ensure the PRT Head is given customer / stakeholder feedback on a regular basis.
24. Exit interviews should be conducted for all PRT staff, and feed into a lessons learned process.
25. Regular appraisals should be conducted with all PRT staff.
26. Notwithstanding the advantages arising from using teams of consultants to deliver programmes, HMG should consider carefully the implications and risks of doing so in high profile positions within PRTs.

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## BACKGROUND

1. The Basra PRT was set up at short notice in April 2006, as a result of US moves to establish PRTs across Iraq following the experience in Afghanistan, and consequent pressure on the UK to establish PRTs in MND(SE). Basra PRT is the only Iraqi PRT led by the UK. Its first heads were sourced from the then Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit, and then in January 2007 the PRT Head and the Deputy Consul General (DCG) posts became double-hatted, so as to tie the PRT more closely into the work of the Consul General, and in recognition of the minor DCG role. The Southern Iraq Steering Group and Better Basra Plans were also put in place to improve coordination of the military and civilian lines of operation.

2. The PRT's current workstreams are Infrastructure, Governance, Economic, Rule of Law/CivPol and Strategic Communications. USAID are part of the PRT, but UNDP is not, although the UNDP representative sits in the PRT's offices and coordinates closely with them. The Basra International Airport (BIA) mentor is not part of the PRT, and is located with and reports to RAF Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW) 903. Annex 3 depicts the structure in more detail.

3. The Basra PRT's objectives, like those of the other PRTs in Iraq, were deliberately kept broad and vague, but centred around:

- building the capacity of the institutions of government in Basra to deliver for the people of Basra;
- putting the economic enablers in place to allow private sector growth, and
- improving the ability of the legal establishment and the media to act as checks on the Government and illegal groups.

Following the Prime Minister's Iraq statement on 8 October 2007, the PRT was re-configured to deliver his economic initiatives.

4. The Iraqi-led **Operation Charge of the Knights** in March-April 2008 has led to an improvement in the security situation in Basra, although it is still a risky environment and not as benign as those in which most other Iraq PRTs operate. Nevertheless, the improvement brought increased expectations that the PRT should be able to make more progress on its objectives, and should have more ability to move around off the air base. A new political dynamic emerged in Basra which is improving the PRT's potential to influence its Iraqi stakeholders, and Iraqis are now more willing than before to be seen visiting the air base than previously. Charge of the Knights was also followed by an increase in US personnel in Basra, and consequently a greater level of US scrutiny on the British performance there - both civilian and military. In summary, Charge of the Knights has led, both directly and indirectly, to greater pressures on the PRT to perform effectively, and an opportunity for the PRT to play a greater role in protecting the UK's reputation. However, given the legacy of Basra's violent past, a high degree of caution is being exercised by the PRT and London regarding the number of moves from the air base, which has only increased slightly since Charge of the Knights.

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## PERFORMANCE

5. Before any assessment of the Basra PRT's performance can be made, it is important to recognise the constraints under which the PRT operates. While many of these are addressed in the Themes and Recommendations section which follows, it is worth touching briefly on them here.

### Constraints

- PRTs operate in a **complex Coalition environment**, with multiple stakeholders and reporting lines. The Basra PRT's multinational composition further complicates reporting lines. (Annex 4 depicts the various stakeholders). Research undertaken by the US House of Representatives Armed Services Committee came to a similar conclusion:

*"there are multiple chains of command: through the military, the Office of Provincial Affairs, the embassies, and Washington-based country representatives of the departments and agencies. The PRTs thus lack clean lines of authority, and the coordination procedures between civilian and military personnel are disjointed and incoherent, which can have the unintended effect of making a PRT's operations personality-driven."* (Agency Stovepipes v Strategic Agility, April 2008, p20)

- There has always been a **mismatch of expectations** in Iraq of both what PRTs are for and what they can deliver in the circumstances. More broadly, there is no consensus on what the role and functions of PRTs should be, and they have often evolved differently to address local circumstances. Indeed, the name PRT is not helpful in this regard, implying that its primary function is reconstruction, when much of what PRTs actually do is aimed at building sustainable local capacity rather than physical infrastructure.
- Stabilisation best practice states that **building up local capacity** is the only way to achieve long term and sustainable progress, and indeed US-led PRTs are increasingly following Basra PRT's approach on this;
- **Capacity building is difficult to measure**, and therefore it is often difficult to point to the concrete achievements of the PRT. This is coupled with the often deliberate decision not to publicise HMG achievements for fear of reprisals;
- The **lack of an HMG wide strategy for Iraq**, despite recent efforts in Whitehall, has led to uncertainty in the UK's enduring commitment, with the result that the PRT has often been considered to be in its final phase of work. This has contributed to an overly short-termist approach being adopted by the PRT.
- The strict **duty of care arrangements** imposed on the Basra PRT – compared to its US-led counterparts – have constrained its ability to access and engage with Baswaris. The improved security situation since Charge of the Knights has led to increased frustration from military colleagues at the PRT's lack of freedom of manoeuvre.
- Basra's handover to **Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC)** in December 2007 means that the coalition no longer controls the political and military levers of power. Basra PRT therefore enjoys less authority than PRTs in provinces which have

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not PIC'd, and is obliged to let the Iraqi authorities lead at their own (slower) pace.

- The **centralised nature of the Iraqi state** means that many of the levers of progress for the provinces lie in Baghdad. This is compounded by the historically difficult nature of the Baghdad-Basra relationship, and the reluctance of some in the centre to see Basra progress.
- The PRT in Basra, Iraq's second city, has historically been **under-resourced** compared to other PRTs in Iraq, with around 30 staff for a population of 1m, compared to 70 in Kirkuk (population 750,000) for example.

## Objectives

6. As mentioned in the Background, the aims of all PRTs in Iraq were kept deliberately broad and flexible, centring around building local governance capacity, and promoting economic development, rule of law, and media capacity.

7. It was only in 2008 that PRTs across Iraq were mandated to establish a Joint Common Plan with their military partners. The strategic objectives for the Basra PRT are now set out in its Joint Common Plan published on the 17 July 2008. This document was prepared between the PRT and MND (SE) and sets out the joint efforts required to create "Civil Capacity Development". The plan acknowledges the primacy of the Iraqi civil administration and of the need to allow provincial and local government institutions to lead, and will be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

8. The strategic objectives are set out below and arranged under five headings relating to the PRT work-streams focusing on the economy, rule of law, governance, infrastructure and communications.

### **Economic Development**

Strategic objective: Regeneration of Basra's economy. To Provide Basra with a Basra Economic Development Strategy (BEDS) that will address the key issues that are constraining growth and investment, and support the delivery of the Provincial Development Strategy. In addition, support the establishment of specific institutions to facilitate the BEDS.

### **Rule of Law**

Strategic objective: To help Iraqis apply the principle that all persons and institutions, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to publicly promulgated laws that are equally enforced, independently adjudicated, and consistent.

### **Governance**

Strategic objective: To improve the life and economy of Basra through effective government spending, and by doing attract support for engagement in peaceful politics.

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### **Infrastructure**

Strategic objective: Improve the quality of basic services in Al Basrah through building capacity of the provincial administration to plan, deliver, maintain and operate essential services

### **Strategic Communications**

Strategic objective: The Basra Provincial Council needs to draw up a comprehensive strategic communications plan for Basra Province in order for the people of the province to have an understanding of what the Council has done and aims to do over the coming year to enhance PC accountability.

### **Achievements**

9. Although there are often difficulties in trying to apportion credit for progress, it is clear that the UK has made a positive contribution in southern Iraq since 2003 despite the challenges.

#### **Provincial Administration:**

10. One area where it is understood the greatest contribution has been made is in provincial administration. The Basra Provincial Council was elected in 2006. Whilst this was a major step forward, its officials had no experience of local government nor how to organise and deliver public services. They were unable to plan programmes or spend their budget effectively.

- Strategy development:- PRT support has yielded significant improvements in the way government institutions operate. PRT assistance has facilitated the creation of the Basra Provincial Development Strategy together with the implementation processes that accompany it. Investment budget execution has improved from \$23m in 2006 to \$205m in 2007. In 2008, the Council tendered contracts valuing \$160m within a week of receiving their budget of \$350m.
- Service delivery:- In addition, the Provincial Council has been able to plan, manage and deliver services such as the refurbishment of electricity stations and the Jameat market, the installation of new water pumps, and commissioned improvements to Basra University. The Council also initiated a number of health projects and took steps to address rubbish disposal in the City. The Basra PRT's focus on allowing the Iraqis to lead on planning, prioritising and owning projects is entirely in line with the PRT guiding principles developed at DfID's Building Provincial Iraq Ownership Workshop in December 2007, and this approach has facilitated the close working relationship with UNDP.

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## Economic development

11. The PRT responded well, although perhaps not as quickly as it might have, to the Prime Minister's announcement of new economic initiatives for Iraq in October 2007, leading on the creation of three new Iraqi institutions:

- The Basra Development Commission to provide advice on private sector investment and work with the National Investment Commission to attract international investment.
- The Basra Investment Promotion Agency to plan and promote the conditions for private sector development
- Basra Development Fund to provide small / medium businesses with loan.

12. Whilst a considerable amount of energy has been devoted by the PRT to these initiatives, they are not yet in a position to function effectively. The Basra Development Commission does not yet enjoy the total buy in of the Government of Iraq, being seen by many as a UK led institution for HMG, rather than Iraqi objectives. This may impede its ability to operate in the longer term once UK involvement draws down. Discussions are ongoing with the Government of Iraq regarding the appointment of board members to the Investment Promotion Agency, due to perceived or real conflicts of interest. It is not known when this matter will be settled. Questions have also arisen about the legal basis on which the Basra Development Fund would operate. Resolution may require approval by the Government of Iraq whose support in the short term is not guaranteed.

13. A small number of high value potential investors have been hosted by the BSO and PRT. It is encouraging to see this aspect of economic activity being pursued, although it was noted that at least one visit had been hosted by MND (SE) due to an apparent lack of PRT capacity.

14. In June 2008, the Basra Support Office was created in the Embassy in Baghdad to support progress on the Prime Minister's economic initiatives, to improve communication between the PRT and HMG Baghdad and to convey the positive impact of HMG in Basra to external partners. Several favourable comments were made in relation to the initial impact the staff have created, notably on investor visits and improving links in to SBMR-I's office. While not strictly part of the PRT, the BSO exists to provide the PRT's link into the centre, and as such its achievements will reflect at least indirectly on the performance of the PRT.

## Areas for development

15. The PRT has been criticised for being slow to respond to changing situations, such as the economic initiatives proposed in October 2007. This may be due to an Economic Team composed entirely of contractors who have their own reporting lines, who may adopt an overly purist approach to development, and who may not share the same sense of duty to HMG as civil servants. Had there been a full time PRT Head and effective management team of deputy heads, this may have been tackled better and sooner.

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16. The PRT has also been criticised for its lack of engagement with locals. While this is due to the duty of care regime imposed on the PRT, there is a perception among the military that this has hampered the PRT's ability to deliver tangible improvements to the lives of Baswaris and thereby win local consent. The recent breakdown in the PRT's relations with CMOC has also had a detrimental effect on harmonisation on short and long term projects which needs to be urgently addressed.

17. There is a widespread view that the PRT has not communicated its messages to MND (SE) and other stakeholders as well as it should have. This also applies to internal communications, where some PRT staff felt there was little understanding of the overall objectives of the PRT and of other workstream activities. Exploiting the potential of strategic communications to address external perceptions in the OPA, British Embassy and Whitehall must become a PRT priority. Such recognition would allow PRT management to set out robustly what the PRT can and cannot achieve with the time and resources available.

18. Considerable adverse comment was made about the PRT Head performing the job on a part time basis. Being double-hatted as the Deputy Consul General, as well as covering for the Consul General's absences, results in the Head only devoting 50% of their time to PRT business. Given the demands of managing PRT staff, relationships with MND (SE), OPA, the British Embassy as well as Iraqi counterparts, the role of PRT Head must be revisited urgently. This is addressed hereafter under Themes and Recommendations.

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## THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Strategic context

19. Since its creation in April 2006, the PRT has suffered from a lack of strategic direction from Whitehall. There is no HMG-wide strategy for Iraq, resulting in an absence of any strategic plans on which to construct a PRT plan. Although the Better Basra plans did go some way towards addressing this absence in 2006 and 2007, these evolved in an incremental bottom-up way, hampered by a lack of strategic guidance from Whitehall, and frequent changeover of personnel in theatre, and so eventually fell by the wayside during the course of 2007. This was coupled with continuing uncertainty over how long the UK military and civilian commitment in Iraq would endure, and a continuing assumption that the PRT would only run for a further 6-12 months. As a consequence, PRT planning took a short-term perspective, and was discouraged from initiating new or ambitious projects.

**6. Recommendation 1 –The PRT Head in conjunction with the Consul General should lead in developing a transition strategy for the PRT, working closely with the FCO Iraq Group and other Whitehall partners.**

This should be in line with evolving work on HMG's overall strategy in Iraq, and the Prime Minister's announcement of a fundamental change of mission in 2009. The aim of the transition strategy would be to facilitate the planning necessary for the change of mission, including the transition of some workstreams to other donors, setting out clear milestones and responsibilities. Depending on when the overall Iraq strategy is agreed, the PRT transition strategy may need to proceed at a faster pace.

### Leadership

20. Although there were valid reasons for double-hatting the PRT Head and Deputy Consul General posts in 2007, tying the PRT more closely into the Consulate, this arrangement has now become untenable.

21. Operation Charge of the Knights in March/April 2008 has increased pressure on the PRT to do more, partly because of raised expectations from an improving security situation, and partly because the US system is now focusing more on Basra. More Iraqis are willing to visit the PRT on the airbase, and there are greater pressures on the PRT to meet its Iraqi interlocutors off the airbase. All of this points to a PRT and PRT Head which could and should be busier. Forthcoming provincial elections, and a drawdown of the Consulate, will also put more pressure on the Deputy Consul General's time in coming months. The Consul General is also likely to be busier with the approaching elections, so the additional pressure of standing in for the Consul General for 2 weeks every 2 months is a further drain on the Deputy's time.

22. The double-hatted posting has also been problematic presentationally, with the US concluding that the UK does not attach sufficient importance to Basra PRT. Its close association with the Consulate has also led to criticism from the US – both from the Office of Provincial Affairs and personnel within the PRT – that Basra PRT was too concerned with delivering HMG goals as opposed to coalition goals. A separation

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of the posts would not address that perception entirely, but other structural changes tying in the US State department representative would help in this regard.

23. The Deputy Consul General and PRT Head need, to some extent, differing sets of skills, which would be rare to find in one person. While the former requires political and managerial skills, the latter requires stronger leadership abilities, strategic planning and programme management skills, and preferably experience of leading diverse teams in difficult environments.

**Recommendation 2 – A full-time PRT Head should be appointed.** This appointment should be implemented urgently as the new leader will need to make an impact early in order to maximise the potential of the PRT in what may be its last phase. The new leader should have the skills identified above, but credibility is more important than grade or department. The new leader will need Whitehall experience, and strong direction and support from Whitehall before and during their deployment. Stabilisation Unit may be able to help with some pre-deployment training to enhance an understanding of stabilisation good practice. While the other recommendations can largely be implemented at no cost, being offset by drawing down other workstreams, the appointment of a fulltime head would require an additional salary plus life support costs, totalling an estimated £500k/year.

#### Access to Baswaris

24. The principle criticism from UK military colleagues in Iraq has been about the PRT's ability to get into Basra and engage with Baswaris. While Charge of the Knights has allowed a limited increase in freedom of manoeuvre of civilian staff in Basra, and made some Baswaris more willing to visit the airport, there is still a sense of frustration that the PRT cannot move around as freely as the US-led PRTs are able to. This leads many in the military to conclude that the PRT are missing out on an important window of opportunity to make a difference in Basra, and a perception that the effort and risk in Iraq are not shared equally by military and civilian personnel.

25. There is no doubt that Basra PRT is constrained by stricter duty of care regulations than US-led PRTs. The Baghdad PRT for example is able to meet locals outside of the International Zone on a daily basis. While many members of the PRT are willing to get off the airport as much as possible, this entails a bureaucratic process - often necessitating approval from both FCO and DfID in London – as well as significant military assets. While the PRT would like to be able to operate independently from the military, this is still considered too risky in the absence certain items of counter-IED equipment.

26. An assessment by FCO's Security and Estates Directorate took place on 28 April - 1 May, about one month after Charge of the Knights commenced, but this was probably too soon to assess the longer term implications of the operation on the security situation, and consequently may have adopted an overly cautious approach pending a full assessment of the implications of Charge of the Knights. It is understood that a further review may not take place for a couple of months.

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**Recommendation 3 – FCO's Security and Estates Directorate should conduct a further review of the security situation and duty of care arrangements in Basra before the end of September.** The review should draw heavily on local security and military assessment of the security situation, and examine closely whether there is scope to allow more delegated authority to the local security manager. DFID's practice of requiring an additional approval process for movements of DFID staff should be reviewed by DFID, taking account of DFID practice for Afghanistan (where DFID cede authority to the FCO). US procedures may provide some useful practices. Consideration should also be given to providing the necessary kit to allow civilian moves without military assets

## Objectives

27. There has been a historic lack of clarity on the PRT's role and objectives, which is not unique to Basra PRT nor indeed the UK. The recent US House of Representatives Armed Services Committee review highlighted the fact that the PRT mission in both Iraq and Afghanistan was not clearly defined. This was illustrated by Ginger Cruz (Deputy Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction):

*"On the issue of civil-military integration, the problems that we are finding are that there is really no permanent, predictable method of integrating decision-making and resource-sharing. Instead, there is a patchwork quilt of memoranda of agreements and FRAGOs [fragmentary orders] and military orders and cables that, all together, sort of provide the policy underpinnings that are used by PRTs."*

HASC Oversight and Investigations Hearing, September 5, 2007  
(Agency Stovepipes v Strategic Agility, April 2008, p18)

28. Objectives were often kept deliberately vague, with the intention of allowing the PRT to better respond to local and evolving requirements. This lack of clarity of purpose has led to problems of external perceptions of what the PRT is for, as well as internal understanding by staff of how their work fits into the wider goals of the PRT. This lack of clarity was addressed to some extent by the Better Basra plans in 2006 and 2007, and to some extent by the recent creation of the Joint Common Plan (JCP) across Iraq, linking military and civilian objectives in each Multi National Division. Nevertheless, there is still a task ahead in linking the PRT's workplan to the JCP, and articulating the PRT's objectives to all its stakeholders.

29. Assuming that the PRT will exist in its current form, under UK leadership, for perhaps another 12 months, and taking into account the Prime Minister's statement of 22 July articulating military plans for a 'fundamental change in mission' in 2009 and HMG's remaining goals, there is a strong argument for refocusing the PRT's objectives to deliver those goals, with realistic end states. This would move the economic workstream firmly to the forefront of the PRT's objectives, which would also chime with US moves to bolster the economic team with two more posts.

30. Legacy work-streams, such as media capacity building and some rule of law workstrands, some of which have persisted as a result of a lack of strategic guidance, can be drawn down to accommodate this refocusing. In addition, there is an opportunity to handover some of the governance workstreams to UNDP who are

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already heavily engaged in Basra, for example with the Governor's Office. The PRI may also be enhanced by the possible addition of US resources, and the US have indicated that they will backfill the PRT as the UK draws down, ultimately taking over its leadership when appropriate.

31. While Quick Impact or Consent Winning projects are carried out by CMOC/J9 rather than by the PRT, these need to be coordinated with the PRT in order to ensure they 'do no harm' and fit in with the longer term sustainability goals. This has not happened since the arrival of the Civil Military Operations Centre (CMOC) in April 2009, largely due to personality conflicts, and needs to be urgently addressed if the potential of both organisations are to be maximised.

32. There has been criticism that the UK has not yet delivered any successful 'iconic' infrastructure projects for Basra. Whatever the shortfalls in the past, we are now probably beyond the point where we can initiate new projects, and better effect can probably be achieved by building up Iraqi capacity to prioritise and manage its infrastructural requirements.

33. In terms of UK funding, Rule of Law has been the PRT's largest workstream, but has been hampered by high levels of corruption in the police, and to a lesser extent in the judiciary. At this stage we should be taking an objective view of what we can achieve in the next 12 months, and drawing down those areas which are yielding the least returns. With the arrival of a 700 strong US PiTT presence, the Rule of Law team should be able to hand over many of its responsibilities.

**Recommendation 4 - The PRT's resources should be reconfigured to give priority to economic development. Consideration should be given to enhancing the economics team with a member of staff from another workstream to attract potential investors into Basra and make visit arrangements.** There appears to be scope for the PRT to provide greater assistance in attracting investors to Basra, and one additional person in the economic team could be offset by drawing down other work-streams (see below). The PRT head should implement this addition as soon as possible to assist with the expected influx of potential investors in coming months. The economic workstream may be further enhanced this year by US plans to provide additional resources on agricultural development and support for small and medium enterprises, thereby bringing Basra PRT more in line with other PRTs.

**Recommendation 5 - The BIA team should be embedded firmly in the PRT's structure.** BIA has suffered from a lack of clarity over responsibility, reporting lines and end state. The current set up whereby the BIA consultant(s) sit outside the PRI and report to the RAF is not optimal. Project delivery would be aided if the BIA team, both consultants and RAF, were anchored firmly in the PRT, and able to draw on other PRT resources. Stabilisation Unit can continue to assist with the recruitment of consultants.

34. As noted in the PCRU comparative review of PRIs in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2006: *"If not dove-tailed into a broader strategy, short-term consent-winning projects are likely either to have a limited impact or be out of line with longer-term development activities."*

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**Recommendation 6 - CMOC** should be used to complement the increased economic focus of the PRT through re-alignment of its consent winning/quick impact projects under the PRT and the Provincial Development Strategy. This is a return to the practice of aligning J9 projects under the PRT and PDS, which was discontinued when CMOC arrived following Charge of the Knights. Alignment would be assisted by CMOC coming under the PRT's control (see Recommendation 14).

**Recommendation 7 - Strategic communications must become central to the PRT.** This requires a full time adviser working wholly on PRT communications, if necessary replacing the two part time advisers who currently focus on building Iraqi media capacity. The previous focus on building Iraqi media capacity has yielded some beneficial returns, but at this stage the way the PRT communicates to its stakeholders is judged to be of greater importance, not least in protecting HMG's reputation. A full time dedicated adviser would provide better support and material for the PRT Head and deputy leaders to meet all the external communications and reporting requirements. Given the issues surrounding the current consultants, it is recommended that the full time adviser be a civil servant or failing that an independent consultant contracted directly to the PRT. DFID or the Stabilisation Unit could assist in recruitment if required, which could be funded by the replacement of the 2 part-time advisers.

**Recommendation 8 - The PRT should begin to plan and manage the transition of its governance workstreams to UNDP and others.** Basra PRT is unique in that the UNDP representative sits within and coordinates closely with the PRT, particularly the governance workstream. UNDP is already engaged with capacity building projects in the Governor's office, and there are already plans to hand over some of the PRT's governance work to UNDP. This should be encouraged and accelerated, and opportunities to handover projects to other donors such as USAID, and where feasible the Iraqi authorities, should also be considered.

**Recommendation 9 - The Infrastructure workstream should continue its current focus of building up Iraqi capacity for infrastructure projects, rather than taking on new projects.** Any spare capacity in the infrastructure team could be transferred to complement the CMOC.

**Recommendation 10 - The Rule of Law workstream should refocus resources from IPS/ Internal Affairs to Judicial and Forensics capability.** Support could also be provided on a limited basis to assist transition to the 700-strong US PiTTs arriving in Basra. FCO Iraq Group is currently drafting the Rule of Law strategy, and they should be encouraged to ensure that our limited assets are focused on those areas where we can have greatest effect.

**Recommendation 11 - To assist internal understanding of the PRT's refocusing, the new PRT Head should arrange a session with the whole team to ensure clarity of vision and objectives for the next 12 months.** This may take the form of an awayday, perhaps with external facilitation, at which the whole PRT discuss and agree a vision and achievable objectives. The PRT Head would then need to ensure that these were articulated appropriately to all external stakeholders.

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### Structure

35. The current PRT structure is depicted in Annex 3. It shows the PRT comprising:-

- Head - FCO member who doubles as Deputy Consul General
- D/Head - US State Department Officer
- USAID and DFID advisers who sit outside the management structure
- UK Major
- Other members are divided across five functional areas: Infrastructure, Economics, Rule of Law, Governance and Strategic Communications.

36. Regardless of their individual leadership qualities, the ability of a part time PRT Head to maintain a firm grip across the work streams is constrained by the time available. The case for having a PRT Head with no other responsibilities has been made in the Leadership section of the report. There is a further case to be made for strengthening the management structure given the demands upon the PRT and the increased expectation in Whitehall regarding delivery. The following recommendations if implemented could send a strong message of HMG intent to maximise the potential of the organisation and to create greater clarity on roles / responsibilities of staff.

**Recommendation 12 - The PRT management should consist of a dedicated Head supported by two deputies. The US State Department officer and the Head of DFID Basra should fill the deputy posts.** One possible configuration would be for the US Foreign Service Officer to have responsibility for personnel/internal communications and the DFID representative for programme delivery. This could potentially draw on the existing post-holders' strengths, tie them both more firmly into the management structure, and take some of the pressure off the PRT Head. Both deputies need to have clearly defined job specifications clarifying responsibilities and authority. There may also be a case for appointing the USAID representative as a third deputy, to tie them more firmly into the PRT management and workstreams.

37. Many words were used to describe the relationship between the PRT and Civil Military Operations Centre (CMOC) - none were complimentary. It appears that differing personalities coupled with the tension between short term consent winning activity and longer-term capacity building have both contributed to this situation. Regardless of causation, such a dynamic cannot be allowed to continue and staff in both organisations should be aware of the standards expected of them in developing multi agency operations. This requires attention by both the PRT and CMOC leadership. Additionally there could be benefits from a greater alignment of the CMOC and the PRT.

**Recommendation 13 - To assist cohesion, CMOC should come under the control of the PRT Head.** This would enable CMOC to focus on QIPs which complement rather than conflict with the PRT strategy, and would leverage CMOC's ability to get out on the ground for strategic communications benefits. Although CMOC is a US commanded asset, it should be possible to achieve greater coherence than currently is being achieved.

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38. It is noticeable that there is no administrative support mentioned anywhere in the PRT structure although this did exist when the organisation was created. The absence of such support may partly explain why there are no structured meetings held with agendas and minutes held.

**Recommendation 14 - A chief clerk should be re-instated to assist the internal administration of the PRT.** There may be a number of solutions for filling this post, but the GOC has already offered military personnel for the PRT, which would have the additional benefits of improving Civil-Military coordination, and not taking up limited FCO accommodation. An NCO from MND (SE) would therefore be the preferred option.

39. The PRT has one UK military officer who is a major. At this rank, the officer should have a more directed and defined role in contributing to the relationship between the PRT and MND (SE), but instead presently plays a more administrative role.

**Recommendation 15 - The SO2/Major in the PRT should have a defined military liaison role, improving civil-military coordination and understanding, providing military advice, helping with messaging etc.** Appointment of the chief clerk would free up the SO2 to perform this function properly.

40. One major obstacle to the efforts of HMG in general is the speedy rotation of personnel through both MND (SE) and the PRT. This means that the implementation of liaison and co-ordination mechanisms need constant momentum to prevent them disappearing as personnel hand over. Previously the Southern Iraq Steering Group played a coordinating role between the PRT and MND (SE), which although not optimal did go some way towards building relationships and coordinating activity. It is clear that the effective delivery of HMG policy in Iraq cannot be predicated solely on the confluence of agreeable personalities, but that appropriate arrangements are in place that will facilitate the maximum coherence and understanding of UK effort possible. The recently established Joint Common Plan Coordinating Group represents an excellent opportunity to address this problem.

**Recommendation 16 - The Joint Common Plan Co-ordinating Group should be given a formal mandate.** This could be along the lines of the Southern Iraq Steering Group which preceded it, but with clearer TORs, including membership, roles and responsibilities, secretariat, purpose etc. The Joint Common Plan Co-ordinating Group has only met once to date, and is planned to meet fortnightly. Consideration for more regular meetings should be considered under the chairmanship of the PRT Head.

## Communications

41. The subject of communications was identified at an early stage in the Review as being an area where quick action by the PRT management would produce visible results and start to foster a more positive image of the good work being undertaken. This is especially important given the multiplicity of organisations with an interest in what the PRT is trying to achieve.

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42. Managed well, better communications also contribute to a more cohesive workforce that is aware of the challenges facing the PRT and what can be done internally to address them. There are a number of reasons why this aspect of the PRT regime is at its current state. Looking outwards, strategic communications has not been identified as a top priority by the PRT Head. The two part time consultants are focused on building Iraqi capacity with much less emphasis on projecting HMG messages. Internally, having a part time PRT Head plus a Deputy Head with unclear responsibilities has resulted in insufficient management time being devoted to this area.

**Recommendation 17 - Communication needs to be recognised as core business by the PRT and its leadership, resourced appropriately, and reflected in job specifications to ensure delivery.** The PRT Head has a key leadership role in projecting the value of the organisation and being engaged with stakeholders to take account of feedback. This links to recommendation 7 and the appointment of a full time strategic communications adviser.

**Recommendation 18 - Regular internal meetings should be held, with agendas and minutes produced, and opportunities to update the entire team on work-stream developments, risks etc.** The re-appointment of a Chief Clerk (see Recommendation 14) would provide the administrative back up to support the PRT Head in implementing this recommendation.

**Recommendation 19 - The PRT Head should actively consult stakeholders on their requirements, recognising that current weekly reports do not meet all customers' requirements.** It is recognised that preparation of reports for different audiences will take time. However, this is a vital task and one where the Basra PRT is believed to be underselling itself compared to other PRTs. The appointment of a full time PRT Head would provide additional capacity for this function. This might include the production of a report for Whitehall every 2 months highlighting the PRT's achievements, looking ahead to the next 2 months, and assessing progress and trends.

43. The diverse composition and reporting lines within the PRT have already been described elsewhere in the report. During the course of the review, it became apparent that the internal dynamics of the PRT have created a working environment that is less than conducive to optimising staff potential. This needs to be gripped firmly by management so that the PRT can be best placed to deliver on the Prime Minister's most recent objectives.

44. One consequence of having a multiplicity of components in the PRT is the numerous reporting lines. Due to the PRT framework as it currently exists throughout Iraq and Afghanistan, it is difficult to see how these could be simplified. The need to improve international co-ordination has however been recognised before. The ISAF PRT Review in Afghanistan (July 2008 p21) commented that:-

*It is widely accepted that a key priority to enhance coherence and coordination of international assistance is the establishment of a common operating picture, i.e. a centrally based database providing information on development activities around Afghanistan.*

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45. The review went onto describe the confusing nature of the data collected:-

*"This is one of a dozen databases in use or being developed to capture and process data for various institutions, donor agencies and ISAF/NATO. Software programming is both costly and time consuming; and multiple systems are both wasteful and opaque."*

**Recommendation 20 - Consideration should be given to utilising external facilitation to address some of the internal communication problems in the team as soon as possible.** The Stabilisation Unit could be a source of facilitation support if required.

46. The Basra Support Office (BSO) was created in June 2008 in Baghdad to:-
1. Support progress on the Prime Minister's economic initiatives,
  2. Improve communication between the PRT and HMG Baghdad
  3. Effectively communicate the positive impact of HMG in Basra to external partners

**Recommendation 21 - The Basra Support Office in Baghdad is a vital asset in improving PRT communications to stakeholders in Baghdad, and should continue to be exploited as such.** Initial feedback indicates that the BSO has made a good start in its work. PRT management should utilise its services to the full, beyond just as a communications tool.

## Personnel management

47. During the review, significant evidence was gathered that suggested personnel management could be improved within the PRT, with many examples of unclear roles, responsibilities and reporting lines. Having effective management in place is a vital element of delivering HMG policy, but especially so under the adverse conditions prevailing on Basra airbase. Success to the degree that it is attainable in Basra will only be achieved through a combination of factors such as having people at all levels with the right knowledge, skills and understanding of the task in hand. The following recommendations are aimed at addressing concerns and providing better communication between PRT management and staff.

48. As has been learned in other theatres, professional competence is not enough. Staff must be capable of both working under pressure and having a well-honed sense of how they impact on others around them. Numerous examples were quoted of two staff members consistently falling below this standard.

49. Leading the Basra PRT is one of the most challenging and high profile appointments anyone could seek within the Civil Service. It is recommended that pre-deployment preparation be amended to reflect the full range of challenges leaders encounter in a stabilisation environment where counter insurgency operations are being conducted

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**Recommendation 22 - The PRT Head should receive appropriate pre-deployment briefings and guidance on delivering HMG strategy in the complex environment of southern Iraq.** The Stabilisation Unit may be able to assist with this process and incorporate lessons from the Helmand PRT. Preparation should include an understanding of the Coalition structure that exists and how this must be managed to achieve best effect.

50. The PRT is a mechanism for delivering HMG effect in Basra. The provision of regular and formal feedback to the PRT Head on how progress is viewed from London could be improved. At present both the Iraq Group, FCO and Middle East, North Africa Department of DFID have a direct interest in the PRT. The FCO have responsibility for the overall direction of the PRT and for appointing the Head. DFID has a number of interests that include managing the Technical Support to Iraq contract under which consultants delivering specialist expertise are provided as well as advising on economic and development initiatives in general. It was generally agreed that the FCO / DFID relationship in London was sound. Initiating monthly telephone conferences between FCO Iraq Group, DFID Menad, PRT Head and Head of DFID Basra could play a useful part in improving communications between these parties.

**Recommendation 23 - The Consul General should ensure the PRT Head is given customer / stakeholder feedback on a regular basis.**

**Recommendation 24 - Exit interviews should be conducted for all PRT staff, and feed into a lessons learned process.** This information would contribute to the pre-deployment preparation of new staff. Stabilisation Unit could provide support on lessons learning processes.

**Recommendation 25 - Regular appraisals should be conducted with all PRT staff.** This would improve both overall performance and enhance the role of line managers. All staff members should have clear personal objectives contributing to team workplans.

### **Coffey**

51. One unique feature of the PRT in Basra is the extensive role played by an international consultancy firm. Not only do the consultants have an impact on the ethos of the PRT through numerical strength (ten people from the PRT complement of thirty staff) but also the situation is exacerbated by them being under contract to one company (Coffey) and reporting to a team leader from that company.

52. Although a single contract was used for perfectly sound and laudable management reasons, it has created an unusual dynamic in the team to which HMG should give careful consideration before replicating elsewhere. A perception exists among some of the PRT's external stakeholders that it is staffed only by consultants who have no sense of allegiance to HMG values or priorities. This perception was reinforced by the comments of some of those consultants during the review. It is also clear that having a 'team within a team' has not helped deal effectively with at least two consultants whose interpersonal skills and attitudes were the subject of much criticism. Where consultants are deployed in teams, robust management procedures

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should be in place to ensure that they are seen to be under the direction of HMG. This could be facilitated if reporting lines were clearer from the Basra Coffey team leader up through the PRT management team, rather than back to Coffey UK.

**Recommendation 26 – Notwithstanding the advantages arising from using teams of consultants to deliver programmes, HMG should consider carefully the implications and risks of doing so in high profile positions within PRTs.** This is especially pertinent where the reputation of the UK is at stake, where extensive relationship-building with other parties such as UK military and the US government is required, and where it might be expected that PRT staff should be proactively seeking to further HMG goals. Consideration might therefore be given to filling some of the Basra PRT posts with civil servants rather than consultants for the remainder of its time.

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## **ANNEX 1 – REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Background**

PRTs in Iraq are based on a model that originated in Afghanistan. The aim of the Iraq PRT network is to help provincial governments with developing a transparent and sustained capability to govern; promoting increased security and rule of law; promoting political and economic development; providing provincial administration necessary to meet the basic needs of the population.

All 18 Provinces in Iraq are served by a total of 25 PRTs. 10 PRTs are “embedded” (ePRTs) into the chain of command of US Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) or Regiments (US Marines) to support the military surge in Anbar Province and the Greater Baghdad area.

The US Embassy Office of Provincial Affairs (OPA) provides overall guidance, coordination and support to the PRTs and ePRTs.

### **PRT Funding**

Funding for the PRTs comes primarily from US sources including the Economic Support Fund, the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund, the Commander’s Emergency Response Programme, and coalition partners (e.g. UK Stabilisation Aid Fund).

Almost all of the Basra PRT technical team is currently funded by DFID through its Technical Support to Iraq (TSI) programme. TSI builds on work undertaken as part of the Governorates Capacity Building Programme which was put in place prior to the introduction of PRTs into Iraq. Project funding comes from a combination of DFID Governorates Development Fund (GDF), Stabilisation Aid Fund (SAF) and US Economic Support Fund and Quick Reaction Fund.

### **Basra PRT**

The Basra PRT was established in 2006. Its principle objective is:

- to build the capacity of the institutions of government in Basra to deliver for the people of Basra

It also aims to put the economic enablers in place to allow private sector growth, and to improve the ability of the legal establishment and the media to act as checks on the Government and illegal groups.

Following the UK Prime Minister’s statement of 8 October 2007, the team was rapidly reconfigured and refocused on supporting the economic initiatives announced by the Prime Minister, in particular the Basra Development Commission.

The UK Deputy Consul-General also acts as Basra Team Leader with a US Foreign Service Officer as Deputy. The team includes representatives from DFID, the UK military and an officer from the US Army Corps of Engineers. The PRT’s international staff are mostly specialists contracted by DFID. Local staff come predominantly from the US Embassy contract with All Native Systems Team

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numbers fluctuate as different experts are pulled in at different times, but the core team comprises about 20 international staff and seven Iraqis.

## Context

Following the success of the Iraqi-led Operation Charge of the Knights (COTK), Basra has enjoyed much improved security since April this year. The reconstruction effort announced by the GoI in the wake of COTK has lagged, however. The central government has sought to bypass the provincial authorities with the appointment of Safa-al-Safi as Basra coordinator in charge of a \$100 million fund for reconstruction in Basra. Disbursement of funds has, however, been slow. As the security situation has improved, frustration with lack of services, economic opportunity and jobs has become the primary concern for Basrawis. Lack of progress risks making Basra more susceptible to a militia resurgence.

There is general recognition of both the opportunity and the need for urgent progress on reconstruction and development. This does not extend, however, to agreement on the means of delivery. There are differences between central and local government, between Iraqis and the coalition, and within the coalition, on who should do what, and where the money should come from. In this climate, it is necessary to review the PRT's contribution to Iraqi and coalition reconstruction activity in Basra, and to revisit the assumptions which have underpinned its current objectives and activities.

HMG's civilian presence in Basra is dependent upon the security provided by the military – without which our work in Basra would no longer be feasible on the same scale. No announcements have yet been made on troop levels in Basra, but it is recognised that HMG has a time limited presence there. The review will allow a focused look at changes required for the PRT to best deliver upon objectives within an agreed set of timescales. The review should be carried out on the assumption that the level of resources committed to the PRT is not going to increase significantly, and thus it should usefully entail recommendations on prioritisation of objectives.

## Purpose of Review

The primary purpose of the review is:

- i) To assess whether the PRT's objectives are valid in the light of developments in Basra since March;
- ii) To evaluate the PRT's performance in delivering its objectives

The review should include an assessment and recommendations on:

- the PRT's performance against current aims and objective;
- changes to current objectives and differing priorities between work strands
- the appropriateness of the PRT's structure and available resources (staff, financial, any other) to its current tasks and/or to any additional tasks recommended by the Review
- the PRT's communications and stakeholder engagement activities

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### Scope of Review

The Review will be led by Stabilisation Unit with appropriate support from Iraq Group, FCO. The Review Team will comprise of two members. In addition to necessary consultations in London the Review Team will undergo an in-country visit of five days in duration in order to conduct interviews in Baghdad and Basra including with (but not limited to):

- Fiona Gibb, FCO (Team Leader)
- , US State Dept (Deputy Team Leader)
- Marcus Hayakawa, MND(SE) (British military PRT liaison officer)
- Kathleen Richmond, DFID
- Nigel Haywood, CG Basra
- GOC/COS
- HMA, Baghdad
- US Embassy, Baghdad
- PRT Baghdad (for comparison purposes)
- SBMR-I (or his office)
- Munathil Al Miyahi, Head of Basra Provincial Council's Economic Cttee
- GBCP / TSI core staff, including John Moss and Peter Muir

### Outputs

The Review Team will produce a draft report (maximum 25 pages, to include an executive summary, and an annex listing the people and documents consulted) containing an overall evaluation of the Basra PRT in accordance with the stated purpose of the review above and a series of recommendations. A draft report will be produced, and an update and stocktaking meeting will be held by 8 August. Following receipt of comments and observations on the draft report, the Review Team will submit the final report jointly to Frank Baker, Head Iraq Group, Donal Brown, Dpty Director, Iraq MENAD, DFID, and Jeff Garrett, Director of Joint Commitment (Policy), MOD by 15 August.

Iraq Group

22 July 2008

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ANNEX 2 - LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Baghdad

Christopher Prentice, HMA, British Embassy, Baghdad  
Lt Gen John Cooper, Deputy Commanding General, MNF-I  
John Tucknott, DIIM British Embassy, Baghdad  
Kate Knight-Sands, Political/Military/Economic Counsellor  
Richard Hogg, Head of DFID Iraq (+ acting Head, Basra Support Office BSO)  
Cdr Ian Stidston, SO1 Planning and Assessments, Office of Provincial Affairs  
Cdr Karen McTear, Staff Officer - Economic, Lt Gen Cooper's office  
Michael Gillimore, Head ASI / Technical Support, Iraq Team  
Mustapha El Hamzaoui, A/Director USAID's PRT Office  
John Bass and team, Baghdad PRT  
1st Sec Economic/Energy, British Embassy  
Nick Kunesh, Task Force Business and Security Operations

Basra

Maj Gen Barney White-Spunner, GOC MND (SE)  
Nigel Haywood, Consul General, Basra  
Fionna Gibb, PRT Head / Deputy Consul General, Basra  
Phyllis Powers, Head of the Office of Provincial Affairs  
Col Justin Maciejewski, COS, MND (SE)  
Kathleen Richmond, DFID Basra  
Managing Director, Coffey UK  
Mark Bocchetti, US State, D/ Head PRT  
Rave Aulakh, USAID representative, PRT  
Maj Catherine Jardine, SO2 PRT  
Dan Jarman, Projects Manager, PRT Economics Team,  
Youth Unemployment, PRT Economics Team,  
Mary Beth Thiesen, Basra Development Fund, PRT Economics Team,  
Trevor Killen, Basra Investment Promotion Agency, PRT Economics Team,  
Rule of Law adviser, PRT  
Police Adviser, PRT  
1st Sec Political, Basra  
UNDP  
Lt Col Damien Gartland, D/Head CMOC / J9  
OSM, Basra PRT  
William Reeve, Strategic Communications, PRT  
PRT Economics Team  
Governance Support Group, PRT  
Wg Cdr Steve Beanlands, 903 EAW RAF  
US Gulf Region South, PRT

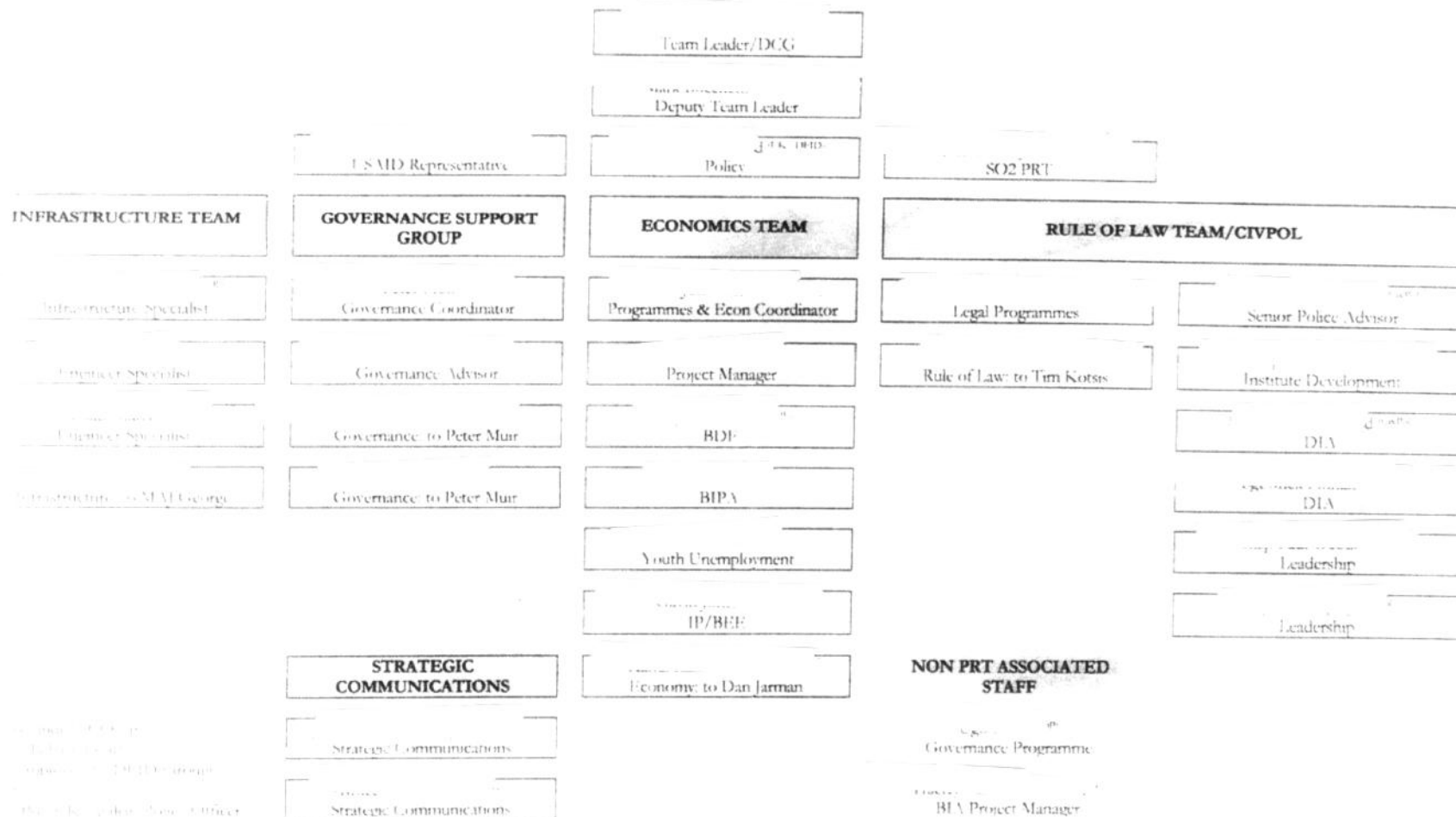
London

Mark Etherington, former PRT Head  
Tim Andrews, Adam Powell and Simon Ancona, MOD  
Donal Brown, DFID  
Frank Baker, Giles Lever, ECO  
Rob Tinline, former PRT Head, ECO  
Ian Wallace, MOD  
Jim Donegan, US State Department, London  
DFID  
Cabinet Office

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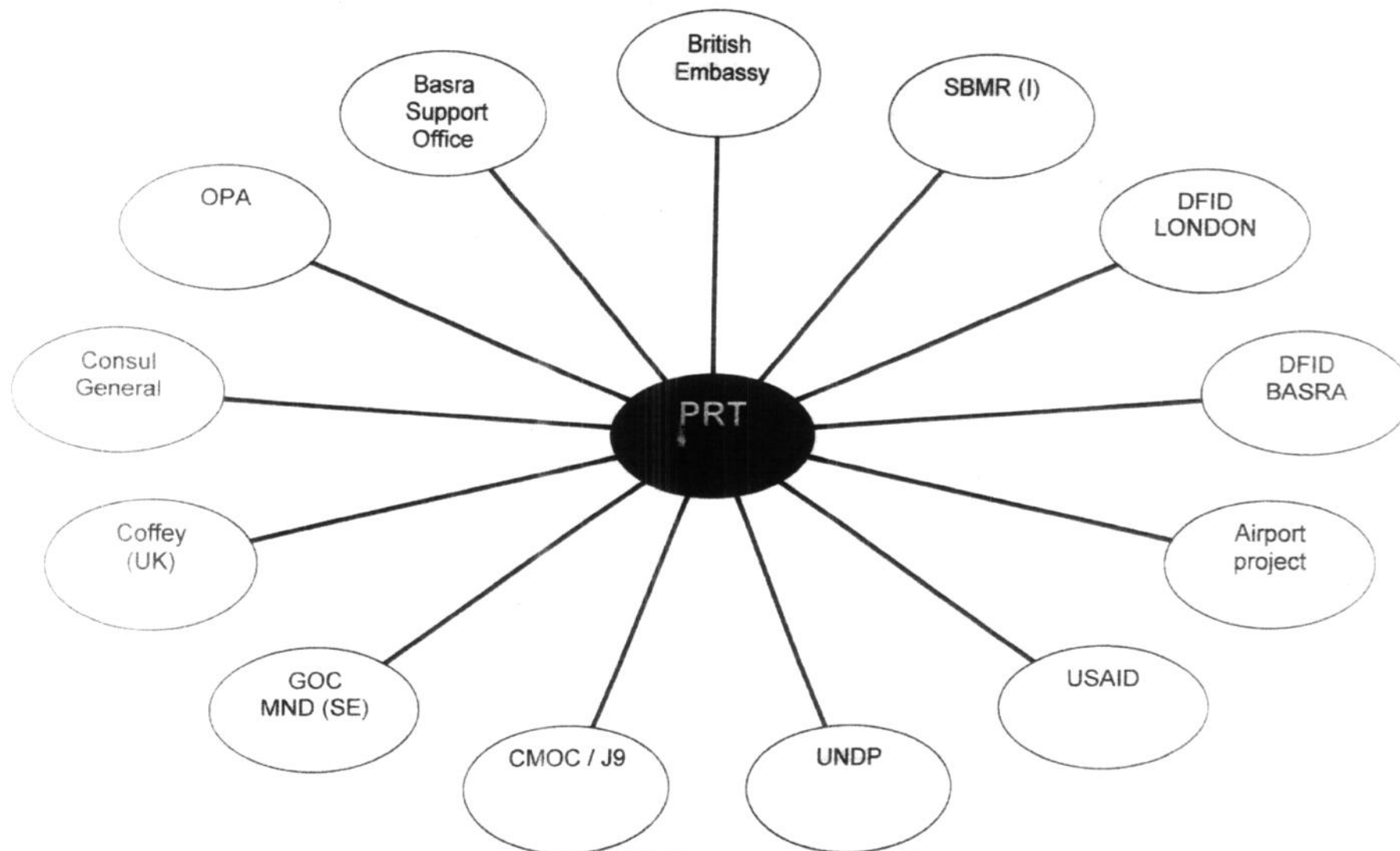
# ANNEX 3 – CURRENT PRT COMPOSITION



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#### ANNEX 4 - PRT STAKEHOLDERS



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