

USIP – ADST  
Afghanistan Experience Project

Interview #16

Executive Summary

The interviewee served as the State Department representative at PRT Mazar-e-Sharif in the second half of 2003. As one who came into the PRT process relatively early in the process, he noted that he had no overlap with his predecessor, apart from a phone call, and that he had no significant consultations in Washington or at Embassy Kabul, or specific instructions, before arriving at his PRT. He stressed the importance of PRT officers receiving as much language training and cultural/area background as possible before starting their work.

The interviewee described how the PRT's relations with UNAMA and NGOs in the area got off to a bumpy start. The NGOs did not trust the military. This changed, however, after the PRT assisted in the medevac of an NGO staff member and after the PRT commander invited NGO representatives to PRT commander conferences and after the commander solicited NGO input and advice.

The interviewee stressed the need for much greater flexibility – and less paperwork – for economic and other development projects. He compared British DFID's speed to the much slower pace of USAID.

To the extent possible, the interviewee tried to follow the reporting plan mandated by Embassy Kabul. He ran into only one problem area: reporting on mass graves and war crimes. His PRT commander told him specifically not to investigate or report on these subjects because of local sensitivities.

Communications remained a problem for the duration of the interviewee's tour in Afghanistan. Classified and unclassified communication in State Department channels was impossible, so he piggy-backed on military or commercial networks. As a retiree working on contract, this was annoying for the interviewee, but he noted that this arrangement would have made the work of a full-time Foreign Service Officer more difficult.

Because of disappointment with Embassy Kabul management (State and USAID) that was caused by the fact that some of his reports were not relayed back to Washington, the interviewee established parallel reporting to the Department. According to the interviewee, end-users in the Department and elsewhere welcomed these reports. At the same time, USAID Kabul criticized the interviewee for having done this, and for having established informal lines of communication to interested Congressional staffers.

United States Institute of Peace  
Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training

**Interview #16**

*Interviewed by: Jack Zetkovic*

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*Q: Could you please tell us when you served in Afghanistan and what was your position?*

A: I left on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July, 2003, and got back on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January, 2004, exactly six months and I spent the vast majority of that time in Mazar-e Sharif as the State Department Representative, a title I gave to myself, at the British Provincial Reconstruction Team in Mazar-e Sharif, which had responsibility for the five northern provinces including Faryab, Sar-e-pul, Jawzjan, Balkh, and Samangan.

Mazar-e Sharif is the capital. And that's in Balkh province. Then there's Jawzjan, and the capital of that is Sherbghan, which is Dostum's - the headquarters now of the Uzbek leader, General Abdul Rashid Dostum. And I was his principle interlocutor for the U.S. And in Faryab province, Sari-pol, and Samangan. Five provinces bordering on Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and a little bit of Tajikistan. And it was, I became, I now am at the center of Afghanistan cities and you'd think I would be an expert. Well, I became an expert on July 21<sup>st</sup> when I got on the plane. I had been posted in Tehran, so I spoke some Farsi. And it was just a sheer, sheer luck that I got the assignment when Jerry Bremer had come out of retirement to go to Iraq, I said hell, if Bremer can do it, I'll do it. So I called up and I got on the list, on several lists...

*Q: Who'd you call?*

A: I called Bremer. And he was at the, literally his plane was taking off from Andrews Air Force Base and I got through to one of his military assistants and I talked to him briefly and he wrote my name wrong. Spelled it wrong. But anyway I got on a series of lists to go to Iraq and it never happened. One day I was going through the Foreign State Magazine and I looked, there was an article about an American FSO in Mazar-e Sharif. I didn't know him, but I knew his father, a retired Ambassador. So I called up my friend and he said, 'Oh, that's my son.' He said 'You oughta call him. He's leaving tomorrow to go out to his next post. So I called him, he said 'Yeah, you ought to call the Afghanistan Desk' (in the SA Bureau). I called. It was the day before the Fourth of July weekend. I came in the Monday after and two weeks later I was on a plane. And the Office Director, I stand in awe of her. She knew what she wanted, she knew who she wanted to do it, she'd back you up. She was a terrific manager, and she saved my ass many times. Because the Charge`, well, they said he would have fired me fifty times if he could have. And that's a story you probably don't want to hear all about, but it's a tough job to be Charge` there.

*Q: Before going out, did you have any briefings, did you have any meetings, did you talk to anyone here, or were you just, were you told to just get on the plane? And then what was the status of your, because you were retired and there on contract? How did it work?*

A: I was a WAE (When-Actually-Employed contractor), and I had done six previous tours as a consular officer as a WAE, so I was already on the rolls of CA/EX (the Consular Affairs Bureau), and that proved to be a mistake. I never got on the rolls of SA (South Asian Affairs Bureau), and I was paid one grade below for the whole time, for six months. So that only screwed me out of about twenty thousand dollars, I'm still working on that. But I was, as I said, a WAE, I was ready to go and my predecessor, who I hope you'll interview her over the phone, she's wonderful. And she was there for three months; she was a PD officer. She did in three months what I had started to do in six months. She was so damn good. But she had already left, and so there was a gap, and so I felt I wanted to get there. Also I was very pleased to know I was going to a British area, the first American to do this. And it was converted then from a U.S. team to a British team, so I was going to be the first. And I got there and I didn't really know what my title was, when I got there it was awkward because I had known our Ambassador when he was DCM in Zagreb. And when I got there about two days later he was given the gate, you know, he was sent packing. And then his successor, who I got to know for a little bit in the brief time he was there, and then he got the gate. So I got there and, really, there was a lot of turmoil within the political section. The woman who had stayed on to, and was the acting Political Counselor for about the first two or three months before she finally, she had extended, and when everybody was leaving she just said 'I'm changing my mind, I'm not going to stay and I'm leaving.' And she was superb. So you had a series of people in the political section -- the political economic -- that just, you never really knew who was doing what, especially with PRTs, until we got the PRT coordinator, a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful guy, who was perfect for the job. He was just what the doctor ordered. He had a political sense, he got the best out of people, he backed you up to the degree he could, although he had an awkward situation within, he was older and outranked I think, or equal ranked to the Political Counselor, so it was one of those awkward situations. And I'm not sure that he ever had the full trust and faith of the Charge`.

But Mazar-e Sharif, well, it was all sheer luck I got there, but I can't imagine a better place to have been, because of the Brits. They took it on in a very serious way. The British, the British Ambassador - they had their own C-130 that backed us up, and he was up there once before he left, he came once a week with his first secretary, it was - I won't get into the humorous side of that story - anyway, and so they had tremendous support from the British. I was, you know everybody started to say 'Well, why are you here?' There was a woman from the Foreign Commonwealth Office who was very experienced and very good. And I said 'I'm here because I'm here.' I mean, there was supposed to have been some sort of a written agreement between the U.S. and the U.K. about the American being assigned there, as the State Department person. I've never found it, and everybody kept referring to it but no one there could ever produce an answer. But the Brits welcomed me with open arms. I had worked very closely with the British in Bosnia, and so I felt very much like I was at home, that my qualifications - actually you only had to look in the 'A' category: "Anglophile, Avuncular, Asshole" - no (chuckles). Anyway, it was my salvation. We had the best conceivable British commander.

The British PRT commander hardly needed my political advice. He had been in northern Ireland, he had been in Bosnia, he had been in Kosovo. He knew instinctively what to do. And it was, when there was a problem he went and grabbed both Dostum and Atta sort of by their collar - you know, virtual collar - and said 'All right, what's going on here? Let's... is there fighting going on? Let's go there.' And he didn't hesitate. If there was force protection there it was only because it was built in and we used it all the time, but he never, there was never a situation that I recall that he ever hesitated going in the most dangerous places and telling these people to stop doing what they were doing.

I remember one of his, I'm very anxious to see his report, I presume they recorded it or something, there'll be some report, because he has insisted about one thing, that is that he did not want to be part of ISAF. Because he wanted to have close air support if needed. And there were times, and clearly they knew we had it, and I'll never... Also I'll never forget, he was a very soft-spoken, six-foot-six, very soft spoken, and in the way of the British commanders they hardly ever raise their voice or ream somebody out, you know they just keep very quiet, but I'll never forget when he said -- this was about the second week I was there -- he said, 'Let's go over to this thing over here.' I can't remember what it was called, but it was a unit that was hanging around there that was pretty close to Dostum. It was an American unit of reservists, special forces over there. And he made it so absolutely clear that if these guys did anything again, that he must have had something coming, threw a cobble through it, that they didn't check with him, they were gone. And in fact they came to every staff meeting after that, and they were gone before too long. He just, this was his, he covered the whole area. He was out on patrol every time he could go, we were blessed with, we had SAS and they were going deep, far into the south. I really don't know what they did, I don't know if they got anything. They kept a certain distance within the PRT, they had their own quarters, they would come to the staff meetings, and coordination was the name of the game. We had a staff meeting every night at six forty-five, it went on for an hour and a half, two hours. And one of the other things that we did early on - and this was actually my recommendation, that we got in bed with UNAMA. We really did, I mean our Chief of Staff. Every morning he went over to their briefing, attended, every evening they had their military advisor or their Head of the Mission, Head of Office come over and attend our meeting. And there was a great suspicion about the PRT in the beginning until one incident. One of the local staff I think it was at UNAMA got sick, and we had, we were blessed, we had a doctor, the doctor was there in like five minutes or ten minutes and saved the life of that person. After that, we could do no wrong. And UNAMA went to bat for us, they became really our advocate with the NGOs, the international community.

*Q: Did you have much work directly with UNAMA?*

A: Oh, yeah.

*Q: Who was there for UNAMA at the time?*

A: The UNAMA head was a very strong woman. And she ended up, to my great amazement, marrying the Australian military guy who was assigned there. You would never have known it. I mean it's just one of those... My PRT commander informed me about it. And there was a terrific Canadian who was the effective number two, although it was a little unclear. There was a

German who was first class, but the real guy who was the expert, and he'd been in Afghanistan for years, was in northern Ireland, and I can't, his name's just not coming back for me at the moment, but he was, he knew all of these things, and it was so interesting to see how, you know, in the first instance I remember the first meeting I had with, when I was introduced to UNAMA, the UNAMA head said 'What is your mission? What are your goals? What are your objectives? What are you here to do?' And I said, you know, 'Well I'm here to do my job.' 'What instructions do you have?' And I had no instructions from Kabul. Except, I take that back, the acting Political Counselor, who's name I can't say right now, was so good. She switched jobs when she was then on the Kazakhstan desk I think. Anyway, I said 'Well, what? I'm a Political Officer, what am I, POLAD?' Because there was no AID person there, and my AID person when I left, I said 'I was told that we were going to have a million dollars suspended in PRT, and I thought wow, finally, I get to administer some programs.' And that turned out to be nothing, in six months we did not spend one red cent of USAID money in that PRT. Not one red cent.

*Q: Well, how come?*

A: Well, the whole set of instructions on how to do it didn't come out until October 16. I got there, that was October -- July, August, September to October -- three months after I got there. The AID representative arrived about a week before that, and she was a very culturally attuned person. She had been a Peace Corps volunteer. She was a good friend. Except we disagreed. First of all, I was one of these people that said 'Wait a minute! That's State Department money! I want to have some say in how that money's spent, that's economic support funds!' And at first the guy in the political section who had done the same thing, our coordinator - I'm sorry I can't remember his name, it'll come. Our coordinator said 'Oh, I went through that same problem with Cuba. Boy, I'm going to back you up.' Well, he didn't. He didn't. And I differed completely on what priorities were. I don't believe in building curbs and culverts with U.S. taxpayers money unless its absolutely essential. I believe in hearts and minds! I was trying to create a domestic peace corps working with students of journalism, etcetera. And she wanted to do culverts and curbs, and we never got it resolved. The whole time I was there we would not, she would not submit the projects to our committee to meet on it. And so, the Colonel tried to work it out, but then his successor took her side completely. And they couldn't understand why I wanted to have a say in this, but actually to some degree I was happy because there was no money wasted that way.

But that was, the British on the other hand, DFID, Department of Foreign and International Development, or Department for International Development, they had a real pro up there. He didn't have to submit his projects to anybody, he just simply wrote the contract. I remember one time I carried twenty-seven thousand dollars in cash for him. And he got things done. And that's, they would never give that authority to, you know, a USAID rep, they had to go through, the Bible that the guy created was twenty-seven pages long on how to get money spent quickly. And this, I was also very interested in this because the mission director was a longtime friend of mine. And when I got there I was very pleased to see him, and I made a tactical mistake when I first got there, I said 'Well, I know (a colleague) at the University of Nebraska Center of Afghanistan Studies.' Whamo. I suddenly became a person in a category, because the University of Nebraska at Omaha had done the textbook project after the Taliban fell, the so-called ARENA program, I can't remember exactly what that stands for. And there was a lot of

bitterness, hard feeling over it because of the content and also because of the delivery. And the University of Nebraska, Omaha has a press up there, UNO education press. And you talk to anybody in USAID and it just builds into the woodwork. The University of Nebraska has published a whole explanation of what happened, they weren't responsible under the contract for distribution, it was I forget UNICEF or others were responsible, but they got labeled with it. And there were some problems with the content, they had to do this in like forty-five days, and they just took, they went back in history and took something that turned out to be something that was subject to criticism. And it's an issue I never got into, because it was history and you were not going to change people's minds on it, everybody said 'Oh, well they didn't deliver.' But by being associated with Nebraska, I was known at USAID as someone who, first of all, was involved with the University of Nebraska, Omaha. Secondly, I was known as someone who was highly critical of USAID programs.

But I mean, I know USAID, I've worked with USAID in many other places. And they had their own way of doing things, which just seems to be inevitable. And I regretted that there were some things I would like to have done with the OTI for example when we were in Bosnia and Serbia, we had some wonderful programs. But it just was... and they were understaffed, there was no doubt about it, there was no place for people to stay, and the guy who ran it was an old retired Army Colonel, can't say his name right now, but he was a bit rough. And he then left and he got another guy, good guy who became the USAID coordinator for the PRTs. And the new AID coordinator had been in a PRT, I think he was in Kandahar or somewhere in the south. And so he was a hands-on guy, he knew how to get things done. And I think things got better then. But when I arrived in Kabul, I was there for a week, it was sort of like 'Oh, you're with PRT. The secretary in the political section who later became the Office Manager in the front office basically let me know that we weren't worth the trouble. We were more trouble than we were worth. They were there, and she was supposed to have arranged these appointments for me for these briefings and things, she spent all the time on the phone and nothing ever happened. To go out to Bagram to have your briefing out there, you had to coordinate the vehicle security and all of that. And it was not well done. I basically arranged my own schedule, and that's fine, I'm a big boy, but we were considered to be... Lynne was her first name, in the political section. I think she even uttered it, and she was so good. Because we were, when we were in from the field we had an office that was adjacent to the political section, it was later taken over by he ARG, the Afghan Reconstruction Group, and then we had really hardly any place to go. But my immediate predecessor had only gone out there, spent three months, and came back. She never came back and forth. I said 'I'm going to be at the Embassy once a month. I've got to know what's going on. I have no classified means of communication and I just, plus I like to know what's going on. And I've been in the field before and, you know, you can easily be forgotten.

So I made the point to come down, and then they started having , I think on October 26<sup>th</sup> was the first one, the PRT commanders' conference, and that was such a terribly important, in fact we crashed it. We weren't invited -- the State Department representative or USAID, and my commander said, 'Oh, you're coming.' I said 'Well, I'm going.' And we went. And well 'Well, you're not supposed to be here.' But then after that they included everybody and that became a very important element, especially for the NGOs. The first military commander was a fighter, the second was a builder. Smart they put them together. The last meeting of the PRT commander's conference I went to in late December, early January, I can't remember. The

commander had all the NGOs in. They were absolutely flabbergasted, he said 'This is what we're thinking about doing, these are our plans, I would appreciate your comments and your input.' What? I mean, he just, I remember these guys from these embassies, they just wrote notes like this, you know they can report back to their capitals that they were included in the process. I mean he just totally disarmed them.

We had a U.S. Army reservist who was assigned to us originally so we could access the reconstruction funds through the military Defense Department channel, there's a certain acronym for it, I can't remember what it was called. And when I got there, my commander looked in and said 'Wait.' Because he'd been a police officer, a customs officer, immigration officer, and he was running the deportation unit in west Texas, Pecos Texas and he's now, a GS 15 in DHS, and he is a piece of work. He got there and my commander said 'You know, we don't need you to do the work you're assigned here to do. You're a policeman. We need you for police advisor.' So he took him and used him brilliantly. That was one of the good things about being with the British. The commander did whatever he wanted to do. I mean he told people, but he really did it. We brought in the first non-factional police to Mazar-e Sharif. That was all his initiative, obviously he was keeping the British Embassy informed and his commanders, and they were keeping the whole UN mechanism informed and the fact that UNAMA was with us, you know they got on board too. And our guy from Pecos, Texas was put in charge of that, we got three hundred, I'll never forget, the Minister of Interior Jalawi, who was, he's an officer for Voice of America, running a language service. He came to town, and I'll never forget my commander saying, 'You promised three hundred police, and they are going to be here three days from now.' And they did. Showed up. They didn't have any support mechanism, we had to provide that, but we started replacing the police of Dostum on the streets of Mazar and the police of Atta, checkpoint by checkpoint, working very closely with UNAMA. And you could see the only problem was that they were paid police, and when I left this was a huge problem, I said 'How? Dyncorps? Dyncorps had a contract for fifty-five, sixty thousand police to be trained over that period, you know in a two-year period, and this is supposed to change everything, it's supposed to bring law and order, but if you can't pay three hundred police in four months, what are you going to do when you've got fifty thousand of them? Where's the money coming from?' And we got into one of these huge international, 'Oh, the Germans are responsible for it, the UN, the British were supposedly responsible for it.' They finally got paid, but it was, just a sign of things to come.

As I say, I went through Kabul with people saying 'Well, why are you here?' Lynne, what's her name, did take an interest. She gave me a reporting list. I said 'Well, you know, I guess I'm a political reporting officer.' Well, your reporting plan, she gave me a very, you know, reasonable one, and I followed it to the degree I could, except for one key issue. That's war crimes and mass graves. And there were a lot of those up there in the north. I said 'It's an important issue.' And not only was it on that list, but it was reinforced when Pierre Richard Prosper, the special envoy, was supposed to come out. We had actually a TDYer, in the political section, who's name I can't say right now. He later went to a PRT, who was, that was kind of his issue. I remember it. Dostum had invited the special Ambassador, special envoy, in Kabul, in September for the text time it comes, come to the north and see the mass graves. And I, so I said 'I've got to be laying groundwork, I have to go out and see these things.' That's where I ran into a roadblock with my commander. He said 'No, you won't.' The only thing we disagreed on.

Well, one other thing we disagreed on. 'No you won't.' he said. 'That's going to have a negative impact on our mission.' UNAMA agreed with him, I actually went back and put it in a document and sent it to David Sedney, and David told me that in a very rational, reasonable way to stand back. Now you're there as part of his team, and so I was relieved, you know it was, when there's a reporting requirement if I'm not going to do it I like to be told, well, you can put that on the back burner. Although the issue is still, clearly the issue is going to be huge, and I used to tell Dostum, when I had, I met with Dostum every couple or three weeks. We had long, long, long conversations. And I'm a storyteller. And he's a storyteller. And he would keep people waiting for hours while we were telling stories. And I said 'Oh, I've got to go.' (Chuckles). Dostum clearly saw himself on our side, and indeed I ended up after six months having quite a bit of respect for him. The last thing he did on January 12<sup>th</sup> I think it was, he crawled out of sickbed to say goodbye to me. And he took me out to his equivalent of Arlington cemetery where eight hundred of his fighters are buried, had created this monument. He asked me 'You've got to bring something from New York City to put here.' And I will, I'll get it. I don't know when. I'll be in New York City later this month, or next month, and I'm going to go over, knock on doors, and say we've going to get something for eight-hundred people who were killed fighting for us. And he wants something from New York. I talked to (the former DCM in Kabul) about it the other day, and he said he got the flag which was in the chancery and the stairs are going up there.

Let me tell you how I first met him. I left, I got there on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, I flew to Mazar on the 30<sup>th</sup>, somewhere in there the Ambassador got the word that he'd been given the gate. I had a meeting with him, because I liked him a lot, I remember when he was DCM in Zagreb. And I thought that was a well-run embassy, I must say. Sort of liked him out there in the trenches when push came to shove. Anyway, he gave me a letter from a fellow in Scottsdale, Arizona, the Curator of the Afghan Archival Project, asking for uniforms and regalia from Dostum for an exhibition that would be a traveling through the United States. I flew up there, I had it in my bag. I got there in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, I'm flying, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, and it was like a Sunday, and this is, my commander would often do it this way, he'd say 'What are you doing?' I said 'Well, I'm just...' he said 'Do you want to come, we're going to go out and watch this disarmament thing out for Dostum.' And he said 'Nobody else in the international community is going, but I think we ought to.' So I said 'Sure, let's go.' So we go down to what was then the Ministry of Foreign Affairs northern agency. And all the usual suspects were there, I later figured out who they were. We got into these SUVs and we go roaring across the countryside at breakneck speed in convoy and we get to the town of Aqcha. And that's about a little over halfway to Sherbghan, and it's right on sort of the line between the Tajiks and the Uzbek-Turkems. And we went on that road many times, and when you get to the turnoff you look over and you see this buskashi field. Buskashi is that game they play. Like a rodeo. And, well, rode up there, and it was a hundred and thirty-five degrees in the shade, and my god I was wearing a suit, and I thought 'Oh my god.' We got there and there were tents that were like awnings, and there were carpets down and big sofas by this buskashi field. And out in front of us were two or three thousand Uzbek-Turkem fighters. It was like National Geographic in your face. These sinewy people with these old rifles in some sort of a loose formation with ammunition, with ammunition. Before I went out there my friends from across the river used to say 'Don't stand anywhere near that son of a bitch, he's going to get blown away. He meant Dostum. Anyway, I got out there, and I looked out and I thought 'Now I know how Anwar Sadat felt like at his last parade, I mean, people out there with loaded



weapons.' And I'm here. There was a guy there from another organization, young guy, he was wearing his body armor. I sort of pooh-poohed, I said, 'Oh, you know, why would you want body armor.' I didn't have any body armor. I didn't have any body armor until a month before I left.

*Q: There's been a lot of discussion about that, about who you had to go to to get the body armor.*

A: It's the stupidest thing in the world. I mean, anyway, so we're sitting there sweating. My PRT commander's there and I'm there, we're the only sort of... There were a bunch of Turks there too, the Turks love Dostum. And all of a sudden a big black SUV comes up with all these guards jumping out and spreading the crowd and he gets out and he's in his long green garb, and he's up there, telling them 'I'm going to give you ninety dollars a month if you put down your weapons and you can plant, you can buy seeds, you can start a business.' And I didn't know what the criteria were for DDR, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. And that's this program run by UNDP. But we're, you know, out in front. And it looked pretty good to me, and we were sitting there, and pretty soon, and women would come running up with petitions and they would be sort of pushed off to the side, and it was just like in a movie. You know, we're sitting there sweating. And all of a sudden Dostum kind of finishes his speech and he starts to go out in this mass of people. I said 'He's got to be crazy. You know what my friends say, someone's going to blow him away. There's no security around him, he's right, cheek by jowl with them.' And then he looks over and he sees us, and he says 'Come on!' And so they come and get us, and my commander in his uniform, and there's Reuters TV, and ITV, and the BBC TV and all these things are on there, and I said to them 'We're not supposed to be there perhaps, I don't want to get fired on my first day.' My commander pushes me up to the front and I've got my straw hat on, my sweaty suit, and he takes us first to this huge pile of rocket grenades and mortars, rusty old things. And I thought: What the fuck am I doing up here? What if somebody rolls a hand grenade in there? I mean, I'm retired! They're not paying me enough to do this. And then there were three miles of old rifles that had been laid down, and five Soviet mortar tubes in there, and sort of an anti-aircraft gun, and Dostum was... I have a picture of me with them as he was showing this. I was on TV and everywhere, you know, that showed this.

And we get down and go through it and nothing happens, and we sort of go on, and then we all get in our SUVs and we roar into the town of Aqcha and they have one of these huge, like a gymnasium filled with banquets of lamb and all of that, this is my first meeting with Dostum. And there's a Turk sitting on both sides as guests of honor, and we come, and suddenly the Turks are gone. And I said, 'You're the commander, you go and sit next to him.' And so he talked to him, and that was the first conversation I had, and I remember we were talking about Khalilzad was going through confirmation hearings at the time, and I would want to give him sort of a briefing, and he said to me, and this was so typical of Dostum, in this very, sort of this cherubic face, Stalinesque cherubic face, kind of a crew cut with this big robe on, and he said 'Zalmay Khalilzad should not be the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, he should be running for President.' And he said it in the most, you know, absolutely factual way. Not making light or anything. Come to find out that he was in constant contact with Khalilzad in the NSC. Within an hour, he says, it was very soon after 9/11, he picked up the phone and called Khalilzad and said 'We're on your side.' And that was a link that he maintained, you know I was there, Khalilzad got there in November, right after Thanksgiving. And, but then I became the link,

although he hadn't wanted to, he'd pick up and call Khalilzad. You know Khalilzad was from Mazar-e Sharif. So he knew the thing extremely well. And all of these meetings I had, I would report. And a lot of these meetings would never get out of the Embassy, because the Section Chief would sit on them. And, but how I reported them, I reported them by e-mail. And I always copied then office director in the State Department, and she kept saying 'Keep those coming, keep those coming.' And that was, if you're looking at lessons learned, structural problems, that's clearly one of them.

*Q: That's actually one of the questions I wanted to ask you because a number of people we've spoken with have talked about technology problems and communications problems, getting information from Washington about policy, communicating with the Embassy, and there have been lots of recommendations about new communication systems to use that'll help to solve that problem. There's SIPRnet and there are others. What did you have as far as communications in the time that you were there? Did comms improve in the time that you were there, and from what you have seen, what would be something that you would need?*

A: Well I got there. My predecessors had assiduously been able to get the units that were provided to the PRTs, and I can't tell you their nomenclature right now for our own unclassified, but our own system where you get up in the morning, you line up your thing with the sun and all of this. And it, I said 'listen, I'm not very good with technology, why don't you, when the communicator came up and brought it with me when I went up there, and came to install it he could never get it to work. So I had to rely only, in the first instance, in using the British, they had a morale welfare e-mail system, you know so the troops could communicate back home. That's what I used. And reported on hotmail.

*Q: For the whole time you were there?*

A: Yeah.

*Q: What about telephone communications?*

A: We actually had, near the end, through Darlington, one of the contractors, they came and installed our own unit, and that was, that became a lot better then, because the British unit was highly unreliable. I was up at three o' clock in the morning every day doing my reporting, because I couldn't use it when the troops wanted to use it.

*Q: What was the system that Darlington put in?*

A: It was a free standing, we had our own dish and all of that, most of it I don't know the nomenclature, but they put them in all the PRTs as I recall, and that was night and day, and then the British came to me and they were going to use my system and we let them use it, we had like sixteen portals, but once again it was unclassified. When I went, I said 'Well, I'll save,' my first thing was 'Oh, I'll save some of this stuff when I get back to Kabul.' And I do, you know, sit down, this was when I was at the ICFY mission, I would come from ICFY over to the Embassy and sit down run that classified cable at night, and you know, report that way. Well, this didn't work. I went to Kabul and nobody cared anything about what you were reporting, the only thing

they said they were very uneasy about me being up there because I tend to be a person who reports things I see. I write, and I know how to write for people to read things. I've been around long enough. And he was, I said, very uncomfortable. He never said anything to me then, but for example I wrote one, not, I couldn't see anything inflammatory about it, about the customs, control of the customs point at Termez. Coming across there, and it was one of the best things I wrote, and it never got out of the Embassy. And you could never find out why. You could never find out what changes needed to be made, it just got...

And it became a very large mission, where you have people like me, like an embassy colleague of mine, a fantastic officer in Baghlan, we were good friends. And he's going back by the way, he's going to Herat next summer. You know, we have opinions and we have things in those were reported and that made him very uncomfortable. I remember one time when one of the first meetings we had as a group, the section chief actually gave an interesting, what our role was, we were considered, we were agents of change. Which was an interesting thing, I like the sound of it. And I tried to do some of it, you know, follow that instruction. I was never told that I was a political officer, I was never told I was a political advisor, I made up my own title as the, first it was the U.S. Representative, and then when the AID person came I was the State Department representative there. Never really had any work requirement statements or anything like that, other than that political reporting list.

*Q: Now, you were WAE. Did full-time, active duty people have work requirements or were they just throwing out people to be on the PRTs..*

A: I... Well, my predecessors were all there for three months, and you can't really do very much. In my case it didn't matter, because, you know, I wasn't being fitted into anybody's system of evaluation. I'm not aware that, because there was no one until an embassy colleague became the coordinator for the PRTs, in the political section. Anyway, when he came he would be the person who would rate and evaluate the PRT State Department people. In my case it didn't matter. And I, I said, to the section chief, I would say we had a love/hate relationship, but he was always very uneasy with me up there. And one time when he came up we'd have these negotiations between Dostum and Atta, and this would be a big thing because fighting broke out in October. And the fighting wasn't really as bad as it was reported in the press, in fact one of the things our PRT did, we went around into the hospitals and the cemeteries to count bodies. The local press, even Reuters, I mean they had local stringers, and they didn't have any standards of reporting. But there were series, there were three series of negotiations going on between Dostum and Atta, which the British Ambassador took a very personal interest. And then he brought in the UNAMA, UNAMA and the American Charge, as sort of an enforcement of the terms and conditions. And when the section chief came to town, I remember I went out to meet him at the airport, he didn't say anything to me. We rode back together in the SUV and he didn't say, I was there to brief him and all of that. He didn't want to hear anything from me, the only thing he said to me was that after this was all over, he, you know, didn't let me go into his meetings. After it was all over he said 'Is it true that you're communicating with members of Congress about the USAID program?' That's the only thing he said to me. The new USAID head, who I didn't know from Adam, he wasn't in the meeting, and I said 'What are you doing? Who's telling the Charge that I'm communicating with members of Congress about the USAID

program? Where do you get that crap?' And it's no secret that I'm a personal friend of two U.S. Senators. Anyway, I have strong opinions about USAID.

*Q: There are some specific questions I want to ask you if I may about communication. You mentioned that you had to use the unclassified British hotmail to communicate with Washington?*

A: Everything, it was everything.

*Q: How about communication from Washington? If you had to...*

A: Never got anything.

*Q: You just didn't get anything?*

A: No. No, one of the reasons my pay grade was never adjusted was because they couldn't get one of the fifteen forms you have to sign for ethics or conflict of interest.

*(End tape 1 side 1.)*

*Q: Who were you talking to? People who just didn't understand you were in Afghanistan?*

A: I don't want to speak ill of civil servants, but...

*Q: This was in HR?*

A: In NEA-SA/EX.

*Q: EX. Okay. But then you said that communication improved near the end of the time that you were there.*

A: Yeah. When Darlington came around we were one of the first ones to get one of these, our own dish, and we had sixteen portals, and we had our own dedicated unclassified e-mail. That's all we ever had.

*Q: Was there a real OPSEC concern about that?*

A: If they, initially you said yeah, but then I said, and I think perhaps some of my colleagues were more concerned about it than I was, because I tend, I think I know how to write things as in an unclassified way, and you know with getting the point across that the Iranians are listening, the Russians are listening, of course they're listening if they can, I dealt with the Russians there a lot. The Russians have quite a presence there. They always stayed very close to the river though, to get across in tough times. The Pakistanis, well, back on communications. There's a good cell phone system up there, and you could easily call, you could communicate that way, call the States, but they couldn't call, very hard to call you. We had all these, the phones that you take along with you, the sat, all of that, and once in awhile you would need those, but most of the time it was the cell phone I used.

*Q: I gotcha. Okay, I'm sorry. Because that's been one of the concerns voiced by active duty people is that it's hard to get the basic information that you need, for instance if you're bidding on a job or if you're taking care of...*

A: For sure.

*Q: ... you're basic HR business that there was no way of communicating easily with the department.*

A: We had, there were several periods where the welfare line went down for the British troops and they would have a contractor come, they would be there two or three weeks trying to get it up. So you didn't have anything then.

*Q: I'm sorry, we were...*

A: I was sort of, one thing I wanted to finish off on that day on August the 3<sup>rd</sup>, because it was, I nearly met my maker that day, because after we had sort of gone through this line to see these weapons, these people all crowded around us, we went to this banquet. And that's where I had this first conversation with Dostum. And the Turks, when I realized, it was only then that was really how important the Turks are to him, and how important he is to the Turks. Because there were people from Turkish parliament there from the Defense Department. They were giving Ambulante medical supplies and all of that. But then after the banquet was over we got in our separate SUVs and we're heading back to, at a more leisurely pace we drove past the Buskashi field and turned left and headed down there, maybe half an hour or forty-five minutes later the whole thing blew up.

*Q: Really?*

A: Somebody dropped one of the, they were loading these rounds onto a lorry, and somebody dropped - it wasn't sabotage or terrorism, somebody dropped something. Killed fifteen, injured more than twenty. And it was really a tragedy, because I mean it was, and I've tried to create a monument to them, to the lost souls of Akcha, because they were really intending to disarm. They were trying to disarm and the international community, I remember UNAMA, this was before we sort of got on their right side at all. 'What were you doing up there?' 'That wasn't real disarmament.' It was real disarmament, the weapons were destroyed. The weapons were destroyed tragically. And I recommended that the Charge` exercise his authority to, you know, up to twenty-five thousand dollars. Never got a response. Never got a response. And there was also the commander of my PRT commander. He and my commander saw me as... what was the term he used? For 'reachback'. Is that the right term? I think that's what they used. That doesn't sound quite right when I say it. That is, you know, I could call people in the Department and find out things without going through the Embassy, or... because he knew pretty early on that my relationship with the Pol-Econ Section Chief wasn't very good. And in the Embassy, he was probably the only person that mattered.

He ran a.... And I remember, I was talking to our former ambassador last week on another subject, he just said, well you know, he had taken his DCM, he said, 'I'm a little too easygoing, but my DCM got people, he did the job that a DCM was supposed to do.' And he worked constantly. He was the hardest working person, I think, in the mission. He just didn't know how to get the best out of people. And now of course he's going to be DCM at a major East Asian post which is a reward I suppose. Anyway, if I could just maybe highlight a few other things that the British PRT did. When this fighting broke out in October between Dostum and Atta, even though it was less significant and substantial than it was reported in the press, it was still fighting. And my commander seized on it, because they used tanks and heavy weapons against each other. And he went to them and he said 'All right. You know if you hadn't used those heavy weapons, you could have kept them. But now you've used them, I'm sorry, you've got to turn them in.' And he created, working very closely with the UNAMA military rep, the Australian Lt. Colonel, just one hardworking guy. Nearly died from pneumonia up there. Really good guy. He's the one that ended up marrying the UNAMA head of office. I never would have known. Which I knew she was hot for him, but I didn't... anyway, long story. My commander seized on this, and got way out ahead in front of the international community, we were going to do our own disarmament. And he got, worked very closely. I mean, the National Guard up there was terrific. We had the Vermont National Guard, the New Hampshire National Guard. My state Iowa, they've got a lot of people up there now, too.

We had two camped elements, one forty kilometers east of Mazar, an old Soviet base, and one forty kilometers west. And went into an extended period of putting pressure on, and we go, I mean I don't have it here with me and I've got pictures of Soviet tanks that got turned in, and heavy weapons. I mean, rows and rows of stuff. Big stuff. Real disarmament. Which is one of the things I'm trying to devote the rest of my life to. We really achieved disarmament. Now I say we, I was a bit player, it was my PRT commander who did it. He just seized this opportunity and ran with it. And there was some reward for Atta, because he was... there was reward for Atta because Karzai appointed him then Governor of Balkh province. Only problem was, two or three days later he declared his allegiance to Yanous Kanouni, the Minister of Education. The Tajik. And Dostum of course, the last meeting I had with Dostum he said 'I haven't told anybody this, but I've offered to Karzai to run his campaign out here. I can deliver three or four million votes for him. Of course Karzai wouldn't take that. And so he ran, and he picked up his eight or nine percent, whatever the census says was there. But it was really, it was extraordinary what was done. And that was one example, and I say the putting non-factional police in place, that was another thing we were way out in front of everybody else. And patrolling. We had patrolling, constant patrolling. Far reaches, Faryab. They finally set up a separate PRT in Faryab province, because it's just too far away. I got there only by plane. Several times they went in vehicles, and they got, you know the roads were just too bad. They came back. But the other guys, the people who were, the unmentionables, they were out deep in this stuff in patrols. And I, they were really, they were pros. Once again, I had no... if they wanted to tell me what they were doing they could, whether they ever found anybody or anything, but they were out there patrolling. We also were the first to have, we had a Danish team who came in and were like a sub-PRT. They went to Aibak in Samangan province.

*Q: Aibak, okay.*

A: And that really worked out well. The Danish Ambassador took personal interest in there, and I remember there was a long negotiation of the terms and conditions and when they came they were fantastic. They were, there were half a dozen of them, and they were assumed were going to have a civilian, kind of a USAID person, a humanitarian person in Aibak. And that was really working. We got a French liaison officer, we got, when the police advisor left to take over the PRT in Kardez or wherever it was got a Rumanian police officer who was great. And it was really quite an interesting combination of people. The relationships I think with the NGOs were initially extremely bad. Then we went through a period of, because we had a bar. We had parties. My commander -- I loved the British -- he had a regimental dining room. Every Saturday we would have a plush dinner with crystal and chandeliers out in the middle of hell and gone. I've eaten more lobster there than anywhere in the world because they would trade, as supply sergeants do. For the British it's no big thing to eat lobster, but for me, for a boy from Nebraska, boy I really ate that up. And we would target, you know, just like you do on a diplomatic mission we would have people in from the other, the Pakistanis were there, the Turks were there, and the Turks looked great. And the Pakistanis had just arrived. There were no French. The Russians were there. And the Tajiks and the Turkmen, because I speak Russian and I got to know them very well, and we would entertain - there was one, also, only one international restaurant. It was the Delhi Darbar. Which is an Indian restaurant, which was fantastic. I'm one of these people, and wherever I've been I've always spent representation money like... I spent more representation money up there than the whole entire mission put together. I remember when I went and submitted my vouchers they nearly died. But they ended up paying me for most of it.

But I mean we really cultivated relations with the Afghans, with the international community, with the NGOs, we invited, invited, invited, and we would have happy hours and big parties for all the things. And you'd get a lot of business done in a circumstance like that. I mean we, one night, the Girls of GOAL, there was a wonderful Irish NGO called G-O-A-L. They got stuck there and they stayed overnight. Well, it was, everybody kept, that was one of the great things we enjoyed, it was one night when the girls stayed there. Although there were women, my British counterpart was a woman. The USAID representative was a woman, and there were three or four women amongst the British troops, but there was something about an NGO of women staying there at night. And then UNAMA did a wonderful job of brokering with us meetings with the NGO community. We were blessed also, one of the figures there was a retired American Army Colonel, fifty year graduate of West Point. He was running a faith-based organization called PAD. Became close personal friends. I mean he just, he sort of put his hand over the international community and just sort of said 'Take it easy. We're all out here working together. And it was an extraordinary period of time. I hated to leave there after six months. I hated to leave. And I would go back. I don't, although we all agreed that it was a special time, it'll never be the same, and that's from so many other things. We went from that period of tension especially with UNAMA and the NGOs to a period of tranquility where we were, we really respected each other. For example, in the beginning I remember I went to UNAMA meetings where I wasn't supposed to be there. UNAMA didn't want the Americans, State Department there. My commander said 'You're coming.' And if I ever had, the only other dispute I had with my commander, just one, was over the mass graves. And the other one was on force protection... what do you call it?... standoff. We had no standoff. You could put a truck bomb...

*Q: Setback.*

A: Setback. We had no setback. You could put a truck right under my bedroom. And he just was adamant about that. And my British foreign office colleague was the same way I was, she said 'This is not adequate protection.' And fortunately nothing happened. And I could have made a stink out of it, and I could have left, and I could have gone to the RSO and said 'Listen, this is not safe out there.' But I, you know, I wanted to make it work.

*Q: That's interesting because they'd worked in Northern Ireland, you'd think that they'd be thinking about force protection.*

A: Oh, they thought about it constantly, but this is their experience. Their experience is that that just invites stuff, and also that its good to have the children playing right outside the PRT because the children aren't there, that means that somebody knows that something's coming down. And that part I still, I was - touch wood - I was just happy nothing happened.

*Q: Can you talk a little bit about sort of theoreticals, you had zero time to prepare to get out to your job. If you had had a week or if you had had a month to have consultations beforehand or any kind of training, who would you have met with, what would you have been trained to do?*

A: More, more... I take that back. If I would have known more about how the Afghan Desk in the Department fits into the USAID relationship. For example, there was one time when I got a call, an e-mail from her saying 'The Secretary and Ambassador Taylor were meeting with the Principals to talk about projects in Mazar, in the north. And I need this by three o' clock in the morning.' Or whatever it was. And the AID rep was new and she didn't have a clue how to do it. I had some ideas of some rather grandiose projects that I wanted to try. And there was no time to run through USAID, we tried to communicate. And if, it's, and this is not usual, the State - USAID relationship is one that is still at odds. That's clearly one where, if you could sit down and say 'Well, what are your plans? What are you doing?' If you could sit down, now I know who the Afghan Desk Officer at USAID is, I call him up, I say 'Hey.' He said 'No, we're not doing that, so and so is doing that.' But also doing what the international community is doing. I went around and met with as many people as I could because that's, especially when you're getting into reconstruction, the same problem in Bosnia. We tried, one of the jobs of the special rep for economic reconstruction was putting all these projects down and seeing who's doing what. And the guy before, he had recommended that the position be double-hatted, be the Deputy High Representative for Economic Reconstruction. And that didn't work, it just didn't work. They hired people with huge salaries to come in and coordinate all these things, and it never happened. He never got the database. UNAMA was going to take that on and try and do that. But everybody had the checks, they were there, they had their own priorities, what they were going to do with the little bit of money they were putting in there. So it's always a noble goal, but one that I've never seen achieved, certainly in those two examples.

And other things to do before you go, I would have liked to know, I would have wanted to know a hell of a lot more about what we were doing with Dostum and we were not. I mean the guys who went out deep, they would come to me, it would be drinking. We'd be conversing late and



night, and they say 'What the fuck are you giving two-hundred thousand dollars a day to Dostum for?' Things like that. And I had no background in that. I would listen and I didn't feel any need to acknowledge or deny anything because I didn't know. But there's a huge history of our involvement with Dostum. One of the curses we have is that there's no continuity. There's nobody in the Department who knows that. Maybe in INR, but I couldn't, I actually met later, when I came back, one of the DASs in INR who I knew from a previous assignment, he's one of the deputies down there and he had me sit down with the Afghan analyst. And I must say she was spot on. She was a civil servant. Her instincts were absolutely right about what she was following over Afghanistan, from my experience.

The other thing I have to underscore is that I know a little bit about a very small part of Afghanistan. I don't pretend to know anything about the rest of it. And I, the terribly important part the role of Uzbekistan plays in the north there, because I mean drugs, customs, oil, it's all Dostum's, and he was cutting in Atta. The cut was supposed to be sixty percent Dostum, forty percent... thirty percent Atta and ten percent to the Hussars. I mean that's, now I've been told that the customs point, they tried to take it over when I was there. I mean there was nothing going on. I mean, there was no customs being paid, I mean Dostum took the money. There was just nothing going on there except, if you want to see one of the most carefully guarded places in the world it's that border from Afghanistan-Uzbekistan. Nobody goes across that border. It's just like the old Soviet era.

*Q: Would you recommend more consultations with DoD or you mentioned INR, other agencies? IOs, NGOs?*

A: Definitely the Agency. Definitely the Agency. When I was Deputy head of the ICFY mission I had, that was just part of it. You went out there and you know what was going on and you knew what the capabilities were. As it works out in Kabul the Agency is not co-located. So you see these rather attractive young women, native Persian speakers who would come and sit in the back row at the country team meetings. And then you, I think I figured out who headed what agency at post after awhile. But you know, for example, there was a mysterious American up in the North that supposedly was doing who knows what, you know. Not, but it always, to have the British come and tell you what you're doing up there, or not doing, it would have been useful to know. If they would tell us to not I don't know.

*Q: Equipment? Things that you needed when you were there that you didn't get apart from communications? Transportation, things like that?*

A: Oh that was a battle. That was a battle. I won it though. I made an enemy in doing it. I got, I simply didn't fit. We had these Hi-Lux SUVs. And I didn't fit. And there were some leg problems and back problems and I talked the Admin Management Counselor into loaning us a Toyota Land Cruiser.

*Q: Armored?*

A: No.

*Q: Lightly armored?*

A: Maybe lightly armored, maybe, maybe. Because actually there was a plan that PRTs were going to get, we were going to have our own 'airline', we were going to have our own, you know, there'd be a USAID vehicle, State vehicle, and then decide whether they're going to be shared or not. And I shared mine with a USAID person. And the beauty of it was we had a plane to take it up there. And then when he wanted it back, my new PRT commander said, 'I'm sorry, if you lose that vehicle you don't have any means to go anywhere.' Then I sort of sat back, so that worked out, and everybody said 'How did you get that vehicle?' It was the Admin Counselor, Management Counselor who went out on a limb, and then he was so pissed when he couldn't get it back. But he left. Somebody else had to worry about that. I was wisely followed my predecessors advice and I took my own air conditioning unit. Before I left Kabul I got them to buy me an air conditioning unit, and I took it. And thank god I did. Just one of these things, you know, a Japanese thing you put in the window.

*Q: And you were there July through January, and near the end of your tour you certainly didn't need it.*

A: Oh, it was a heating unit also.

*Q: One of those, you put it in the middle of the room ones and you put the hose out the window?*

A: No, you put it outside the window and the hose comes in.

*Q: Yeah, we had those in Sarajevo. I know what you mean. So, a short list of the things you needed: air conditioning, transportation, communication, consultation. That's a list.*

A: And I suppose body armor. But I think that's been solved now.

*Q: Are there other things, if you found out I was going to be going out there next week, or next month, what other specific advice would you give?*

A: Well in my case I happen to speak some Dari, Farsi. And that's the other thing, in preparation. Anything that you can learn will be to your advantage, even just social stuff. And that's, that's not new in the Foreign Service, but it's I guess worth repeating. I just, you know I've learned history, little bits and pieces of it starting to fill in, and now that I spend half of my day, seven days a week dealing with Afghanistan now that I'm into it. And it's, I don't know anybody who's gone out there who hasn't gotten to some degree or another hooked. And mine was turned around because of one person, I went out there, and I thought, I remember I had a driver, he was this Cockney, and he said 'What the fucking, fucking people?' You know, why are we out here? Why don't they take care of this problem themselves? And I didn't disagree with that in the beginning. I sort of said, you know, and I, having both of us been in the Balkans, where they blame it all on the crossroads of history and all of that, that nobody takes any responsibility.

*Q: It's always someone else's fault.*

A: That's right, exactly. But then there was one guy, and this is actually a relevant issue. There was one guy. He was an Afghan who was the Deputy Head of a very large French NGO called Acten. Sixteen-hundred employees, they did a lot of emergency feeding and emergency shelter, with a lot of money from USAID, from OFDA. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. Well, in the summer of 2002, an American employee of Acten was in a caravan or column of vehicles going from Aibak to... and they were carrying new computer equipment, and maybe a hundred thousand dollars in cash, and somebody got wind of it and they were hijacked. And this young American woman was raped. Brutally. Repeatedly. Five gangs. It was well known who they were, who the attackers were. And the local authorities did nothing. Put pressure on USAID, all USAID funds were supposedly cut off to Balkh province, because that's, as it was perceived that's where the crime took place and they pursued it. My whole attitude got turned around when I started looking into this because, you know, could we resume USAID activities in Balkh province, and in fact I found there were quite a few things that had gone on anyway despite this freeze. And so I got to know this Deputy Country Director - he's now at the University of Nebraska, Omaha in the international development program. Wonderful human being. Thirty-five years old. He was, you know, twenty-three years of war starting when you're twelve. Couple years out in Pakistan studying medicine, but the rest of the time he was there. And he risked his life, the life of his wife, his eight-year-old daughter, his extended family to bring those five people to justice. He took it all the way to the top. And three of them were arrested and got sentenced to twelve, fifteen, seventeen, eighteen years. Although I never saw them in prison, I wouldn't believe it unless I really saw it.

The fourth one was in Iran, the fifth one was in Aibak, in Samangan province, everybody knew he was there. He was under the protection of a warlord. So I went to Dostum, and I said - actually, I went to his military advisor, general Rossi, he was Russian trained, and I told him in Russian, I said 'You're going to go get that son of a bitch and you're going to bring him to justice.' And I'll never forget, it was on November the second I went back on one of my times to see Dostum, and General Rossi was waiting outside the palace, and he said, sort of like Jerry Bremer, he said 'We got him!' I said 'Great!' He said 'What do I do with him now?' I said 'Well you know, in the letter, I wrote you a letter on embassy stationery saying, you know, turn him over to the Afghan authorities.' And I remember he went like this, 'What the bloody fuck are you talking about? There's no justice here. Turn him over and two days later he's free.' And that's, that's, but that, because Mahir helped us find the guy, he knew where he was, once again he put himself at risk. Tremendous risk, because they knew that he was out to get them. At that point the woman had, she had actually come back to Afghanistan, tried to resume her job, went back to Paris, she wouldn't testify or anything, so anybody we found after that, what are they going to do? You have no witnesses. So I told him, I said 'Just castrate him, that'll be good enough. You know, cut his balls off. That's what we do back in Nebraska, and that's for rapists and that'll take care of him.' He looked at me, I don't think they did it.

*Q: How did that change your attitude about who could help and?*

A: Because of Mahir. He had no expectation, he had no reason to put himself at risk other than his country. This was his country. You cannot do that in his country. And that changed me from being someone reluctant to one where now I, you know everything I can do to help

Afghanistan, I'm going up here on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, you can come along if you want to, I have a fundraising dinner in Delaware with the Afghan Ambassador to the UN speaking. They're building a school, getting involved with a school here and a school there and shipping supplies and creating a new flavor of ice cream called Afghan Ambrosia. Importing nuts and dried fruit from the north through the biggest ice cream company in the world, I sat down on July 16<sup>th</sup> with the CEO. Three minutes with a couple of young Afghan women who have their own NGO, in three minutes we knew we had him. He's going to create this new brand, give them a market for exporting something other than heroin poppies.

Huge project called Swords into Ploughshares I've been working on which I thought I was going to get the executive MBA program at UNO, University of Nebraska, Omaha to do a business plan on, huge thing to take advantage of... there's a company up in Tashkent. Bunch of Princeton guys run it, and they've been trying to get the Afghan guys to agree to let them take the old tanks and armor around the country, cut it up and turn it into construction reinforcing bars. Rebars. The Afghans are not willing to do that, that's an asset, scrap metal. I said 'Let's put the factory in Akcha. Right on that line and re-employ the disarmed fighters using the gas.' There's a huge gas, when I say huge, about three to five trillion cubic feet in the Samangan area. And everybody knows it's been there, but it's fairly little compared to, Turkmenistan has a lot more, Uzbekistan has more, Tajikistan has a lot too, to try and, and everybody was always 'So how will you get the power to Kabul?' I say 'Screw Kabul! Kabul doesn't give anything to the north, it's going to cost a billion dollars to do a pipeline down there which wouldn't be secure, and that's even more a guess to generate enough power out there and send it by wire.'. Anyway, we had a team there from U.S. Geological Survey that had, well we worked very closely with them, provided security for them.

And so this was one of the projects that I'm still trying to work on where we would actually, it's about a three-hundred million dollar project, and still trying to get it off the ground. And trying to get an Afghan student to go to Labal university in Quebec city and trying to get money - oh, I'm a Willa Cather freak. I grew up in the town she grew up in, and so just this last weekend we had a dozen. The only program the UNO center for Afghanistan studies has now is teacher training. About four groups a year, there'd be a dozen women teachers come over. And quite frankly it's a waste of money. They get a trip, and they go back, and they get some experience. Anyway, but I'm trying to introduce Willa Cather's literature, we have a certain group there now who are teachers of English as a second language to use for literature in their training. And on and on and on and on.

*Q: Still a lot to do.*

A: Yeah. Plus a huge exhibition with my friends and associates, I think I mentioned when I first, this guy wanted Dostum's...

*Q: Yes.*

A: A month later, I got them. And for three months I sat there with this two suitcases full of Dostumabilia, and then by this, the fellow who wanted, Paul Mooney has become a very close friend, brought George Crlye, I don't know if you know that name, George Crlye wrote a book

called 'Charlie Wilson's War', which is worth reading. It's the story - and George is a producer for Sixty Minutes 2, and it's the story of how Charlie Wilson, a wild and crazy, horny Congressman from Lefton, Texas, in 1980 crawled out of a hot tub in Las Vegas with two showgirls, called up his staffer and he said 'How much money is the CIA giving the Mujahedin?' And the answer was 'Five million.' He said 'double it.' And if you follow that story through, that's the beginning of the end of the Soviet empire. From one perspective. Tom Hanks has bought the movie rights. Miramax is going to produce it, and Aaron Sorken, who did the screenplays for West Wing is going to write the screenplay if it ever gets done. And so that's how I met Paul, and we've been looking for ways to get back over there. I'm going to do a documentary on Dostum. Because I said to him, I would have these very frank conversations, I said 'What happened to the Shah? Look how we turned our back on him. What happened to Milosevic? Look where he is now. Milosevic, hadn't been for him there wouldn't be international criminal courts. We used to use him to keep the Bosnian Serbs on side. Whatever happened to Raul Sedrus?' And he said 'Who?' I said 'Raul Sedrus. General Sedrus, the leader of Haiti. Whatever happened to him?' 'I never heard of it.' I said 'That's right. Because he made a deal, he made a deal, he got out of the business.' I said 'You should make a deal.' I said 'You come with me. I'm trying to make a movie about the U.S. intervention of Grenada, you come and...' because he's a showman, he's a showman. 'You come and we'll provide security for you, we'll get good medical care.' He kept lobbying to come to the United States for medical care. And I said, kept telling his aides, I said 'He's not going to get a U.S. Visa. Period. Full stop.' And so the idea was to bring the medical care to him. Get him out of the business, and that's always what my position was, make them an offer they can't refuse, and we're not going to, we're not going to use U.S. forces to take out warlords for any length of time, and the British were absolutely right on that. You've got to work with what there is on the ground now, because if there's no Dostum there will be somebody else. And until you've got to make it in their interest to be on the side of disarmament and demobilization. And Dostum he did, he wanted, because he was paying these people, he wanted to get them off his payroll. And there was one awkward thing, at the end of the constitutional loya jirga, I wasn't there but I heard that Dostum went up, Karzai was giving us a speech at the end. And Dostum went up and sort of pulled on his coat tag, and said 'As a goodwill gesture we're going to announce the release of eight-hundred prisoners from Mazar-e-Sharif. Once again, he's having to feed them. And half of those were non-Afghans, you know, they're foreign fighters. And everybody sort of applauded that and then after a little bit we said 'Wait a minute! Who are these people?' And I remember the last meeting I had with Dostum, he said 'Can't we give them to you? Can you sort out who they are? I don't want them!' Anyway, he was, so I'm hoping that we can get up there, I'd like to do it. Because I'm telling him, I would tell him, 'You need to tell your story in an objective way, because if the United States is in this for the long haul,' and I think we are, I hope we are. Although I'm not sure if we are.

Somewhere down the road, as I said the British and UNAMA didn't want me to get into the mass graves because their position, which was reasonable, there was no long-term strategy. What do you do? Srebrenica, and Tusla, the one with seven-thousand people lost? There were a thousand bodies, two-hundred and twenty were identified, how many millions of dollars was spent on that? What was really achieved by that? And so that was a position that the human rights, I mean the UNAMA people took, and it was hard to disagree with. But I would tell Dostum, I said 'Well, somewhere down the road they're going to set up a tribunal. And you're going to be

sitting in front of them. Why not tell your story?' And he would. This is what I'd like to do is have document all the myths, all the facts, and, you know, put it on the record. All kinds of allegations, every time that he was up for some kind of a position, and he was always angling for one, he wanted Fahim Kahn out of there, he wanted to run the Defense Ministry, and he'd take care of those Taliban and Al Qaeda down in the south in no time at all and he would probably welcome, I think you may have heard the Serbs were going to send a thousand fighters over there, it never happened. I remember I asked General Demarn, I said 'What are you going to do with those Serbs?' He said 'Not mine.' And I asked a commander, a Canadian, 'What are you going to do with those Serbs?' He said 'I don't know, not mine.' And I guess they never go the volunteers to go or it never happened, but I just, as you can see I'm hooked. I can't get it out of my system, I don't know what kind of a contribution I can make, and I'm told that they're not, they don't need, they're getting enough people from the regular system, they don't need WAEs for the PRTs. But if they set them up in Iraq, that's what I, I tried to get, actually PRT commander was offered the position of the military coordinator for the PRTs in Afghanistan. He turned it down, I told him to take it and I'll come and be your POLAD or whatever. And then when I came back I told an NEA colleague, who I was an old friend, thirty-five years we've known each other, I said he's terrific, and I said 'You must know of him, a real pro.'

I think about what you said in the beginning, you know, whether bombing is the right way to do it or not, I have grave doubts about that, but that's what we do well. I mean, I don't know if we do it well, we do it. We do it in a big way. And it gets people's attention. If you're not afraid to call in close air support and bombs. I never saw the time when we would have needed it, because everybody wanted to be on our side. Clearly Atta wanted to be on our side, he kept angling to go to the United States to study, and I kept saying, same thing with Dostum, I said 'Listen, there is no-one who is going to recommend you for a visa. No one. Of course now he's the Governor and somebody will invite him as the Governor and somebody else will have to deal with the visa.

*Q: The issue of security. Anything else you want to tell us?*

A: I just hope we're there for the long haul. If we walk away from it again it'll go, I'm not even sure if we are there for the long haul for a change, I mean look at what the British did, look at what the Russians did. And there were various times in there when I said, because I got to know the Russians well, I said 'Are you sure you don't want it back?' Because, I should add that. The Chancellor of Balkh University who was acting governor, good friend. When I went in to call on him, first meeting, I took an interpreter along. And he was a Soviet-trained mine engineer. I didn't know that, and I'm asking his background, I switched to Russian. Eight of the nine deans in his, that were there were all Russian, Soviet trained. And it would be interesting to look at whatever the Soviet reconstruction plan was compared to what our reconstruction plan is, and my guess is there is not a whole lot of difference.

End Interview.