

## USIP – ADST

### Afghanistan Experience Project

#### **INTERVIEW #36**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The subject of this interview was posted to PRT Gardez from February to August 2004, after having served on the State Department's Afghanistan Desk. An early proponent of the PRT concept in Washington, he welcomed the opportunity to join the first PRT, located in Afghanistan's dangerous southeast, where Operation Anaconda took place. Gardez had responsibility for four surrounding provinces until it could "stand up" other PRTs to cover those areas, as was accomplished in Khowst, Ghazni and Paktika.

Subject felt that his most important work was in Paktika on the Pakistani border and home to many Taliban remnants. PRT officers traveled with the provincial governor to almost every district in Paktika and some in Paktia, where the governor used the PRT to collect requests for local assistance and then to set up delivery. The PRT played an important part in convincing many to accept the new government as an alternative to continued violence.

The PRT's ability to deliver on its promises depended on funding. At Gardez, USAID money was funneled through a UN agency, the IOM, which subjected USAID contractors to crippling UN security restrictions. The State Department representative had a smaller amount of money available while the US military implemented the multi-tier Commander's Emergency Relief Program (CERP), which allocates a certain amount of discretionary money to the local commander and provides successively more dollars to each higher command level. The Civil Affairs (CA) officer set up a bidding and evaluation process to get this CERP money to local Afghan contractors. The interviewee recommends getting closer to USAID, which has the "big" money.

NGOs varied greatly in their willingness to be seen cooperating with the PRT. The subject argued against this point of view and actively encouraged NGO involvement and cooperation. One critical item Gardez used to measure its success was to note how many NGOs had come into the area.

Based on his involvement in the creation of the PRT concept, his work on the Afghan desk and in management at Gardez, the interviewee had a wide range of comments on the role of the PRTs, especially those faced with hostile circumstances.

On overall effectiveness, he stated that where the PRT was active and successful, there was a stabilizing effect; people in the area became receptive to the new government and to the coming elections. He stated that as many as 90% of the Afghans they contacted responded favorably to the chance to end the rule of the gun and the oppressive rule of the militia commanders.

For post-conflict activities, the subject suggests a three part continuum:

- 1) Alleviation of the humanitarian crisis,
- 2) Quick impact and reconstruction, and,
- 3) Development.

Each of these phases has separate security issues, implementation time frames, suitability for participation by different organizations, and unique funding issues.

As early military and reconstruction efforts succeed, an area moves along the continuum from force suppression and crisis management toward more productive activities.

The interviewee states that the PRT's overall goal is to foster stability. It provides security for civilians and NGOs to work. PRTs should plan and work toward phasing themselves out, thus letting NGOs and local government take over. Initial security and violence issues rule out wholly civilian teams and NGOs until phases two and three of his continuum. Something PRTs do that NGO's often don't is to regularly feed information back to the U.S. Government, thus providing valuable information about places not well understood by decision makers.

The interviewee argues strongly for including civilian teams at the military theater commands while they are planning for future hostilities. Planning for post conflict issues is likewise needed at that point using USAID and State teams to point out what is needed the day after fighting ceases, including immediate crisis assistance, rule of law, police, army retraining, and similar tasks. Winning the war and losing the peace makes little sense.

The interviewee details critical interactions with US military personnel ranging from maneuver commanders to CA, Special Forces, new replacements and the providers of air resources. He gives us a rich, extensive and varied look at PRT interaction with Afghan civilians, Afghan government, insurgents, and NGOs Western government and military figures

United States Institute of Peace  
Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training  
Afghanistan Experience Project

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*Interviewed by: Peter Bolton*  
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*Q: ... Before his tour in Afghanistan, the interviewee served in the State Department's Bureau of South Asian Affairs on the Afghanistan desk. He has since returned from his posting to PRT Gardez... Could you describe the PRT? -- the location and organization, the different agencies of the U.S. and Afghan governments represented?*

A: The Provincial Reconstruction Teams at the time that I was out there -- which was between February '04 and August '04 -- had just become, sort of, joint-American-Afghan projects. The Afghan government made a point of putting a representative in each PRT and it usually was a police officer, generally a senior colonel and he was identified by the Ministry of the Interior and they were on varying levels of abilities. Some were just old fellows who had been brought back and were connected, others were actually quite excellent street cops who had some savvy and even some tribal knowledge. The PRTs were created around a civil affairs nucleus: civil affairs team from the military, usually reservists, the guys who specialize in hearts and minds and reconstruction projects and governance and what have you. And as we were expanding the PRTs the joke was we were doubling the number of them by halving the number of CA guys in each one, because there was a limited number to go around and of course, so many of them were being drawn off to go to Iraq. So the CA nucleus at Gardez was about three guys, actually. It was a major and two enlisted fellows. That was augmented by a very small reserve unit out of New York, which consisted of a Chief Warrant Officer and two enlisted fellows, both about E-4 and an E-5. So they were the actual military component of putting reconstruction money and projects out there. The entire PRT was headed up by an O-5 and he was also a civil affairs specialist. Once you got beyond the CA guy then you went in to the major component of any PRT, which was the force protection and security element.

The force protection and security element, in our case was close to 60 guys. Essentially you were looking at maybe six full time specialists doing the actual reconstruction, ten times that number for force protection and then you were augmented by all sorts of various logistical elements and military intelligence to provide you sort of, tactical data on the ground about what was going on. In addition to that, you would have whatever the U.S. government's civilian agencies could put out, the commitment had been made, primarily by State and in Gardez, I was the State Department's foreign service officer. So you got, generally, one State Department person per PRT. In addition you had a USAID [United States Agency for International Development] representative, he was of course a contractor and he was former military himself. I think he came out as an E-7, so he spoke military. No, I take it back, he was a former major, so he spoke military but he spoke old military. And then we had a USAID rep as well. There were three in country at the time, one was in Gardez, one at Bamiyan and the third fellow, I can't remember if

he went to Kandahar or to Herat. Later on we were joined by a representative from DFID [UK's Department for International Development] actually, the British foreign affairs, foreign service. And he proved to be quite interesting, which we'll talk about later. But he could actually talk to people that sometimes we couldn't.

Finally, we in Gardez as were many of the American PRTs, were co-located with a special forces compound. In fact, most of the PRTs started off in locations where, well, where battles had happened. I mean that was the reason Gardez was chosen, that was the area where Operation Anaconda had taken place. It wasn't too far, actually, from the Tora Bora region and so it was decided that this was a tough-nut area and Gardez became the first PRT established. That happened in either late '02 or really, '03. It was co-located down there with that, again, that special forces fire base. As you might imagine, there were all sorts of intra-base issues about who was going to talk to whom and who wanted to work whom and who didn't. In our case, we were lucky that we had a really good set of guys over there and it was always very easy to work with them. They had a particular mission and we had a particular mission and if you coordinate it right, it all goes to the same place.

The location of Gardez is down in the southeast. It's towards the Pakistani border. It's not as far over as Khowst in most places. It does border Pakistan and it's just to the north of Paktika province which we had responsibility for until the very end of my tour. We were also assigned to Lowgar province, which was the province between Kabul and our province, Paktia.

*Q: By "we" do you mean PRT?*

A: The PRT, yeah. The Gardez PRT: Gardez is the capital of—I should clarify—is the capital of Paktia province. Originally that PRT in Gardez was responsible for, not only Paktia, but the surrounding provinces of Khowst, Paktika, Ghazni and Lowgar. What happened was before I got there, the Khowst PRT had stood up so that responsibility had been relinquished. Ghazni was handed over, I think, my first month there I made one trip to Ghazni to that PRT. Lowgar remained with us and Paktika stood up and that stood up at the very end of my time there and they got their own PRT down in Sharan. But most of my time ... actually I'd say I split my time almost evenly between Paktia and Paktika and certainly the most interesting work I did turned out to be in Paktika which is right down on the Pak border and right where the remnant Taliban and its friends were going back and forth over the border and where a fair amount of bad stuff would happen on a regular basis.

I've given you a little history of the PRT, again, it was the first one and it was well known and had a pretty successful role in settling down the province of Paktia, certainly in the immediate range and vicinity of Gardez. The further you get away from it, of course, the less effect there was until you hit actual American combat units ... or, we always called them coalition combat units, there usually was a coalition presence in each one. I've given you the physical structure.

We lived in what was called a *qalat*. It was a mud fort, it looks like something right out of ... most of us would say it's right out of *Beau Geste*. In fact it's right out of the middle ages or before. You could have seen the Babylonians creating something like this. It's a square for the most part, a big one, it's got a tower in each corner and it has parapets up on the top and the

people tend to live in the turret and they live in the walls and the court yards within are where they have orchids and farm. They might farm a little stuff without gardens, some of them do their washing, we'll have a well, it was sort of a self-contained community for an extended family. And you can find, depending on how big the *qalat* was, you could find as many as ten families living in one.

Now, that would be in the rural areas. Of course the towns are towns like any others. People lived in dwellings and houses of adobe or if they had the means, they constructed them out of brick or wood. There wasn't a lot of wood running around but they'd import it for certain purposes.

Size: total PRT size for Gardez, probably about 80 give or take. People are always coming and going for various reasons. I figure it, a real effective strength on any given day of about 65. Staffing, we've gone over and the bureaucratic organization is something that never ended in discussion and probably is still going on. The way it works is this, the design is to have, in terms of the reconstruction, the commander of the PRT, the State Department rep and the USAID rep and the other reps, whoever they should be, in our case it was USAID for a while and then DFID. They all get together and discuss the priorities of the PRT region. Because you have limited money and everybody's got different pots and some people can do this and some people can do that. You establish your priorities and then you go forth boldly and you try to get the money moved to do worthwhile projects and the whole concept of it is that it's sort of security through presence and good works. The actual direct physical security component of it is limited. Our force-pro guys would run patrols around the town, that had a pretty good effect and generally it showed. If they ran their patrols regularly around the town, we didn't get rocket attacks. If they didn't do that and say they were going to switch over for a couple of weeks, by and large, some nitwit would decide it would be fun to set up some 107s or 122s and launch them in. They're never accurate, never hit a darn thing, but just to let you know that they were there. So that direct physical component was limited. In terms of the wider presence however, the whole concept was to go forth on behalf of the Afghan government, which of course had very limited resources, virtually nothing coming out of Kabul and to be—despite the fact that we were Americans or in the case of my U.K. colleague, British—to go out and say, “Look, we are the extension of the Afghan government, we are taking up its priorities and what we're here to do is come listen to you and hear what your needs are.” And we have limited resources, we can't do everything, but we can certainly try to attack the really important ones and what we can't handle maybe we can get a larger organization out of Kabul, you know, an international organization or perhaps a government ministry to take on.

This had an enormous amount of initial success in just co-op and good will from people. They want to hear that you want to help and they want to hear that you're there to help and that you can do things. So the initial listening and venting portion was always well received. Particularly in areas that hadn't seen coalition forces before, they're just thrilled that you're here. But then you had to deliver. And delivering can be far more difficult. Little projects like digging wells like re-landscaping an orchid for a town or what have you, that's not so hard. But if they actually need a water system or if they actually need a health care system or they actually needed, like they do in so many places, big roads. They needed completely redone roads. Those tend to be pretty major projects and there tend to be a lot of entities involved in those, a lot of other

organizations. That requires a lot of coordination and that also tends to require a lot of time. The thing about being present is that the time is immediate. The people want stuff now, if you can't build that road and start it say within a month or so, they get frustrated and understandably so. Because you're perceived as not delivering on those promises. So the whole trick was to go out and to establish that presence and buy over their confidence set by step by doing smaller but hopefully progressively larger projects over time and by keeping the context, the political context with the tribal elders and the various peoples and government agencies that were out there, you would hope to co-opt them into not supporting the Taliban. They might not actually push your agenda, but you'd hope that they'd take support away from the bad guys. That was the whole concept, security as a more area effect rather than security as going in and as having what the special forces are call direct action.

I guess I'm done with that.

*Q: How about actual accomplishments of your PRT? How about some examples?*

A: Sure. The accomplishments of the Gardez PRT were ... well they were a number of them. Bureaucratically speaking, they set up or helped set up, supported the set up of the Khowst and Sharan PRTs. I don't think they did a whole lot with the Ghazni one—got them going and then rolled on. In Gardez, the PRT came in after the ... no I take it back, they were during the time that a particular militia commander was a real problem in Gardez, the special forces removed that problem and his lieutenants fled. The PRT was able to go around the town and do a number of good works, including assisting the reconstruction of a governor's offices downtown, the building of a large number of wells around in the area, they did, initially I believe, provide a lot of material to a hospital but then the government of Afghanistan came up with a big over-all comprehensive health system and the PRTs were asked not to interfere with that since one PRT could do one set of things and another PRT could do another set of things. The health ministry just said, "Look, we've got a plan, this is the plan, if you think you can plug in let us know, but otherwise everything you do has to ... don't build any more hospital, if you get requests for that, funnel it up to us, we have a process."

The security of the area around Gardez was always somewhat fluid but the town itself became quite peaceful and it became a problem for any bad guys to operate within it. That was due as much, I think, to the special forces operating in the area as it was to the PRT's good works and co-opting people out. Probably the most successful thing the PRT in Gardez did at least while I was there was to go down to Paktika on a number of trips. What happened was the governor there, a guy by the name of Ghulab Mangal had been appointed by President Karzai and he replaced a fellow who in fact, was Taliban. There was just no two ways about it, the guy was Taliban. He allowed the Taliban to come in through a swinging gate over the border and it was just a mess. So Karzai got rid of him, this new governor came in with a new chief of police and the poor guy got rocketed on his first night, the previous governor stole his phone and his car and wrecked the place. But he was a decent guy and he was smart. He had been in an emergency ... no, a constitution Loya Jirga leader. He'd been sort of ... his profile had come to the attention of the UN. The UN officer in Gardez, a Frenchman, very early on identified this guy as someone we could work with or he cold work with and made a point of going down to Paktika regularly.

Well, the UN fellow had an idea that perhaps if the UN ... this is really radical, and it'll be really radical for anybody in the NGO [Non-Governmental Organization] community, I'm sure. But if the UN could work with the U.S. PRT and we can all work with the Afghan governor together on the same program, maybe you could stabilize at least part of this southern Paktika or northern Paktika but part of the Paktika province. Southern Paktika was going to be a lot more of a jump and anyway things were being run out of a place called Orgun, which had an American fire base.

Mangal clearly wanted to establish his presence and change things in Paktika starting with his capital and Sharan. The UN fellow felt that this was a guy that could be worked with and he who has been there, now going on probably three and a half or four years—at that time he'd been there for two years—a fluent Dari speaker, had an enormous credibility pretty much everywhere, but certainly in that region and certainly in Kabul.

So our commander—he was a Lieutenant Colonel an Army Lieutenant Colonel—was quick to pick up on this and what we would do is under the governor's auspices, the governor would lead trips to the various districts within Paktika province and it was an outreach mission. Here's what that outreach mission said, "I'm your governor, I'm the representative of your government coming from Kabul. I'm here to establish order, I'm here to help make things better and what I need is your cooperation. That cooperation means not supporting the bad guys anymore. What do you get in return? In return, we're going to provide you security, we're going to give you new police, we're going to get rid of the bad militia commanders. Here's my proof, here's my evidence. The UN is here with me and UN is here for the political reconstruction of this country. We're organizing elections, the UN is doing this, the UN is here to help your elders select their representative to the presidential elections and later we'll do the parliamentary elections."

At that time, they were still talking ...

*Q: When was it?*

A: That was probably about April of '04. At that time it was unclear who was going to [work] presidential and parliamentary. It got split, so it was just presidential.

And of course, the UN was doing all the training of the monitors and what not. And then, "by the way, I've also got the U.S. PRT here from Gardez and they are there, they've actually got money and they actually can do projects. So we want to hear like your top three, we can't promise you everything, but certainly if you can tell us what it is, we'll get cracking on it and at a minimum we can get wells done. At a minimum we could get maybe a school built or we could refurbish something here." You could never do it for a private citizen for it of course, but you could certainly do it for the town. So these trips the governor would lead them, they would last as much as ten or twelve days and they were right out in the bush. You just drove out and you slept in someone's *qalat* under Afghan hospitality and you just slept in the vehicle, you rolled out your sleeping bag, whatever you did. We went to almost every district in Paktika and we did a number of them in Gardez as well.

That was the first time anybody had attempted, directly, to do such a thing in that area and it directly confronted the bad guys with not just force, it wasn't about force, you can direct force at

those guys at any time of the day. I don't know how many times I woke up and there was a B-52 was refueling overhead or A-10s were screaming on their way somewhere else. It was confronting them with a message, it was confronting them with an alternative. The point we used to try to make was look, what is your alternative? We're here trying to bring order and governments and we know it's tough, but what's your alternative? Violence? Oppression? Murder? Continued killing? We just went through 25 years of that, why would you want more? Why would any sane person want more?

Except in the really hardcore districts, right down in the south, that message went over pretty well or so it seemed. With the Pashtun no deal is ever finished, of course.

So I guess, if there was a major accomplishment of the Gardez PRT during my time, that was it. I would say the major accomplishment of the Gardez PRT in the time that it's been established is that it has set the model in many ways for subsequent PRTs. It was the original experiment and hothouse. It was fortunate enough to have a number of really good people initially and I think, if I understand other PRTs correctly, what came out of it, the most important aspect of it, and that can be debated, there are good things and bad things about PRTs. The flexibility element of it is critical. Each PRT is different and each PRT has its own character and its own way of operating and it has to adapt to the local culture. Most of them seem pretty well suited to doing that.

*Q: If you're going to send someone out to a PRT, what would you tell him he was doing? What his purpose was?*

A: For a State Department officer? I would say, "Listen, your job, first and foremost is to advance and advocate U.S. government policy in the provinces." Because that's what we do, I mean no bones about it. But, the good thing, the great thing about it is it's 100% in line with what the Afghans want and what the Afghan government wants. Because what you're trying to do is extend the Afghan government's reach out to establish order and keep the peace and to provide opportunities for the Afghans to reconstruct their lives. This isn't about reconstructing physical ... this is about reconstructing a society that has just been atomized, decimated. And ... giving them a chance to sort of, pull out of this endless conflict that they had and really rebuild lives for themselves and futures for their children. The Afghans respond to that, that's exactly what they want. As a State Department guy you are charged with working with the Afghan government officials; making sure that U.S. government and Afghan policy is coordinated locally. You are charged with working with whatever international organizations are down there and NGOs are down there, provided they will cooperate with you. You are charged with coordinating U.S. policy with the military down there which is no easy task sometimes, I mean, people are on different pages. What you find, of course, as always anywhere, going down the chain, tactically, it's always easiest on the ground and it's always more difficult going back up. Finally, you're charged with reporting on this and making suggestions and recommendations. The amount of freedom that you have in your job, everyday you get up and you decide with your people what you're going to do, that is the greatest part of that job. It's just that you are there are your own resources with your own ideas and any day that you want to wake up and try something new you can do that.



*Q: What would you tell a military commander you were going to send down to head a PRT, what do they tell him, what's his function? Based on what you've seen?*

A: Well, I'd say get ready to not sleep a whole heck of a lot. Well of course they're always ready to do that. It takes a special kind of military guy, the challenge for, I think a lot of foreign service officers is that, this is a rare job. This isn't about paper pushing, it's not about memos, it's not about demarches, this is about going down to a warlord who is acting up and telling him, "enough, don't make us put the cell phone call in to a B-52, that's not what we're going to do." And that's an extreme example but it's happened. For a military commander, it's a totally different perspective because suddenly it isn't about direct action in most cases, it's about doing a lot of political military stuff and a lot of economic stuff and they hear about and they train for and that, you know, is in courses that they take but with the exception of the civil affairs guys, I think they have very little actual experience in it. Unless they've been deployed to Bosnia or to Kosovo previously. Now, of course, that's changing now that we're in Iraq and Afghanistan for a number of years and lots of people have experience with this. But when you're that commander of a PRT, you have to be savvy to the political structure, you have to be savvy to your own government's bureaucratic structure that's always a chain. The State Department guy has got his chain going back and the USAID guys got his chain going back and you've got your chain going back and your chain is military and it's sort of CA, how do I move money, and you're in charge of protecting all of this and you might be charged with setting up with another PRT or two or three. You're charged with, on top of all that, if you've got coalition presence, keeping all your coalition partners happy. And then there's all these NGOs running around who some of them like us, some of them don't, some of them will talk to you, some of them won't. They are a pain in the neck because nobody coordinates anything. If you're just organized enough and just disciplined enough to run a military shop but just comfortable enough with the chaos that this place is to understand the chaos theory sometimes works ... people working independently sometimes actually get to the right place; you're going to be alright. But flexibility is definitely the key here.

*Q: Now what is his—as commander of the PRT—what is he being judged on after six months, the pacification or ... ?*

A: Well, again, somewhat dependent on the place you're put in.

*Q: ... the way you are ...*

A: What was tough for the PRT commanders while I was there and I suspect they have this rectified now—it looked like they had it fixed when I was leaving—was they had a real chain of command problem. There were all these structures where, initially the PRTs reported to a command at Bagram base, but that command didn't seem to have any resources and it was a component command of the larger military command was you know, busy war fighting and frankly didn't put a lot of priority or stock sometimes in to what the PRTs needed. That got changed a couple of times, it divided it in to areas and some areas were good, the marines were there at one point. Their area with their PRTs, they ran like clockwork, or so that was what we were told, but I never heard anyone who worked under the marines contradict it. In the mean time we had, in the Gardez' case, we came under Kandahar's purview and Kandahar became infamous for not running its PRTs well out of KAF ...

*Q: What's KAF?*

A: Kandahar Air Base ... or Air Facility or whatever it is. They were the base down there running, again, the counter-insurgency operation. I mean they've got stuff going on.

*Q: Right, right.*

A: So, that got rectified. When I left, that seemed to be working, they've broken it up in to three areas around the country and it seemed to be working. So the PRT commander reports back to this chain that is now integrated with the war-fighting element and the reconstruction effort element and that's good, because it will reduce or it seemed to reduce the frustrations that poor PRT commander is fighting.

The other thing that a PRT commander has to be aware of is—and if he's a CA guy he'll know this anyway—they can be viewed as the red headed step children of the military by their own brethren. I can remember we had an SF [Special Forces] unit; we had two SF A-teams co-located with us, they were reservists of Florida, 20<sup>th</sup> group. Those guys were spectacular, they were older, a lot of them were in their mid to late 30s, a lot of them were cops or ex-cops. These guys knew how to work an area. They got in to that system and they had their finger on the pulse. Although that smarmy, soft, buttery, political, silver-tongue stuff, really didn't sit well with them, they certainly knew that it was a tool and the kick-back that they could help. That was how the commander and how I approached them and we actually had a very good working relationship with them. When they left, a new unit rolled in, a third group. The third group had a lot of active duty guys and in this particular unit, several guys had just come fresh out of Bragg and they had a real, sort of, fist to face direct action approach in this whole CA stuff and all this political stuff, they didn't want to know about. So you could see that it was going to take a number of weeks or months to sort of get a working relationship, to get them to trust you, get them to see the benefit of what you are doing and see that ... and they could see ... Again, they obviously have methods and ways and means and assets that are useful to the whole PRT mission, so that's frustrating.

There was another time when we worked with an active duty unit and we co-located for the night to stay at a particular ... it was a ruined *qalat* and we were just staying over night. Our commander offered some soldiers to help stand watch during the night and he was just sort of dismissively told, "I don't need your guys, I've got real soldiers." You know that's just unnecessary, was it true? I doubt it. That's not necessary and you need a better working relationship than that. So a PRT commander should be ready and I'm sure anyone who is at CA is told to work through those issues.

*Q: Hmm. Did you ever run in to ISAF [International Security Assistance Force]?*

A: ISAF?

*Q: NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] they set up ...*

A: Yeah, ISAF originally wasn't NATO. Originally it was British, and then it was Turkish, and then it was something else. Then NATO took it over under U.S. request, we worked through the NATO issue. ISAF is primarily confined to Kabul and the way the charter reads and its environs, ISAF; there's always this debate going on about ISAF expansion, should ISAF get out in to the provinces, I think the answer was, yes absolutely. The question was how would you find the bodies to do it. When they extended as far down, they extended as far down as Lowgar province, which is the next province south from Kabul when I was leaving. That was under a very active Canadian commander. Now that ISAF is NATO, lock, stock, and barrel and now that the PRTs in many cases are also NATO, lock, stock and barrel ... I was just reading recently that the U.S. is looking to turn over all the PRTs to NATO, I think. You'll have defacto ISAF expansion. So periodically you'll run across and they go by in their cars and they're decent dudes but they didn't have a major effect on our lives.

*Q: How about the embassy?*

A: Sure, I have regular contact with the embassy. The embassy under Ambassador Khalilzad was very activist and under the DCM [Deputy Chief of the Mission] it was very supportive of PRTs. Both of them, I find, really believed in the whole project, understood the importance of getting the Afghan government presence out there, getting the coalition presence out there and it was good to work for that kind of thing. Being in Gardez, I had the ability and sort of my USAID rep of ... (my USAID rep ... *the* USAID rep) to get up to Kabul probably about once a month, once every three weeks. That's critical because you coordinate your public diplomacy issues with your PAO's [Public Affairs Officer] shop and you would coordinate logistical issues of course with the GSO [General Services Officer] for various things. The political section is always fascinated to hear what's going on out there and you can get a decent shower and that wasn't a bad thing. [chuckle]

*Q: Did you have contractors in the PRT?*

A: The only contractor for the Americans we had was our USAID rep, which is how USAID does it. I believe a couple of PRTs might have had actual USAID officers. Contractors are interesting questions in PRT-dom. The USAID for example, contracted through a couple of different NGOs in Afghanistan to get its money moved. And what they chose, and they have their terminology have for it, which I don't recall for the moment. What they did is they went with one primary contractor with each region of the country. In our region it was IOM [International Organization for Migration] and IOM is actually a UN agency and it was run by a very decent Italian fellow who is based in Gardez. The problem with that was where as an NGO, a large NGO such as ... not that they were ever a contractor by say, CARE [Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Inc.] comes with a certain number of logistical facilities and sort of makes its own rules on the basis of its practices and its experiences. IOM was really beholden to the UN rules. For security and that meant the USAID contractor in terms of what he could get done was kind of stuck with whatever the UN determined to be security rules. What we found was the UN in Kabul, because UN was a centralized organization, none of us was a stranger to that. As the UN would ratchet up its security guidances and prevent its people from really moving anywhere, so that would limit IOM and our USAID fellow really, from getting anything done. That was part of the most frustrating aspect of it.

There didn't seem to be anyway to break out of this. The PR—the State Department rep had access to some money that was actually in a USAID account, it was a small amount of money so you can get around it with dribs and drabs to get things done but you're talking about a couple of million bucks instead of the tens of millions that normally USAID could probably tap to do things like refurbish the government justice ministry or something or the government's offices from time to time.

The way the civil affairs guys worked, with their money which was called CERP, Commander's Emergency Relief Program ... They went out, they decided what projects it was that they were going to do and they had bidding auctions from local contractors and they assess whether these contractors could actually do the job and they would have a bidding session; call all the contractors in and they'd award contracts. These were Afghan contractors who would go out and they kept pretty detailed records about who's a good contractor and who wasn't and if they screwed up, they didn't get used again and that word quickly got out. They also tried to be pretty fair about who got what. That word gets out too.

*Q: Is that through the PRT element?*

A: Yeah.

*Q: Ah. So the PRT did the contracting?*

A: That civil affairs Major, that was his primary job, he was the money guy. He would come back from pyre(PH) with large stacks of cash and that money would go out. He'd pay us a certain amount up front and a certain amount at the completion of the contract.

*Q: Since the USAID money went through the IOM, that was constrained. That was slowed down?*

A: Well right, because of course, the Afghan contractors are only limited by resources really. If they felt that they were going to get killed, they'd tell you that. They'd say, we can't do this. IOM of course was relying on a very centralized, bureaucratic structure in Kabul. What's frustrating about that is Kabul as anyone will tell you from any agency, Kabul is in its own world. In Gardez you could make very good cases for saying ... Because it's never a uniform picture, it's never a uniform picture. Herat is totally different from Gardez and Gardez is totally different from Kandahar and Kandahar ... Yeah you want to be flexible. I mean ... the guy is in a Sadabut(PH), I don't know how often they ever got out. They were constantly under attack. Even within the region of Gardez that we had with Paktika and Lowgar. Lowgar was for the most part, safe, although we had a bombing of IRC while I was there, the International Rescue Committee. That really kind of shocked them. Within Paktia, some places were pretty good and then other places, there was one district called Chamkani that was right up on the border. I mean if we went up there and stayed over night, it was about an 80% chance we were going to get attacked.

So it's never a uniform picture and the problem with uniform rules is that they constrain you ... they're good in that they constrain you from getting yourself hurt in the dangerous areas but they constrain you from doing good work that you needed to do in the less dangerous areas.

[END TAPE 1, SIDE A]

*Q: Where were we?*

A: We just finished discussing PRT relations with the embassies and ISAF.

*Q: Right, there's government ministries and Afghan warlords on the next ...*

A: Yeah, these will be short actually. The one Afghan government rep was Minister of the Interior of policemen by and large, an officer. In our case, Colonel Nabih was a Colonel and he was an older fellow. Initially we really didn't know what to think of him, he didn't seem like he was particularly active or particularly enthusiastic but as it turned out that was simply a language barrier and he began teaching himself English and then took a decided interest in working with us on local disputes and tribal disputes. What it turned out was ... this was a guy who literally came up as a beat cop and that's what he knew.

The first couple of months it was sort of, "what are we going to do with this guy?" And then suddenly he came up and said, "well look, you're obviously having trouble figuring out these disputes, let me help you." And all of a sudden our ability to deal with the local populace I think, increased by a factor of about ten because he was so good. As for the other ministries we never dealt with them. Periodically someone might come down to Gardez, but it would be rare indeed that they would actually let us know and talk to us. That's too bad because the feeling probably was something along the line of, we don't want to be seen as being too close to the Americans. We'll be perceived as puppets. Of course if you don't show up and show that there is an Afghan presence guiding us, and we were always happy to play second fiddle on that, then it really does look like we're ... we the coalition are out there on our own.

As far as our Afghan security goes, there were Afghan security guard but they were only hired by and large by the special forces and that was their deal. We didn't do that, we had our own force-pro. Then weekend at the NGO's ... The NGOs are a multi-faceted and complex group all their own. NGOs, probably the most ... in some respects the most rewarding to deal with and in some respects are also the most frustrating in some cases. We didn't have a lot of NGOs in Gardez. But we had a few. CARE was down there but I never saw them. I don't know if they had closed up their compound or what but I never saw anybody from CARE. International Rescue Committee, IRC, was down there, they had a very active presence and they had a different completely way of operating than the coalition did. Their attitude was ... or at least this office's attitude was—it was run by a British fellow—we're going to go low under the radar; we're going to have a low presence, a low profile and we're going to work with the communities and develop relationships because ultimately your security is from the people warning you. The people see that you're doing good by them and doing good for them and they'll really want to protect you and they'll want to protect themselves because if their child is playing in an IRC constructed

soccer pitch ... they don't want their child hurt if the Taliban decides they need to blow up the soccer pitch.

That is to me ... That always was a valid approach of security. That is one way of approaching their security. It wasn't one that we could take but I understood the logic. What I didn't agree with IRC on was—and some other NGO's and some members of the UN—that they truly believed that the Taliban or the Hekmatiar's guys or the Al-Qaeda or whoever it was that was on the other side of the fence, opposed us would ever perceive them as being neutral. The big argument was, you don't want the military doing reconstruction works of this kind or development work of this kind because that makes the NGOs look as if they're in bed with the military and therefore the NGOs would become legitimate military targets. Of course they don't have nearly as much the force protection of the military had.

Again the logic itself isn't really ... There's nothing wrong with it. It's an understandable argument but I disagree with it because it was pretty clear to me that the other bad guys on the other side of the fence, very definitely perceived pretty much all the foreigners as the problem because they were in Afghanistan supporting the government of Karzai which was anti-Taliban. If you support Karzai and Karzai's government, it didn't really matter whether you were pro-American, pro-Bush, military, civilian or what have you. You were anti-Taliban, they want power. They are going to displace those people that were there doing things that prevent them from taking power. The only conceivable group that I can even think of that might obtain some kind of neutral pass, might have been the Swedish committee. They've been there I don't know how many years, 20, 30, maybe more. They've been there all through the Taliban. Now they had to cut all kinds of barter, I'm sure, in order to keep operating but they were the only ones that I knew that had been there that long and it was pretty clear to me that ... It was pretty clear to me that everybody on the coalition side of the house that these more strident NGOs that really thought that they were going to be left alone if only the military would stop doing reconstruction, wasn't right. Then there was a separate argument that was, well the military should be here but you should only provide direct security. At a certain point you just have to make your decision, you have to fish or cut bait. If you don't want the military there you're going to complain that there's no security, if you do want the military there the military does a lot of things and if you look at, in particular, the British and the Mazar-e Sharif, the British they give a commander an area and they just say, "go do what you need to do." It doesn't matter if it's civil it doesn't matter if it's blowing a warlord's base, he goes and does ... and he's got the whole spectrum.

*Q: That was the British in Mazar-e Sharif?*

A: That's the British anywhere.

*Q: Oh.*

A: That's how the British handle going in to do not occupation but post-conflict kind of stuff. British civil affairs doctrine is, go in, own the area, work with the locals, but do what you need to do, you are the commander, you have the spectrum, you have the latitude. American forces are a little bit more specialized, you have civil affairs who do the governance, you have other guys that do the military side of the house. They do the direct action stuff. But if you're complaining of the

military's presences, well then, if they leave, you'll complain that there's no security. If you complain that the military is doing reconstruction, well okay, but if they're not ... they provide a heck of a lot of money and they do it a lot more quickly, that stabilizes the region. At a certain point, I think, everybody just more or less came down and said, "it is as it is, and that's how we're going to do it." So some NGOs chose not to work with the PRTs. IRC wouldn't always talk to us, they weren't going to coordinate with us by any stature. There were other NGOs like, what was the French one ... ACTED [Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development] I think. Or maybe not ACTED maybe it was *Médecins Sans Frontières* but they wouldn't even talk to coalition forces. Then there were other NGOs which really weren't so bothered by it. United Methodists came down, they were willing to go in and do anything. They probably wouldn't have traveled with us in one of these great safaris to Paktika but they were certainly working with us. The NGOs were a varied lot to be sure. With that aside, with all the professional and bureaucrats of it aside, you universally found that they were good people and that offline, if you developed trust, there were ways to exchange information that didn't hurt anybody's interests and sort of kept everybody in the loop. And once you got those informal networks set up ... things could work very, very well. The two things in Gardez that played a great role for us in that were the UN guest house which has a bar. Me and the USAID guy ... these were the guys were the only ones who could go to ... then the ...

*Q: The military couldn't go?*

A: No, no. General order number one. Thou shall have no fun in any way, shape, or form. No drinking, no nothing. No nothing.

*Q: No fraternization?*

A: No. Just nothing. Anyway, we had the other thing ... We had the DFID fellow. As a Brit, he didn't get the sort of ... weariness of the American goliath that I would. As a State Department guy you're always going to be called the CIA guy. So the Brit could go and talk to people that probably I couldn't do and certainly the military couldn't. So that was always a good boon for us as well. And that's how it worked.

Later on, one of the govern—we'll get the governance later—but one of the governance projects that our civil affairs guys tried was they tried to set up a provincial level governor-run reconstruction office that this Afghan province would ... We called it the provincial reconstruction office, this was the Brit's initiative but it was carried forth under the CA fellows sort of, tutelage. They had a bunch of guys who were working for them down at their own shop downtown and I can't remember this ... When civil affairs unit comes in they set up an office ... They do it everywhere, I can't remember what the terminology for it is at the moment but they go down and they listen to people. They have people come in and they talk and make sure the problem's solved. Well this sort of outlived its usefulness after a couple of years. So what Simon said was, well why don't I get a little money maybe from DFID and why don't we get the UN to provide some training to these Afghan guys, why doesn't ... You know the PRT could provide continue to provide the salary, support and maybe some of the equipment like computers. We'll set up sort of an Afghan reconstruction office. Then the governor can throw these parties.

It was a good idea. The Afghans themselves I thought were very willing, the UN was very enthusiastic about it. They put up a huge map with every project out there known to anyone. The NGOs were always welcome to come in and look at it and talk. They didn't have to tell us anything they don't want to. But the whole the idea was that this was the Afghans' ... problem was we had a corrupt governor. He didn't understand this Western ... He understood it, lets put it that way. It didn't add anything for him, this Western rational approach. What the governor was very good at was cutting deals with the tribes and that did any number of things but it would keep, sometimes, the provinces quiet. It kept the tribes in line, it kept him in power and it generally lined his pockets pretty well. So this whole idea of having an actual reconstruction office didn't do much for him, but it did serve as a meeting place for the internationals who downtown, in a governor's office would otherwise, maybe stop in and talk rather than coming out to the base or rather than having us there, because that was just ... they felt was just too dicey. And fair enough ...

*Q: Okay, what about security? You already talked about a lot of these things in parts.*

A: Well, the military component we've discussed. What we've had, I will say, the force protection we had were re-trained field artillery which is something that's going on with the Pentagon now and they worked out fine. We had a couple of units that I think had a rep for not being especially well disciplined and certainly they had their problems but I don't think they had anymore problems than any other unit being stuck out in the desert in *Beau Geste* would have had. I will say that we had this one retrained field artillery unit, they were a component of what they called the "leg" battalion out of Bragg. They're the one unit that doesn't jump. So you can imagine what kind of guff they get. They came in and they had some unit pride and they had a commander with a little something to prove and I'll tell you what, I never saw that unit turn down any mission at all. They always did a pretty decent job of it. Once in a while they'd goof up but by and large, they worked out pretty well. So, retrained field artillery for force protection, I saw it as a success. I don't think it was the most exciting work those guys had ever done, but everyone of them would also tell you, "I'd rather be here than up at Bagram at that huge base just sort of schlepping around, not doing a whole lot. At least I'm here I feel like I'm doing something." So that was all for the good.

The threat level in nature, we discussed that a bit. It wasn't what I would call extremely high, certainly not in comparison to a place like Asadabad or Kandahar, but it was in the area. It was in the zone and you can count on a rocket attack periodically in town or on the base. Once in while, we got ambushed, once out in one of our trips out to Paktika: an RPG ambush. We had mines laid in front of us a couple of times, we had ... I remember one time, we had a group of elders in a pick up truck trying to lead us in to an ambush and they were shocked when we figured it out.

*Q: [laughter]*

A: Yes, it's not ... If you're idea of a good assignment is sipping coffee down at the piazza and night skiing on the slopes this is not the job for you.

PRT relying on Afghan forces for protection? We didn't ... over all force protection was it adequate? Yeah it was. What we really needed were more CA guys. We really needed more civil



affairs guys. We really needed more civilians. Could personnel operate in the field? Yes. What that really stems from is the commander's interpretation of the area based on the intel he's getting, based on what his MI (military intelligence) guys are giving him, based on what he sees going out and around him. We had a pretty involved commander. He was probably a little bit more cerebral than most, but he got it. When the word came down that, "hey we're doing this operation in your area, don't go out." He put it that way, this is an operation, we're not going out. Otherwise, I found him to be really willing to go out and he was really good at balancing threat and result. He would always weigh a pretty good cost benefit. He didn't want anybody to get hurt, didn't want anybody to get killed, CA guys aren't out there to be the front line troopers but on the other hand, they wear the uniform, they carry the weapons and there's a job to be done and let's get it done. I thought he had the right balance.

How could security have been enhanced? The one thing I would say about this is the PRTs in the time that I was there for the most part, did not have adequate comms-chains back to the actual war fighters. By that I mean it was very poor coordination or so it seemed at the operational level about what PRTs were doing and where they were going and where they would be. PRTs were on the lowest priority peg for any kind of support. So for example, on one of these trips to Paktika if the PRT ... if the plan gets filed, it gets approved, it's out there, I'm sure it's on a map somewhere ... but the fact is, if that mission had gotten stuck, if it has really gotten stuck ... We got ambushed once but we drove through it and fine, we got out of there. But if we had really gotten stuck, say in a valley or a mountain or something and couldn't get out, the ability for that unit to call for help out of Bagram or Kandahar was really limited. They were always getting sort of, the second line of equipment. Particularly in comms. The logistics were always a problem, the Humvees were always breaking down, I'm sure none of this is unique to Gardez. I'm positive it's not, I'm sure it's not unique to the Army either, but the PRTs always were on the last ... they were always at the end of the line. They couldn't, I don't think they could have called for air support. They could have *called*, I don't think we would have gotten any and that's dangerous. Because if you're going to have these people out there, they're lightly armed, they need to be out there ... they're the guys who *need* to be out there, doing this kind of stuff because it's not going to stabilize—as any veteran of an insurgency or any student of insurgency and counter-insurgency will tell you—it's not going to stabilize just through killing the bad guys. It's going to stabilize because you're filling the vacuum that direct action will create with something else. It needs to be better than just killing. That was something that I found a little bit more disturbing because it wasn't quite getting the support that maybe it was due.

There were people at much higher levels who were trying to balance out the force requirements for the counter-insurgency for the hunt and for force protection so hopefully this is something that's gotten rectified. But the answer is not "stay home," you can't call for air support, so stay home. You can't call for CAS [Close Air Support], there's no A-10s left: that's not the answer here kids! The one time that it did work was when we went to southern Paktika.

The PRT in Sharan had not yet stood up but the governor, Mangal, wanted to go to a bunch of districts down in the southern half of Paktika, Terwa and Wermamai(PH) and I don't remember the district but Orgun was ... or Orgun is its own district but it's also the capital. This was like, no kidding, big black turbans, Taliban sympathizers out and out and "you are not welcome here, we're the people who hunted the British down to the last man" sort of guys. We went down there

and the reason it worked was because the commander there at Orgun, they had just come in from Hawaii, they were part of the 25<sup>th</sup> and he got it. He got the whole idea, he was a maneuver commander, but he got the mission, he understood the whole political-military insurgency concept. So the PRT went out with the 25<sup>th</sup> and he got it in a way that a lot of people didn't ... What he would do was he would stand up, support from place to place and stage the air for the right times so that you could move from place to place. It was always some resource out there you can call on if somebody got hit, if somebody got ambushed or if somebody hit a mine. He did a brilliant job of it, as I understand from my contacts, he continued to do that through the end of his tour. That was the only way we could get that kind of support, if we had a maneuver commander actually calling it in. There was no way a little PRT was going to get that. If you have a maneuver commander who isn't so tuned in to that kind of ... who isn't that sensitive, then you're stuck. You're just stuck to going to the safe places or in some cases maybe you could prevail on the SF guys to go out before you and sort of do a sensitivity training thing or trying to figure out what's going on out there and come back and say, "eh, it's alright, go ahead and work," or, "no, it's hot, I wouldn't go."

So comms and support, those were the key issues.

Looking at the governmental relations, the big issue we faced was the presidential elections. Everything really ... our primary sort of, in-house priority was setting up the Sharan PRT but the over all goal in the time that I was there was the presidential elections and to get those set up. So these missions, as I was saying, to Paktika, these were attempts to co-opt the local tribal elders, the councils, the shuras in to supporting it. In to getting their people to support it so that the bad guys trying to disrupt it would find it an inhospitable atmosphere for their activities. We certainly didn't organize local councils, we left that to the UN. The UN was the lead for the presidential elections and the UN worked closely with the governor and the governor would go out and call it. And he'd say—as I was saying before—the UN is coming with me and the PRT is coming with me and we're going to do this whole joint thing. I'm here, I'm your representative, I brought these guys with me, the UN is here to ask for your help with the elections and the PRT is here to listen to what your priorities are and if you'll agree to all this, what we're going to do is provide you governance and order and elections and hopefully some projects that'll make your lives better. I felt it was an effective message, I know the governor did and the UN chief did down there as well: Sebastian. I think we did three or four of these and he would do them in other provinces as well. He was responsible for four of them.

*Q: Which governor was this?*

A: Ghulab Mangal. He's still governor down in Paktika as a matter of fact. He just came through Washington on our international visitor program, which I set up for him.

*Q: Oh good.*

A: So as far as human rights and women's rights, this would be woven in to the fabric of pretty much everything that we did. One, it was always good to have an NGO down there, particularly if that NGO had a female expert because Paktia and Paktika are real Pashtun country. You didn't

see women, women really weren't out there. It wasn't that the women were in the burka, I mean they would be, but they weren't out there. You never saw them, they were at home or ...

*Q: ... secluded.*

A: That's right, exactly. So it was good to have that view from someone who could talk to and work with women. That was good sensitivity training for all of us because you really have to understand how women function in that society. You're always trying to cut a fine balance between protecting women's rights and understanding that there is a pretty set culture here and you're not going to change it overnight, although, certainly, you'd like to see it changed as an American for the better. The US agencies that were there, we've gone through that. USDA [United States Department of Agriculture] handled agricultural stuff. USAID was there for a lot of different projects including reconstruction of government buildings as well as repairing irrigation channels and that sort of thing.

In terms of promoting the government, I'd like to think we did a pretty good job. I think we could have done better, it was always a struggle with the governor. The governor was an older fellow and very set in his ways and very good at dealing. He was very good at the art of the deal but he's always trying to get something out of you for himself and of course the "regs" prevent that. He didn't want to hear that so there were times where you had to work through him, in one case we had to work around him, he was just being so difficult. And our frustration was mirrored to an even worse extent by the UN and I watched him one day just drive a Polish NGO right out of the city. He treated these two gals like absolute trash, there was no need for it, I think all they wanted to do was build a school for one of his districts and that didn't fit. Well the thing was, it didn't fit with his little tribal plan, hey, you know what? Fine. It doesn't fit with your tribal plan, there's some deal going down, understandable, there may well be a good reason for it, they still want to build a school and you might be able to get them to build it somewhere else that would help you. That sort of thing never entered Governor Waffa's mind and it was, no, you're trying to usurp my authority, well no, of course not.

*Q: Who's Governor Waffa?*

A: Governor Waffa was the governor of Paktia. He was based in Gardez. Governor Mangal was the "good" Governor Mangal, you might say, he was the governor down in Paktika down in Sharan. Mangal was very easy to work with and had a much tougher job. Governor Waffa had his advantages but it was just-gosh-it was just like pulling teeth sometimes with him. These were issues that any PRT is going to deal with. You're not always going to get some wonderfully, pro-Karzai, pro-American cooperative fellow or so they have it.

Then there was the Lowgar governor, Hamini who displayed more of a technocratic aspect. He was a Tajik as opposed to being a Pashtun. Lowgar is a mixed province in terms of its ethnicity and it has a significant number of Tajiks and I think a minority of Pashtuns. He had come down from the north and he had a technocratic approach to things and he was easier to deal with. He actually did have, I guess, what we would call a more "Western" approach. But he had traveled outside the country significantly.

*Q: How do you spell his name?*

A: Hamini.

*Q: And he was from ... ?*

A: Lowgar. Again, he was brought in and he had a real problem because there was an old militia commander who had actually come in post-9/11 with our guys from the south and east who had taken up residence in Lowgar and had been cut off and had made a nuisance of himself, let's say. He was trying to establish a power base in Lowgar but didn't want to do it democratically of course, he just wanted to be sort of a feudal chief. So that wasn't easy either.

So yeah, PRT's were all about government. They're all about governance, we try to set up this good governance reconstruction office down in Gardez for the Paktia province and it didn't go so well, I think, in some respects but there were some lessons learned and I understand that governor Mangal down in Paktika liked the concept and so he set one up. He said, "I'll pick the people, don't worry about that. If you guys can get me the equipment, we'll go from there." Of course, Governor Mangal would always coordinate with the folks in Sharan, the coalition folks to ensure that everybody was on the same page. So where does that leave us?

*Q: Political events. You talked about how you were going to open the presidential election right?*

A: Yeah.

*Q: Were you there?*

A: I wasn't. I left before the elections took place. We were in the run-up phase. And I was interested, these trips down to Paktika were how—and elsewhere—were how the governor and the UN were trying to work with the local communities, the shuras the elders to get these set up. When the tribe, whatever the district we were in, in whichever province, when the elders, the shura met, and agreed that this is what they wanted to do and gave their word on this, there would be a complex negotiation about who was going to be the rep, who was going to be the election ... you know, who was going to get the jobs, really, is what it came down to. Of course, it was going to be a fine line, a whole distribution that made sure everybody's political sensitivities in the areas were taken care of. That's fine, that's how they do it and it would take hours, but it's a very communal, consensual system that's designed to avoid fighting because these are people who will fight for 25 years if they feel the cause is right. Yeah, they'll fight for generations even, if it's a clan issue. So it would take hours. But they'd settle that out and then you'd get the right people identified and then the UN would work to have local trainers come down and what the UN insisted on, each time, was women have to be involved, women have to vote, they have to register ... well they don't have to, nobody has to vote but women have to go out to register and women have to be allowed to vote and this has to be offered and this is not negotiable. Furthermore, we would like to see women be election officials.

[PAUSE]

*Q: So, reconstruction.*

A: So we got to reconstruction, we talked about physical reconstruction, there were a number of levels at which you could do it. There was your basic, tactical, I would call a tactical level, which was digging a well, or, I don't know, paving over a bridge or refurbishing a set of government offices with furniture and what have you. That was basic, simple stuff that could be done very quickly through this terrific program called CERP, Commander's Emergency Response Program, which the Undersecretary for the comptroller at DOD [Department of Defense] had, I believe it was his brain child and I believe he fixed it to make it work correctly. It allowed the PRT commander to spend, I believe it was up to, let me get the number quickly, I think he could do \$20,000 dollars without—does that sound right?—\$20,000 dollars without even asking. 50 G's he had to go up a step higher and over a hundred I think it had to actually leave Bagram. Or maybe it was over a million. In any case, it provided an enormous flexibility for the PRT to go out and do quick impact projects, these were quick impact projects by any other name, they just happened to be administered by the military. CERP was a phenomenal program that everybody loved, the real problem was, there wasn't really good accounting on it, which is kind of strange considering the its creator was a DOD comptroller . You'd think his office would have had the regs on that boat. There was this pot of money that Congress had allotted and the attitude was, go forth and do good works and whenever this money runs out we'll get more. And I'm not quite sure where the expectation was that we would get more from, whether it was, Congress and a supplemental or the DOD would find another hundred million or whatever it was from some black account that was just lying around, but the accounting on it wasn't real good. There was a stop-start pattern to it where PRTs and maneuver commanders who could also tap in to this, would go out and buy tractors and goats and herd animals and whatever, big wells, and contract for irrigation issues. Suddenly, the work would now stop, everybody stop, too much is going on, some of these projects don't make sense, there isn't adequate vetting, we're running out of money. Then you do that for about two or three weeks and you couldn't do anything which was frustrating and that would halt progress and of course, annoy the local citizenry and then you'd get a message that said, "no, everything's okay, we've actually got millions and millions, go forth and spend."

You know, what that encouraged was ... I felt, it encouraged people to do one-offs and immediate impact without real good analysis. Because you never knew when the money was going to dry up again. What they should have done initially was just said, "we've got x amount of money, we're going to allot certain portions," right, wrong or indifferent, just give people a budget. People know how to work within a budget, if you tell them there's a common pool, it's going to be like, common grazing in New England, eventually it all gets over-grazed and there's nothing left except a patch of dirt. So without budgets people were sort of left in the dark. Again, there was this maneuver commander down in Paktika, went forth great guns, he was dragging tractors dragging a lot with them and even at one point was considering buying herds, animals, to get people's farming ability back up. Some of what he was doing was great, some of it, I think was kind of questionable, but there was no doubt that this guy was pro-active. He would suck up a great deal of money where as someone who wasn't being pro-active wasn't going to do that and someone who is—and that's fine, maybe they don't deserve to get a share of the pie—but then someone who was trying to do thoughtful, systematic analysis of what wasn't going to impact the local cultural systems was kind of boxed out a little bit because sometimes you really have to

look at what the effect is going to be on a local society in terms of, if you dig a hundred wells, maybe you're just going to pull all the water out of the ground and completely salinate the area. That's not going to help anyone. You really have to go at it with a more systematic approach.

At the higher level, USAID was the group that had the really big money. Of course, really big money takes longer and USAID was just consumed, this was so much of the embassy, frankly, and Washington was building the big ring-road around the country and the ring-road goes from Kabul to Kandahar to Herat to Mazar-e Sharif I think, and then back down to Kabul. This is an enormous project and it was divided amongst a number of nations and international banks and other entities. USAID was just consumed with it and rightly so but there were commitments to put money out elsewhere to do things like rehabilitate government offices and what have you, rebuild waterways and this sort of thing. Again, it varied. Some places like up in the north, USAID wasn't using IOM as a contractor and they had some very good proactive people up there and they've got stuff: man they've got stuff out. They've got it out there. In Jalalabad apparently there was a UN contractor who was a little bit more daring than most, he worked very well with USAID and the State Rep and they got a lot of stuff done. But in Gardez it just seemed like we were always stagnant and I was always frustrated that I could just never figure out how to get that money moved. So much of USAID is really about how you get the money moved. The six months I had with my first experience with it when our USAID rep finally left, we didn't have a replacement immediately, I just could not solve that problem. I couldn't get that magic to work. For a State person going out there, the first question is, "do you have USAID with you?" and secondly, "does that person know how to move money?" and thirdly, if you don't have USAID person, I would highly recommend you get yourself over to USAID and meet the right people and that you meet the right guy in Kabul and you figure out how to get that money moved because USAID is the critical component here. Everybody else is doing short-term impact, USAID is doing medium-term and long-term impact development and *that's* where the rubber gets rolled. That's where we're going to make or break it. Even if this country stabilizes and becomes relatively stable and can hold off these remnant Taliban and it's not a haven for terrorism or it fails; it's getting that international development money in there that's the critical factor.

At a certain point, you transition from, initially it's humanitarian crisis then you stabilize that, then you get in to quick impact and reconstruction in a post-conflict environment and then you get out of that and you're in development. And the challenge of Afghanistan is that in a number of areas, you're still fighting an insurgency while you do all that. Afghanistan, again, I'd say it's an uneven place. There are places that are calm, they don't have an insurgency, they're well along the road to development, if there's a PRT there they might not even need it but it's there as a political sign and it's fine, I'm a political guy, I'm cool with that. In other places, you have a hot war going and that's a lot more challenging and you really ... it's just critical to get that money out there.

So, that's kind of a bureaucratic look at it but in a way, that's kind of how you have to approach it from the PRT level. You get the people to identify what their needs are and then you try to help them. And sometimes helping them means, look, your government doesn't want the coalition to build hospitals willy nilly, they have a plan. You say you need a hospital, we can help you get in touch with your government ministry and your government representatives and

we can help you request a hospital or a clinic down here. We can't actually provide and we can't furnish one. That's the government's ministry. In the end, that's the right answer, you want to see the Afghan government taking the lead. It's when they can't deliver that the frustration really begins because they're saying they may or may not do it, you're saying you can't do it, and meanwhile the poor guy who is sick or whose children are sick are saying, "well thanks for nothing." Come on, at least the Taliban would have tried to get me medicine from Pakistan, which is something they would have done. Which is something Amaj Amasoud(PH) the leader of the urban alliance used to do. He'd go in to a village, you'd get rid of the people who were working against you of course, but you provide humanitarian relief, you provide services, schooling, and that's the sign of a successful insurgency.

So moving down the list here ... Did civil affairs soldiers participate in reconstruction development projects? Well they were the managers, they were the coordinators, they were the funders. Did they actually go paint buildings? No, there weren't enough of these guys. There was more than enough work to go around and besides, that's not the point. You want the Afghans to work, you want to pay the Afghans to work, you want to put money in their hands so they've got jobs.

*Q: But they actually did management, planning and scheduling?*

A: Yeah, you bet. Sure. You sit down with a contractor, "you're going to build this building, it's going to be a police station and I want it completed by x date and these are the specs and you come with me with your architectural plan and then we'll approve it and then you tell me what the costs are and we'll keep you within costs." The real key, the monitoring aspect of it. And the CA guys got to be really good at that because you know a contractor, they're just like contractors here, they will skimp at the first ability, the first opportunity on cement or wood or materials. We had one guy using water and sand and calling it mortar. Sorry, that doesn't work. You would get this cheap cement from Pakistan that wouldn't hold up a coffee cup and they would use that and it would crack and fall apart, well guess what? You're not getting paid, you're still on the hook to build this, you're going to build this right and it's the same amount of money, we're not going to give you any more, it doesn't work like that. And if you don't want to do it, that's fine. We'll pay someone else and you don't ever get another job. In Afghanistan, people get it, they get that. Not like here where probably there would be ten years of lawsuits and counter lawsuits.

What were the impacts of these efforts? Over all, in the grand scheme, in Paktia, I would say that where the PRT was active and regularly present, there was a stabilizing effect and people became receptive to the coalition and receptive to talking to us and receptive to asking questions about their government. But it was really shown, I think, in the receptiveness to the elections. Once the Afghans really caught on to the concept of, there is something else out there and this is our change to speak, and this is our chance to get peace, and this is our change to end the rule of the gun and end the rule of the militia commanders, 90% of them said, "well yeah, that makes sense." Oh and by the way, we get a common well out of the deal, well that's a pretty good deal. There's probably this 10% percent who just aren't going to buy it and the further south you go ...

[END TAPE]

A: ... when you establish a PRT, it initially gets attacked because they're going to try to drive it out. And then what you find that if it stays and there's a significant force protection component and there's enough direct physical security too at that PRT, that goes away. Now there are exceptions and Asadabad is one of them, that's right in the middle of it all. Mostly, that fades, and then you see the town itself kind of settle out, particularly if you've got good Afghan government officials, particularly if you've got bad ones, you can get the government to replace them or the special forces to otherwise help in the removal of particularly bad people.

*Q: So you're a counter to the Afghan government as well?*

A: You're not, you're not a counter to the Afghan government at all, you support the central government, the national government out of Kabul and if there's a fellow down there who is an opposition to his own government ...

*Q: Ah, yes, yes.*

A: And actually, you saw this early on, you know, guys who were actually cooperating in attacks on Americans and attacks on coalition forces who had terrorist links. They need to go and there are people out there who can help them take that journey.

*Q: And Afghan central government was completely with you on this? They wanted to get rid of all those ...*

A: Sure, they're not pro-terrorism. Karzai wants good people out there. Now, you don't take the governor to Bagram over night, you don't do that. But lower militia commanders you can certainly do that sort of thing.

*Q: Now the PRT can make that decision at central?*

A: No, not at all. That was a separate chain.

*Q: You would report to the ... oh.*

A: What we could do, in coordination with—if whoever was operating in that area—was willing to coordinate with us, we can coordinate with them and share information and then the beauty of having a PRT, a fully manned one, is suddenly ... Let's say you've got a chief of police, this was the case in Gardez, you had a bad chief of police. He's a militia commander, he's going back and forth across the border, there's lots of attacks, lots of IEDs [Improvised Explosive Device], lots of bad stuff happening and a lot of intimidation in town. Suddenly reports started going up the chain, now it's not just the SOUTHCOM chain, the special operator's chain. They're their own deal and they're great. Suddenly there's something going up to Bagram from this PRT commander who is out there trying to do good works and that goes to the Bagram commander who is probably the CFC, the combined forces commander, so he's going to report, "this guy's bad." And then, the State Department comes up through the embassy right? It goes back to Washington where there's high level interest, really high level interest in what's going on out



there, particularly back in '02, '03, stuff was just being read at the very highest levels all the time. Hmm, "this guy's a bad guy."

Perhaps your USAID person even sends back a report or at least sends an email saying, "you know, if this guy's is just an obstacle, we can't get anything done, he's always trying to take a cut, no contractor will do anything without giving him 80% of whatever we pay, that's not worth doing." All of a sudden, it's amazing how you can leverage that kind of network, it's a case where you can actually leverage what the military would call, "stove piping." Yeah, everybody's got their own chains and sometimes they don't talk to each other. But in this case, that's an advantage because all of a sudden the embassy's got it, Washington's got it, Bagram's got it, SO-com has got it ... And if you work together on the ground level, I don't want to say that you're actually manipulating your chain of command, but you certainly are able to leverage the fact that hey, my State guy says this is a bad egg and hey, I go up to the embassy and I can tell the DCM.

All aspects of the military are on the same page, this is the best action. You get that related to the national government, in the case of say a bad governor, all of a sudden, Karzai and the Minister of the Interior, Ali Jalali, are scratching their heads saying, "maybe this guy just ought to go, maybe he ought to be moved, maybe we got to put someone else in there." In the case of the militia commander, you set up the groundwork for this person to take a vacation. So that's how you do it. You don't do it all the time and you certainly have to be judicious. I'm not going to nab a chief of police who is just incompetent, that's silly. But if he's bona-fide a terrorist link, he's bona-fide cooperating with the bad guys, you know, what's the question?

*Q: How does it get to the Karzai government, the embassy to the ministry of interior? Or the Army to ... ?*

A: Oh, it's all sorts of ways.

*Q: Uh-huh. Lots and lots of contacts.*

A: Yeah, but you know, if it's a real problem governor, if you're really talking about someone who is ... this guy down in Paktika for example, who actually was Taliban. You know if the ambassador, once he's fully briefed and appraised of the situation, might well have a conversation with President Karzai. Or he might have a conversation with ... or the DCM might have a conversation with Minister Jalali, you know, that's really typical. But it gets brought up. What's even better is when you don't have to do that, when the *Afghan* government, suddenly realizes through its own contacts down in that area that this guy's a bad apple and that gets relayed up their chain and suddenly guess what? It's working.

Anyway, that's sort of a political side track to the whole thing, but in terms of reconstruction and I will stress, the PRT is not in the business of removing governors or people. But when you're in that situation, you have to report what you see. You have to call it like you see them.

*Q: Then you're acting as an agent in support of the central government?*

A: Always. If the central government comes down and says, "you know what, tough." Well, okay, you work with them and that's the way it is. Paktia, Governor Waffa had pretty good connections in the palace, so he stuck around. Okay, I mean Waffa was difficult, in terms of reconstruction I was telling you about that Polish NGO that he drove out earlier.

*Q: Oh excuse me.*

[PAUSE]

A: So Governor Waffa for example, the difficulty with him would be that you'd want to go out and just as an example, build a school or build a police station and he'd say, "well, that'd be great but I already opened a school out there the other day and why don't you build me a swimming pool with that money?" It's like, you know, after a while you can ... and it was crazy because you'd say, "look, Chamkani district is up in flames, there's an open gun bazaar and an open drug bazaar, every time ..." I mean, they don't even shut the doors when the Humvees roll through.

*Q: What district was that?*

A: Chamkani district.

*Q: Which is where?*

A: Chamkani is on the eastern border with Pakistan from Paktia. Here is Gardez and right here ... And there's a little ... It's actually, I take it back, Chamkani doesn't directly border Pakistan, there's another little province or little district called Dand Wa Patan and Dand Wa Patan was just the doorway for Chamkani. The bad guys the bad eggs are all residents in Chamkani, Dand Wa Patan was just the transit point. Those are the two districts. They were the only—I mean if you're really going to have a major problem—that's was where you were going to have it. So you try to work some deal like this and instead the governor is asking for a swimming pool and after a while you kind of understand why Nero was fiddling and how that can happen.

But there you have it, that's the political side of it. To emphasize on leveraging your stove pipes: - If you're having a problem getting money moved, again, it's one thing if you're a USAID guy or your State guy is frustrated, it goes up through the chain to your military commander, suddenly that makes it over to the embassy and you might just get a general meeting with the ambassador, DCM meeting the General's XO, and "hey, how do we solve this?" I found that tremendously useful. It was any number of ways you could manage up, if you would, on your chains.

So, where does that leave us?

*Q: No, that was good. NGOs. You talked a little bit about NGOs, why don't we start with the last question. Could the NGOs have done a better job than the military of providing required assistance at that time?*

A: Hmm. Sometimes. It really depends. NGOs get treated, I think, in particularly in the military realm and also in the State realm as this one block. We know it's amorphous but we kind of treat them as if they're all the same and they're not. USAID gets that, that's sort of the advantage USAID brings to the table conceptually here. The NGOs do talk and coordinate but there's a whole lot of spectrum in between the most radically anti-coalition or anti-military and the most cooperative of them. When you're talking, you have to address not only their difference in view point but you have to address the difference in resources. Some NGOs are really big and have a lot of resources and can do a whole lot and some aren't, some are very small and very locally based. Then you have to talk about what place along the continuum you are in terms of humanitarian, reconstruction, development. I was describing that continuum earlier. A lot of NGOs are out there that are really good at crisis response. So is the military for that matter. So is USAID for that matter. What you have there, is a mature system of responding to humanitarian crisis evident in the tsunami relief effort, evident in the humanitarian crisis just after the attacks began in Afghanistan right after 9/11. There is a group of dedicated professionals, by and large who tend to know each other, particularly in the civilian world. A military system that is designed to execute and by and large, it's not hard to understand, but they get it done and they know how to do it. This is a solved equation and there are procedures and everybody gets it. Most importantly there's very little political controversy, it's humanitarian.

When you move up to the next stage of the continuum with reconstruction, again there's a large number of NGOs out there, they are varying in sizes from the largest—say, CARE or IRC, ACTED the French one—that have experience in the post-conflict world, have differing bureaucratic and political outlooks on this who have varying capacities to do various projects. ACTED got the Salang tunnel up north after I don't know how long they have been closed for ... and it was the only conduit for a while for trade coming in and out of Afghanistan other than coming through the Khyber Pass which of course, you have to bribe every tribal elder and brother to get through it if you weren't going to get your stuff stolen.

*Q: Where is this Shangra tunnel?*

A: Salang: it's up north on the Tajik border.

*Q: Oh okay, right.*

A: ... beautiful area of the country. I think it was a Russian-built tunnel. But in any case, ACTED got that opened, that's a major project, that's a big deal and they did it pretty quick. Could the military have done it any more quickly? I don't know if they could have, frankly. I don't know if the Army corps could have done it any faster. So they bring these skills to the table. On the other hand, not all NGOs are born equal and so you get the one NGO that is just a couple of people in Kabul and they make forays out to one or two places, well they don't have the resources to do this sort of thing. They might do very good works, they might have a contract to help out the school systems and assist in getting text books published or something but they're not something that brings a ton of resources to the table.

Finally, you have development. Here in development, again, large number of NGOs that are out there in varying sizes, skills and capacities and this is the place where the military says, "we

don't play." Just up front, "we don't do this, we don't do long term development." I mean, we do, the Army corps does it here domestically, but ...

*Q: ... in Mississippi.*

A: ... you know. If it's directed to, occasionally you'll see Army corps send people out there; they were involved with the road construction project. Red Horse, down in Haiti, which is the Air Force construction brigade, went and did some road building down there. But it's rare, by and large, everybody agrees the military is not in long term development. That's USAID and that's the NGOs. So if you have agreement on the left side on the spectrum with the humanitarian stuff and you have agreement on the right side of the spectrum with long term development and basically I think that's the case, then there's this middle ground that's very new for the military and it's very new for the NGOs which is: This post-conflict, reconstruction, "what's the role, the military, is it security only? Should it be involved in reconstruction? Does that not endanger NGO workers, civilians in general? Should not the military always be in uniform? Because if they look like civilians and make us targets, should they not distinctively identify their vehicles because otherwise our vehicles might be targeted." All of these are questions that the PRTs raised and that the NGOs were very sensitive to and which needed to be addressed and you address them.

Could they have done a better job than the military of providing required assistance? Not everywhere, not along the full spectrum of the continuum and in some cases, not immediately. The beauty of the military is that they come armed, they have their own huge logistical system and they can fight back. That is an advantage in a really difficult area that no NGO can bring to the table in large, logistical fashion. So, there were areas that the NGOs could not deliver that the PRTs would and that really was the purpose. That was the whole point of the exercise, it was, "hey look, Kabul's fine." The military doesn't need to do anything in Kabul, there's eight million NGOs here. Initially it was Gardez that needed to be reconstructed and needs assistance to stabilize, but there aren't any NGOs there that can operate there. But a military unit that's self-protecting could. Well Gardez settles down and the number of projects that the PRT was running in Gardez declined precipitously because the point is not to do projects where you can do them, the point is to do projects where it's hard to do them.

So the success measure of the PRTs, at least we in Gardez, tried to use this, "how many NGOs have come in? How many are operating in the area and can they push out in to other places?" The more NGOs we can welcome down to go in to these places, the more successful we were. We would always tell the NGOs, we don't want to compete with you, that is not our purpose at all. If you can do a project better, by all means go in and do it. We want to go the Wermamais(PH), we want to go to the Terwas, we want to go to the Chamkanis and operate there. And when those places have settled down and you guys want to move in Oruzgan and it was something that we really didn't stress enough, we only sort of developed the concept towards the end. But it's like, "look, we're trying to work ourselves out of a job here. Ultimately." Understandably there's some friction over how this is being done and this is brand new and not everybody's on the same page but look, we're all trying to do the same thing. It's really all about the Afghan people and getting a stable Afghan government so we can either work together and coordinate and keep it on the same page and make sure it's all happening, or we can

coordinate and not work together. That's okay too. If you're over here and you don't want us over there as the coalition, we don't have to go there. Today, this week, whatever. If you want to go in to an area that basically seems to be pretty safe and we think it is too, then we'll go to a higher threat area. That was really the purpose.

[PAUSE]

*Q: Right, sometimes the NGOs didn't buy in to it?*

A: No, some of them, the ones at the other end of the spectrum that bought in to it said, "yeah okay, work yourselves out of a job, we get that and certainly we need security here and if nothing else it was always the realist point of view of, well PRTs are here, they're not going to go away, U.S. government does nothing but slowly, so fine. We'll find a way to live with this." On the other end of the spectrum though, you did have people who were sort of in the more idealist camp who were rejectionists about PRTs in any way, shape or form and what they would say is, "look, what you should be in the business of doing, U.S. military, or coalition military, is providing security." Direct physical security, meaning, even in the extreme case, you should escort our convoy of trucks of supplies, going to a refugee camp or whatever. Well no, the U.S. military isn't in the business of escorting NGO columns as a matter of course. Certainly it has done so in an emergency situation but that wasn't the design for putting these PRTs out there and so you had varying levels of NGO acceptance and rejection on that. The whole point was, "look, we're not here to compete with you. Nobody wants to compete with NGOs and frankly there wasn't enough money." Number one, there wasn't enough money to go around anyway, number two, it wasn't enough money in all of CERP and all of USAID and all of the State Department budget to effectively compete over the long term. It wasn't a competition issue.

*Q: That's good. The next category is hand-over. It says some PRTs were organized by the U.S. and handed over to other countries, did that happen?*

A: Not in Gardez. The U.S. retained control of the south and south-eastern ones 'cause that's where the insurgency was going on. It happened elsewhere.

*Q: In the north and west?*

A: The Brits took over Mazar-e Sharif, the New Zealanders took over Bamiyan, the Germans established one in Konduz.

*Q: Who was military?*

A: Sorry?

*Q: What was the military ...*

A: They were militaries. British militaries.

*Q: Oh their militaries.*

A: Germans, Brits, New Zealanders ... Now I just heard there was a Lithuanian unit that was going to establish a PRT in Farah or some place or Nimruz maybe. Gradually it's being turned over to the NATO allies and anyone else who wants to come in and play as in the case of the New Zealanders. New Zealander's got the best deal, Bamiyan is definitely the best place of the country. [chuckle] So yeah, that's not a lot to tell there from the Gardez perspective.

*Q: Were you involved in any of these arrangements?*

A: No.

*Q: Okay. Police training; several PRTs co-located with U.S. police training centers?*

A: That's true, we were one of them. I think we had the original one, in fact. That was run by ... is it Dyncorps? I don't think it was Dyncorps. It was a contracting outfit, a large one, that brought in police trainers. They built their training center and the recruits were brought in from six surrounding provinces and there was a distribution factor for who came in from each province and they were selected by the governors. And there were raw recruits—it was two programs—it was raw recruits, new people to be trained up and then old timers, officers essentially who were coming in for, I wouldn't want to say rehabilitation, but like refresher training. So that these guys would establish a rapport with their recruits. So that would establish and it gave them human rights training, it gave them their Western policing training. They had a little range, they had ghurka guards. The only problem we had—we had an excellent relationship with them and we want to maintain that relationship because they had the best cafeteria in the area, they had an incredible contract ... they served us lobster one day, it was incredible—we had an agreement with them whereby we provided them signal flares and if they came under attack they would shoot off the signal flares. They had radios and they could radio us. That agreement originally was not made real clear, they did come under attack one night, rocket attack, because they were right down in a flat plain. They were sort of an easy launching target from the mountains and it hadn't been well thought out. They sent up their flares but nobody saw them and they tried radioing it in and the radios didn't work and finally they sent up a driver out and this old policeman came out and the commander said, "well I can send my guys out but what's the problem?" He said, essentially, what's the point, we're only going to be sending cars out there and they'd become targets. What we need to do is essentially send out a patrol, we'll organize one and we'll send it out and then what we'll do is we'll find the site and we'll clear it out and then what we'll do is organize a coalition area.

Well it wasn't the direct—and these were cops, ex-cops in some cases—that wasn't a direct response they wanted. What they wanted was an A-team to go out there and kick ass. That's just ... you could do that, you could send a team out there and see if you could find someone, who knows what you'd find. These guys when you're talking 107s, what they generally do is they take one or two or three or maybe as many as six, they line them up on crude, aiming mechanisms, rocks in many cases and they use delayed timers. Water timers for examples, water leaks out of a bucket and that causes gravity to do something and then it makes the connection and then off it goes. There's no aiming system. It's there to panic. It's there to sow ... It's just to say that they're there, if they get a hit it's a lucky hit, it's always a lucky hit with a 107. They're

long go, they're having tea and laughing and joking about how they stuck one to the evil infidel back in their huts, 20 miles away. There's no point in sending a patrol out. But what you can do, is start patrolling that area and other areas and clear it out. If you do that often enough, they can't do that delayed timer thing with reliability because you might find them. Well you might find them planting them. That's how you adjust to it. But it wasn't the answer that the police wanted, particularly after they fed us this wonderful lobster meal about a week before. But that got worked out, they got more flares and we worked on the system, we worked on the radios and the village became a whole lot better over time. They were always a good stop for VIPs who were coming down, they always wanted to see the police training facility.

*Q: So your primary responsibility was to protect them?*

A: No. Not at all, they had their own self protection capacity. We simply had an agreement that if the shit really hit the fan; if there was really ... if there was really 50 guys out there attacking the joint or threatening to overrun it, yes of course. The UN would deploy down there. But it was basically a coordination, information sharing, patrolling, sort of arrangement that we had with them.

*Q: And then those police, did they become local Gardez police?*

A: No. What they did, the recruits—the officers I think, went back to where ever it was that they came from—but the recruits would then get mixed up. The only thing I think they were sure of, was that they were not going back to their home province. The whole point was to reinforce the concept that they are national police. They serve the government, they have to learn to work with people from other blocks of life, other provinces, other ethnic groups and that they are all in this together as Afghans. That was an excellent, excellent part of the program.

*Q: So that was basically your involvement?*

A: With that facility. With the local police, well the local chief of police was always one of your chief contacts. Again, it's a dog's breakfast of what you're going to get from the local police chief. In Gardez we had a very well-connected fellow who had been there for ever, I think he'd been a policeman under the communist regime. He was looking to retire and feather his nest and he had a number of ways to do that and he wasn't especially effective on anything. That was just in tune with the governor, that was just fine with him. In Paktika, we had a fellow who was very much a friend of the governor, who was very active who brought his own people down with him and made a point of creating his own network down there. So you can get both sides of the spectrum.

*Q: So then, local police effort in Gardez was not intense? There wasn't a lot of police?*

A: No, I wouldn't say so. One thing that we did do, the PRT did do, which was innovative on the part of the force protection unit, which again, was that group out of Bragg, they offered to patrol with the police in Gardez. Just around Gardez and sort of showed them basic MP [Military Police] methods of how to patrol, how to talk to people, how to do street policing, how to stop and talk to somebody, how to stop and search somebody if you have to. That was something they

initiated and which the police really responded to. Later on, nationally the Afghan police program kind of got bogged down and one solution to it, one tool, was to deploy MP soldiers out to the PRTs to assess and start retraining. We got a couple of really sharp guys and they started this program too and they started working with the police and at that point, you started to see more police on the street taking a little more pride in what they were doing. It was funny because the chief of police didn't like that, what he really thought assistance to the police should mean was more guns, which would go to him of course. Definitely more money, which would go to him and "did we mention vehicles? We need vehicles." Well they did need vehicles, no doubt about it, they needed vehicles but not to get around Gardez. A policeman can easily get around Gardez to and from whatever his station is on a bicycle or a taxi. So there were these competing interests if you will. The best of what the MPs did, I thought, and certainly what the force-pro guys did was to show a policeman that, "hey man, you're not just a traffic cop. You're not just the guy standing on the circle waving traffic through. If you want to do that, lets show you how to really do that." You want to stop traffic? We'll stop traffic. *This* is what being a policeman is about and it was a professionalism that these guys in many cases if they were young, had not seen and if they're older they haven't seen in a long, long time. They really responded to it. That was all to the good.

The Afghans are a funny mix of really democratic, egalitarian, feisty individualistic and at the same time, very consensual, can not stand to be alone very any great period of time, and very respectful of order if they feel that order is backed by a legitimate authority. It's a fascinating mix but once, you will see people respond to the police, it was like, "okay, alright, he's doing something now. Great. About time."

*Q: How about rule of law?*

A: Rule of law: We had one project which we supported through a USAID project to ... It was a USAID program where the U.S. government funded the rehabilitation of the courthouse in Gardez. That came out very nicely. The ambassador came down to open it, it was a big hoo-haa. Helicopter, the ambassador, drive him down, open it up, governor came out, also some notables and functionaries; speeches were made, roses were thrown. It was a nice building. Unfortunately there wasn't a really solid program of training the guys who were supposed to use it. If you went down to that courthouse, that justice ministry building on any given day, there weren't a lot of people in there and the ones who were there weren't doing a whole lot. You'd occasionally see some people kind of waiting around to get some document signed or stamped or drawn up. Essentially what they were doing was bribing the judges—well bribing is a hard word—but they weren't getting a salary, they had to support themselves somehow. So they were paying these officials to do this, just kind of like a private enterprise and that was kind of tough. That goes back to the difficulties of the international community in coordinating what it was doing. The Italians had the lead on justice, they dropped the ball time and again and I don't think there's anybody out there who would disagree with that. There were challenges elsewhere, we all had challenges, but that particular one was kind of tough. Of course the Afghan government always had trouble on making the salary payments if it wasn't directly supplied by foreign government. The police got paid because money was going in to that account from the Germans and I think ... INL didn't do salary payments but they were helping elsewhere. So unless it was some direct funding mechanism it was often hard.



*Q: INL?*

A: Yes, State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement. They do policing, they do counter-drug, they do drugs and thugs: it's their moniker. So that was probably the major rule of law thing that we did down there. My colleague from DFID wanted to get more in to that but he was running in to his own bureaucratic obstacles when I left.

*Q: So you weren't able to make much progress in that area? That wasn't a primary was it?*

A: No. It was, sure it was. I mean, yeah as a priority it's just that you've got everything as a priority. This is a country that's been blasted back to the stone age. I mean, what is your first priority after you're sure nobody's dying from starvation or from exposure, well everything's a priority. There was a point where they wanted to rehabilitate a prison, they wanted to knock it down and rebuild it. The Italians were going to do this and there was some reason the Italians couldn't do it because it needed to be de-mined and they wanted the EOD [Explosive Ordnance Disposal] detachment on the base, they wanted the EOD detachment to de-mine it. Well that's not what the EOD detachment was there for, they were there to explode caches of weapons that were found and confiscated, that's what they did day in day out, they would just blow stuff up, all day long. That's the level of weaponry that there is in Afghanistan. You can go in any cave and probably find stacks of weapons and ammunition. The UN de-mining program had its own bureaucracies that wasn't going to play ball so it went on and on and essentially it became very difficult to deal with the Italian embassy in Kabul because they just essentially were looking for someone else to pick up the ball for them. So that became an issue.

Ultimately, the UN did step in with a different program to get the ball rolling. That was something in Gardez that we couldn't take responsibility for, we had no authority over prisons and it was something we definitely wanted done because the conditions—they weren't awful—but it was something that we just couldn't move.

*Q: Now you have achievements and assessments. Over all, some of which you've given but how would you sum up them?*

A: Are PRTs accomplishing their mission? Yes, I think they are. Are they doing it uniformly? No, no they're not. Where are they being successful? Well obviously they are being more successful in places that have less of an insurgency and that are less dangerous. Again, I would make the point, Bamiyan probably does not need a PRT. However, Bamiyan is the homeland of the Hazara tribe and they're the third largest ethnic group in Afghanistan and they're politically important and they've been persecuted for almost their entire time in modern history so politically it is important to have a PRT down there. Herat, does Herat really need a PRT? Mm, I don't know. Herat province maybe, these are areas that—Herat, Farah, Nimruz, far west, all desert right on the Iranian border—to some extent, our presence there counters Iranian influence, not by a lot. The Iranian influence is going to be pretty heavy out there, but up in the north, settling down commanders, the Brits always had problems in Mazar-e Sharif and in ... what is the other place they were in ... I don't see it here. They had a couple of bases and it was the Uzbek commander Dostam who was just such a problem, he wasn't just a problem for them, he was a

problem for Karzai and for everyone else for that matter. But where stabilization has taken root, the PRTs have become ... I think they are agents of that success and they are vehicles to that success and they are catalysts for that success. But they certainly aren't the only reason for that success, there's a lot of ingredients in that witches' brew from direct military action to special operations to NGOs providing a presence to finally, in the end game, the Afghan government actually being able to exert control. Is it a vehicle for providing security? No, it's not. It's a vehicle for fostering stability. That's the what the way I'd think of a PRT. It's immediate security-providing-ability is extremely limited. What it's there for is to foster an atmosphere of stability, to encourage people to believe in their government, to work and cooperate with their government, to provide programs and quick impact and credibility to the Afghan government in places that it's difficult for the Afghan government to exert control. And in providing that credible alternative to bad guys who really only have a vision of, in my opinion, warfare, violence and oppression. I can't think of anything better to describe the Taliban, it's really kind of how they are.

Expanding central authority? Yes. Are they an effective vehicle? Yes. Could they be more effective? Yes, you bet. If we had more of an Afghan presence, even though that would undoubtedly entail all manner of politics involved in it, the more Afghans you have in a PRT on behalf of the central government, the better off you are.

*Q: How many did you have in yours?*

A: One. And he's responsible for the ... he had the waterfront and the problem with that is, if you work for the ministry—in a straight bureaucratic organization, they fund the State Department and I'm supposed to represent six U.S. government agencies—who do you think gets the priority? The guys who pay my bills. On top of that, you could have me out there representing the Department of Energy's interest, but I don't know the first thing about energy issues or anything along that line. Similarly, a cop, even a really skilled one, is just not going to be able to represent the interest of say, the health ministry effectively. You know, he's not a doctor, he's not a nurse, he's not a bureaucrat in that area, so he doesn't know it. So the more that you can have out there and they don't even have to be in the PRT, they can just have their ministry ... Or if they need to be co-located with a PRT, fine, for various logistical reasons, but the more cooperation you're going to get from the Afghan central government the better off you are. That's ultimately, again how it expands.

The governors of course are very jealous of their authority. They're the cons. They run these little fiefdoms. I used to call Governor Waffa in Paktia, I used to call him "Boss Tweed." That's how he functioned. So they want a little central authority because it brings them money, but they don't want to act on central authority because it detracts from their con-ate if you want. Reconstruction and development: is it an effective vehicle? Yes, but I would stress that it's meant to be a quick-impact and on the military side and it's a vehicle for putting civilian agencies out there to do more medium and long-term stuff. In the final end game, it's there to foster the stability that allows them to leave and all these civilians to continue working in an atmosphere of relative security. Utilizing American military and humanitarian resources, is it effective? Yeah, it's new. Certainly the military side of it, is it efficient? I don't know what efficient is, but it's certainly very effective in getting stuff out there. No one would argue that the

military is an efficient organization but in terms of what can be done quickly in terms of execution it certainly has that ability. In terms of the assessment, my lessons are—there are a number of lessons—but the main one is that PRTs probably should have a shelf life and sort of like a five, one year plan. Optimally they can have a two or three year plan. But that plan, notes the continuum, it tracks the progress along the continuums of security, of reconstruction, of where people can go and function without fear of danger to their lives ... and cooperation from the local government entities, local communities. And it should be able ... the goal is, at the end of that one or two or three or five year plan, to work yourself out of a job. There should be sort of a master PRT plan that would shut them down as a place becomes mature and it transitions in to straight development.

Here's my bet. Let's say you start with Bamiyan and you say, right, Bamiyan's mature, we can move out of here. As soon as that message went out, I would guarantee you within a month, there'd be a bunch of "attacks." And I say "attacks" with quotation marks. No body would get hurt, nobody would get killed but stuff would blow up. That would be people saying, "huh, we need to get the PRT here, clearly they need a security reason to be here, therefore, we'll create that security reason." The Afghans are nothing if not clever. But that would really be the optimal thing as you find stable areas, since you have a limited resource in the number of civil affairs you are and it's getting smaller everyday, you move in to the areas that are far more difficult and need more help.

Could we adopt or should we adopt another approach to accomplish the same objectives? Yeah. In Afghanistan? No, this seems to be working. A wholesale transition—I'm not sure—to another system, I'm not sure how effective that would be. You're probably better off staying the course. I think there's reasonable success and reason enough to continue the program in some of the more difficult areas like Paktika. Another country? Different story. You know the Afghans have a culture that's based on consensus, it's based on discussion, it's based on small "d" democracy at the lowest level. So in that sense, PRTs can have a really good effect. You go to another country that's maybe a lot more hierarchical, maybe that doesn't work so well. Maybe there's a different approach you need. So I don't see PRTs as the model of the 21<sup>st</sup> century for post-conflict reconstruction, quite the opposite, I see them as an experiment, one that has successes and failures. I see them as a potential tool. There are numbers of ways that you can visit their structure. Rumsfeld was talking at one point about civilian dominated or majority-civilian PRTs; pipe dream, if you're talking USG civilians. But there's nothing to say that a relatively stable environment you couldn't put out a group of civilians from the U.S. government with a force protection element only and have them coordinate with the NGOs and the UN in these areas. It's just that the military tends to be faster from the U.S. government arms to put their money out there. It doesn't mean you couldn't do it logistically, especially if they had an adequate force protection element.

[END TAPE 2, SIDE A]

*Q: Okay, this is side two, tape two.*

*A: PRTs originated with the civil affairs groups called "chicklicks" which wasn't spelled that way. It was different, I think Coalition Humanitarian Liaison Cell. These were civil affairs*

teams. Civil affairs personnel are considered to be in the special operations forces, they're SOF. Although they're again, the redheaded step child of SOF, because they're not the direct door-kicking types. But they had gone to places like Herat and Gardez—well, I don't think they were in Gardez—but they've gone to places like Herat and Bamiyan early on after hostilities were more or less over in Afghanistan and the government had stood up in Kabul. What happened was the AID people from, you know, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance [OFTA], Office of Transition Initiatives [OTI], were going out to visit them and people thought that this was a pretty good idea. Somewhere along that line that germinated in the bowels of the Pentagon to be, "Jeez, why don't we have civil affairs and USAID and maybe other people out there, wouldn't this be a good idea."

Civil affairs units operate in Bosnia, they operate in Kosovo, they have operated in Haiti. If you have a problem with PRTs, my question is do you have a problem with the civil affairs community? Because this is what they do, this is a little more organized, there's more money, it's more directly aimed at reconstruction but this is what civil affairs folks do. They get involved in governance, they get involved in projects, they get involved with rebuilding things; they're good at it. Their reservists, they have real jobs in real America in the private sector, they bring a lot of skills to the table, it's crazy not to leverage that asset.

Is the PRT the right form all the time? Probably not. But you'd be crazy not to use that kind of assistance and that kind of skill set. You're crazy to turn it down. So from that perspective, I think, the PRTs do bring something to the table. You just have to consider whether, A: is it the right environment for them and B: whether this is the right structure and if that couldn't be modified. Of course it'd be modified: PRTs are ultimately, they're extremely flexible. You can modify them and do whatever you want.

Lessons that you would draw from the experience: One thing PRTs do that the NGOs, I'm sure it would drive them wild, some of them. PRTs do something that NGOs don't and that's feed information back to the U.S. government, regularly. That doesn't mean they're spies, it doesn't mean they're intel-collectors. But they do feed information back and in a place like Afghanistan, it's utterly critical. It's just so critical. You talk 2002, 2003, even in 2004, these guys are going to places no one has seen in ages. Very rare the man or woman who has traveled to some of these places, if at all. If you're going to be effective as the U.S. government and the international community and helping the Afghan government stand itself up, you have to know the lay of the land, you have to know the players. You can't just be stuck in the capital. What PRTs do is they push, not just U.S. government, but coalition officials out there on assignments for maybe six or twelve months or more. They push them out there for VIP visits which were impossible previously. This brings a level of visibility and a level of understanding that is desperately needed by the embassies in Kabul and the respective capitals around the world. The NGOs, you know, I never made that argument to them primarily because I've just come up with it here, but I guess, I wonder how they receive that. You don't need a PRT to send information back, but in some respects you do, because you need that force protection element. That's something we don't get out of them. I would argue to you, it's every bit as critical in the grand scheme and the long term of having a successful mission and standing up. The mission is not to build a well. The mission is not "make Nangarhar safe for IRC to work in." The mission is not to remove a bad militia commander from Paktia. All of these are parts of the mission. The mission is to have a

stable, developing Afghanistan that is no longer a haven for terrorism. That's the mission for the U.S. government perspective and I would argue the coalition perspective. In most—I can't think of too many NGOs that would have a problem with that statement, although maybe not as bold—that's what you want here. And the information that you provide from these outer areas that people just haven't seen in 25 years, that they haven't been to and that are so critical to reassembling this fragmented, atomized country, is every bit as important as the physical reconstruction of it. If you don't understand what you're dealing with, if you don't have a way to get out and sort of have influence there and grasp it, you're not going to be effective. PRTs are very good about that. In no way would I ever say that this was an intelligence thing, it's not, it's information. It's simply being out there and knowing what's going on and that's critical anywhere but especially here.

Finally, what advice would I pass on for future operations?

I actually wrote a paper on this up in Newport. The place—I'm sort of going to jump up a little bit above the levels of PRTs—I told you how the chains of commands function and how you could leverage those and I told you how the PRTs had difficult chain of command issues in and of themselves with either bad or unclear management up above or low priority for logistics and supplies or what have you. What the real issue to me is, when you step up a level, is at what the military call the "operational level" there's a real disconnect between the military and the civilians.

I'm going to get a little theoretical here, do we have enough tape?

*Q: Mm-hmm.*

*A:* But, at the tactical level, everybody works real well together and the tactical level is almost never a problem unless it's a personality clash. At the strategic level well, there's all sorts of bureaucratic in-fighting and politics this and politics that, but at the end of the day, someone in a position of authority and maybe it has to be the president, makes a decision and people execute. There's all sorts of bureaucratic jujitsu that goes on but basically, you have to learn to work together. That's what the policy coordination committees are for and that's what the deputy's meetings are for and so forth and so on, the principles committee and all that. There's this whole level right in between that doesn't have that kind of activity. So you have your strategic and your policy level up top, you've got your tactical on the ground level at the bottom and right in between is this operational level and for the State Department that's basically the embassy. But it doesn't fit real well with the military's theater commands. Because the theater command is trying to deal with many embassies and the embassies only deal with one country. When you're dealing with something like an PRT or this kind of concept and you're trying to use the theater structure in a country to leverage resources to use this mission, you are missing the civil military connection at the operational level. It only happens by and large in the embassy and a lot of times it doesn't happen really well.

What we really need to do for any post-conflict effort is have civilian agencies provide people to the theater commands in teams, I think, who are really to a: do planning. Planning to how to do this critical, not at the Washington level: the operational level. Have USAID offer people in that

theater command saying, "this is what you need to the day after you bomb." This is the humanitarian assistance you will need. This is the reconstruction assistance that will probably be brought to bear. Here's your rule of law, here's your police, here's your army retraining aspect. You know, yaddi-yaddi-yaddi-yadda. Get your State people in there to provide the political reality check. And as needed, there will be other agencies that need to do this, but we need our teams to do this planning. It's deliberate planning and it's crisis planning with the military. They need a separate bunch of teams who can actually deploy with the military when the military breaks us up between phase one and phase four. Phase one is essentially planning and getting ready for war. Phase three is the war and phase two is getting ready for the war and phase four is post-conflict. And traditionally the military does phase four very badly. They don't do post-conflicts real well.

Phase three of course, we are champs at. We know how to do that part of it, we can break stuff like nobody's business and phase one and two they've actually got that down very well, they do the planning part very well, but the civilians aren't there. That's why phase four is often such a disaster. You can win a war, you can win the battles and lose the war. You can win your war and lose your policy gains. What wins phase four is the implementation of the political aspects that you fought that war for. If you don't implement that, if you don't win the peace, there's no point in fighting the war. So what you need to do is have these people deploy out when CENTCOM [Central Command] or PATCOM [Pacific Command] or whoever is spinning up, get them ready in phase two, send them over. They should have gone over in terms of Afghanistan, they should have gone to where ever it was that CENTCOM located itself in Doha or where ever it was. Same with Iraq, and have them—honestly, they're not in the country yet—but they're there, understanding the situation, prepping Washington to get the logistics ready, to get in with the military and be these teams that are just immediately ready to go in and you'd have more follow on teams. They don't always have to be—I don't want to say—ready made PRTs, but ready made agents to go out to these army bases and what not as we did in Iraq, learning from the Afghan model. Although in Iraq we came in late again.

You have to have the civilians, the civilians have to be ready first of all to do this before the fact, not after the fact. They have to be involved from phase one on ward. Planning, readying, deploying and then post-conflict. And in post-conflict, that's when the civilians go in, just, "okay, we've got a plan, it's 80% and we're going to work it and get that other 20% right. Then you will see winning the peace, you'll see phase four be a lot better. How that relates to PRTs is that makes it easier to deploy PRT-like instruments, it makes it easier to staff them, to man them and it will make them a hell of a lot more effective because you'll have someone, theoretically, in oversight over them: Both civilian and military, who have been at this from the outset; who started this before the war, or whatever hostilities eventuated. Then you have your tactical people who are out there, they know what the mission is, they go do it. Then you have that team that's at CENTCOM and Doha, during the war, who was in the embassy, right when that gets established. That's the operational level is where we just have not married the civilians and the military. We can do it at the tactical level ad hoc, that works, it's not great but it works. Strategically, we have, Washington-wise, we have mechanisms. Nobody's going to argue they're good, perfect or likeable. Anybody listening to me here is going to have participated in PCC probably and I'll tell you what a pain that is.

*Q: PCC?*

A: Policy Coordination Committee. That's where all the agencies gore their oxen in the pursuit of policy. Yeah, it's painful but it works. Where we don't have anything is that operational level. All you have is generally a Political Advisor [POLAD] and that poor POLAD, that's not his job and he would be under resourced to do it. And then other people would tell you the JIACG is the answer, the JIACG is the Joint Inter-Agency Counter-Terrorism Group I think, or Coordination Group. But it's a narrowly focused counter-terrorism group initiative. You can hang all these other people off the JIACG structure logistically but the JIACG isn't the answer. So that's my advice for how we do this better is that it needs to ... It's not a matter of tinkering with the PRT structure. You'll do that anyway depending on what your mission is. It's an operation level question, where this needs to be done from the outset in a much more organized fashion and it's incumbent on the military to welcome that, it's incumbent on the military to support the civilians in congress when they ask for that and it's incumbent on the civilian agencies to devote the resources to do it, particularly State and USAID. They've just got to do this, we can not continue to say, "oh we don't have the bodies, we don't have the money and we'll ask for a written supplemental, we'll take it out of hide." You know, come on. You can't rebuild a nation on some sort of hand-to-mouth thing.

*Q: True. Well thank you very much. This is a terrific interview and I'm sure it's a lot of good ideas for the folks who are listening.*

A: Yeah, work on that will you guys?

[END TAPE]