

USIP - ADST
Afghanistan Experience Project

Interview #31

Executive Summary

The interviewee is an active duty Foreign Service Officer who served in Afghanistan from August 2003 until the day after the elections in October 2004. She worked as Afghanistan USAID's country representative for the Office of Transition Initiatives.

When the interviewee arrived there was limited staff. The deputy of her office was the primary liaison between the civilian community and military to get people out to PRTs. She was one of the earliest civilians to take advantage of PRTs, monitor projects, and develop relationships amongst a variety of government and non-government agencies. She was there at a time when the entire process was evolving.

The interviewee found getting out into the countryside was difficult except through the PRTs established relationships with OMC ALPHA and other military commands.

The interviewee says there was an underlining mentality that the military had the lead in the PRTs. Interestingly, she never saw a document describing what a PRT did. She emphasizes the importance of have people fully briefed up on the interagency relationships, the role of PRTs, what they do and don't do, and have a sense of the overall strategy behind PRTs. The interviewee felt that there needed to be a plan set up so everyone knew what role they were playing and to establish a co-equal interagency partnership.

The fact that some people only focused on their own portfolio, an array of competing interests, and the rapid turnover of personnel made it hard to for the PRTs to work toward a common goal. Also, some people who were placed in the PRTs lacked experience.

She also reports on the resistance amongst the international community of NGOs about having a military presence around them whatsoever. While this may have been the case with NGOs, the Afghans themselves welcomed the people that were assigned to escort the interviewee and others.

She describes the military as highly prepared for their traditional roles but not for civilian duties, and that the civilians on the ground were involved in a constant learning process. This difficulty was augmented by the fact that civilian and military staff were changing every three to six months, forcing them to restart back at the bottom of the learning curve. There was no set plan to deal with these transitions.

Another common problem was duplication. The interviewee describes the need to set up team meetings so all participants know what was going on. She voiced a need for more structure.

The management of civilian interaction with PRTs evolved and took off, but some management focused on administration instead of substance. There was a lack of communication between these civilians and the military.

The interviewee describes how PRTs were intended to be the eyes and ears to the embassy and the primary interlocutors to advance embassy mission to Afghan critical leaders. But she says this changed and PRTs were instructed to be just reporters. While there may have been problems on the larger scale, the PRT worked well on an individual basis. When relationships were developed and clear goals were established, things worked very well.

During the interviewee's tenure in Afghanistan, the Office of Transition Initiatives began a civilian-military planning program. This project ultimately became the Quick Impact Project (QUIP), funded by USAID and military (CERP) funds. This was a step forward to working together.

Following the transition of PRTs management to NATO, the civilian side needs to focus on management and administrative capacity. Civilian officers need to come back and brief military officers on what USAID and embassies do, so they have a better sense of what to expect; how all pieces work together. There also needs to be communication between embassy and military chain-of-command.

The interviewee suggested that, while PRTs are in evolution, they should start thinking of an exit strategy. She believes local ownership is key if we're going to leave Afghanistan. Our investment should be more directed to the provincial and regional government structures and away from extending or legitimizing in any way our foreign structures.

Overall, the interviewee feels that if there were a mission mandate, things would have been clearer. While she illustrates the positive and negative aspects of PRTs, she feels a job description or mission mandate would greatly have helped define the roles of PRTs.

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

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*Interviewed by: Pat LaRue
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Q: This is an interview on behalf of the United States Institute of Peace and the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, part of the Afghan Experience Project. The subject is a Foreign Service officer. Let's start. Describe your involvement with PRTs and the perspective you have on PRTs given your current position.

A: I need to start back with my previous position. That's where I encountered PRTs first. That was in Afghanistan. I spent from August 2003 until October, the day after the elections, 2004 in Afghanistan as USAID's country representative for the Office of Transition Initiatives. I arrived at a time when my office actually managed civilian military affairs for the embassy because there was very limited staffing. The woman who was the deputy in the office before I arrived was the primary liaison between the civilian community and the military to actually get people out to PRTs. Some of her work, she also monitored a lot of the programming for USAID. She was one of the earliest civilians to really take advantage of the PRTs and the military presence to get out and see and monitor projects, develop relationships with a variety of local actors government and non-government. When I came on board, the embassy had just started to regularize a position outside of my office, which focused on political transition activities and assigned a civilian military officer to take up the position and responsibility for coordinating interaction with the PRTs. He was only there for a while and was one of the players who facilitated or was at least part of the transition into a much larger embassy-USAID office that coordinated PRTs. When I say "coordinated," it wasn't just people getting out to post but placement of permanent State Department, USDA, and USAID representatives at the PRTs. So, I was there at a time when it was all evolving.

Primarily, my interaction with the PRTs was our program, the Office of Transition Initiative's Programming was one of the first offices of the embassy or the mission there to actually get assistance throughout the country. So, we had eight field offices that mirrored many of the places where PRTs either were already or eventually arrived at. These offices were through an international organization. So we had a need to get out as often as possible. Our implementing partners could get out. We could not except through the PRTs. So, very early on, I personally established relationships with OMC Alpha and the other military chains of command to get a better understanding of how the military operated, what their expectations of people on the ground were. At that time, there was very little civilian presence other than the intel communities and the PRTs other than on a visit basis. The permanent reps hadn't yet been placed in the PRTs when I first arrived. So, I was there when it was truly trying to decide what people's roles would be, why they would be out there. When I was out there, being in the PRTs,

it was largely a building arrangement rather than facilitation of interaction with local entities that you may or may not have known about sitting in Kabul or otherwise had access to. So, my first initial forays out with the PRTs were actually very well received by the military. They'd presented and explained what they were doing, what they couldn't do for you, what they could do. Even though it was my understanding that the military didn't technically have the lead on what PRTs were supposed to be doing but were to be there to facilitate civilian outreach in the countryside, it was pretty much understood that the military had the lead. I never saw a document in my entire time in Afghanistan that said, "This is what a PRT is and this is how you should interact." It was very iterative. I understand that there was such a document; I never saw one.

So, a lesson learned right upfront is, if you're going to have these types of entities like a PRT and even now people need to be fully briefed up on the interagency, the role of the PRT, what they do and don't do, have the documentation, understand what the expectations for these bodies are, and to right upfront before either getting deployed or going out to a visit have a sense of what a PRT strategy is. At the time I was there, the strategies for PRTs were largely security focused. They were the forward PRTs in the eastern and southeastern part of Afghanistan and so largely engaged in combat missions. As time evolved and the civilian staff were placed other than the intel community into the PRTs, it was very ad hoc about how they came up with plans about how development assistance or even military funding would be spent and deconflicted and what it all meant to have civilians on board there. At first there was a lot of resistance certainly on the commander level about having civilians out there because it interfered with their security and combat missions, or at least that was the perceptions. So some of the first things that I did was when people were assigned to escort us out into the development community, it was looked upon as a low level job even with the civilian affairs teams. So, instead of treating them like security guards, I would brief our interlocutors on the military side about what our programs were, what we were trying to achieve, how we did it, who we were talking to, and then when they came with us introduced them as colleagues, not as bodyguards. There is a lot of resistance in the international community in the NGOs about having any military presence whatsoever.

So, we would establish right upfront that they had a right to be there, they were accepted and welcomed by the Afghans, and so the NGO community needed to work with us to figure out how this relationship would proceed. So that was an educational opportunity and it brought down the level of fear of what the military people were going to be doing out there. The Afghans generally didn't have the same fear as the international implementing agencies did, which I found very odd. I found it a wonderful opportunity to work with the military. Highly professional, but not prepared for their civilian duties. Since most of the civilians had never worked with military before either, it was constantly a learning process. The civilian staff as well as the military staff at PRTs were changing every three to six months. So, just as you'd bring someone up to speed and think you had an understanding about a way forward in a particular PRT, there would be a changeover and you'd have to start from scratch again. Many soldiers were there to fight, not to do development. I'm kind of talking all over, but it's kind of the way it evolved as well. There wasn't really a set plan for where this was going to go. On paper, it looks far more strategic than it was in its implementation.

I would suggest that... I haven't followed it closely since I left, and that was seven months ago, but when I was suggesting even when I did leave was, rather than leave it up to ad hoc, each PRT develop a strategy for how it was going to move forward and engage the communities, that there be somebody of the U.S. government and the other NATO and CFC players at the table to come up with a template for the kinds of things you should at least consider and not just be driven by the pot of money that you had but really based on, everyone should have a development plan, everyone should have a political engagement plan, and that before anybody gets sent, whether military or civilian, to a PRT, that they were briefed up, that they had these various mandates and responsibilities. I think that would go a long way towards clarifying who has which role and on what. That's really a coequal interagency partnership. I think a big problem for a lot of the PRT activities and for those who visited the PRTs was a lack of clarity about the mission and agreement about U.S. government objectives and interests. Everyone was driven by either terrorism or extending the reach of a legitimate government or global war on terrorism. Some people focused only on their particular piece of a portfolio as their goal. So, you have lots of competing interests and levels of focus for people and it was very hard for individuals, especially with rapid turnover, to actually come together in a coherent way to come up with a plan so that they were working towards a common goal. We didn't understand necessarily that there was a common goal. Frankly, the people who were placed on the PRTs to begin with, and particularly some of the AID people, lacked AID and/or government experience and so weren't the best interlocutors for the U.S. government or for USAID to actually represent the organization or the agency and to work with others to develop a way forward.

Many people on the PRTs said it was the greatest job they ever had because they could do whatever they wanted. That wasn't the most effective use of government resources. Understandably, people actually didn't want to get posted to some of these places. Some were advance fire bases. Some were less insecure than others. In terms of actual placement of staff, we could have done it more strategically. We could have recruited more strategically. We could have had plans in advance for what the civilians were going to do as a team. Instead, people were recruited individually by AID. Then they were recruited individually by State, given their marching orders, and sent out but without having initial team meetings to say, "This is how you'll interact," who was a higher order of manager on post. Everybody reported back to their own agency heads in Kabul. There were all these bodies on a PRT, but who actually communicated and why I don't think was ever adequately spelled out. Some of the interest I have now working with S/CRS and looking toward the future where we might use a PRT-like structure again, I think you need, understanding the challenge, senior level experience managers to be assigned for the civilian leadership piece and civilian leadership on interaction with the local government as well to be on a PRT. Any other additional staff need to be subordinate to a civilian leader who can then be the counterpart to the military liaison. I think that would go a long way towards managing relations, managing priorities, and working towards how you can deconflict and develop complementary approaches between the civil affairs teams of the military and the civilian agencies.

I can talk a little bit about the evolution of management of civilian interaction with the PRTs. I talked about this a little bit earlier. When I first arrived, there was the whole interaction with PRTs. The embassy and larger mission ability to visit PRTs and then get out beyond the PRT areas into project areas really evolved and took off when I first got there back in the fall of 2003.

When I left in October, what was organized – and it was organized in part in response to a growing demand for people to get out as far as possible into the countryside to engage people – was, they had developed a management team that included both USAID and State representatives that sat within the embassy to coordinate people’s trips to the PRTs, whether it were permanent staff at post or visiting delegations, evaluation teams, that kind of thing. But unfortunately, and it may be because of the type of people who were available to provide this support, a lot of that management focused on administration rather than substance. So, it was a question of who’s got a sleeping bag, when is the flight available, which PRT can actually receive you. 96 hours advance notice was required before you could go out into the field for security reasons and also because the PRTs didn’t have a lot of space to manage people. So it really unnecessarily devolved into an administrative support function that in many respects confused access to the PRTs. Messages weren’t necessarily clearly communicated about why you needed to get out and why it would also advance the interests of the PRTs. We didn’t really have those discussions. It was more “What projects do you want to see? What’s the timeline? What support do you need in terms of bed, food, vehicles?” I think they could have done a lot more work in terms of substantive interaction and substantive direction to people going out saying before you go out, for instance, “This is what’s currently going on with that particular PRT. Here’s how you can best fit in. Here’s what you can bring to that team.” Often, travelers to PRTs were seen as a burden. They were facilitating our work which really had nothing to do as far as they could tell, because they weren’t informed, with what their mandate was. So, there could have been a lot more facilitation of communication about why what we were doing was actually the same mission and contributing to the same objectives as the mandates of the PRTs. That’s unfortunate. I don’t know the extent to which that may or may not have changed. There was also a lot of confusion because the highest levels of management in the embassy changed the mandate of the political officers, for instance. PRTs offer the embassy an opportunity without setting up a formal consulate to send very experienced people way out into the field and to be the eyes and ears of the embassy, to actually be the primary interlocutors on a regular basis, on a day to day basis, with in this case in Afghanistan critical leaders, tribal leaders, warlords, both problematic and well as sympathetic leadership to our objectives. There was a lot going on where they weren’t just reporting on local activities. They were actually engaging and trying to advance the embassy’s mission there. That was changed. They were more or less pulled back and told to just be reporters a couple of months before I left. I think that did a huge disservice to our mission and was misguided. It was misguided in part because the PRTs saw the value of that to their own mission. You then had an experienced political reporting and analytical officer who could feed into the PRTs and also help to be a civilian interlocutor for the military. That was unfortunate.

USAID is still struggling to fill its positions. To the extent possible, I think they should recruit Foreign Service officers, not contractors. Largely, the people were brought in as personal services contractors who were not necessarily tied to or experienced with USAID. So, it was very hard for them to act. What it devolved into is that those USAID officers represented a particular project in the mission where they knew that they could call upon money to program, so they had a role in decision-making, whereas what would have been far more useful to the assistance side of the U.S. government would have been for them to officially be representatives of USAID in the field so that no matter what project was going on in that area, they had to know about it, not necessarily legally approve it because there are complications there, but to truly be a

USAID representative rather than a project representative. So, huge missed opportunities there. I think it goes back to a lack of a clear set of guidelines for how the U.S. government generally wanted to use PRTs.

Q: I think you've pretty much covered describing the management of or oversight from the State Department, from the embassy, and how has this process evolved over time.

Describe some of the lessons learned from PRT experience. What worked well? What did not? Were these problems addressed? If so, how? What still needs to be done?

A: In terms of... It all could have worked a lot better. Things worked well on an individual basis. When individuals developed relationships and were clear about what was needed, then things worked individually very well. I never had a problem getting out to where I needed to get to, seeing things and experiencing things otherwise because of being able to travel with the military. But it goes back to what I said before. We didn't have a clear plan of how to engage with the PRT and so it could have worked a lot better in a lot of ways. I don't even know in some cases what I didn't do well. I just didn't know how far I could push the relationships and expectations.

I had an opportunity to engage, stay at, multiple times the PRT in Kandahar, so in a most insecure environment, and yet we were able to get out widely because that particular PRT believed and its leadership believed in engaging as much as possible to help people understand why we were there and had tremendous support in terms of my portion of USAID had responsibility for supporting media development throughout the country. That meant a variety of things, including establishing community radio stations, private, independent radio stations, all over the country. If it hadn't been for the PRTs in some of these areas we would not have been able to get the radio stations set up. Where we had a little bit of trouble was when we got them set up, the PRTs often saw them as a readymade conduit for psyops messaging, which then compromised the independence and caused security issues for independent journalists in some of these stations.

In one case, after we had with U.S. government funds set up a radio station, one PRT tried to buy them out and offered them money so that they would just deliver the messages that they wanted to. Because of a lack of preplanning and clarity on the mandates, there were unnecessary entanglements at times with things like that, with competing interests that actually weren't competing. So, we were able very quickly to see what they wanted and to explain what we were trying to do and why that was a positive and that if their message was good enough and attractive enough for an audience, then the radio station would take it on and play it for free anyway, and that maybe they just needed to consider that they had to speak in the same language as their audience. So, there was a lot of that kind of thing. It's not that it didn't work well. It just took time to, because you had such turnover, to try and keep reeducating people about what was possible, what was an immediate objective of a particular PRT and a military objective versus a long-term development objective.

That was hard for people who had no experience whatsoever with either on the military side with AID programming or with AID with military objectives. Where things worked really well – and

I don't know where it's evolved to know but started while I was there - was that in many cases where supporting programs with millions of dollars, maybe in small tranches, but a lot of taxpayer money being spent, and because of the security situation we had very little opportunity to directly monitor what was going on, and so we were often relying on third party Afghan organizations or our own contractors, who, frankly, had a vested interest in telling us everything was fine. So, what we explored – and in some cases it worked better than others – was engaging the PRT representatives, the military civil affairs teams, whenever they were traveling for whatever reason, we'd give them the project coordinates and then they would go and monitor the status of the project. They were happy to do that. They were looking for opportunities. It depended on the commander and which part of the country they were in. In more permissive environments, it was easier for them and they had more time to do that. In other areas, in Kandahar, it was a little more complicated for them to get out and look at projects because so much of their activity was focused on combat missions. But monitoring in particular was very interesting.

Another, at least a new beginning, and I don't know if it can be claimed as a success story at this point, but a formal arrangement for civilian military program planning was initiated by my office in the first month that I arrived. That was because at the time the Office of Transition Initiatives was trying to leave the country and say, "We've filled the gap that we can fill. Permanent staff are now coming." OTI is truly a transition body of USAID. It's unapologetically political in its objectives in a way that USAID is not normally. It was developed as a precursor to FCRS because there was a gap in being able to respond rapidly to evolving needs but that they weren't specifically development oriented needs. Our approach was to, although we may have ended up building a bridge or a school or even holding community theater sessions, was not to project; it was engaging people in a democratic process and buying time until the formal government could reestablish itself or until the longer term development and bilateral government representatives could be on the ground to begin longer term programming.

So, we were trying to leave and ultimately were asked to stay because the mission wasn't ready fully for us to be gone. But at the time, what this prompted was design of a project that was very similar in nature to what OTI does, which ultimately became the Quick Impact Project [QUIP], funded by USAID initially, ultimately was funded also with military (CERP) funds. But what was done very strategically to deal with some of the earlier problems that I was describing in terms of people having one bucket of money was to have the money that was allocated to each of the PRTs, projects had to be approved by a military, a State, and an AID representative as a team. So, what wasn't done was give them a strategic planning framework that says, "The reason you're doing all these things is to achieve X," but at least on a project by project basis, they were making decisions about why it would be good to have this project in a particular community or otherwise. So, that actually began to formalize working together and deconflicting military funds being spent on a project that might or might not interfere or complement an otherwise AID funded or USDA funded initiative. So that was a step forward. It still was only one project and they still didn't have responsibility as a team for oversight of all of the assistance programs that were going through the PRTs, but at least it was a step in the right direction.

All of this is of great interest to FBRS as we look forward in the future to hopefully not too many of these post-conflict settings where we have U.S. boots on the ground and our large-scale endeavors. But assuming that we would have to respond in such a situation and put an advance civilian team at a brigade level in a country to respond in a post-conflict setting, what would we want out of this? How would we want to see a PRT actually function? What we were talking about is having an advance civilian team that would be primarily civilian but would have a military liaison piece in it seconded to the embassy to do all of the work that requires urgency and immediacy and search capacity to supplement the embassy's work, but that that team would then coordinate the civilian teams placed in PRTs. So, right from the beginning, this advance civilian team, which would come from a Washington based team that was already participating in the strategic planning and response preparations, would already know what the mandate, the objectives, the interests are, and it would bring on board people who represented all of the agencies with interests as well as representing a full set of skills that might be needed to contract, to provide security, to interact with political actors, the whole spectrum. That team would be mirrored skillwise and all of that within the PRTs. You'd have a headquarters advance civilian team that could communicate directly with the headquarters military teams and make sure that everybody's on the same page and from the very beginning strategically working together towards the same objectives. So, we've already taken a lot of people who have worked in Afghanistan and on the PRTs actually come through FBRS to do a similar type of lessons learned exercise that USIP is taking on more comprehensively and systematically. So, I'm happy to share whatever it can because the sharing that we expect to come back... Got to pay for it.

Q: What still needs to be done? How do you see the PRTs evolving in the future?

A: I think the biggest question, and one that FBRS is looking at right now in terms of supporting its own interagency evaluation of the operations of PRTs is concerned with the transition of PRT management to NATO and what can we take that is lessons learned right now that could be fed in real time to help them manage the PRTs more strategically and better. It's everything that I've already talked about here from my perspective, but I think that what we're trying to set up with our evaluation is not only make an interagency evaluation team so that the lessons are owned by the interagency, but to look at a variety, not just substantively what the PRT can do but what it takes in terms of real management capacity - and I distinguish management capacity from administrative capacity - to actually make a PRT run effectively. That's just on the civilian side. I'm not sure I can make great recommendations from the military side other than - and this is already going on as well - civilian officers who have served in Afghanistan have been invited by the combatant commands to come and present whenever they're in the States or near a combatant command to educate military officers about what USAID and embassies do so that before they get on the ground they have a better sense of what to expect from us and that we're on the same team, not part of the problem and not extraneous to their missions. So some of the things that need to be done better are already beginning to happen. All I can say is, more strategically, more often, just keep doing it. But what we're going to recommend to NATO and how they can manage is that it's the management, administrative, and substantive keys, and substantive needs to have a focus on... We all have a tendency coming from our own agencies, if it's embassy, to focus on the intel and the political piece of it and not really take into account all the rest of it. AID tends to look at health, education, and some pieces of the economics. Then

you have the military looking at the security piece. But actually in post-conflict transitions, if you don't make all the pieces work together, you're never going to leave there, or you're not going to leave there with something you can leave behind and help it to continue. So, to the extent this substantive piece can look at how interagencies, whether it's just a USG PRT-like structure or if it's a multidonor PRT, how all the pieces work together is absolutely critical to define.

A communications piece is really important. I don't exactly know what the recommendation would be. We had an instance in Herat PRT when finally the famous warlord Ismail Khan was convinced or on the edge of being convinced to leave his post in the far west of Afghanistan and rioting broke out and there was violence for lots of reasons. A new governor was identified and installed and one of the instructions that was given to my office was, "Do whatever you can to help the governor to demonstrate that he's here for the people and to help him get a legitimate foothold" for political purposes, to get that community that was so wedded for a variety of reasons to the warlord to accept this new guy. We were ready to deploy with a readymade radio station and things that had never been allowed out there. Everything was very much controlled by the governor. We were ready to go. We could not get our equipment out there. The ambassador was saying, "This is absolutely the highest priority. Get this out there," but the military never got that order. So, while we were trying to respond to an emerging immediate need, the military chain of command didn't actually pass that same instruction." So, there is a communications piece and I'm not sure how you fix it. The one thing that then Iraq followed the example of was to have the head of the military operation in Afghanistan collocate in the embassy with the ambassador so they could communicate more in real time. That communication didn't always translate all the way down the line. For what reasons? I still don't know enough about the military command structure to begin to comment. But that's an important lesson, the communications piece.

I do think that there was a question at times about what the PRTs' mandate was versus what the priorities of the national government were. Granted, those priorities were emerging and developing over time, but I don't think it was always clear that when a PRT decided to fund a particular initiative, that they ever knew or took the time to explore whether or not that was consistent with the plans that the central government was developing or had in place. Again, once we placed the Quick Impact Project and started to have joint decision-making even about one stream of funding, that then gave the military access to the central government and an understanding of the structures and the approval processes and why it was important. The military was often looking at Quick Impact to establish support for a U.S. presence when the donor and political community was actually trying to extend legitimacy of the Afghan government, so there was a little bit of difference of opinion or difference in instructions about what we were doing in relation to the government of Afghanistan. Now, in terms of the evolution of the PRTs, it's interesting that the talk is what should the PRTs do next? I personally think the PRTs should think of an exit strategy. If we continue to invest in our capacity to run a particular piece of the country or to be able to function out there, we urgently need to look at civilianizing even more. Our investment should be more and more directed to the provincial and regional government structures and away from extending or legitimizing in any way our foreign structures. It's time in the third, now the fourth, year of post-conflict reconstruction to be looking at how we now back up and facilitate local governments to do the work and anything we

do should be done through those governments. We started that in the regional development zone concept in Kandahar, which I don't think ever fully took off. But the regional development zone concept, which put all of the actors together, including international actors in support of a government governor's plan was the right direction to go in at that time and should be more broadly pursued. Local ownership is key if we're ever going to leave Afghanistan in a large way.

NGO relations. I think that the PRTs in some cases did a yeoman's job of trying to reach out, but fundamentally, they speak different languages. The biggest problem was the military wearing civilian dress and handing out humanitarian supplies. In other cases, the military dropping leaflets and threatening to withhold humanitarian assistance if people didn't cooperate in their efforts to combat the local terrorists or international terrorists living locally. That endangered civilians on the ground outside of the official U.S. government. Since we weren't allowed to live in the local communities, it potentially endangered others who did live in those communities. It muddied the waters about what was actually humanitarian assistance and who was behind this thing. Since then because of this FBRS is working with the military and Interaction, which represents a large body of NGOs, to address uniform issues, vehicles that are used by the military, to make sure that there are clear distinctions in the minds of the public about who is military and what their mission is versus who is civilian and what their mission is. I think there is a lot of mission creep on all sides.

In response to this question here about are PRTs accomplishing their mission, I would have a hard time answering that because I still to this day could not tell you in a succinct manner what the mission of the PRT actually is. I can think of many missions. The rationale, I never saw a document when I was in Afghanistan describing what a PRT was for. I learned about it, helped to evolve them. I think maybe what they were set out to achieve has changed and evolved.

Hope this helps.

Q: Okay. Thank you. It's not as long as we thought it would be, but that's okay.

A: Short and sweet and to the point.

[END INTERVIEW]