

ANNEX F – CONFLICT ASSESSMENT/RAPID RESPONSE MECHANISM

Current Situation

Iraq remains central to the global war on terrorism. Former regime elements, foreign fighters and Islamic extremists continue to conduct terrorist attacks with devastating effect upon Iraqi civilians. Numerous attacks are perpetrated against Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces. Moreover, these attacks significantly damage the country's infrastructure and cause a tide of adverse economic and social effects that ripple across Iraq.

This attachment explores the nature of the conflict in Iraq, the elements comprising the current insurgent conflict, lessons learned in recent USAID efforts to mitigate conflict through its Transition Initiative Programs and proposed USAID roles and mechanisms to support the defeat of the insurgency.

USAID has developed a framework to assess conflict vulnerability, and programming to support the military with post combat reconstruction operations, and design more conflict-sensitive programs across the many common sectors in which the Military and USAID operate. Working in close collaboration with the Military, other USG agencies and USAID's implementing partners USAID will readily identify and address the sources and consequences of conflict in Iraq via its Conflict Mitigation Strategy.

The insurgency's violence is generally directed at the Multi-National Forces and the Iraqi government. However, because the tactics of the insurgency include creating chaos in Iraq society as a whole, and fomenting civil war, many other forms of conflict are present at the same time. Efforts at conflict mitigation may be more effective if the organization of the violence and motivation for that violence are generally understood. The Iraq conflict includes internecine violence, attacks against the Iraq government and combat with the MNF-I forces and Coalition partners (both civil and military).

Specific Elements in the Iraqi Conflict

Internecine

Internecine conflict may be defined as violence by Iraqis on Iraqis. This type of violence has a number of forms and includes religious/sectarian, ethnic, tribal, criminal, and politically based conflict.

Religious/Sectarian

Religious/Sectarian violence occurs between the main religious groupings. The most significant clashes exist between Shi'a and Sunni sects. The root of this conflict reaches back to the seventh century. These old sectarian differences have been exploited by Sunni nationalists and Sunni religious extremists (Wahabbi or Salafi influenced) to try and incite civil war. Most of the dramatic violence has been Sunni on Shi'a, as evidenced by the bombings in Karbala' and Najaf in 2004, and the recent spate of kidnappings and murders that have transpired over the past 8 months. However, retaliation and revenge killings are perpetrated by Shi'a as well.

There has been more limited sectarian violence, such as church bombings and the kidnapping of Christian clerics. The main Assyrian and Chaldean Christian groups have been targeted, often because they are viewed as supporters of the Coalition forces. Additionally, there are long term oppressive tendencies directed at smaller syncretic sects found in Iraq, such as the Yazidis of northern Iraq.

Another dimension in the religious/sectarian based conflict exists between those Iraqis who are more secular in nature and religious fundamentalists and extremists. Recently in southern Shi'a regions, social liberties have been curtailed dramatically by roving bands of self-appointed religious/moral police, not unlike the cutaway of Saudi Arabia. These groups enforce their version of "appropriate" interpersonal behavior between men and women, proscriptions against alcohol, or dress codes. Religious extremist aggression against the more secular elements of society is inflicted by Sunni groups as well. Salient examples of the religious culture conflict are evidence by recent attacks, murders and beatings of barbers providing "western style" haircuts or removal of facial hair as well as the bombing of restaurants, liquor stores, and night clubs.

Ethnic

As a multiethnic country, Iraq has experienced periods of harmony, mixed with outbreaks of ethnically based fighting. In recent history, ethnic tensions between Arab and Kurd have dominated the political landscape, having been exacerbated by the "Arabization" policies of previous regimes and the massive Anfal campaigns of 1988. Ethnic tension in Iraq is largely between the Kurds and Arabs in the northern region of the country with potential flashpoints in the communities in and around Kirkuk, Mosul, Tuz Khormatu and Tel 'Afar. While Kurds and Arabs are the largest groups, the Turkmen and Assyrian groups are often at odds with both Arabs and Kurds.

Ethnic animosity most often revolves around disputes over property/territory, resources, and the sharing of political power. On a more human level, the Kurds feel they are considered unsophisticated, second class citizens by the Arab majority and that they have been systematically excluded from power and having a voice in Iraqi society.

Deep seated anger lingers over a series of assaults linked to long term campaigns to change the demographic ethnic balance in the oil producing regions of Northern Iraq. Starting in the early 1970's, hundreds of thousands of Arabs were enticed or forcibly compelled to move into the predominantly Kurdish areas near Kirkuk. These Arabs were seen as "beneficiaries" of the campaigns and allocated property and or housing belonging to Kurdish families. The Arabization campaigns were accompanied by the redrawing of administrative borders to exclude Kurdish provinces from control/ownership of oil and other resources. The change to the Salah id-Din province to include the Kurdish and Turkmen areas around Tuz Khormatu, and the annexation of Makhmur districts by Ninewa from Erbil are examples.

The most significant ethnic insult, very near to the hearts and minds of the Kurds, surround the massive Anfal campaigns of 1988 in which most of the Kurdish rural communities, in areas accessible to mechanized Iraqi forces were depopulated with housing and infrastructure destroyed.

Tribal

Iraq is also divided along tribal lines. Tribes are long standing political and kinship groups tracing back to antiquity. They are tied to territory and have their own structures and rules. Tribes exist in both the Kurdish and Arab regions. In the current situation of weak governmental control, coupled with the large presence of active MNF-I campaigns, tribal based conflict may be seen as part of the insurgency, particularly among the Sunni tribes in western Iraq. However, in the chaos surrounding military action, conflict that is often tribal in nature may be grafted, so to speak, onto the face of general insurgency.

Tribal conflict is generally linked to achieving redress for some injury against person or property. Key to the nature of tribal conflict is the sense of honor (sharf) and shame ('ayb). When a tribesman's (qabili's) property or person, including reputation, is injured, it is incumbent on the recipient of the slight to reestablish honor. Because honor also resides in the extended family group, the natural sets of allies are fellow members of the tribe. It is common for a problem between individuals to expand and start a feud between tribal segments or between separate tribes. Once the level of conflict has risen to this level, revenge may be taken on any member of the tribal group, regardless of an individuals' involvement in the original injury. Escalation and extension of violence is common. Tribal ethics of revenge are often called into play to redress injury from coalition or Iraq military forces. It is increasingly common for tribesmen to "turn in" to the authorities enemies as insurgents – this as a form of tribal revenge.

Political

While the whole of the insurgency and conflict between religious, tribal and ethnic groups have a political dimension, there is also the potential for conflict between bona fide political entities. The war between Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Mustafa Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (PDK) in the mid 1990's is a recent reminder of political party ability to become units in an armed conflict. As political parties regain importance in the emerging democracy, there is an increased risk they may devolve into conflict groups.

Criminal

In the social breakdown that has accompanied the defeat of Saddam Hussein's regime; criminal elements within Iraqi society have had almost free reign. Crime runs very high. The murder and robbery of truck drivers on the main supply routes, kidnapping and ransom demands for Iraqi citizens deemed wealthy enough to afford some kind of payment, armed robberies and burglaries are all extremely common. The violent nature of these criminal acts allows the crimes to blend in with the general disorder created by the insurgency.

In the absence of state control and an effective police force capable of ensuring public safety, criminal elements flourish. In Iraq criminals are largely opportunistic, and have aligned themselves with most of the combating groups and factions to further their aims. Baghdad is reportedly divided into zones controlled by organized criminal groups/clans.

Militant

The insurgency per se, is more directed against the new Iraq Government, the multi-national forces, and the civil groups that have entered Iraq post conflict to participate in peace-building and reconstruction. Again, it is a complex conflict and a mixture of political and religious, sectarian forces.

Former Regime Loyalists/Elements

Former regime loyalists are generally regarded as members of the Baa'th party who derived power, wealth and social importance from links to the Saddam Hussein regime. Although the Baa'th party derived approximately half of its members from the Shi'a Arabs, the real power and benefit accrued to Sunni tribesmen most closely aligned with Saddam Hussein and his tribal group. These people hailed from the so-called Sunni triangle.

Sunni Nationalists

While the Baa'th party and Saddam Hussein controlled the centers of power, there was also a holdover effect from earlier British Occupation policies whereby the Sunni population was left feeling they were the rightful "class" to rule Iraq. The British empowered the Sunnis and they became a ruling minority. While power rested in general with the Sunni, not all Sunni tribes prospered under Saddam Hussein.

Religious Extremists

While there is a tendency to ascribe much of the religious based combatants in the insurgency to foreign fighters, it is important to note that there are organized groups composed of Iraqi nationals that are religiously motivated insurgents. A prime example is Ansar al Sunna, a group of Kurdish religious extremists that carried out simultaneous bombings against the both the PUK and PDK party headquarters in Erbil in early 2004. Formerly based in the mountainous regions along the Iranian border, Ansar al-Sunna may continue to draw on some Iranian patronage, but it appears to be an example of militant Kurdish Iraqis becoming more active in the insurgency.

External fighters and organizations such as al-Qa'ida, and the Iraqi offshoot lead by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi are gaining in number and notoriety as significant actors. Recruitment into the ranks of these organizations takes place throughout the Sunni Muslim world, with most suicide bombers coming from Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region. These are predominately Sunni extremists, drawing on Salafi fundamentalism and unique Quranic exegesis that justifies violence against MNF-I and Iraqi Government forces, and also against civilians, aid workers, and any members of the general population seemingly in opposition to their vision of a Sunni Islamic state in Iraq. These interpretations allow for the murder of innocent individuals as the unintended but necessary victims of a holy war and have led to the destruction of a number of civilian targets: restaurants, markets, and municipal facilities and other institutions. To achieve their goals these groups seek to escalate the violence in Iraq to a level where all out civil war prevails. To meet this end, an increased focus is placed on the murder of Shi'a citizens.

Motivations for Participating in the Conflict

To round out the brief synopsis of the internecine conflict in Iraq the motivations for participating in conflict and violence include

1. Retribution for tribal/family grievances (grafting blood feud onto the insurgency)
2. Nationalism and opposition to perceived occupation
3. Religious duty or Jihad
4. Revenge for a family death or other form of injury caused by Iraqi or Coalition forces
5. Economic turmoil, greed, benefit from chaos or seeking retaliation for economic loss

Looking at the other dimensions in the Iraq conflict, such as internecine conflict and violence directed at Iraq's Government, conflict under these circumstances may be amenable to mitigation with conventional USAID programming interventions. The factors in the Iraq conflict that may be improved are linked to social and economic conditions:

1. Restoration of livelihoods and the reduction of suffering
2. Restoration of essential services
3. Establishment of conditions of fairness and respect among different religious and ethnic groups
4. Political power-sharing

Options for Conflict Mitigation

In Iraq, the conflict matrix is complex. In the situation of a low intensity civil war, USAID conflict mitigation inputs may only operate at the margins of development and provision of assistance. USAID contributions to peace building in Iraq will differ depending on the component of the conflict to be addressed at any one time. As far as foreign fighters and the Islamic extremist are concerned, there is little in the way of conflict mitigation that can be offered through USAID. This is largely a military and police matter. USAID can offer a supportive role to the efforts of the military. Examples of successful past USAID programming following Military activities include the post battle reconstruction efforts undertaken in Najaf, August 2004, and Fallujah, November 2004.

The main areas where USAID could be most effective at conflict mitigation include:

- Reduce economic hardships, i.e., restore livelihoods, provide essential services and improve the overall quality of life.
- Support holistic approaches to Youth, particularly disenfranchised men between the ages of 16-25.
- Support to legitimate local government: Build capacity to foster the delivery of basic services thus supporting the establishment of governance and the rule of law at the local level.
- In areas of potential ethnic conflict, work towards the development of fairness and respect between groups, especially in ethnically mixed communities by supporting local civil society organizations capable of advocating for change across sectors.

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)

USAID's office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) has been USAID's principal instrument for dealing with conflict in Iraq. This section deals with the OTI program and the lessons learned from the program for future programming.

OTI focuses operations on the provision of fast, flexible, short-term assistance. Since April 2003 OTI via the Iraq Transition Initiative (ITI) has supported critical actions that build Iraqi confidence in the transition to a participatory, stable, and democratic country.

ITI's activities have focused primarily on areas crucial to the development of Iraqi democracy, e.g. civic education, civil society, media, women's participation, good governance, conflict mitigation, human rights and transitional justice.

Nationally, ITI supports efforts to expand citizens' understanding of and participation in the establishment of Iraqi institutions. Civic education and media outreach initiatives are used to inform the public about the constitutional process, election planning, and the transition to democracy. Locally, ITI helps to enhance citizen participation in governance by identifying and supporting new local government and civil society groups, especially women's and youth groups, and human rights organizations. Using small grants, ITI projects engage communities and emerging Iraqi leaders and encourage them to address local priority needs together.

ITI has focused small grant activities on current or potential conflict areas, using participatory methods to manage and mitigate sources of tension. For these initiatives, ITI draws heavily upon its close working relationship with U.S. Military, Civil Affairs, and other Coalition Forces present in areas prone to or experiencing conflict. For example, ITI has worked closely with the U.S. Army First Cavalry Division and now the Third Infantry Division in priority areas of Baghdad. ITI and the 1st Cavalry's/3rd ID's joint efforts have targeted immediate assistance to unstable neighborhoods. These activities are being replicated in other conflict-prone areas around the country to foster stability and so other development activities might move in and "take root" as areas progress and become stable.

A multitude of emergency needs developed in the vacuum of functioning Iraqi civil institutions. Clearing streets of destroyed vehicles, bulldozing mountains of garbage, distributing rations, repairing damaged roofs, wells, and sewers, rehabilitating broken-down jails and police stations, and tending to a variety of urgent medical needs became the business of soldiers. These relief and reconstruction activities were undertaken to the extent that continuing combat operations against hostile elements permitted or as was demanded in some cases of particularly grievous collateral damage.

Having been hailed for its potent contributions to stabilization efforts in Iraq, the ability of commanders to provide assistance in the form of the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) became a significant development and potentially transforming influence on modern U.S. military operations. The significance and potential operational impact of the legislative provision that created the CERP program can be appreciated against the background of restrictions historically imposed on a U.S. field commander's ability to spend public funds. Under normal circumstances, a brigade commander with forces in Baghdad or Mosul has no source of discretionary funding to apply toward his mission.

OTI has worked closely with Brigade Commanders – most notably in Baghdad - to leverage CERP resources and avoid duplication of efforts by coordinating a variety of response mechanisms aimed at mitigating conflict and reducing tension in violence prone sections of Baghdad. In Sadr City, not only were a number of short term temporary employment grants developed as conflict mitigation devices, but other projects targeting youth and providing civic education opportunities as well as the chance for nascent Iraqi NGO's to exert themselves were developed by OTI.

OTI's Sadr City Approach

ACTION	RESULT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID focuses internal human and budget resources to quickly address need through Coalition Forces' partnership • USAID meets with Coalition Forces covering respective Area of Operation on a weekly basis & contributes to the weekly reconstruction brief • USAID develops key relationships with military partners to execute a proactive, targeted plan to meet local needs • USAID focuses assistance on target population groups • USAID moved from basic short-term employment activities to longer-term projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term employment opportunities created for military age males and disenfranchised individuals yielded greater civil stability • Awareness campaigns on electricity conservation, anti-violence and neighborhood cleaning improved the neighborhood environment • OTI's engagement strategy minimized community frustration level by opening a dialogue with local government through its military partnership critical moments following kinetic operations • Coordinated USAID and CERP projects enabled the local government to gain legitimacy

LESSONS LEARNED from the /OTI Sadr City Programs:
As early as possible the following should be accomplished:

- Maintain extensive communication between USAID and Coalition Forces as it meets Iraqi needs while minimizing overlap of activities between USAID and Coalition Forces
- Work with Iraqis to create target packages that deliver enduring reconstruction assistance; e.g. operations and maintenance
- Build joint target packages with Coalition Forces to address needs and help reduce the security threat

OTI's Post-Combat Reconstruction Efforts

Since August 2004, OTI has been engaged in quick-reaction post-battle reconstruction activities in strategic cities across Iraq.

Strategic City Examples:

Fallujah:

ITI has approved 105 projects totaling almost \$9.8 million to support immediate post-battle reconstruction initiatives in Fallujah and nearby Ramadi. USAID/OTI has demonstrated the ability to engage in quick-reaction post-kinetic operations that support the efforts of the military. Activities include rehabilitation of pumping stations to improve sewage services; provision of furniture and equipment to looted or damaged local government offices; provision of communications and safety equipment for municipal utilities workers; provision of furniture and supplies for area schools. Identification of projects has been synchronized with relevant MNF-W Civil Affairs teams and the IRMO-led JECC to ensure coordination and prevent duplication of assistance efforts. ITI continues to work closely with relevant military and Iraqi partners to develop projects to bolster the economy in Fallujah and encourage return of citizens.

Najaf:

In the aftermath of clash between the Jaysh Al Mahdi and Coalition Forces during the August 2004, ITI deployed a team to respond to the emergency situation in Najaf. In coordination with the US State Department, Civil Affairs teams operating in the area, PCO, Najaf local government officials, moderate leaders, and community activists, ITI developed a rapid, flexible, political transition strategy to support stabilization efforts in Najaf. A number of projects were identified that seek to mitigate conflict, promote reconciliation and support democratic transformation. In a little over a month's time, ITI was able to identify project sites and clear funds for approximately 35 grants totaling slightly more than \$5 million dollars. USAID/OTI-funded activities included short-term employment clean up projects in strategically targeted neighborhoods as well as school and clinic rehabilitations. Since then, additional projects have been funded for a total of 76 grants totaling \$10 million dollars in assistance to the strategic city of Najaf.

Samarra:

Since kinetic operations decreased in Samarra, ITI has programmed approximately \$1.1 million across 12 projects to improve community infrastructure and respond to priorities identified by the Samarra City Council. The approved projects were developed by USAID/OTI, the US military and a local NGO after having been identified by the Samarra City Council as top priorities for the community. ITI projects in Samarra include: rehabilitation of two primary health clinics and six primary schools, improvements to the Samarra Museum, provision of Internet and computers for the Samarra Courthouse, rehabilitation of the city water towers and provision of furniture and equipment for the Department of Education. In addition to these projects, work was completed on four school rehabilitation projects (totaling approximately \$104,000) which had been identified prior to military engagement in Samarra.

Tal 'Afar:

Following military operations in Tal 'Afar, USAID/OTI initiated seven grants there totaling over \$400,000. All of these projects were developed in coordination with Tal 'Afar city leaders, Ninewa provincial council members and representatives from IRMO, PCO, and the Civil Affairs unit operating in the area. In an effort to support the growth of transparent local government ITI providing essential equipment to the Municipality Directorate which will allow government staff to effectively provide

essential services to the people of Tal 'Afar. These types of projects allow government officials to demonstrate positive tangible changes and increased employment opportunities, thus restoring trust and hope to a community prone to insurgency.

ACTION	RESULT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imbed OTI program manager with Coalition Forces • Shared assessments • Combine resources with military to build a strategy meeting Iraqis' short-term needs • Develop relationships with local authorities/key leaders; enhance governance capacity • Execute programs & link follow-on activities with other USAID offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated activities expedite stability of the security situation • Restoration of essential services & key infrastructure provide legitimacy to local authorities/key leaders • Projects assist nascent civil society • Leverage resources of Coalition Forces • Allow Coalition Forces to redirect resources for high value activities

**USAID / OTI LESSONS LEARNED from the PKRI -
As early as possible the following should be accomplished:**

- Imbed USAID with Coalition Forces to minimize overlap of activities & coordinate resources
- Develop relationships with Iraqis and Coalition Forces at ground level
- Build target packages to address Iraqi needs immediately in the event conflict arises

USAID's Lessons Learned from Cooperation with the Military

USAID's activities have focused on supporting Coalition Forces to address the insurgency and assist Iraqi security forces build legitimacy and support within the Iraqi population. Partnering with the military in this fashion has been historic, groundbreaking and is at the crux of meeting USAID's overall strategic objectives in Iraq. Moreover, this cooperation is critical to mitigating future sources of conflict in Iraq.

With its mandate and flexible implementing arrangements, the OTI -military partnership was fostered to meet a critical need. OTI commenced working directly with military partners throughout Iraq to ascertain the Iraqi need at the local level and provide rapid assistance to the specific situation in April 2004. These activities have formed the essential foundations for USAID/ Military cooperation and joint planning for programs that have fostered short-term activities that have stabilized communities. Some initiatives have had sustainable impacts forming the basis for citizen support of the GOI. However, the program was never intended to be sustainable, nor was the USAID mission program in a position to support OTI's program with more sustainable programs. However, the linkages and methodologies field tested by OTI are critical for future programming and form the basis for the Mission's strategic approach to economic and social stabilization in Iraq. Thus, the links made by OTI's activities are crucial to helping USAID's programmatic investments develop sustainable components and further develop partnerships and collaborative methods of working with other USG agencies.

OTI's "gap filling" activities in cooperation with the military have focused primarily upon short term employment opportunities for young adult males, the provision of essential services, and support for repair and rehabilitation of basic infrastructure where needed.

OTI's cooperation with the military in Iraq has resulted in the following recommendations to consider when planning future

- Promote joint planning and strategic approaches to addressing problems. This overcomes differences in organizational cultures and overcomes misperception of capabilities.
- Start with something small and doable. Expand from there. "success begets success"
- Make seamless linkages between what is addressed in the short-term with what is needed in the long-term
- It is imperative to manage expectations not only of the Iraqis but our own as well.