

USIP – ADST

Afghanistan Experience Project

Interview #23

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The interviewee is a research plant physiologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He was sent to Afghanistan by USDA in September 2003 and assigned to work with the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Gardez, a city 200 kilometers southeast of Kabul in Paktia province, near the Pakistan border. He served with the PRT until April 2004.

The interviewee was assigned to the Gardez PRT as an agricultural advisor. His training for the assignment was minimal, with only a few days in the U.S. and consultations in Kabul preceding his arrival in Gardez. When he joined the PRT, he found that the region was suffering from six years of severe drought and had virtually no viable agricultural sector save the cultivation of illegal drugs. His work through the six-month period that he was there became a series of ad hoc projects mostly unrelated to agriculture.

The interviewee found that the tenuous security situation in the Gardez region limited what he and the other members of the PRT were able to undertake. The PRT was centered around the U.S. Army civil affairs personnel assigned to the group, but constant preoccupation with security limited what PRT members, particularly the civil affairs personnel were able to do. The interviewee believes that a larger combat force would have allowed the civil affairs soldiers and other nonmilitary members of the PRT to do more to in the city and province.

The interviewee believed that an effective way to have helped the extremely poor population of the region would have been through the modest provision of seeds, water and fertilizer. He was frustrated in not being able to obtain “micro” resources from U.S. and other authorities who were focused on “macro” projects.

He observed that the effectiveness of the Afghan government and its military forces was not significant during the six-month period that he served in Gardez.

United States Institute of Peace
Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training

Interview #23

Interviewed by: Barry Ballow

Interview date: June 7th, 2005

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Q: Can we start by asking you to state your name and your current job, your job description, and then your job description in Afghanistan?

A: I'm a research plant physiologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, specifically the Forest Service. My professional responsibilities are imaging of mobile protons. I am interested in determining seed components and specifically with the anatomy, physiology of mobile protons as they relate to computerized tomography and magnetic resonance imaging. I was sent to Afghanistan as a representative of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. My commission there was to liaison with other entities of the PRT program and provide what agricultural services I was able.

Q: Can you give a general description of the location, the history, the physical structure, the size, the staffing, the bureaucratic organization, and the agencies of the U.S. and Afghan governments represented in the PRTs, particularly the one in which you served?

A: Yes, I can. I will start with Gardez in Paktia province, which is in the southeastern region of Afghanistan bordering Pakistan. Gardez is approximately 200 kilometers southeast of Kabul. It is one of the original PRT locations. As a matter of fact, Gardez was the first PRT location. The U.S. army had already been in Gardez for several months when I arrived in September 2003. The 82nd Airborne Division, 10th Mountain Division, and then later other elements provided the force protection unit for the approximately 125 U.S. personnel in the cadre at Gardez. The civilian components were at that time a full complement of PRT which later was to be expanded to include other departments. Those original departments were the Department of State, USAID, USDA, and other components of scattered professionals to include DEA, FBI, and other governmental agencies.

The relationship with the Afghan government was made very clear to us before going and upon arrival. Our job in the PRT was to serve as an extension of Kabul, namely at that time, Karzai had not yet become president but was acting in that office, and our job was to extend his authority and part of his influence to the countryside in which we served. Gardez was responsible for Paktia, parts of Paktika, and other cities peripheral to those two provinces. Later, Gardez was broken down so that our primary responsibility was Gardez and Paktia province. Khost and Lowgar were the two other primary locations in Gardez at the time I was there beginning in September 2003. In addition to the U.S. complement, we also had ministry of interior presence. MOI had a representative there.

We knew him as a colonel in the Afghan army. Was he actually a colonel and in the Afghan army? I'm not sure. But he was knowledgeable and had experience in police authority. While he was with us, his personality usually would dictate how much availability and how much practicality he had and gave to the U.S. PRT. We can go into specifics of that, but just as the members of the PRT themselves, each location had one of these Afghan "colonels." I learned by experience after visiting them that each of the locations was working a little differently depending on the personality of this Afghan colonel. So, in addition to the U.S. military and the U.S. OGA people there, the Afghan military and their counterparts, the other big interface was primarily with NGOs. Gardez had a very small contingency of NGOs, mainly UN. But none of them had an active part because Gardez was hostile at this time and the NGOs, although extremely vocal and critical of the U.S. army, had none of their own force protection. Some chose not to be there and they left. While they were there, including the UN--all of them on occasion while I was there--would ask the U.S. army for force protection. There was even a contingency plan of how we would respond, like a QRF [Quick Reaction Force]. QRF, the force protection, the militants, the actual soldiers, would be available under any number of coding circumstances. They would respond as necessary in time and in reaction force to the situation. Well, what I was hinting at here is that even though the UN, the Red Cross, and some of these other NGO people were very critical of the presence of the U.S. army and the PRT business, they never had any hesitancy to make certain that the U.S. army was there available for the QRF. On occasion several times -- and I can be specific again, referring to notes -- the UN compound took its turn being shelled with incoming rocket and mortar fire. On occasion, the Gardez PRT did respond with a QRF.

Q: Could you talk a little about the formal mission assignment? Did you have specific projects to complete in a specific period of time, for example? If you did have those kinds of assignments, in retrospect, did you think that the mission was appropriate to the resources that you had available and also just to the circumstances in Gardez?

A: Let me start at the beginning, I hope. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is new to all of this business. There was even some overt hesitancy on behalf of the political structure of the Department of Agriculture to send any representatives to PRTs, but they did. There was a minimal amount of guidance, instruction, supervision, and training that was given. That sounds harsh, but you have to understand that Agriculture didn't know what was expected of them, not having previously participated, and the whole PRT concept was new. The idea of agricultural resource people working with the army like this was a concept that neither the army nor the Department of Agriculture had yet experienced. The training we had was three and a half days in Washington, DC, at the departmental level. We had interviews of persons who had been in Afghanistan such as Peace Corps personnel, various specialists who had been from Agriculture to Afghanistan but not in any hostile zones and not into a PRT. So there wasn't much training that was given to us before we left other than word of mouth and briefings from persons who had been there. I had previously been in Afghanistan three times myself and I did appreciate what was said. I'm sure some of the other persons who had not yet been found it even more helpful. There was even less instruction given as to what we were to accomplish

when we were there. Generally, our instructions were to go, offer the help we could, and stay safe. This was a six month program. There were three persons sent. We were the first three to go. The entire experience was new to Agriculture. When I got there, there was some additional training, orientation, implementation, given at the U.S. embassy in Kabul. There was no PRT coordinator at that time. However, there was by November or December of 2003. So there were people that we could rely and call on. This didn't mean that we were left out there on our own. We used the Thoria or telephone or whatever we had available any time we needed help and contacted the embassy. All this is just to emphasize that we were among the first of a brand new program. There wasn't a lot of information, training, sensitization, that could be offered before we left. But when we got there, things were about as I expected them in my location. I said three of us went. Each went to a different location. Even though I've spoken with the other two certainly and we've compared notes, I don't think that any of us had any real surprises as to what would happen. The level of it, of course, is going to be different at each of any location.

Q: Once you got to the assignment, how did your role evolve? You said there was no specific assignment ahead of time, but ultimately, what did it evolve into? Was it strictly providing guidance or did you actually help plan projects?

A: The short answer is that it was all of that. First of all, in 2003, Afghanistan as a country, its geography, as a region, was in the fifth year of a drought. Even the winter times were less severe than what we were told to expect – namely, not as much snowfall. Gardez is at an elevation of approximately 8,000 feet, so we were expecting a harsh winter, arriving there in September and preparing for it. The winter was mild because there was no precipitation, no rain or snow. So, this immediately puts restraints on what any agricultural advisor can do. I'm not trying to be funny, but you can't do anything without water in the agriculture business. Gardez itself is on a high elevated plain and it did not have water. There wasn't much agriculture interest in Gardez. Persons who did live off the land in the Gardez-Paktia, Paktika province did not grow any money crops outside of those that were illegal. One major influence that we tried to have, and we were not successful, was to offer substitute cash crops. Well, you really can't offer much of a substitute cash crop for what they were raising and selling, so that concept didn't work out. The fact that it was the fifth year of the drought didn't help. The fact that the average Gardez family in this province was making about \$300 per year annual income meant that they did without and it meant that the other things they wanted they had to barter for. Agricultural products outside of the illegal ones just weren't going to do it. They had nothing to feed their small animals, namely sheep, goats, a few cattle, this kind of thing. So, there was not much there to trade. There was no water and there was no inclination for farming. So, basically, agriculture in Gardez was not a primary objective.

Why did the Department of Agriculture send somebody to Gardez then? First of all, it was a learning experience and we probably didn't know everything we should have known to implant somebody there. Of course, you question why an Ag person would be sent anywhere in September at the end of a growing season at about an 8,000 foot elevation. All of these things, again, we wanted to help and weren't exactly sure how and

in which direction. The lessons that we learned coming from there are invaluable not just to Agriculture but to PRTs. So, we didn't get too much accomplished. One potentially important initiative that could have been undertaken, but wasn't, was to allow us a funding process. The PRTs and the U.S. army and the NGOs did have money available, but it was a long process, a very bureaucratic one, to get any money freed up to the point where it would actually work for you, especially during a six month tour. What do I mean? I mean that when you got to a place in this region outside the province-- because Paktia province was brown, dry, semi-arid, and mostly barren--but when you would get to a place -- for example, Khost -- not far away, a very dangerous drive geographically and politically, but when you got there, it was almost like going into another planting zone here in the States. It was much better. They did have arable land. They had all kinds of things that would be useful to traditional agriculture. The bureaucracy was not in place that would allow a small project -- say, \$10-20,000 -- to immediately start work and take effect. Two reasons. Number one, nobody was interested in helping Afghans at the \$10-20,000 level. They were looking for things that cost a quarter of a million or \$150,000, \$712,000. But when you see who you're trying to help, this is mom and pop and Lord knows how many kids because many families would live in the same mud huts. They are all in there together. These people were looking for help. They didn't care if you were going to build them a dam right now. They wanted to know, "Can you bring me a water tanker right now?" This was one of the problems that I had. Money was there. USAID, and this is critical, had programs set up in effect, but when you went to the AID reps and said "Hey, can you buy me some seed? Can you get me \$100 worth of seed and a couple of trailers full of water up here to help these people out," "No, we can't do that. It's got to be a big project. We'll fund something for \$150,000, but we don't know how to handle something for \$20,000."

Q: So microcredit programs, for instance, were not being tried out at that time?

A: No, they weren't, and they really needed to be. The people that we were trying to win over in the "hearts and minds" concept, those are the people that through an interpreter would patiently listen to me, they would have me in their town meetings. The shura (the town council) would meet and they would listen to me. When it was all over, some semi-toothless bearded man who hadn't shaved or combed his hair and was wrapped in a blanket "patu," would simply say, "Can you buy me seed" and I would say, "I'm sorry, I can't buy you seed." Through the interpreter, the men would generally disgustedly look at me and say, "Well, how are you going to help me? What are you going to do to help me?" They didn't care who was in Kabul. They didn't care whose extension we were trying to politicize for them in Kabul. What they wanted was help. PRT could have done that, but PRT was not working at the micro level. Everybody wanted to build roads and bridges. A ring road had to go in. Well, of course it did. And that stirs the economy and moves traffic, but the people the PRT should have been helping were these Afghan villagers who didn't have anything. And we were restricted as to what subjects we could help them with. Of course, everybody wanted wells. In the location I was -- and it varied -- a well about 50-75 meters deep would produce water and that would cost about \$1500 dollars. Then you'd need a pump to go with that. You know what? If you could find somebody who would give you the money for a well, their story was, "I'm sorry, we can

only build a well. We can't give you a pump." Well, why the hell not? What good is the water if you can't pump it out? These are the micro problems I'm talking about. Nobody wanted to build wells and pumps and a cistern and this cavity, this flowing, this irrigation system. Nobody wanted to do that. But I heard people that wanted to build dams. Somewhere in between you've got to stabilize the people that really are going to be the influential ones and that's going to be mom and pop. All the ministers and all the provincial governors – and I can talk about that in some detail – they wanted parks in their towns, streetlights, paved streets. Of course they do, but wouldn't it have been a lot more logical to take a chunk of money - what is a million dollars to a project like this?— and divide it up into \$25,000 lots that you can give one or two or three to a village, depending on how many people are in that village? We did not do what these people were expecting the U.S. to do. After the bomb smoke cleared and after Al-Qaeda and Taliban ended, they didn't leave. They're still there and they were there then. But the fact of the matter is, dramatically, when all of this had gone, the Afghan people were looking for this reconstruction help. We would build them schools. That's great. We would build them hospitals. That's great. But we didn't get out in the street, get out in the countryside, and give these people what they really wanted, and that was Afghan agriculture. They wanted something they could grow and eat and grow and sell.

Q: You were there for six months until April 2004?

A: Right.

Q: During that period of time, you were gathering this information and making these observations, did you report this back to the people that were responsible for the planning in Kabul?

A: Yes, and everybody agreed with what I was saying. But they also said, "We're just not set up to do this. There is a much greater probability of getting a bridge built over one of the creeks or streams in Gardez than there is in getting six or seven wells built." Let me clarify, wells were built, but the wells were usually built by other authorities. While we were there, things were changing. Everything was in flux. The army had a program which was given to the PRT commanders and it was the commander's fund. I've forgotten what it was, but it was a chunk of money, maybe \$50-100,000, where the PRT commander could divvy it out in these smaller quantities, and that was a step in the right direction. So, yes, people were hearing this story from several of us, not just me, and there was an inclination to do something about it, and this commander's fund came about. We indeed did use the commander's fund to build some wells and to get things out in the countryside. It did help. You'd be surprised how much people talk and share information with you when you're friendly with them and they know that you're there to stay. But unfortunately, early on, the PRTers went into town and they promised the world, left, and nobody ever saw them again. Why did that happen? One reason it happened is, as great as the PRT is – and it is a fantastic idea – it's understaffed. We were responsible for four provinces in Gardez when I got there. You cannot do that. You need more soldiers. You need more reps from any government agency just about. You need to get out. You need to have vehicles. You need to have force protection to

travel with you outside a 15 kilometer ring from the actual location of the PRT. You can't do that being responsible for more than one of these big provinces. So, what happened is, the civil affairs soldiers were very proactive, good people in PRT reconstruction, but when they got out, they started talking to people and the tendency was to promise them a well, promise them a school. They meant to follow through, but because there were so few soldiers and such a large space--this was in September of 2003 and this is now June of 2005, so I know things change--but people were promised things, those things never came about, and then when you did get back in town, you would find that often recalcitrant shura saying, "Look, you came here. You promised us everything. You gave us nothing. Why should we help you?" That was one of the drawbacks. It wasn't just money. It was the distribution of money. One sore spot for those of us who worked in Afghanistan, was that we kept hearing about these millions of dollars that Congress was appropriating or enabling at least, if not appropriating, and we kept saying, "Well, when does it come here? Where is this money?" It eventually did trickle down, but this is one of the disadvantages to a six month project. From the time CNN would say Congress approved \$17 million for Afghanistan until it wound up in the field in the form of wells and pumps was more than six months. These were some of the problems. You have to be there for the long run. You have to have lots of people. You have to have available money. You have to know how to get along with the local persons. PRT, specifically civil affairs, U.S. army, they were doing a good job at this.

Q: You've been back a bit more than a year now. Are you getting any feedback since that time that in fact your advice on some of the things that you've just been talking about have been added onto the role that PRT people are playing in the province? In other words, are they doing things more on the micro level now, having your experience and others on the books?

A: I don't really know because since I've come back, aside from some persons like yourself, nobody's asked me my opinion. When I got back, we had a debriefing and everybody wanted to know my opinion. That was a year ago and since I'm not in the Washington area - I'm not being sarcastic, but I am not in that flow. I do have contact with persons who are there now. From what they're telling me, it does sound like there have been changes. I don't think that the Army is putting more troopers in the field, which is what they need. And I do think that the U.S. Army is concentrating politically along the Afghan-Pak border like they always did, which means that they are freed up from other PRT locations by sharing the responsibility with other UN countries. I know that there are Germans, French, Spaniards, Koreans, and several other coalition countries that are taking other PRTs. Hopefully, that's good because then the soldiers that are available who can be put back into that border area where we really are trying to win over the locals. So, yes, that is a good thing. But one thing that I don't agree with in the way the army is doing things, they don't make the PRT independent.

Q: I was going to ask you about the handover. What did you see and how could the situation been improved?

A: I can only relate to my March/April 2004 to my extraction date. I don't know what has happened since. I visited 12 PRT locations ranging from Jalalabad to Spin Buldak (PH) along that sweeping border. I did see quite a number of the same problems. Of course, every location has its specific problems. But one problem I kept seeing at just about each one of the military bases as well as the PRT was that there were not enough soldiers there. The longer I stayed, with each rotation, there were fewer soldiers coming in. I don't know whether we had fewer to draw upon or they were just putting them in different locations.

Q: These were U.S. forces you're speaking of.

A: Except for Spin Buldak, which the French special forces had, I was always with the U.S. army.

Q: Are you saying that your PRT didn't really have any help from Afghan forces for protection?

A: Yes, they did. Gardez had both the new Afghan police facility – one of the sub police academies was being built in Gardez north of the city on the Gardez-Kabul road. And then in addition to that, we had some of the Afghan militia themselves stationed right there in a separate part of our compound, not within the security of the U.S. army, but in the same general compound. They were in flux. They varied from about 200, down to just maybe a few squads. That would depend on the specific minister of the interior who had control of them. They were there so that our cadre could teach them some things. This was the Afghan military force [AMF]. The police were handled differently at their own facility. But on occasion, we did use the Afghan military force on some of these QRF operations. But generally, most U.S.-controlled PRTs relied on the U.S. Army to give them both force protection and the civil affairs soldiers as well.

Q: Did you have enough protection while you were there to allow you to operate in the field?

A: It was variable. There wasn't one blanket that would cover all of that as an answer. There were not enough soldiers, no. The ones who were there were very good soldiers. They were regular army soldiers. They knew what they were doing. They did patrols well. They'd go out at least three times a day on patrols to different locations. There were variable times, locations, routes everything. Very professional. The civil affairs personnel themselves had to take responsibility for part of their own force protection when they could leave the PRT compound. Without getting too technical – I know this is not a DOD interview – there was a 15 kilometer ring which would go around the center from the PRT. Generally, within that 15 kilometers, and that at times was variable--it would shrink, I don't remember it getting larger, but it would shrink upon the daily intelligence reports--but basically there were not enough force protection personnel to go on all of the patrols. There were occasions, not just in Gardez but the other areas as well, that civil affairs people had to provide their own protection. I don't think that the civil affairs soldier was prepared for this responsibility either in experience or training. The

regular army, yes, of course, did it very well. And the civil affairs persons wanted to do it and did do it with training and on the job experience. But I don't think that when they were sent there they were ready to get into their trucks and their HUMVEEs and spend the day navigating the Afghan countryside, providing their own protection. Keep in mind, not all PRTs even did this. Some PRTs had what was called a storefront. That concept was a very viable one and a very productive one whereby the Afghan people could come to the PRT either downtown or in some cases at the PRT field location. That was probably dictated by the security level at the geography of the PRT.

Q: Did your PRT operate more on the storefront model or on the field model?

A: Both. We were very careful as to which Afghans were allowed into our compound. Security was an ever-present concern in Gardez. It certainly wasn't the most hostile zone in Afghanistan at that time, but it was far from being the most secure. We were very fortunate. We had some very experienced civil affairs soldiers as well as 82nd Airborne or 10th Mountain Division for professional force protection. No, we allowed individuals in for intelligence briefings and for political goodwill. They could visit with escorts inside our compound. But I had been on other compounds where the Afghans were not permitted totally free access but had more liberal access so that they could come into the compound for interviews.

Q: One more question about security. You mentioned that there seemed to be fewer and fewer U.S. troops in the area. If you had had more troops, more force protection, would the PRT have been able to do more?

A: Absolutely. There's no question about it. The civil affairs soldiers are good people. I was not very kind to them a few minutes ago talking about security. Those people didn't have patrolling skills, self-defense skills, immediate action drills, this sort of thing. They just didn't have them. But the civil affairs part of their assignment, they did quite well. They were really good. Most of them were reservists who had come there from things like being deputy police chief for a small town or a highway patrol officer or social workers or hospital administrators. They really knew what had to be done. But they were kept from doing a much a better job because there was just not enough regular U.S. Army presence that would allow them to extend their activities further beyond this security ring and get out where mom and pop were living. This is interesting. The NGOs were extremely critical of the U.S. army being in the reconstruction business. I could see their point of view but I could never understand it. The NGOs where I was didn't want to be there. That particular area was too hot for them. They didn't want to be there. So, what was their objection with the U.S. Army trying to help out? If these people were so philanthropic, if their philosophies were so "Let's help the other guy," why was it that they were so critical of the U.S. Army helping where the NGO didn't want to be because they didn't want to get shot at? Nobody blames them for that. That's not what I'm saying. The NGOs that we dealt with in Gardez told us that their organizations had signed some kind of a letter of intent that said that they would not bear arms and they would not ride in armed convoys. Well, I don't know about such things, but I heard it quite often. Okay, that means you either have to go in these areas and

become the potential victim of hostilities which you know is possible, or you have to go with your own force protection. How then could the NGOs be so critical of the U.S. Army being in the reconstruction business when the U.S. Army took its own muscle along so that they could get out of a tight situation if one arrived? Nobody blamed the NGOs for not wanting to go, but why would the NGOs blame the PRT and the U.S. Army for getting in the reconstruction business when we were doing it where the NGOs couldn't?

Q: You were talking about relationships between the various organizations and entities that were in Gardez in the area you worked in? Is there anything else you'd like to describe about any of those relationships?

A: In the last 15 months or so, I hope that some things have changed. For example, there are a lot of competitive feelings among some of the government agencies that are there trying to accomplish this good. Namely, it's the people who have the money and the people who want to get hold of some of the money. I have always thought AID should be running the PRT show. That's what they do globally. They're the Agency for International Development. The army has always said, "Yes, as soon as things cool down so that you don't have to have protection, you're right, AID should run it." That's not my comment. My comment is, AID didn't look kindly on Agriculture for just having agricultural people there. The comment I heard from several individuals was, "Hey, we can handle the agriculture business ourselves. We don't need you." Well, I don't know about that. I don't know who, for example, my counterpart would have been. There were several persons at the Kabul embassy, but there was nobody out in Gardez from AID in agriculture. However, there certainly was a person from AID in Gardez. Personally, that person and I--as well as other U.S. reps--got along just great. They would even give me some tips. They'd say, "Look, regarding this problem of finding \$5-10,000, no, we can't help you because we can only give you \$5 million. But if you go to such and such organization, they might help you out." So, yes, the AID personnel that I dealt with were really good at our location. But the basically AID was very protective of its own territory. I think that they were afraid of, specifically, Agriculture getting into their ballgame and thereby losing some of next year's budget money.

Q: What about security? You have threaded a description of the situation there through much of what you've already spoken about. Is there anything else about the security situation there that you want to elaborate on--a specific event perhaps that frustrated a project that you were trying to carry out or that limited the way you worked? Or basically if the security situation got better, did that help out?

A: As I speak, please respect that I'm giving you, number one, my opinion for my location, which cannot equate to a second Agriculture guy's opinion from a second location. Security certainly did play a role in many of the places that I was in. It did not hinder me because when I was able to get out into the country and talk to mom and pop -- and I use this term "mom and pop" respectfully, meaning that the ordinary family were the ones that I thought should be helped... Not being in the Department of State, having

no idea what political ambassadors do, I thought my job was to help turn part of this place green. The people who can do it were villagers--mom and pop--in Afghanistan. When I got out to see them, I always felt secure. During the whole six months at these 12 different locations, there were moments when I did not feel secure, but that was not because I was out talking to some farmer in his mud hut. It was because five percent of the Afghan population plus the people they fought for and brought in were trying to harm us in our own PRT location or out in the field. I relate that as something different than security to my Ag position in PRT.

Q: Throughout the six months you were there, did you see any improvement in security? Did it start off bad and get better or start off bad and get worse?

A: Let me remind you that I've already said about the army... On each rotation for the civil affairs soldiers, each rotation military units brought fewer real soldiers with them. So, since the security situation at best stayed the same - the security threat along the border stayed the same - and you had fewer people to deal with it, it's quite natural then that there would be fewer people to deal with and therefore one could say that the threat increased, not decreased.

Two other points. As I was leaving the country, the Army was changing the PRT structure. It was going from individual cities--Gardez, Khost, Jalalabad--to regional hubs. I think that Khandahar was the pilot when I was there. The major army facility would be at Khandahar. They would provide force protection which could be expanded, for example, in the form of response helicopters, response armored vehicles. Many of the places where we were in 2003 had vehicles but no armor. This was meeting the security challenge but under a different organization. Other than the fact that I knew it was coming about, I had no experience with it and therefore can't comment on it.

The other point I want to make is that I think that no matter what organizational level the PRT finds itself in, it will ultimately be successful only if it's reaching out in the country and away from the base of operations. To do that, the PRT must have an integrated internal force protection unit with it. I don't think that it was a good idea to bring in on rotation the regular army units. It could work if you're going to bring them in for a year or two. But to bring them in for six months and then rotate them out, no. What I'm suggesting is that maybe the answer to that is have the civil affairs cadre unit with its own force protection. You had a lieutenant colonel (pay grade officer 5) as commander of the PRT. Most of these lieutenant colonels had enough experience and training by the time they got on location to be there that they could well have managed a force protection integral to civil affairs, but as it were, the force protection was segregated, meaning that it had its own commander and its own schedule of patrols and so on which were indeed daily interfaced with what the PRT would ask for, but they weren't controlled by the PRT commander. Every night after dinner at just about every location, the PRT commander would have a staff meeting. The force protection people would be there and they would get their instructions for the next day or the day after, depending on where civil affairs wanted to go. But that's not good enough. I think that the Army should give some serious consideration to making an entire integral unit called civil affairs with its own

attached force protection. Don't make the fat old reserve sergeants and the lazy civil affairs people who are there walking around with their guns in their pockets, don't make them your main source of force protection. Get regular GIs to do it. But those regular GIs should be part of that civil affairs unit, perhaps on a protem basis like a task force. Don't assign 50 troopers to the civil affairs unit, but assign them to the task force including the civil affairs when you actually operate in the field. That way, after the 12 month rotation period that was standard for everybody short of being extended, everybody would know what their job was going to be and they would know the personalities involved. Security was never a problem in that we couldn't handle it. It was always a problem in that we didn't have enough people to handle it right. I remember the Army saying over and over again to NGOs, "The army will get out of the reconstruction business when these fields and roads are secure for everybody to walk on and ride through." They were serious about it. Until the roads became secure, which was only going to be done through my having more guns than you, the NGOs weren't going to be there and the army was going to be there, and it all comes down to this same turf war. The NGOs don't want the army in the reconstruction business because it cuts on their money. The army sees a poor image from NGOs because they don't want the army there. It's all wrapped around security.

Q: Let me take you to another subject. This is about governance. There is interest in this reporting project on how the PRT activities related to promoting democracy and creating local governance and extending the authority of the central Afghan government. There is interest in the relationships between the PRT and the local Afghan power holders and also the central government in Kabul. If you could comment on that. If you know whether the Afghan government was represented within the PRT at any of the time you were there--if they weren't actually part of the PRT, if you saw them in action in organizing local councils or assisting in the setting up of local elections or otherwise promoting democracy and protecting human rights and advancing women's rights and that sort of thing. So, a general idea of the state of Afghan governance there and how your PRT interacted with that effort.

A: Let me give you some examples. A guy named Governor Wafa was and may well still be the governor of Paktia province. The governor as I understand is appointed by, in this case, President Karzai and his consultants and serves at their pleasure. Also, coming down from the governor into the major city of Paktia province, which is Gardez, the mayor and all of the municipal officers served, some under the governor's authority. Well, not only politics but personality, family, and tribal associations come into play here. We saw some people who looked potentially promising as leaders in agriculture and then we saw some others who were just there because their cousins were friends--the good old boy concept that reaches from from Mississippi to Afghanistan. That about sums it up. There was a mayor of Gardez who was on and off, up and down, in and out, three times in the six months that I was there. He finally confided in me he wanted a UN job. He wanted to know if I would help him get an NGO job because he knew that as long as he was the governor's yes man, he could be the mayor of Gardez. But when he wanted to do something on his own the governor didn't want done for whatever reason,

that was when the governor fired him and brought in another yes man. So, I don't know how effective any of these ministers in Kabul were, are, will be. I do know that on one occasion I had reason to approach them politically – not myself, but through the chain. There is a pass through the mountain that is absolutely a necessity to bring commerce between Kabul and Gardez in the wintertime through the heavy snows and ice.

Well, the roads are primarily hard gravel. Some of them are paved, but not many. When you go through these passes at 8-9,000 feet, there is just enough room for one lane of traffic and on occasion there will be some sort of a passing lane. There is no guardrail. Aside from being really pretty views, they're pretty dangerous. Well, the PRT commander asked if I would see if it were possible to clear these passes and keep them clear during the traditional winter. We were trying to find money to carry out the work. One of the people I looked to for help was the minister of interior in Kabul. He had no interest at all in doing that. We approached him--not me personally--but persons I spoke to did approach him. Apparently, the minister couldn't see that this was of importance to the reconstruction of Afghanistan, to have flowing traffic. Not only was he not interested in this, he couldn't see the value of extending his authority from Kabul into Gardez by providing this. To make a long story short, the U.S. army did provide some road clearing maintenance. Then, by going to the UN ops people, who were able to help by providing money for people with shovels and sand buckets and so on to get out, it was possible to get a contract that did clear this road. Okay, that might answer your question about how effective are the Afghans politically when they get into a situation they can help? If it's going to help them, they're going to do something about it. But they are pretty strong about what's in this for me. I don't know and I won't say how crooked I think some of them may be or could be, but I've seen them be very personal about what they're willing to do as far as helping their country. I don't know if anybody makes money off of this and I don't mean to hint that that's what's happening – ripoffs, whatever. It's just that when you go to them with a definite problem their people are having, I hear more reasoning why we shouldn't do this than agreement to trying something different to make it work. I know they don't have much money, but what are they doing with the money that we give them? I don't see it coming down into Gardez. This governor had his own agenda. He wanted to develop a housing project of all things, so where do you think he wanted to pay for them to go? In front of his housing district. This is another story for you to hear.

Q: Some of the projects that the PRT or presumably at least the embassy in Kabul was interested in were things like the general promotion of democracy perhaps through the conduct of elections, promotion of or protection of human rights, and one thing in particular, of course, was women's rights. That was sort of a centerpiece for the administration. Did you see any progress in those areas in that early time that you were there? Was there any active effort in any of those directions taking place in Gardez?

A: Absolutely. I can be much more upbeat on this one. Very, very strong cooperation. As you know, the United Nations did have the lead on the CLJ, the constitutional jirga, and they did come back to Gardez for the CLJ, the elections. That was the one back in

November, December, or January '04, where the Afghans came to elect the electors, the representative people and so on. UN did a good job on that. They had a personality there who made it work. He came to the Gardez PRT and explained his position. The Lieutenant Colonel who was the PRT commander really went out of his way to make this Gardez CLJ a success and it was. There was a lot of security that was supposed to have been done by the MIOs, the minister of interior, and it wasn't. He was supposed to send, I think, it was 250 troops, Afghan militia, down to Gardez for the security of this. Well, you would have to have to ask PRT commander exactly why, but the bottom line is, they never showed up. So, the U.S. army, backing up what local Afghan militia there was, did the job. The local Afghan militia was there, yes. The ones that I mentioned earlier were garrisoned at Gardez, they and the U.S. army soldiers and civil affairs soldiers and some force protection brought in from Khowst (I think it was 10th Mountain people), all of these people went together to assure that the CLJ in Gardez was a success. You had several State Department people at Gardez at the time who really, really worked their butts off to make this thing happen. Rather than have me tell you about it, you need to talk to them. They really earned their money on this one.

Q: Are you crediting the State Department or the military? You did say the commander of the PRT was involved in this, too, so I guess you're crediting the PRT for playing a role in this?

A: I'm crediting the U.S. It was a cooperative effort. The U.S. army, mainly the PRT, headlined by the PRT commander, he could have said, "No, I can't get involved in this," but he didn't. I'm crediting DOS because of the guys you had. Those guys personally had a lot of guts and they went out and they did things. I'm crediting the local AMF because they were at their post, we had to back them up and keep making the rounds to make sure they stayed at their post. But I'm giving everybody that had anything to do with the PRT concept a lot of credit for making this CLJ work in Gardez. I don't know how other locations made it work, but I know the one in Gardez was a success.

Q: Did the loya jirga actually take place while you were in Afghanistan?

A: Yes.

Q: So you saw the run-up to it and some of the aftermath?

A: Yes. Regarding the women, I'll tell you some of the things I saw personally. Women are taken to Gardez for the constitutional loya jirga process. I saw them literally coerced into a lesser level of participation than was hoped for. We did get some comments saying, "Oh, well, they're never going to elect a woman. They won't send women delegates to elect." The CLJ and the shuras and the people just wouldn't send women to be part of it. However, in the Gardez site, yes, there were women there. Who got elected and why or why not, I can't comment on that. Your State Department reps will have a story to tell you on that one. But, yes, I did see them at Gardez, and the women I saw were exerting their opinion. Whether or not they could do anything with their opinion, I don't know. But they weren't afraid to speak their mind.

Q: In general, still on the subject of the loya jirga, did you see any immediate impact after that meeting took place, was there anything that happened locally that seemed to be a result of that constitutional jirga?

A: I didn't see it, but you probably have to have a State Department rep tell you that because he would know what to look for. I didn't see things like reprisals, those kinds of things. I didn't see things like overnight beauty salons opening up. My point is, I wasn't trained to know what to look for. But I'll bet you some of your own guys were trained and did have comments on that. I know that mostly after the reps or delegates were appointed, I did hear that some of them were not allowed to go to Kabul for the next level of talks. I never knew exactly why they didn't go, whether it was tribal coercion, sexual harassment, meaning that they wouldn't let their women take part even if elected. I just don't know those things.

Q: Can you think of any additional PRT activities that were related to economic reconstruction and development that you might want to mention in this commentary, anything that involved other U.S. agencies? You have talked about the Department of Agriculture and AID a little bit already. Anything else that you'd like to bring in to that just to look back at reconstruction?

A: Yes, I'd like to make sure that the Army gets a lot of credit for this. What I was saying earlier about nobody drilling wells, I meant on a big scale. I didn't mean that there were no wells being drilled and no pumps being given. I've seen them. On many patrols, I would ride with civil affairs and we would go back and check to make sure that not only were these wells drilled but they were drilled where everyone agreed to have them and not in the backyard of some shura leader because those things could happen as well. And the Army also did a lot of reconstruction – again, not to be confused with my \$5-10,000 projects. They did things like, they located and made the arrangements for schools, hospitals, town meeting halls, this sort of thing to be built. I know that they had money for that because I would go with them when they would go to take a look at progress of what was done since the last time we were at this location. So, I think that the army did a fine job, and they did have money, not millions, but hundreds of thousands of dollars, for building schools. They'd go into a village... There were some ground rules which I found interesting. The Army denied requests from certain villages schools because the shura would not promise the Army, the PRT, that girls would also be taught. They said, "Oh, no, we would never teach girls." Okay, then the PRT would say, "Well, I'm sorry, Sir, but you can't have one of our reconstructed schools because we are pushing the agenda of Karzai in Kabul that women do have rights in your country. It's not the U.S. army saying they have rights. It's your people. It's just that we're not going to give you what you want unless you tell us that the women will be part of it." I hope this does give you something of what you're looking for where the army did make reconstruction and the army did enforce such things as women's rights.

Q: For clarification, when you say "the army," you really are talking about the Army that was part of the PRT or that was the spearhead of the PRT, is that correct?

A: Yes. I should be more specific. I'm talking about civil affairs, that part of the Army which is called civil affairs.

Q: You also mentioned that they were part of the PRT though. Is that correct, they were also involved?

A: I think it depends who you talk to within the army and maybe within DOS. But the army had the force protection soldiers, civil affairs soldiers, small groups of intelligence people, special forces. All of this went in to make up what would be called very generically a PRT. Usually, when people talk about PRT, I think really the persons they're talking about are the civil affairs. Those are the people that kept getting smaller and smaller every time a rotation would come about.

Q: But the PRT collective included both the U.S. army and the civilian contractors like yourself who were there, is that correct?

A: No, I was not a contractor. They had contractors. Most of the AID people were contractors. Some of the State Department people told me that they were on a contract, not permanent employees.

Q: But you were an employee of the Agriculture Department?

A: Yes, I'm a Civil Service employee and part of the federal structure. I'm a Civil Service employee, a GS person.

Q: I was just trying to clarify the composition of the PRT. If I understand it correctly, the PRT included both civilian participants such as yourself, either contract or civil servants, and military components. So when you're referring to the PRT, you're talking about both civilian and military components, is that correct?

A: Yes, and when I specifically say "civil affairs" or "force protection," then I'm relating to a specific part of the army. But yes, you're right, a PRT is thought to include everybody U.S. at that location.

Q: You've commented several times about the relationship with the NGOs or at least the NGOs' activities and their outlook and that sort of thing. Is there anything else you'd like to add to that, any observations about that, the relationship between the PRT and NGOs?

A: No, I just want to summarize very quickly that I don't personally see a competitiveness between NGOs and the military. As I've said so many times today, they're doing the same work but they're doing it under different circumstances and in different parts of the country where one of them may not want to operate.

Q: In some parts of the country and during the period of time you were there even, I

believe some of the PRTs were organized by the U.S. first and then handed over to other countries. Did that happen in Gardez at all?

A: No, because that area along the border between the two countries was always meant and probably for a long time will be controlled for any number of reasons by the U.S.

Q: So it really just wasn't feasible at that time presumably?

A: No, but in other locations they seemed to work out quite well. They free up the U.S. to go somewhere else and then they also allow the UN and ISAF to take over more responsibility.

Q: Did you have any knowledge where that did happen, any province or city, of any personal – anything that you could comment about that handover, how it went?

A: No. The only handovers I can comment on through personal experience were from U.S. to Afghan, namely the AMF and some of the security problems that could be and were in some cases – patrols and so on – handled by the AMF, but not from coalition group to another.

Q: In Gardez at the PRT, was there any focus on police training at all? Were you collocated, for example, with a U.S. police training center?

A: Yes, I thought I mentioned this very briefly earlier. The main academy was controlled by a representative of the U.S. the embassy in Kabul. I knew him and respected him, so I think that he did a good job with that. He then located regional subacademies. I think the main one was called the “academy” and the other ones were called “training schools” or something like this. But Gardez did indeed have one of those. I even mentioned that it was north of the city on the Kabul-Gardez road, pretty well located. The actual class was just starting to form about the time I was leaving. The structural facilities, all the physical facilities were just about in place. We'd go out there often, stop by on patrols and check it out. It looked like it was up and ready to run in February/March of '04 in Gardez.

Q: Up to that time at the PRT did you have any level of engagement, direct or indirect, with the local police force?

A: Yes, we had a one on one involvement. One of the projects I was able to fund was sponsored by the UN, UN Ops, in Kabul. The governor's appointee, called the director of agriculture, in Gardez went to the UN people in Kabul, collected the money which was to have been used to pay off the laborers, and then he in turn and the man who went with him reported to the UN people that they had been robbed of this money. They didn't have it anymore. Well, it was a substantial sum in particular for Afghans. I was brought in on that. I interviewed these people in UN Ops headquarters in Kabul and then Governor Wafa asked for my report back in Gardez. Most people thought that the director of agriculture had staged that robbery and he and the other guy kept the money.

As a result of this, and not my opinion, but my report after interviewing both of them separately and together, the governor put the former ag director in jail. I went to visit him on one occasion, couldn't find him. They said he had been transferred. During that time, I did have an opportunity to see the Gardez holding facility and that was quite an experience.

Q: Do you speak Farsi or Dari or any one of the local languages?

A: None of those languages.

Q: Can we talk a little bit more about the general subject of rule of law? If you can describe a bit more the PRT's involvement if it did, in fact, get involved with the Afghan police, the courts, and prisons in the Gardez area or the provinces that you were working in. Did you know if there were local courts and prisons actually functioning while you were there?. If you could describe any PRT involvement with informal or traditional justice systems. Did the PRT promote legal institutions? What were the local attitudes toward the PRT activities in the area of rule of law, if in fact the PRT actually did get into that area in any substantive way?

A: I didn't see much of that. I don't think that the PRT wanted to become involved with administering or interpreting any legal systems outside the U.S. army to the soldiers in the U.S. army. We had our frustrations with it, I can tell you that. When persons were collected by the Army for interrogation, the Army had to be quite aware of the manner in which these persons were approached, held, interrogated, and maintained. The local Afghans were apprehensive about any of their family members being taken to Bagram Air Base. When the army would find somebody thought to be not friendly to the U.S., they would be interrogated locally and then, depending upon the severity or what we felt would be their contribution, we would transport them to Bagram air base north of Kabul for further interrogations. At that point, the family of the locals would become very interested because they were apprehensive about the treatment of their family member as a prisoner in Bagram. Many of the storefront activities for Gardez PRT involved fathers, sons, brothers, no women of course, no wives and mothers, asking, "Can you help me find Abdul Jones, who was taken three months ago during a raid to our home?" The standard questions were always met with the standard answers, referral to the American Red Cross or the International Red Cross. Aside from that kind of local law and the intercourse with the local training facility in law, I had no personal involvement with the application of local Afghan law. I saw it in effect and I have very vivid, lasting impressions of what I saw. I can tell you that it was pretty harsh, but I don't know if it was typical or not. I never went into a local court while it was in session. There was a courthouse built by the UN and AID, mainly AID, in Gardez. I think Karzai was scheduled to visit several times, but I don't know if he ever made it. At the time he was supposed to have come, there were several rockets and other hostilities demonstrating that some persons didn't want him to come to Gardez. I think that they didn't want him to come for any reason. It was just coincidental that it was to inaugurate or to open or dedicate (I think they said dedicate) this courthouse in Gardez. After having left there, I

heard similar stories about when he was supposed to have come to the police school in Gardez. So, the local law in Gardez was very similar, not to become melodramatic, about what you see in Kabul. It was there and it was upheld by some persons with a strong enough hand to do it, but on many occasions, it could be bent. That's the only thing I personally had involvement with with local Afghan law.

Q: Let me ask you about your opinion about the achievements of the PRT while you were there and any reflection you've made since returning to the U.S. Do you think that the PRTs were accomplishing their mission? Do you think that the trend was good as far as the PRTs being effective? Do you think the PRT as its organized is an effective vehicle for providing security, expanding central authority, promoting reconstruction and development, and in general utilizing U.S. military and civilian resources?

A: I think the PRT is a damned good idea. I think that the Army really has something going by using and operating PRTs. I don't know, maybe State Department had the idea for PRTs. Whoever did it, it's a good idea and it should be kept. I think it's going to become an army operational doctrine. I don't see why it couldn't work in other countries. Does it have drawbacks? Does it have weaknesses? Does it have shortcomings? You bet it does. But some of these things we've already touched on right now today and some of them are being touched on by people in the Pentagon.. How I see the PRT? I see it as being very productive, I really do. I earlier gave you some of the shortcomings of the PRT, namely the civil affairs reserve soldiers are not trained for combat patrols. They should be or they shouldn't be doing it. And if they shouldn't be doing it, which I feel they shouldn't be, then the force protection group has to be enhanced. That is when I suggested that the PRT commander should indeed be in control of the force protection soldiers as well.

What are some of the achievements? The achievements are just plain good schmoozing with the Afghan locals. It got to the point where when we rode out of town in more than one location, you'd pass the same groups of people just about every day. You could tell those peoples' attitudes towards Americans just by driving by. When a HUMVEE bounces up and down the "rutted road" from one Afghan village to another, it makes a lot of noise. They could hear you coming. We knew what kind of response by the kids that would run out front. The kids would run out front, they would wave, and everybody would holler, "GI, GI, GI! Hello!" They'd wave at you. Some of them would even give you the finger. I don't know how many countries you've been in, but most of the ones I've been in with GIs, this is something that they learn. Even in an endearing manner, you can still give somebody the finger after a while. It doesn't mean what it means getting on the George Washington Bridge in New York City. If the kids would come out and they would holler and they would say, "Hello! How are you? GI," you knew that they were learning from their parents what American soldiers meant to their country. If you go down the road and you come into a village and nobody was out, nobody was hollering, you thought, "This ain't good. The parents are telling them that 'Here come the baby shooters. Stay inside.'" If you had good soldiers, you would act defensively and you would be prepared for that. So what does this have to do with... It has to do

with the image that the U.S. army and their affiliations, the AID, the ag[riculture] people, the Department of State persons, that even in youth the Afghans knew that we could help them. Were we going to help them? Not if we just come in one day, promise them wells, leave the next day, don't ever come back, and don't ever give them the wells. They know that. I've heard this at several shura meetings, "You soldiers come and you promise and we never see you again." Well, you can't argue with them because we did it. Why did we do it? There weren't enough of us to go around. It's not a money... You're not going to flood Afghanistan with dollars and come away in four years any better than we are right now. Those people will take your dollars and run. They're not dumb. They're just poor, that's all. It's not enough to appropriate, to enable, billions, money to go there. You've got to send boots on the ground, you've got to send them in trucks that can drive for... It's only 20 kilometers from one place to another, but do you have an idea how long it takes to get from there to there? Sometimes there aren't even roads. If it weren't for GPS, we couldn't find some of these places. You, the Department of State, had reps there and they rode in the back of these trucks just like the soldiers. Ask them, the guys who were there. They'll tell you. But it's got to be money that can be distributed in a fair process. It isn't just UN rolling in town and building a bridge. Somebody's got to go out to mom and pop and give them a bag full of seeds, give them a well. You've got to get army medics out there, and every PRT had army medics and they were lifesavers in more ways than one. They'd roll into town, first thing you know, we'd have a clinic opened up. I've seen many of these medics open up the backs of their trucks and just start giving shots, bandaids, cotton, eye drops. Those people had no idea what an eye drop was good for and probably wouldn't use it if they knew, but the fact that they could go up to an American soldier and get something – I don't mean a rubber ball or a Frisbee, I mean get something like a band aid, it was terrific. If that's where we need to spend our money, give them some more money to spend on that. But PRT is a damned good concept. I hope that it stays, but I hope that they'll take what people have said and find out those of us who are exaggerating and forget us, but look at the mainstream of all the comments you get from interviews and put those concepts into building a bigger and better PRT. The army, sure, they have to know what's going on in a PRT, but do they have to be in charge? For security matters like Gardez, you bet they do. But for a place like Kandoz, Bamian... Of course, these change from day to day, so you can't be specific. I was going to say Herat, they don't, but since I've been back, it sounds like Herat is warming up again. So, maybe the Army still has to be in charge there.

As to the handovers, I see that as a mixed bag. ISAF was something next to a joke. As long as I was in and around Kabul, I'd see ISAF soldiers and their armed vehicles and their 50 caliber quad machine guns, but you know what? You get far out of Kabul and you're never going to see one. So I don't really know what they want to do, what they can do, what their countries allow them to do, or what the Department of State wants them to do. No matter what the army says, from my experience in Afghanistan, and in some cases it got hostile, the Department of State was running that war, not the Department of Defense. Iraq? Okay, that's an entirely different ballgame. But I still think that the Department of State calls the shots in Afghanistan. You've got to have the Army there because the Department of State doesn't want to be known as shooters. What I'm saying basically is, we want to spread the American image. The soldiers can do it.

They do it very well. Every one of us in the PRT with bags and boxes of candy from church groups and baseball hats, tee shirts, and socks, and you ride through town, you give them out, and all the kids – not many of the adults – next time you see them are going to have a big smile and a dirty, muddy, beat up, old baseball hat that we had given them brand new, but they were proud of it. Some of them even wore socks. They're not used to wearing it.

Q: As far as your own personal experience and your role as an expert in the agriculture field, were there any particular successes or frustrations that you remember that are still in your mind from that six month period?

A: The successes are very hard to judge. We were sent there with no, zero, agricultural funding at all. They told us, "Find money where you can and do what you can." Most of us were able to generate funding there by going to the NGOs, getting friendly with them, and getting some money. AID had money, the Army had money. So we were able to generate amounts of money. Just in dollars, I don't know, mine came out relatively small. I think I got somewhere between one and two hundred thousand dollars generated. Compared to my research budget as a U.S. Civil Service employee, that's fantastic in six months. We don't get that kind of grants. But in relation to what other PRT guys did, no, I heard they got millions of dollars. But they went in for building bridges and roads. The money was there and they made it work. But for agriculture, no, I've got to come back to what I said earlier. AID got millions of ag dollars available to build irrigation canals, dams, hydroelectric plants, okay, but somebody needs to go to you know who, mom and pop, and give them \$250 worth of seeds, a wheelbarrow and fill it full of shovels. Well, I saw kids carrying water in old rubber innertubes that they had gotten from discarded tires, just some means of conveying from here to there. I don't know how many trips those kids made, how many gallons of water you fit into a truck innertube. We could have done stuff, we could have... Of course, they all want motorbikes and pickup trucks. You ask them what they want, that's what they want. But that's not what we should be giving them. We should be giving them something to convey that water in a better, more efficient, get more of it. It's the little guy that needs the help. Sure, you help the country by doing the ring road, and they did. That ring road is something to ride on. We drove from Kandahar to Kabul in about six hours, believe it or not. It was safe and it was straight, level, paved. But how about all the millions of people that get to know American influence because they see a bag of seed with the American flag on it or the handshake clasp of AID or some such thing?

Q: Would you recommend that the PRTs that are there now and in the future consider this micro approach as well as the larger macro approach in what they're doing?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there anything else that you'd like to get on the record here about your experience, anything that in the context of the project's aim of trying to make this whole process better in the future and looking for better ways of approaching, anything that we haven't talked about that you'd like to get on the record?

A: I just want to emphasize that PRT is a good idea. I don't know who thought of it. Does it matter to me? I just think that it needs to be a consolidated effort by the U.S. government, and at this point it's got to include the U.S. army. I think it should include the Department of State, Agriculture, Interior, Drug Enforcement (They certainly ought to be there, and they are), FBI needs to be there, everybody... You can't name an agency in the U.S. government that wouldn't find an interest and a contribution by being in a place like a PRT. What country? It doesn't matter? I've been all the way through Central America. I've been behind the Iron Curtain before the Wall came down. I've been to Africa, Europe. I'm not boasting. I'm just saying that in my experience, there are very few places that a PRT wouldn't work. Stop and think about it. What did FDR do back in the '30s that got this country on its feet? You could damned near turn it around and call it a PRT. He called it WPA [Works Progress Administration]. It worked for us, didn't it? So, under certain restrictions, security being probably paramount, why would it not work in Afghanistan? Colombia, who knows where else? It's an excellent idea. Let's work on getting people to make improvements on it, make it flexible enough so that just because the army isn't needed anymore, you don't have to do away with the PRT. Let's be realistic and say, "Well, why not even invite the UN and the International Red Cross to become part of the PRT?" Of course, they'll have to get over this thing about not wanting to be friends with gun toters, but that's their problem, not ours.

Q: Thanks so much for your time with this and all of the information.

A: Sure.

[END INTERVIEW]