

3-1-2009

Provincial Reconstruction Teams: How Do We Know They Work?

Carter Malkasian Dr.

Gerald Meyerle Dr.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs>

Recommended Citation

Malkasian, Carter Dr. and Meyerle, Gerald Dr., "Provincial Reconstruction Teams: How Do We Know They Work?" (2009). *Monographs*. 356.

<https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/356>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by USAWC Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in Monographs by an authorized administrator of USAWC Press.

PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS: HOW DO WE KNOW THEY WORK?

**Carter Malkasian
Gerald Meyerle**

Visit our website for other free publication
downloads

<http://www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil/>

[To rate this publication click here.](#)

March 2009

The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government. Authors of Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) publications enjoy full academic freedom, provided they do not disclose classified information, jeopardize operations security, or misrepresent official U.S. policy. Such academic freedom empowers them to offer new and sometimes controversial perspectives in the interest of furthering debate on key issues. This report is cleared for public release; distribution is unlimited.

This publication is subject to Title 17, United States Code, Sections 101 and 105. It is in the public domain and may not be copyrighted.

This report could not have been completed without the contributions of Dr. Whitney Raas and Dr. Frederick Thompson. They were both integral members of the CNA team that went to Afghanistan to work with the provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs). Their research and insight into analytical methods underpinned many of the team's findings. We merely present those findings here. We are grateful for the contributions of Dr. Daryl Liskey as well. We would also like to thank the U.S. Navy, which funded the field work in Afghanistan. The conclusions and recommendations presented here, though, remain our own and do not necessarily represent those of the U.S. Navy. Finally, we would like to thank the members of the PRTs who hosted us—Kunar, Khost, Ghazni, and Nuristan—as well as the members of the U.S. combat units working alongside the PRTs. It was an honor to have spent time with them. We are forever in the debt of the soldiers who protected us on many a mission among the people of Afghanistan.

Comments pertaining to this report are invited and should be forwarded to: Director, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Ave, Carlisle, PA 17013-5244.

All Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) publications are available on the SSI homepage for electronic dissemination. Hard copies of this report also may be ordered from our homepage. SSI's homepage address is: *www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil*.

The Strategic Studies Institute publishes a monthly e-mail newsletter to update the national security community on the research of our analysts, recent and forthcoming publications, and upcoming conferences sponsored by the Institute. Each newsletter also provides a strategic commentary by one of our research analysts. If you are interested in receiving this newsletter, please subscribe on our homepage at *www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil/newsletter/*.

ISBN 1-58487-383-3


FOREWORD

Over the past six years, provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) have played a growing role in the U.S. counterinsurgency effort in Afghanistan. PRTs are one of several organizations working on reconstruction there, along with the U.S. Agency for International Development, numerous nongovernmental organizations, and the Afghan government's National Solidarity Program. Perhaps unsurprisingly, something of a debate has emerged over whether PRTs are needed.

This monograph, by Dr. Carter Malkasian and Dr. Gerald Meyerle of the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA), argues that civilian reconstruction agencies cannot do the same job as the PRTs. While these agencies remain essential for long-term economic and political development, the PRTs conduct reconstruction in ways that help create stability in the short term. Absent the PRTs, the "build" in clear-hold-build efforts deemed essential to effective counterinsurgency would fall flat. Accordingly, the authors recommend that the United States give the PRTs the lead role in reconstruction activities that accompany any surge of military forces into Afghanistan.

These findings are based on over two months of field research in 2007 and two months in 2008 by a CNA team with four different PRTs—Khost, Kunar, Ghazni, and Nuristan—plus interviews with the leadership of ten others. The CNA team divided up to work with each of the four PRTs and was able to directly observe PRT missions, interview Afghan leaders, and interact with officials from civilian development organizations.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this monograph as a contribution to the national security debate on this important subject.


DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.
Director
Strategic Studies Institute

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

CARTER MALKASIAN leads the Stability and Development Program at the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA). In late 2007 and again in early 2008, he led a team that advised Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in eastern Afghanistan. Previously assigned to the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) as an advisor on counterinsurgency, he deployed for the war in Iraq from February to May 2003, February 2004 to February 2005, and February 2006 to August 2006. Most of that time was spent in Al Anbar province. Dr. Malkasian's most recent publication is a co-edited book (with Daniel Marston of Royal Military Academy Sandhurst), *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*. His other books include: *A History of Modern Wars of Attrition* (2002) and *The Korean War, 1950-1953* (2001). His journal publications include: "Did the Coalition Need More Forces in Iraq? Evidence from Al Anbar," *Joint Force Quarterly*; "A Thin Blue Line in the Sand," *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*; "Signaling Resolve, Democratization, and the First Battle of Fallujah," *Journal of Strategic Studies*; "The Role of Perceptions and Political Reform in Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*; and "Toward a Better Understanding of Attrition," *Journal of Military History*. Dr. Malkasian holds a doctorate in the history of war from Oxford University.

GERALD MEYERLE is a Research Analyst in CNA's Stability and Development Program. He has published articles on the insurgency in Kashmir, the Pakistan military, and the Pakistan-Afghan border areas. He worked with a U.S. Provincial Reconstruction Team in northeastern Afghanistan in early 2008 where he studied insurgent infiltration over the border with

Pakistan, among other things. Before coming to CNA, Dr. Meyerle was an adjunct professor at the University of Virginia where he taught courses on terrorism and guerrilla warfare. He has done over a year's worth of fieldwork in India, Pakistan, and Kashmir, and speaks Urdu, Pakistan's national language. Dr. Meyerle holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Virginia.

SUMMARY

The first provincial reconstruction team (PRT) stood up in January 2003 in the city of Gardez. A novel concept, PRTs combined civilian and military personnel into a single entity with the purpose of improving security, governance, and economic development. The idea was that PRTs would be able to get into areas where there was little or no presence on the part of the Afghan government or the development community and jumpstart reconstruction. In short order, the PRTs blossomed: seven more were established in 2003 and 11 were added to the list in 2004. Today there are 26 in Afghanistan: 12 under U.S. commanders and 14 under commanders from another country within the Coalition.

In the meantime, the PRTs evolved into much more than an agency with guns that could go to areas too dangerous for civilians and jumpstart development. No longer do they simply pave the way for civilian agencies to step in and do the real reconstruction work. Instead, the PRTs have become America's primary tool for using large-scale reconstruction to improve security in Afghanistan; the executors of the softer side of counterinsurgency.

Yet questions remain. It is not clear that PRTs should be filling such a large role. Do they really make a difference, particularly in terms of improving security or the capacity of the Afghan government to govern? Even if they do, could not another organization, like the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) or the Afghan government itself, do the job just as well, if not better?

The PRTs hardly stand alone. In addition, USAID, the Afghan government, and even U.S. battalions

do reconstruction work in Afghanistan's provinces. USAID has been conducting projects in Afghanistan since 2002. Few provinces have not benefited from their work. The Afghan government has the National Solidarity Program, which attempts to connect local villages and shuras with the central government. These are just the most prominent development players. Numerous nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) plus the United Nations (UN) do a wide range of reconstruction work as well.

The answers to the questions about the usefulness of PRTs affect U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. Any surge of U.S. forces could be accompanied by an increase in reconstruction funding. If the PRTs make a difference and are unique, then arguably a large share of new reconstruction activities should be handled by them. If, on the other hand, PRTs do not make a difference and are not unique, then new reconstruction should be handled by other organizations.

We conducted field research for over two months in 2007 and two months in 2008 with four different PRTs—Khost, Kunar, Ghazni, and Nuristan. We then augmented that field research with interviews with the leadership of 10 other PRTs. That research suggests PRTs do make a difference, at least in three provinces—Khost, Kunar, and Ghazni. In Khost, an aggressive project “blitz” corresponded with fewer attacks and the emergence of a real partnership between tribes and the government. In Kunar, road projects in two major river valleys led to a rise in local community political participation and local resistance to insurgent activity. Tribes in at least five different districts responded to attacks on projects—roads, bridges, and schools—by coming out of their homes and shooting at insurgents. In Ghazni, PRT projects appear to have helped counter

rising violence, and the PRT's focus on reducing corruption and improving Afghan public health capacity can be said to have improved governance. Though we have not reviewed the history of the other PRTs in detail, our interviews with commanders and civilian representatives from PRTs in the east, south, and west do not disprove what we found and, in some cases, even support it.

Furthermore, our research suggests no other organization can fill the PRTs' shoes. Civilian development agencies—USAID, NGOs, the UN, the Afghan government's National Solidarity Program—cannot do the same job as the PRTs. Each plays a role in reconstruction, but none match the PRTs' capacity to complete projects in contested areas. This is something PRTs do regularly, working side by side with U.S. combat units in the field. While other agencies remain needed for long-term economic and political development, the PRTs are best suited to conduct reconstruction in ways that create stability in the short term.

This is not to disregard other organizations. They are needed. USAID's large-scale reconstruction projects and training programs build up the economy and governance in a manner and scale far beyond the PRTs' capabilities. And the National Solidarity Program is an ingenious tool for strengthening local governance and expanding the reach of the Afghan government. Both the National Solidarity Program and USAID are better for nation-building and long-term economic development than the PRTs. A strong argument can be made that PRT projects are not needed in safe areas like Jalalabad, Panjshir, or Kabul. USAID, NGOs, and the National Solidarity Program can do the work in these secured areas.

For counterinsurgency operations in dangerous areas, though, PRTs are the name of the game. Accordingly, the United States should give the PRTs a major role in reconstruction activities that accompany any surge of military forces into Afghanistan. As much as possible, new funds meant to back up the counterinsurgency campaign should be funneled through the PRTs.

That is not all. Counterinsurgency objectives can be better met if decisionmaking for *all* U.S. projects in contested areas is delegated to the PRTs. The USAID representative at the PRT should be in charge of approval and monitoring for USAID projects in their province (excluding large cross-province projects). To do so, Congress will need to lessen the accountability required for USAID funds, and the USAID billets in all PRTs will need to be filled.

Additionally, to complete the added duty of monitoring and executing a greater number of projects, each PRT should be given additional security personnel and additional civil engineers.

These recommendations may not be the best over the long term. Over that period, it would be better for USAID, with its proven expertise and bags of money, to handle the softer side of counterinsurgency. By giving the PRTs, and hence the U.S. military, the lead in surge reconstruction, the United States would be foregoing the creation of a real counterinsurgency capability in USAID. Unfortunately, doing otherwise would take time. With a surge around the corner, the United States has little choice but to reinforce what has worked best to this point – the PRTs.

PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS: HOW DO WE KNOW THEY WORK?

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 6 years, the U.S. counterinsurgency effort in Afghanistan has become dependent upon provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs). Originally conceived as the vanguard of reconstruction efforts – an agency with guns that could go to areas too dangerous for civilian agencies and jumpstart development – PRTs have evolved into much more. No longer do they simply pave the way for civilian agencies to step in and do the real reconstruction work. The PRTs have become America’s primary tool for using large-scale reconstruction to improve security in Afghanistan; the executors of the softer side of counterinsurgency.

Yet questions remain. Do the PRTs really make a difference? Do they help improve security or the capacity of the Afghan government to govern? Even if they do, could not another organization, like the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) or the Afghan government itself, do the job just as well, if not better?

Civilian development agencies, such as USAID and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), tend to take exception to the military-staffed PRTs.¹ Many civilian aid workers argue that the PRTs’ military personnel know little about development, reconstruction, or Afghan culture. They say that as a result, PRTs build a lot of physical infrastructure but neglect the human side of development, leaving in their wake schools without teachers and clinics without doctors. Nor do many aid workers believe that reconstruction should be tied to a

counterinsurgency strategy. In their view, development should be conducted for development's sake, not as a means of defeating the insurgency.² Winning hearts and minds smacks of a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) plot. The anti-military lobbying efforts of civilian development agencies have been so strong that the Coalition headquarters in Afghanistan recently issued new civil military guidelines that state: "Humanitarian assistance must not be used for the purpose of political gain, relationship-building, or winning hearts and minds."³

The answers to questions about the value of PRTs affect U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. Any surge of U.S. forces could be accompanied with an increase in funding for reconstruction. If the PRTs make a difference and are unique, then arguably a large share of new reconstruction activities should be handled by them. If, on the other hand, PRTs do not make a difference and are not unique, then new reconstruction should be handled by civilian development agencies.

Field research over two months in 2007 and two months in 2008 with four different PRTs—Khost, Kunar, Ghazni, and Nuristan—plus interviews with the leadership of 10 others, suggests that PRTs do make a difference. They strengthen governance and contribute to security.⁴ Civilian development agencies—USAID, NGOs, the United Nations (UN), the Afghan government's National Solidarity Program—cannot do the same job as the PRTs. Each plays a role in reconstruction, but none match the PRTs' capacity to complete projects in contested areas. This is something PRTs do regularly, working side by side with U.S. combat units in the field. While other agencies remain needed for long-term economic and political development, the PRTs are best suited to conduct

reconstruction in ways that create stability in the short term. Absent the PRTs, the “build” in clear-hold-build efforts deemed essential to effective counterinsurgency would fall flat.

This monograph is divided into four sections. The first reviews the structure of PRTs and what they do; the second examines whether the PRTs have made a difference in counterinsurgency, particularly in terms of improving security and strengthening governance; the third assesses whether the PRTs’ contribution is unique; and the fourth summarizes what we have learned and suggests how to use PRTs in Afghanistan in the future.

WHAT ARE PRTs AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

When the United States invaded Afghanistan in late 2001, there was little infrastructure to speak of. Most schools, hospitals, and government buildings had been destroyed by over 20 years of civil war. There were almost no paved roads, and few towns had electricity or running water. The country had no functioning civil administration, police force, or professional military – either in the capital or the provinces. To coordinate reconstruction efforts, the Coalition created provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs).

Afghanistan has 34 provinces. The first PRT stood up in January 2003 in the eastern city of Gardez, in Paktia province. Seven more followed by the end of the year – Kunduz, Bamiyan, Mazar-i-Sharif, Parwan, Herat, Nangarhar, and Kandahar. Eleven were added to the list in 2004, many in contested provinces such as Kunar, Paktika, and Ghazni.⁵ Today there are 26 PRTs in Afghanistan: 12 under U.S. commanders and 14 under commanders from another country within the

Coalition. All the PRTs are connected to the Coalition headquarters—the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

U.S.-led PRTs field 60–100 personnel. U.S. Army or Marine officers commanded the first PRTs. This was an added burden upon these overly committed services. Consequently, today, commanders come from the U.S. Navy or Air Force. These are not throwaways. For the Navy, they are the cream of the crop: post-command or command-selected officers who have already or who will go on to command a ship or squadron of aircraft; the peers of the Army and Marine Corps battalion commanders. In addition to a skeleton military staff (intelligence officer, operations officer, supply officer, etc.), most PRTs have two engineers, three to eight U.S. Army civil affairs officers, and a platoon of about 40 U.S. Army National Guardsmen. The Navy and Air Force commanders arrived in 2006 as did the two engineers, leading to better-led and more capable PRTs. Finally, a civilian representative from the Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) are assigned to every PRT, though oftentimes all three will not be present. They are co-equal to the commander, rather than his subordinates.

Ten of the 12 U.S. PRTs fall under the command of a U.S. brigade commander. The brigade, in turn, falls under Regional Command East, a U.S. divisional command. Today that division is the 101st Airborne; in 2007–08 it was the 82nd Airborne; and in 2006–07 it was the 10th Mountain Division. Thus, most U.S. PRTs are firmly embedded in the U.S. military chain of command. Two U.S. PRTs—Zabul and Farah—fall under ISAF regional commands (Regional Command South and Regional Command West).

The 14 non-U.S. PRTs vary in structure and personnel. The Italian, German, Canadian, and British PRTs all boast over 100 personnel.⁶ The Germans have nearly 500 in Kunduz. The non-U.S. PRTs tend to have more civilians than their U.S. counterparts. The German and Canadian PRTs have 20. The British PRT in Helmand has 30, divided into different functional cells (stability, development, rule of law, and governance). The Helmand PRT is led by a civilian who outranks (but does not command) the brigadier in charge of British military forces in the province. Representatives from USAID or the U.S. State Department work on many non-U.S. PRTs, most notably Helmand and Kandahar.

The PRTs' original mandate was to assist the Afghan government in extending its authority in order to facilitate security, security sector reform, and reconstruction. In particular, the PRTs would jump-start reconstruction in areas where there was little or no presence on the part of the government or the development community through small-scale quick impact projects.⁷ The PRT Handbook, drafted in 2006 to summarize the purpose and history of PRTs, reads:

A PRT is a civil-military institution that is able to penetrate the most unstable and insecure areas because of its military component and is able to stabilize these areas because of the capabilities brought by its diplomacy, defense, and development components.⁸

Thus, PRTs do not conduct development for development's sake. For the PRTs, development is a means of turning Afghans away from the insurgency and thereby creating a stable environment in which the Afghan government can exert its authority. This mandate largely still stands today.⁹

PRTs have two primary means of fulfilling their mandate. The first is executing reconstruction projects. Most funding since 2004 for U.S. PRT activities has come from the Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP), a fund designed to give U.S. military commanders the ability to spend money quickly on small projects without much bureaucratic processing. It does not have the checks of other U.S. funding streams. The PRT commander can apply \$100,000 per month as he or she sees fit. Larger projects require approval of the PRTs' higher headquarters, but this is not a problem. Higher headquarters, anxious to back up soldiers fighting on the ground, generally try to expedite approval. Non-U.S. PRTs also have access to CERP, but their major sources of funding come from their respective governments. Some of their governments do not fund PRT projects but funnel their money through the UN or Afghan government.¹⁰

Besides CERP, PRTs have access to the USAID local governance and community development fund through their USAID representative. This money does not compare to CERP in size, though, and the approval process can be lengthy. The local governance and community development fund comprised but 7 percent of all USAID project money in Afghanistan in 2007. The rest of the USAID money cannot be accessed by the PRT. The vast majority of the spending decisions for it are made in Kabul rather than by the USAID representatives on the PRTs.¹¹ This is because Congress enforces more stringent accountability upon USAID funds than CERP funds. Under current practice, USAID representatives on the PRTs lack the certification to contract all but a handful of low cost projects. The certified contracting officers reside in Kabul.¹²

The second means for the PRTs to fulfill their mandate is by meeting with village, district, and provincial Afghan leaders. The team's commander, civil affairs officers, and civilian representatives interact regularly with provincial and district officials—especially the provincial governor and district governors (every province is divided into districts). The subject is generally ongoing PRT programs and major issues facing the province or district, such as the blowback from U.S. military operations, tribal disputes, and future activities of the Afghan provincial and district government. There has also been an extended process of developing the organization of the provincial government. The most notable improvement in this regard has been the institution of provincial development councils, which coordinate the activities of government line directors (such as education, public health, and rural development), the PRT, the UN, and other development agencies in the province.

Research Background.

Research for this monograph came from a variety of sources. The ISAF Country Stability Picture database was the source of most of the numbers. This database compiles information on project location, start date, type, and value from 2004 to the present. There are many holes in the data. Consequently, we updated and corrected it to the best of our ability. Through speaking with PRT members and going through project files, we checked the project information of the PRTs and U.S. military units operating in the area. Plus, we acquired project information from the Afghan government's National Solidarity Program. The biggest gaps remained for information on projects conducted

by USAID, the UN, and NGOs working outside the National Solidarity Program. We relied heavily upon USAID fact sheets and briefs for information on their projects and expenditures.

Besides examining project data, we conducted extensive interviews with the members of the PRTs. The focus was obviously on the provinces where we worked, but we interviewed members of PRTs in other provinces as well. We tried to learn as much as we could about the history of PRT activities. In the course of our work, we were also able to talk to the officers and soldiers of nearby U.S. military units, often staying with them for several days. These included battalion commanders, company commanders, platoon commanders, and advisors embedded with the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police.

Nor did we talk only to PRT members and U.S. military personnel. We also spoke with civilian officials from ISAF, the UN, and USAID.¹³ Most importantly, we spoke to Afghans. This included provincial governors, district governors, provincial directors (such as public health, education, irrigation, and rural rehabilitation and development), development officials, tribal elders, contractors, journalists, members of NGOs, and the local population.

Finally, we directly observed PRT activities and military operations. On a day-to-day basis, we were able to see how the PRTs operate. We observed discussions and meetings involving the provincial governors, NGOs, tribal elders, contractors, and the PRTs' own staffs.

DO PRTs MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Do PRTs make a positive contribution toward stability and development in Afghanistan? What is

the proof that they are making a difference? Lack of rigorous assessment of their effectiveness has been a common criticism of the PRTs.¹⁴ We take a stab at these questions by looking at their effect on security and governance.

Security is the immediate objective of U.S. forces in Afghanistan and also one of the three objectives within the PRTs' mission. PRT projects are thought to reduce insurgent activity by providing jobs to young men, giving tribal elders a means of buying back the allegiance of locals from insurgents; and creating an atmosphere of economic development that makes insurgent violence appear unneeded.

Good governance is widely regarded as essential to effective counterinsurgency. The first chapter of the new counterinsurgency manual reads: "The primary objective of any counterinsurgency operation is to foster development of effective governance by a legitimate government."¹⁵ We assessed governance by examining the level of participation in political institutions, the amount of goods and services flowing from the central government into the districts of each province, and the prevalence of corruption.¹⁶

Wide participation in political institutions is particularly important in Afghanistan and in Pashtun society. Traditionally, Pashtuns deem no one leader to have authority over the rest. Decisions are made by a "shura" (council) of elders. Also known as "jirgas," shuras convene across Pashtun society to resolve disputes, deliver goods and services, and unite communities against threats. The participation of key tribal elders enhances the authority of any shura.¹⁷ Provincial and district governors hold shuras, trying to draw as many elders as possible as a means of ensuring that no tribe is insulted by a government decision and driven toward violence. For all intents and purposes,

shuras are the key political institution in the Pashtun provinces, if not Afghanistan as a whole.¹⁸ Over and over Afghan leaders told the United States that unity, not military action, was the key to peace. Shuras created that unity.¹⁹ In the words of Haji Mohammed Zalmay, one of the better district governors in Kunar province, “The key to success is getting tribes to come to shuras and keeping them united.”²⁰

We assess the impact of the PRTs on security and governance by examining the accomplishments of three specific PRTs—Khost, Kunar, and Ghazni, three of the four PRTs we visited. These provinces were not chosen at random. They were chosen because they were led by U.S. Navy commanders, and because CJTF-82 and these commanders wanted analytical assistance. Our sponsor was the U.S. Navy, and our immediate task was to provide analytical support to their PRTs. This broader study was secondary. We excluded Nuristan (where we sent one analyst) because that PRT had only been in existence for 1 year, and the mountainous terrain made it difficult for it to do much outside the single district where it was headquartered. All three provinces lie in the east of the country, are largely Pashtun, and have U.S.-led PRTs.

To be clear, there is no evidence that PRTs on their own have quelled violence. We expended many hours examining the relationship between PRT projects and the numbers of insurgent attacks, comparing the amount of money spent in each province and district to the number of attacks. This data is classified and cannot be displayed here. What we can say is that we found nothing to suggest the PRTs are turning the tide of violence. Attacks in general have increased in Afghanistan over the past 2 years, including in the provinces we visited.²¹ At the same time, PRT spending

has been increasing dramatically.²² The effect of this spending has not been enough to overcome the other factors driving violence levels upwards. Nevertheless, if not reversing rising violence levels, PRTs have played a helpful role counteracting them according to our evidence, which is laid out below.

Khost.

Khost is a small province (roughly the size of Rhode Island), with a relatively flat interior surrounded by mountains. The population is 300,000. Economic and political conditions tilt in the province's favor. Temperate climate and access to water endow Khost with year-round agricultural activity. The governor, Arsallah Jamal, who is experienced, intelligent, active, and seen as trustworthy by both the people and coalition forces, promotes good governance. A thriving civil society further helps good governance. Khost boasts a university, an active media, poet and law societies, and a relatively high literacy rate.²³

Khost's biggest problem has been its long mountainous border with Pakistan, which contributes to unrest. Insurgents are thought to operate out of Miram Shah, which is less than a 30-minute drive across the border. In 2005 and early 2006, insurgent violence was relatively low, but attacks did occur, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in particular. Insurgent activity increased in 2006 when the Pakistani military stopped fighting in the federally administered tribal areas. It spiked in February 2007, with large numbers of IEDs and suicide car bombs going off.²⁴

Colonel Marty Schweitzer (commander of the brigade responsible for Khost and the surrounding provinces), Lieutenant Colonel Scott Custer (commander of

the battalion in Khost), and Commander Dave Adams (commander of the PRT) responded with a new strategy hailed as a counterinsurgency success story; in the words of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, “a model of a concerted counterinsurgency effort.”²⁵

Custer’s battalion oil spotted out from its large forward operating base (FOB Salerno) near the provincial capital (Khost City) to multiple smaller district centers throughout the province. Fortified, these district centers housed 20–30 soldiers, the district governor, 50–100 Afghan National Police, and sometimes an Afghan National Army detachment.²⁶ Nor were Custer’s men the only U.S. presence. Adams placed civil affairs officers and NCOs in the district centers alongside Custer’s men. By living in these district centers, U.S. forces co-located themselves with all aspects of the Afghan government and made themselves available to the people of the province, while simultaneously providing security for the immediate area.²⁷

Adams further backed up Custer’s security operations with a project “blitz” of over \$22 million in large-scale projects. It entailed roughly 50 schools, 300 wells, 30 dams, and over 50 kilometers of road. The PRT concentrated these projects in outlying (less secure) districts. Roads received the largest percentage of funding, followed by education, irrigation, governance, and water. Custer and Adams wanted to connect all of the districts to the capital. One road was built into the most dangerous district in the province.²⁸ To execute these projects, the PRT worked with the governor, district governors, and line directors to hold fair and open bidding processes, conduct groundbreaking and opening ceremonies, and ensure the people knew of the involvement of their government in the reconstruction process. The idea was to show Afghans and even

insurgents in Pakistan that the quality of life was improving. Particular attention was paid to bringing in the Afghan media for all groundbreaking and opening ceremonies. This helped create a “buzz” around all of the reconstruction.²⁹

Projects helped strengthen governance. By allowing projects to be discussed at shuras with the district governor or the provincial governor, the PRT empowered the Afghan government. It gave them a carrot with which to increase political participation.³⁰ Kael Weston, the Department of State representative on the PRT, pressed tribal leaders and village elders to cooperate with the Afghan police and the Afghan government on security matters in return for projects. A real security partnership emerged between tribes and the government in many places.³¹ According to Weston, the number of tribal elders working with the governor and district governor increased between the beginning of 2007 and mid-2008.³²

The new strategy affected security as well. In the words of the chairman of the Khost Provincial Council, “The Taliban have lost, they have been unable to separate the people from the government.”³³ The quote contains a bit of hyperbole, but other evidence suggests that the strategy inflicted at least modest damage on the insurgency. A positive shift in attitude among the population accompanied the project blitz, which undercut support for the insurgency.³⁴ Insurgents going through Afghanistan’s amnesty program told Weston that the extent of PRT projects in Khost caused them to question Taliban propaganda and encouraged them to stop fighting.³⁵ The situation improved enough for U.S. soldiers to hand over defense of one district center to an Afghan army detachment.³⁶

Furthermore, we found a statistically significant relationship between improvements in district security

ratings (assessed by the U.S. military) and high levels of PRT spending in those districts. We ran a Spearman's Rank correlation that compared improvements in the security ratings of the districts of Ghazni, Khost, Kunar, and Nuristan to the amount of PRT spending in each of those districts. Security assessments are made by the local battalion commander in coordination with the brigade commander—in this case, Custer and Schweitzer. Districts are rated green for safe, yellow for fairly safe, orange for fairly dangerous, and red for dangerous. We quantified how much change occurred in the ratings, say from red to yellow or orange to green, and then compared it to the amount of PRT spending in a district. To test for a relationship, we ranked the districts first by size of the security change, and, second, by the amount of spending. Then we ran a Spearman's Rank correlation.³⁷ Generally speaking, districts where the PRT allotted the most spending witnessed the greatest improvement in security ratings.

All that said, in 2008 Khost still experienced violence, especially because of incursions from Pakistan. In some respects it actually got worse. The “model” could not bring peace and security or prevent a rise in insurgent activity. There were multiple suicide bombings, more IED attacks, and five attempts on the governor's life.³⁸ What the PRT did was help prevent a difficult situation from becoming even worse.

Kunar.

Kunar lies north of Jalalabad along the border with Pakistan. Mountains cut by narrow river valleys dominate the terrain. The two largest rivers are the Kunar, running north to south, and the Pech, running west to east. Numerous tributary valleys intersect both these valleys. The population numbers roughly

380,000, distributed in small villages throughout the various valleys.

Kunar is one of the most violent provinces in Afghanistan. In 2007, the number of attacks there tripled those in Khost.³⁹ Attacks, particularly ambushes, were well-organized, often combining heavy machine guns and mortars with ground maneuver. Sometimes over 100 insurgents took part. Insurgents controlled several remote valleys and received support from the Northwest Frontier Province or Federally Administered Tribal Areas across the border in Pakistan.

In early 2006, Colonel “Mick” Nicholson, the brigade commander in the area, positioned two U.S. battalions, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment (750 men) and 1st Squadron, 35th Cavalry Regiment (500 men), in Kunar and neighboring Nuristan. Both dispersed into company- and platoon-size detachments along the rivers and in a few of the remote mountain valleys.⁴⁰ The PRT, then under Commander Ryan “Doc” Scholl, backed up the military operations with projects. The PRT effort centered on road construction.

The first major road, completed in November 2006, ran through the Kunar River Valley from Jalalabad, the largest city in eastern Afghanistan, to Asadabad, Kunar’s provincial capital. USAID funded the road, but the PRT managed its execution—resolving disputes over land and labor, conducting quality control missions, and holding shuras to build community support.⁴¹ Violence fell as the road was paved. IED incidents dropped from a high of 17 in 2006 to 7 in 2007 following the road’s completion. Other positive effects in 2007 were that the UN reopened its office in Asadabad, and the Kabul and Azizi banks established branches there.⁴²

The road went a long way toward improving governance in Kunar by opening an avenue for the

delivery of goods and services. Provincial line directors, such as the director of education, director of irrigation, and director of agriculture, could now send workers to rural districts to interact with local communities and observe projects. In 2006, Afghanistan's National Solidarity Program, which handles rural development, directed project funding into Asadabad. No National Solidarity Program projects had ever been committed to Asadabad before. As one of its largest programs, the National Solidarity Program is a primary way that the Afghan government delivers goods and services to the people—an important component of good governance.⁴³ From then until the end of 2007, over \$1 million of the \$2.5 million total in funding for Kunar went to Asadabad.⁴⁴

The next road was built in the Pech River Valley, funded entirely by the PRT.⁴⁵ The river cuts through three districts—Chapadara, Pech, and Watapur—and contains roughly 100,000 people in numerous small villages. The valley was known as a hotbed of insurgent activity, frequently witnessing large-scale firefights. The battalion posted there (1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment) took 120 casualties in firefights during its 15-month deployment from January 2006 to May 2007.

Governance fared no better than security. Few village shuras existed, let alone shuras with the district governors. Police forces were small and did not get out much.⁴⁶ Infighting plagued the dominant tribe (the Safis) as powerful elders competed with one another.

As a means of undercutting the insurgency, the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Chris Cavoli, advocated paving the dirt road through the valley. From his perspective, doing so would increase trade and economic activity, providing the people

with an alternative to violence. At the same time, a paved road would make it harder for insurgents to lay roadside bombs.⁴⁷ After several false starts, paving started in earnest in early 2007, under the guidance of the PRT, now led by Commander Scholl's successor, Commander Larry LeGree.⁴⁸

As road construction began, the PRT and Lieutenant Colonel Cavoli's officers worked with the valley's district governors to reach out to tribal elders. The district governors established shuras at their district centers and went out to the villages to draw communities together into their own shuras. The tribal elders came forward. What drew them? The possibility of securing jobs for their tribesmen as road workers or roadside guards; the need to resolve disputes that arose as the road passed through people's land; and the opportunity to consult on the location and nature of additional small-scale side projects offered by the PRT. The road was thus a vehicle for building political institutions—shuras—and increasing participation in them.⁴⁹

LeGree's PRT completed the road in March 2008. By then, the Watapur and Pech district governors were holding monthly shuras that drew more than 30 tribal elders apiece. At least five village shuras had formed that met regularly with the district governors.⁵⁰ Elders provided 140 additional men for the Afghan National Police.⁵¹ The police stood and fought, repeatedly dueling with insurgents in the mountains. Sometimes they reinforced U.S. soldiers on their own initiative. The local population even began helping the police man checkpoints.⁵²

Security improved at the same time. In early 2008, Americans and Afghans alike said that the number and scale of attacks on the valley floor had dropped.⁵³

An informal USAID survey in late 2007 found that people in the Pech River Valley believed that the road had increased security and economic opportunity.⁵⁴ As hoped, IED attacks fell off, going from a high of 21 in the first 6 months of 2006 to 2 during the first 6 months of 2008. Insurgents could not easily dig a hole through the pavement to lay an IED, especially considering that the necessary tools to do so are hard to find in rural Afghanistan. Equally important, though, was that the shuras had brought the Safis together to police the road and to provide intelligence on insurgents and the location of IEDs.⁵⁵

Like the road from Jalalabad to Asadabad, the Pech road brought goods and services. The National Solidarity Program started projects in the Pech Valley, which it had never done before. Even before the road neared completion in late 2007, the National Solidarity Program had committed roughly \$1 million to projects in the Pech district (out of \$2.5 million total for Kunar).⁵⁶

Following the success of the Pech and Asadabad to Jalalabad roads, the PRT started new roads in the Korengal, Shuryek, Deywagul, and Nawa valleys. All of these roads remain under construction but one – the Deywagul road – especially appears to have hurt the insurgents.

The Deywagul valley feeds into the southern Kunar valley. Known to be an insurgent operating area, the PRT contracted a road into the valley in late 2007. As with the previous roads, tribal elders (following fairly tough negotiations) came forth and provided road workers and security guards. The insurgents were not going to back down without a fight though, and throughout 2008 they attacked the workers and security guards relentlessly. The security guards and

their elders, backed by the PRT and U.S. combat forces, persevered, outpostting the length of the road, training, and even patrolling to find IEDs. Their morale grew stronger and stronger as they endured battle after battle. The insurgents could not overwhelm them and found laying IEDs increasingly difficult. By November 2008, the road had been paved deep into the valley. Whether the road will be completed or violence will taper off in 2009 is an open question, but clearly the road helped motivate locals to fight against the insurgents in 2008.⁵⁷

Other large-scale projects had a similar impact elsewhere in Kunar, particularly in terms of strengthening political participation and turning locals against insurgents. We spoke to 25 different Afghan leaders in Kunar province—district governors, police chiefs, mullahs, two governors, and (most importantly) tribal elders. In the course of these discussions, we tried to learn why tribal elders participate in government in their respective districts. For 7 out of 15 districts, leaders mentioned a PRT project as the reason (other prominent reasons were dispute resolution and the charisma of the district governor).⁵⁸ Participation in the district government enabled tribal elders to bring projects and jobs to their tribesmen. While to some extent the PRT was simply buying off participation, the end result was still a more participatory Afghan government that had a better ability to resolve disputes and marshal the support of key leaders toward its policies.⁵⁹

This trend was not unrelated to fighting insurgents. As in the Pech, participation in shuras often translated into resistance to the insurgency. In the words of Governor Wahidi, “A big shura will show our confidence. It will signal strength to the enemy.”⁶⁰ Local tribes in at least five different districts responded

to attacks on other projects—roads, bridges, and schools—by coming out of their homes and shooting at insurgents.⁶¹ New road projects into other mountain valleys in Kunar have even driven wedges into the insurgency by compelling insurgents, who want to see their communities receive the benefits of development, to clash with other insurgents, who want to prevent the government from expanding its power into their territory.⁶²

In 2008, after all the efforts of the PRT, Kunar still ranks as one of the most violent provinces in Afghanistan. Yet clearly the PRT helped reduce violence and strengthen governance in two locales—the Kunar River Valley and in the Pech River Valley—where the strategy of out posting and road building brought security, revitalized local political institutions, and enabled the Afghan government to deliver goods and services to the people for the first time. No mean feat, even if the insurgency remained formidable elsewhere in the province.

Ghazni.

Roughly five times the size of Khost with three times the population (931,000 people), Ghazni sits south of Kabul on Afghanistan's ring road. From 2006 to 2008, insurgent activity was greater than in Khost but less than in Kunar. Pashtuns are the largest ethnic group, though Hazaras comprise a sizeable minority (42 percent). Insurgent activity occurred primarily in the Pashtun areas. Violence was not Ghazni's only problem. Poor governance afflicted the province as well. Between the summer of 2006 and the summer of 2008, four governors held office; two were corrupt, the third was replaced for poor performance, and the

jury is out on the fourth. Nine of 19 district governors were replaced during this period as well. Corruption pervaded all levels of government.

The PRT in Ghazni started addressing governance in 2006. U.S. officers were assigned as “mentors” to key provincial officials and important government bodies (the provincial council and the provincial development committee). Commander Scott Cooledge, who led the PRT in 2007–08, expanded mentorship to the district governors and placed a new emphasis on countering corruption. Competitive bidding processes and quality control measures were instituted for all PRT projects to prevent the government from skimming off contracts.

These efforts made a difference. Frequent interaction with the PRT across the government hierarchy compelled officials to do the right thing. It turned officials into more effective administrators. The importance of mentorship is underlined by a statistically significant correlation between improvements in U.S. assessments of governance in districts and the number of PRT visits. The more the PRT visited a district, the more that governance improved.⁶³

The most vivid improvement in governance regarded the delivery of goods and services. The PRT instituted a multilevel plan to improve public health in the province.⁶⁴ It started with the mentors, who held regular meetings with the provincial public health director and the NGOs to identify the right PRT projects. Then, those projects – improvements to clinics and the provincial hospital, and the construction of radio communication nodes – were executed. Next, the PRT provided health care training to Afghans. The PRT held seminars and workshops for Afghan health care professionals nearly every week, augmented by two large multi-day conferences. The centerpiece was bimonthly village medical outreach operations in

which the PRT traveled to outlying districts and set up temporary treatment facilities as a means of training local health care professionals.

By early 2008, there were clear signs that the public health strategy had enabled the government to better deliver goods and services: the number trauma cases referred to the field hospital on the PRT's base dropped to zero as patients now went to the new PRT-funded emergency room in the provincial hospital; and the public health directorate began to run village medical operations on its own.

Large numbers of projects accompanied the PRT's mentorship strategy. They represented the PRT's major weapon against insurgent activity. As in Khost and Kunar, project spending in 2007-08 was unprecedented; the total nearly doubled that of 2006-07. The PRT focused on large-scale construction projects. Fifty-five percent of spending went to roads.

Five dangerous districts received the greatest concentration of PRT spending. Roads were paved in four of these districts. Like mentorship and anti-corruption efforts, projects made a difference. According to the 82nd Airborne Division's assessments, security in all five dangerous districts improved between 2007 and 2008. To test for the role of projects in security, as in the Khost case, we compared the district security ratings between 2007 and 2008 to PRT spending. And as in Khost, we found a statistically significant relationship, suggesting that PRT projects may be helping to improve security.⁶⁵

Thus, by early 2008, the PRT had helped improved governance through mentorship, anti-corruption efforts, and a coordinated public health strategy. At the same time, large-scale projects had helped counter violence in certain districts. As in Kunar and Khost, though, the PRT did not reverse violence throughout

the province, and overall security in Ghazni has worsened over the past year. Traveling along parts of the ring road has become dangerous, and the Taliban operates freely in certain districts. A PRT alone cannot bring victory.⁶⁶

What These Three Cases Tell Us.

The three cases above illustrate how the PRTs have made a difference. For the past 3 years, each PRT has been trying to fight rising violence. They have not reversed the tide – indeed, absolute numbers of attacks have risen in each province – but they have helped prevent the violence from reaching even higher levels and, in some discrete locales, actually stemmed it.

Similarly, the PRTs have helped strengthen governance through improving the delivery of goods and services, countering corruption, and increasing political participation, though there is nothing to suggest that they create good governance on their own. Other factors – particularly good Afghan provincial governors, district governors, and line directors – played a role as well. Thus, both in respect to security and governance, PRTs seem to make a contribution, just not a decisive one; neither stability nor good governance is going to appear on account of the PRTs.

Does the evidence from these three cases say anything about the usefulness of PRTs overall? We have not reviewed the history of the other PRTs in detail. Nevertheless, our interviews with commanders and civilian representatives from other PRTs in the east, south, and west mostly confirm the conclusions so far, particularly in regard to governance.

Governance improved with the implementation of PRT projects in several other cases. According to U.S.

military officers, projects encouraged tribal elders to participate in political institutions not only in Kunar and Khost but also in Nuristan, Parwan, Farah, Zabul, Paktia, Paktika, and Helmand.⁶⁷ In many provinces, PRTs have organized shuras to support reconstruction and resolve disputes. In Farah in 2006, it was common for local leaders to meet in large shuras to secure local support for the PRT's activities.⁶⁸ The PRT negotiated several important settlements among warring tribes.⁶⁹ In Paktika, the PRT sought to help the tribal elders regain a position of strength within society in order to counter insurgent activity. The PRT organized local shuras and empowered the elders by conducting projects in their areas under the auspices of the Afghan government.⁷⁰

The PRT commanders always insisted that proposals for reconstruction projects go through government officials and district-level shuras. The PRT retained ultimate control over these funds, but the practice gave district and provincial officials power they would not have otherwise had. The types of projects were similar, too. Large road projects often paved the way to political participation. In nearly every province, the PRT has built roads linking provincial capitals to district centers, helping farmers bring their produce to market.

As in Khost and Kunar, political participation could translate into security. For instance, in Zabul province in the fall of 2004, tribal leaders from several particularly dangerous areas came together and agreed to protect the PRT and its contractors in exchange for irrigation projects. The PRT secured similar agreements in eastern Paktia in 2005.⁷¹

COULD ANOTHER ORGANIZATION FILL THE PRTs' SHOES?

We have argued that, by contributing to security and strengthening governance, PRTs make a difference. A question remains, though. Why PRTs? Could not another development agency have the same effects? The PRTs hardly stand alone. USAID, the Afghan government, and even U.S. battalions all do reconstruction work in Afghanistan's provinces.

USAID has been conducting projects in Afghanistan since 2002. It enjoys a depth of experience and understanding of how development works that the PRT, with its military staff on a 9-month or 1-year rotation, cannot match. Indeed, PRTs depend on USAID for programs to train Afghans in essential skills, without which the capacity of government will not improve, no matter how many clinics and schools go up. What is a clinic without nurses or a school without teachers? Few provinces have not benefited from USAID's work. Moreover, USAID is the most powerful U.S. reconstruction organization in Afghanistan. USAID expenditures in Afghanistan in 2007 totaled \$1.5 billion compared to \$.2 billion for all CERP expenditures.⁷² Many projects are nationwide efforts that span several provinces. Other projects focus on building the capacity of the central government. In the violent provinces, though, the PRTs do most of the work. In all but two of the 14 provinces where the U.S. military operates, CERP spending exceeded USAID spending in 2007. For example, USAID spent \$2 million and \$8 million in Khost and Kunar, respectively, compared to \$18 million and \$11 million by the PRTs.⁷³

The Afghan government has its own development programs, the largest being the National Solidarity Program (NSP). Set up in 2003 and funded by the World

Bank, the National Solidarity Program falls under the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). The ministry controls the implementation of economic assistance projects. MRRD runs five programs, including the National Solidarity Program. The program is designed to connect local villages and shuras with the central government. Local communities are given small grants (\$200 per family in 2007 for villages with more than 100 residents) to contract projects in their villages. In each village, a community development council is formed, which decides what kind of project should be implemented. An NGO (such as Oxfam, Madera, or Relief International) supervises the process.⁷⁴

The idea is that choosing and implementing a project will bring local communities together and facilitate good governance (largely by drawing people to participate in community development councils) while at the same time connecting those communities directly to the central government. The number of projects per province ranges from 270 to 1,400. No province has been excluded. In Khost, Kunar, and Ghazni, \$8 to \$10 million was spent to the end of 2007.⁷⁵ According to local Afghan leaders, political institutions have indeed become stronger as new councils form to take part in the program, often with the participation of key local leaders.⁷⁶

The PRT is not the only U.S. military body conducting projects. In almost every province, U.S. PRTs operate alongside a U.S. battalion (in Afghanistan the U.S. military refers to these battalions as “maneuver forces”). Each has a civil affairs team that conducts projects in order to help the soldiers on the ground win hearts and minds. Like the PRTs, their funding comes from CERP. Spending by battalions varies by province.

For example, \$2 million has been spent by battalions in Ghazni since 2004, compared to \$15 million in Kunar.⁷⁷

These are just the most prominent development players. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and CSTC-A (the training command for the Afghan security forces) also conduct projects. And, of course, numerous NGOs plus the UN do a wide range of reconstruction work in Afghanistan. Time limitations prevented us from examining the work of the UN in detail.

Yet none of these organizations can fill the shoes of the PRTs, which have a unique capability to complete large-scale projects in dangerous areas (see Table 1). The U.S. military rates the security in the districts of each province on a scale of red (dangerous), orange (fairly dangerous), yellow (fairly safe), and green (safe). In our four provinces, the PRTs conducted projects regularly in “red” districts. So did the resident U.S. battalion, with which the PRT always worked side by side. The National Guard security force platoon attached to each PRT enabled it to go to dangerous areas. According to interviews, the same occurred in most other provinces, especially where there were no conventional combat forces to back up the PRT.⁷⁸

Red Districts Where Projects Are Conducted				
	Districts with PRT Projects	Districts with Maneuver Projects	Districts with NSP Projects	Districts with USAID Projects
Khost	2	2	2	NA
Kunar	5	2	3	0
Ghazni	3	7	0	NA
Nuristan	3	2	3	NA

Table 1. PRT, “Maneuver,” and NSP Projects Per “Red” District in 2007.⁷⁹

USAID and NSP could not match the PRTs. Our field work could not identify any USAID projects in red districts, though available records of their projects were largely incomplete. We were told that USAID focused their efforts on Jalalabad rather than Kunar and Nuristan.⁸⁰ In other provinces, USAID certainly has faced challenges operating in dangerous areas. The PRT is better suited to protect its people. Ahmed Rashid's *Descent Into Chaos* cites one report that over 100 Afghans working with USAID were killed in unrest from 2001 to 2006. In Helmand, violence forced a major agriculture project to be canceled in 2004. Other work suffered the same fate in later years. In 2006, USAID, the British Department for International Development, and the Canadian International Development Agency allotted millions to Helmand and Kandahar, but violence prevented aid workers from dedicating much of it.⁸¹ In the south, USAID has been compelled to go out with its own security.

We did find that the National Solidarity Program works in red districts. Indeed, the program has completed 22 projects in Nuristan's Waygul valley where nine U.S. soldiers were killed in a massive attack on a military outpost during the summer of 2008.⁸² For security, workers rely upon the protection of villagers and tribal elders.⁸³ However, the program did not go to red districts in every province (Ghazni, for example). Furthermore, often the PRT opened the door into red districts for the National Solidarity Program. For instance, in Kunar, the construction of the Pech road and the Jalalabad to Asadabad road allowed the National Solidarity Program to enter dangerous areas. Even so, the PRT tended to handle the most dangerous ("reddest") areas.⁸⁴

One very dangerous area is the infamous Korengal Valley. Featured in Elizabeth Rubin's painfully honest *New York Times Magazine* piece, "Battle Company is Out There," the Korengal resembles the front lines of the Korean War more than a three-block war.⁸⁵ From 2006 to 2008, insurgents there mounted attacks from prepared positions involving as many as 100 fighters. Soldiers knew that patrolling past certain gridlines guaranteed an attack.⁸⁶ As part of a U.S. military plan to convince Korengalis to stop fighting, Commander LeGree funded the construction of a road into the Korengal. Hoping to mirror the success of the Pech road, the idea was that the jobs and economic opportunity the road provided would draw men away from violence and give tribal elders a means of countering insurgent influence. The road has pressed forward slowly since the end of 2007, accompanied by a variety of side projects. Whether it will be completed is an open question, but there is no question that the PRT is operating in a dangerous area.⁸⁷

Many NGOs avoid violent districts. In some cases, their workers have been targeted and killed entering such areas.⁸⁸ For example, when the Taliban killed two German civilians in Paktia in 2003, most of the NGOs left the province. Many did not return for over a year. The PRT, however, stayed.⁸⁹ The same happened in the southern provinces of Kandahar and Helmand in 2005. Had no PRTs been in these provinces, reconstruction would have slowed to a trickle or stopped altogether.⁹⁰ And in Farah, the UN labeled the entire province "nonpermissible," in part because bandits regularly targeted unarmed aid workers.⁹¹ Now there are only a handful of NGOs and a few USAID projects administered from Kabul through local subcontractors.⁹² By comparison, over 100 NGOs operate to the north in Herat where security is better.⁹³

PRTs also work in less dangerous areas (those rated orange, yellow, and green). Indeed, the majority of spending goes to areas where insurgents cannot move freely or control territory but that are still contested (i.e., orange and yellow areas). Work has also been done in safe areas, although the trend is to hand them over to NGOs, USAID, and other civilian development agencies.⁹⁴ For example, the Nangarhar PRT left Jalalabad, a relatively safe area, to NGOs and civilian aid agencies doing large infrastructure projects in order to focus on more dangerous outlying areas that had seen little development aid.⁹⁵

Whether in red, orange, yellow, or green areas, PRTs have a different focus than the U.S. battalions or the National Solidarity Program. That focus is large-scale reconstruction—roads, bridges, schools. In their early days, most PRT teams focused on small, quick-impact projects designed to win hearts and minds.⁹⁶ As time went on, funding streams increased and so did spending. For instance, PRT spending went from \$2 million in Khost in 2005 to over \$22 million in 2007. The change was even more dramatic in Kunar, where spending went from \$2 million in 2004 to \$13 million in 2007, and finally \$80 million in 2008.⁹⁷

With greater funding came larger projects. The average PRT project in Kunar, Khost, and Ghazni in 2007 cost \$218,000–\$387,000 compared to \$13,000–\$15,000 for the National Solidarity Program and \$18,000–\$72,000 for U.S. battalions (see Table 2).⁹⁸ Of each PRT's spending, 30 to 60 percent went to roads and bridges. Lacking dedicated engineers and civil affairs personnel, the National Solidarity Program and U.S. battalions simply cannot manage such large-scale programs.

Funding \$K/number of projects (2007)

Province	PRT	NSP	Maneuver
Khost	\$218.00	\$14.90	\$17.60
Kunar	\$387.00	\$15.00	\$72.00
Ghazni	\$362.70	\$12.70	\$22.00
Nuristan	\$38.40	N/A	\$44.80

Table 2. Average PRT, NSP, and “Maneuver” Cost Per Project (in Thousands of U.S. dollars).⁹⁹

USAID is a different story. Major national level infrastructure projects—such as the Kajaki Dam, the Gardez to Khost Road, large portions of the Ring Road, and the Jalalabad to Asadabad Road—have been funded by USAID, in addition to many other types of projects. In 2007, according to information provided in PRT briefings, 30 percent of their \$1.5 billion budget for Afghanistan went to roads and bridges.¹⁰⁰ However, USAID is less likely to go to dangerous areas than the PRTs and also cannot fund large-scale projects as quickly as the PRTs. USAID money has a long approval process, and getting a major project funded can take the better part of a year.¹⁰¹ Over \$300 million of the funds programmed for provinces in 2007 was never expended.

One might ask what makes large-scale projects special? Cannot smaller projects have the same effect? To some extent, we assume large-scale projects contribute to security and governance in a way that small-scale projects do not. What can be said is that this assumption is fed by the impact of large-scale projects in Kunar, Khost, and Ghazni. Still, we have not rigorously compared the impact of small- versus large-scale projects. In our field work, no small-scale projects stood out as having similar effects in drawing

communities together against violence and paving the way for the Afghan government to deliver goods and services—but that hardly means that no such cases exist.

The PRTs have one other advantage over other development organizations: hands-on monitoring. Most PRTs have disciplined processes for competitive bidding, enforcement of contract clauses, and regular on-site inspections (known as quality control missions). The two engineers on the PRT staff and the organic National Guard platoon provide the know-how and force protection to make this possible.

Even though they sound mundane, fair bidding processes, contract enforcement, and quality control missions are critical to U.S. counterinsurgency objectives. From 2003 to 2006, several PRTs had experienced problems in completing projects. Many that were completed were not structurally sound.¹⁰² When the first group of U.S. Navy and Air Force PRT commanders arrived in early 2006, Lieutenant General Karl Eikenberry, then commander of the majority of the U.S. military forces in Afghanistan, told them to clean up the contracting process and the projects.¹⁰³ Over the next 2 years, the PRT commanders and their staffs worked to do so.¹⁰⁴ The addition of engineers to the PRT staff helped in this regard. Fair bidding processes were instituted to cut down on contractor corruption. Regular quality control missions were run to ensure projects met contract specifications. When they did not, there were consequences. The PRTs fired contractors, tore down inadequate work, and withheld money. Commander LeGree had large sections of road torn up to send the message that projects must be completed according to contract specifications. Commander Cooledge scrapped nine dams worth

millions because they were inadequately designed or illogically sited (one dam held no water). Such actions put real teeth into quality control and got the attention of contractors and government officials.

All problems have not been eliminated, but the situation has improved. It is not just an issue of project completion. Quality control missions serve as a check on corruption. They allow the PRT to monitor whether the money laid out in the contract on labor and materials has actually been spent and has not been pocketed by the contractor, government officials, tribal elders, or – of most concern to the United States – insurgents. Quality control is the best way to keep U.S. dollars out of insurgent hands.

Other organizations lack a similar capacity for hands-on monitoring. The maneuver battalions have a small civil affairs team of four to six men and no dedicated engineers. The team is too small to run regular quality control missions. Battalions focus on combat and are reluctant to commit assets to inspecting a project. Even managing a competitive bidding process can be taxing. The result has been that issues have arisen with project completion (contractors claim a project has been completed when it has not) and contractors and tribal elders have skimmed money from contracts. Some units explicitly skip quality control.¹⁰⁵ In fact, battalion civil affairs personnel often ride with the PRTs to look at their projects.¹⁰⁶

The ability of USAID personnel to enforce standards and limit corruption is indirect.¹⁰⁷ USAID rarely conducts on-site inspections of its projects using its own personnel. Instead, it pays Afghan nationals to visit project sites and write reports.¹⁰⁸ Some PRT members and officers in U.S. battalions insist that USAID's practice of subcontracting quality control

results in poor construction and corruption by local contractors.¹⁰⁹ At best, because of their reliance on third parties, USAID lacks a full picture of the status, quality, and location of projects. While perhaps acceptable for low-cost projects, indirect monitoring for highly technical and high-cost projects (such as roads and bridges) risks both the completion of the project and the loss of large sums of contract money to the insurgents or corrupt officials. The problem has not escaped USAID. Indeed, in Farah, Kandahar, Paktia, and Kunar, USAID addressed it by delegating hands-on monitoring for certain projects to the local PRT.¹¹⁰

The National Solidarity Program sends its own engineers to inspect projects or charges its NGO facilitating partners to do so. We have interviewed NSP and NGO personnel, and there are areas of Kunar, Khost, Ghazni, and Nuristan where they simply will not go. Discussions with U.S. officers and civilians on PRTs suggest the same is true in Helmand, Farah, and Kandahar. Consequently quality control is spotty at best. Widespread anecdotal accounts describe large-scale corruption. The most common are tales of tribal elders absconding with money meant for the community's project. In some cases, money is suspected to have gone to insurgents.¹¹¹

So, to answer the question posed at the beginning of this section, the PRTs seem to be unique. No other organization can complete large projects in dangerous areas and conduct hands-on monitoring.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to address two other criticisms of PRTs. First, USAID and NGOs argue, with good justification, that they have a better understanding of Afghan culture and society than the PRTs because they have years of development experience and employ so many Afghans. From

their perspective, their projects are better attuned to community needs than those of the PRT and are hence more likely to be used by the community. This criticism has started something of a debate. Afghan and various U.S. officials level similar criticism in return, citing stories of uncompleted projects, corruption, and projects rejected by the local community.¹¹²

The problem in discerning who has the better projects is that the existing records of projects do not list when projects were completed and to what extent they were used by the local community. Moreover, the records we encountered did not have all USAID and NGO projects. Thus, no comparison can be made among the effectiveness of PRT, USAID, National Solidarity Program, and battalion projects.

The other criticism we have not addressed is whether PRTs “crowd out the humanitarian space.” This refers to the possibility that PRT development activities taint all development activities as part of the Coalition military effort. From the viewpoint of many in civilian development agencies, because the military effort has become connected to the reconstruction effort, NGOs no longer appear neutral and insurgents are more likely to attack them.¹¹³ We did not examine this criticism. It is not easy to determine whether PRTs made insurgent leaders decide that attacks on civilian aid workers are legitimate, especially without resorting to classified information.

CONCLUSION

This paper started out with two questions. Do the PRTs make a difference? And could another organization fill their shoes?

The answer to the first is yes, at least in some cases. While we cannot show that PRTs make a difference across the board, we do have evidence that they improve security and strengthen governance in three provinces. These results may pertain to other provinces.

The answer to the second question is no. PRTs provide a unique contribution to U.S. counterinsurgency strategy. Without the PRT, the U.S. military would lose the “build” in its clear, hold, and build operations. Reconstruction tied into U.S. military operations would fall on the small civil affairs teams assigned to each battalion. They are not structured for the task. Dangerous areas—where American soldiers are fighting and dying—would have no major reconstruction projects, just small-scale affairs, such as wells and humanitarian assistance drops. Perhaps this would be enough but the successes of road construction in Kunar and elsewhere suggest otherwise. Furthermore, the U.S. Government as a whole would have less ability to monitor projects being funded, whether conducted by the U.S. military or USAID, since the PRT stands as our number one mechanism for quality control. Corruption would increase, fewer projects would be completed, and insurgents could siphon off contract money undetected.

This is not to disregard other organizations. They are needed. The small-scale projects of battalion civil affairs teams help win hearts and minds as soldiers operate among the people. USAID’s large-scale reconstruction projects and training programs build up the economy and governance in a manner and scale far beyond the PRTs’ capabilities. And the National Solidarity Program is an ingenious tool for strengthening local governance and expanding the reach of the Afghan government. Both the National Solidarity Program

and USAID are better for nation-building and long-term economic development than the PRTs. There is a strong argument to be made that PRT projects are not needed in safe (“green”) areas like Jalalabad, Panjshir, or Kabul. USAID, NGOs, and the National Solidarity Program can do the work in these secured areas.

For counterinsurgency operations, though, PRTs are the name of the game. Accordingly, the United States should give the PRTs a major role in reconstruction activities that accompany any surge of military forces into Afghanistan. As much as possible, new funds meant to back up the counterinsurgency campaign should go to CERP. The PRTs have proven themselves able to use CERP effectively to improve the security situation in contested areas.

That is not all. Counterinsurgency objectives can be better met if decisionmaking for *all* U.S. projects in contested areas is delegated to the PRTs. The USAID representative at the PRT should be in charge of approval and monitoring for USAID projects in that province (excluding large cross-province or regional projects that naturally fall under the Kabul headquarter’s purview). To do so, Congress will need to lessen the accountability required for USAID funds, and the USAID billets in all PRTs will need to be filled. Since the USAID representative has a co-equal relationship with the PRT commander, USAID would not be losing any authority. Its actions would simply be better coordinated with the military. There is no reason for USAID decisions on projects to be made in Kabul, possibly hundreds of miles away from the project location.

Also, to complete the added duty of monitoring USAID projects and executing a greater number of CERP projects, each PRT should be given a National Guard platoon and additional civil engineers.

These recommendations may not be the best over the long term. One better option would be for USAID, with its proven expertise and large amounts of money, to handle the softer side of counterinsurgency. By giving the PRTs, and hence the U.S. military, the lead in surge reconstruction, the United States would be foregoing the creation of a real counterinsurgency capability in USAID. Unfortunately, USAID currently lacks the personnel and ability to get into dangerous places to fill this role. Consequently, this option would require significant restructuring of USAID to give it a real counterinsurgency capability. In addition to fewer restrictions on contracting, USAID would need more personnel to cover all the provinces, many of whom would need to be senior enough to take on the role of the PRT commander managing large numbers of personnel. One junior civilian per province would be insufficient. Furthermore, USAID would either need to be assigned military forces for protection or hire cadres of private contractors if their personnel were to venture into dangerous areas. USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives, which has fewer restrictions on expending funds and is experienced in working in dangerous areas, might need to be placed in charge of such an effort. Even it would probably need additional resources.

An even better long-term option, from the perspective of empowering the Afghans, would be for the Afghan government itself to take over reconstruction efforts. Thereby, the legitimacy of the government would be built up as goods and services went directly from the center to the periphery.

To do so, the United States could funnel more money into the National Solidarity Program so that it could play a larger role in province-wide reconstruc-

tion. For larger projects, the United States and the international community could train and provide grants for the Ministry of Public Works or the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development to take over the role of the PRTs. Thereby, the Afghans could start sponsoring road and bridge projects instead of the PRTs. Such projects could be coordinated with Afghan National Army operations and, through the PRTs, U.S. military operations. Detachments of Afghan National Army could be trained to take on one of the critical roles of the PRTs: going into dangerous areas with officials and engineers to meet with local leaders and do hands-on monitoring. The PRTs themselves would fall back into an oversight and advisory role.

The problem is that these alternatives, while better for long-term development, are not practical in the short term. Perhaps with significant reforms USAID or the Afghan government could take over all reconstruction activities. But right now, they cannot. With a surge around the corner, the United States has little choice but to reinforce what has worked best to this point – the PRTs.

ENDNOTES

1. "Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: An Interagency Assessment," Washington, DC: U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), June 2006, p. 9.

2. Nima Abbaszadeh, Mark Crow, Marianne El-Khoury, Jonathan Gandomi, David Kuwayama, Christopher MacPherson, Meghan Nutting, Nealin Parker, and Taya Weiss, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Lessons and Recommendations," Research Paper, Princeton, NJ: Woodrow Wilson School of Public & International Affairs, January 2008, p. 12.

3. "NATO-led Forces, Air Agencies Agree New Modus Operandi," New York: UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), August 5, 2008.

4. The interviews were conducted with the leadership of the PRTs in Paktia (2005-06 and 2006-07), Laghman (2006-07), Panjshir (2007-08), Parwan (2006-07), Farah (2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08), Nangarhar (2004-05 and 2006-07), Kandahar (2005 and 2007-08), Helmand (2004-05), Zabul (2004-05), and Paktika (2006-07). We also spoke to the PRT commanders of Ghazni (2006-07) and Khost (2006-07) who had served prior to our own work at those PRTs.

5. International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) PRT Handbook, Kabul, Afghanistan, July 2006, pp. 2, 4.

6. Abbaszadeh *et al.*, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Lessons and Recommendations," p. 24.

7. Terms of Reference for CFC and ISAF PRTs in Afghanistan, January 27, 2005.

8. ISAF PRT Handbook, p. 39.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 36. Security sector reform, largely embodied in the disarmament of militias, has ceased to be a major focus of most PRTs.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

11. Discussion with Michelle Parker, RAND Corporation, September 2007. USAID Brief to PRT Conference, Kabul, Afghanistan, August 2007.

12. Discussion with USAID officials, USAID headquarters, Washington, DC, October 9, 2008.

13. We spoke to USAID officials who were both working at the PRTs and who were working outside the PRT.

14. "Agency Stovepipes vs Strategic Agility: Lessons We Need to Learn from Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq

and Afghanistan,” U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, April 2008, pp. 24, 26–28; Nima Abbaszadeh *et al.*, “Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Lessons and Recommendations,” p. 4; Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*, New York: Viking, 2008, p. 198.

15. *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007, p. 37.

16. *Foreign Aid in the National Interest*, Washington, DC: USAID, 2002, p. 6; Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006, pp. 1, 34–35, *info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/faq.htm#10*, accessed December 31, 2007. Many scholars and organizations (particularly the World Bank and USAID) have examined what constitutes “good governance.” The answers have been fairly consistent:

- A high degree of popular participation in political institutions;
- Strong and coherent political institutions;
- The existence of the rule of law, to include police and a judicial system;
- The delivery of public goods and services;
- A meritocratic bureaucracy;
- The absence of corruption throughout the government;
- Regulations that promote a free market.

For a work based partly on Afghanistan, see Clare Lockhart and Ashraf Ghani, *Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

17. Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 2nd Ed., Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 22–24, 35; Steven Caton, “Anthropological Theories of Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East: Ideology and the Semiotics of Power,” Philip Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, eds., *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990, pp. 96–97.

18. Jennifer Brick, “The Political Economy of Customary Organizations in Rural Afghanistan,” Paper for American Political Science Association Conference, August 15, 2008, pp. 7–9, 26–28.

19. Discussion with Dangam tribal elders, Dangam District Center, October 29, 2007; Pech-Chapadara shura, Pech District Center, Nangalam, March 27, 2008; discussion with Chowkay District Governor, Chowkay District Center, April 9, 2008; discussion with District Governor Mohammed Rahman, Shigal District Center, November 5, 2007.

20. Discussion with Haji Mohammed Zalmay, Watapur District Center, April 20, 2008.

21. Major General Jeffrey Schloesser, Press Briefing, September 5, 2008.

22. ISAF Country Stability Picture, 2007. This is the database of all projects that have been recorded as contracted in Afghanistan.

23. Discussion with Commander John Wade, CNA headquarters, January 11, 2008.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Thom Shanker, "Top Officials Greet Gates in Kabul with Pleas," *New York Times*, December 5, 2007.

26. Discussions with Task Force Professional, Forward Operating Base (FOB) Salerno, Italy, October 15, 2007; Ann Marlowe, "A Counterinsurgency Grows in Khost," *Weekly Standard*, May 19, 2008.

27. Discussions with PRT civil affairs officers, Bak District Center, October 16–18, 2008; Commander Dave Adams, Presentation to CNA, May 21, 2008.

28. Discussions with Khost PRT, FOB Chapman, October 3, 2007. Commander Dave Adams, Presentation to CNA, May 21, 2008. Marlowe, "A Counterinsurgency Grows in Khost."

29. Observations of PRT Khost by Frederick Thompson and Whitney Raas, October 2007; meeting with Governor Jamal, Khost Provincial Government Center, October 19, 2007; school groundbreaking, Musa Khel, October 9, 2007; discussion with

Commander Dave Adams, FOB Chapman, October 15, 2007; meeting with Khost Director of Education, Khost Provincial Government Center, October 9, 2007.

30. Discussion with Commander John Wade, CNA headquarters, January 11, 2008.

31. Khost Synchronization Meeting, FOB Chapman, October 22, 2007.

32. Discussions with Kael Weston, State Department Representative to Khost PRT, April 2007–September 2008, Arlington, VA, October 17, 2008. Commander Dave Adams, Presentation to CNA, May 21, 2008.

33. Discussion with Khost Provincial Council Chairman, Khost, October 2007.

34. "Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan," Report to Congress, June 2008, p. 11.

35. Discussion with Kael Weston, Arlington, VA, October 17, 2008.

36. Casey Ware, "ANSF assumes control of Bak District Center," CJTF-101 Press Release, August 22, 2008.

37. The Spearman's Rank correlation was chosen because of the small number of cases (7–15 districts in each province). The ranks were positively correlated at the .05 level in Khost and (shown later) Ghazni. Thus there is weak statistical evidence that PRT spending may be positively affecting security. The results for Kunar and Nuristan were not significant.

38. These include a major attack on FOB Salerno in August 2008; Commander Dave Adams, Presentation to CNA, May 2008; Major General Jeffrey Schloesser, Press Briefing, September 5, 2008.

39. "Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan," Report to Congress, June 2008, p. 11.

40. Michael Coss, "Operation Mountain Lion: CJTF-76 in Afghanistan, Spring 2006," *Military Review*, January–February 2008, pp. 22–29.

41. Discussion with Master Chief Slothower, Kunar PRT, Camp Asadabad, September 29, 2007; discussion with Commander Larry LeGree, Alexandria, VA, August 2008.

42. Discussion with Captain Jay Coughenour, Kunar Provincial Government Center, March 15, 2008.

43. Discussion with Afghanistan Embassy to the United States, Afghanistan Embassy, Washington, DC, February 3, 2008; Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, p. 194.

44. National Solidarity Program records of projects in Kunar Province, November 2007.

45. For a detailed analysis of the Pech road, see David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

46. Discussion with Lieutenant Colonel Dale Alford, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Quantico, VA, January 2008. Alford commanded a U.S. Marine battalion that had a company in the Pech Valley in 2004.

47. Discussion with TF Bayonet staff, Jalalabad Airfield, September 25, 2007; Michael Phillips, "Close Contact," *Wall Street Journal*, April 9, 2007.

48. There had been two earlier attempts to pave the road. Both never got off the ground. discussion with Commander Larry LeGree, Camp Asadabad, October 20, 2007; discussion with Master Chief Slothower, Kunar PRT, Camp Asadabad, September 29, 2007. Master Chief Slothower had two back-to-back tours in Kunar. He was there from early 2006 until early 2008.

49. Discussion with District Governor Mohammed Rahman, Asadabad, March 22, 2008.

50. Discussion with District Governor Mohammed Zalmay, Camp Asadabad, March 13, 2008; discussion with District

Governor Mohammed Rahman, Kunar Provincial Government Center, Asadabad, February 13, 2008, March 22, 2008; discussion with shop-owners, Nangalam, October 31, 2007.

51. Discussion with Kandogal Police Chief, Kandogal, November 12, 2007.

52. Meeting with Governor Deedar, Provincial Government Center, Asadabad, October 2, 2007; brief to Brigadier General Crane, UNAMA, Camp Wright, November 7, 2007; Kunar Provincial Security Meeting, Kunar Provincial Government Center, March 26, 2008; discussions with Task Force Bayonet, Jalalabad Airfield, September 26, 2007; discussion with District Governor Mohammed Zalmay, Camp Combat Main, February 18, 2008; discussion with Captain Lou Frketic, Able Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, Camp Combat Main, February 18, 2008.

53. Comments by Safi tribal elders, Pech Road opening ceremony, March 3, 2008.

54. USAID briefing, Camp Asadabad, November 2, 2007.

55. Kunar Provincial Security Meeting, Kunar Provincial Government Center, March 26, 2008.

56. List of National Solidarity Projects in Kunar, November 2007. Discussion with the Director of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Asadabad, October 28, 2007.

57. Discussion with Lieutenant Matthew Myers, PRT Engineer, Washington, DC, January 2, 2009.

58. Discussion with District Governor Mohammed Rahman, Shigal District Center, November 5, 2007; discussion with Eastern Shuryek Valley elders, Kunar Provincial Government Center, March 23, 2008; shura with Shuryek Valley elders, Tantil, February 28, 2008; discussion with Mamund tribal elder, Marawara bridge opening, March 3, 2008; Pech-Chapadara shura, Pech District Center, Nangalam, March 27, 2008; shura with Chopadara district elders, Chopadara District Center, November 6, 2007; discussion with Haji Mohammed Zalmay, Korengal Outpost, November

6, 2007; conversation with Haji Mohammed Zalmay, Camp Asadabad, March 13, 2008; discussion with Shigal tribal elder, Camp Asadabad, February 27, 2008; shura with Shigal tribal elders, Shigal District Center, November 5, 2007; discussion with Dangam tribal elders, Dangam District Center, October 29, 2007; discussion with Chowkay District Governor, Chowkay district center, April 9, 2008; discussion with Naray reporter, FOB Naray, October 16, 2007; discussion with Ghaziabad police officer, Nishagam, October 17, 2007; shura in Pech Valley, November 12, 2007; meeting with Omar Village elders, Omar, Pech Valley, October 31, 2007; discussion with Governor Deedar's staff, provincial government center, October 23, 2007; notes on Mamund tribal meeting, Asadabad, November 5, 2007; discussion with Korengali tribal elders, Korengal Outpost, April 3, 2008; discussion with Kunar Provincial Council, Provincial Government Center, April 10, 2008; discussion with Governor Wahidi, Asadabad, March 26, 2008; discussion with Marble Jon Dodd, Kunar Provincial Government Center, February 20, 2008; messages sent from Haji Jon Dodd via UBCC Construction Company, April 2008.

59. Discussion with Governor Wahidi, Kunar Provincial Government Center, March 25, 2008.

60. Discussion with Governor Wahidi, Asadabad, March 26, 2008.

61. Discussion with Shigal tribal elder, Camp Asadabad, February 27, 2008; discussion with Civil Affairs Team North Leader, Camp Asadabad, February 25 2008; discussion with Shuryek tribal elders, Pech River Valley, April 2008; discussion with UBCC construction firm, Camp Asadabad, April 2008; discussion with Chowkay District Governor, Chowkay district center, April 9, 2008; discussion with Kunar PRT civil affairs team leaders, Camp Asadabad, February 2008.

62. Discussion with District Governor Mohammed Rahman, Kunar Provincial Government Center, March 25, 2008; Kunar Provincial Security Meeting, Kunar Provincial Government Center, March 26, 2008; Pech-Chapadara shura, Pech District Center, Nangalam, March 27, 2008.

63. Districts were ranked according to the degree governance improved and the average number of PRT visits per month. We then ran a Spearman's Rank correlation, which was positive and significant at the .05 level. This test provided some evidence that PRT engagement had a positive influence on governance.

64. The Kunar PRT instituted a similar plan in coordination with the provincial director of public health and NGOs. It was just underway when we left so it could not be evaluated. Kunar PRT Effects Meeting, Camp Asadabad, October 31, 2007.

65. See explanation for Spearman's Rank correlation in endnote 37.

66. See Nir Rosen, "How We Lost the War We Won," *Rolling Stone*, www.rollingstone.com/news/story/23612315/how_we_lost_the_war_we_won, accessed November 10, 2008.

67. Phone interview with PRT Lashkar Gah commanding officer, August 6, 2008; discussion with Lieutenant Colonel Chris Kolenda, FOB Naray, October 13, 2007; Bill Anderson, Kapisa and Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team Brief, September 9, 2008; discussion with Commander Michael Varney, CNA Headquarters, June 2007.

68. Discussion with Commander of PRT Farah in 2004-05.

69. Discussion with State Department Representative for PRT Farah in 2005-06, August 1, 2008.

70. Discussion with Commander Michael Varney, CNA Headquarters, June 2007.

71. Discussion with Civil Affairs Team Leader for PRT Gardez (Paktia province) in 2005-06.

72. Expenditures totaled \$1.6 billion in 2008. USAID Afghanistan Budget Presentation, November 13, 2008; USAID Afghanistan Budget Presentation given at PRT Conference, June 2007; "Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan," Report to Congress, June 2008, p. 62.

73. For the calendar year in 2007, the Khost PRT spent \$22 million, and the Kunar PRT spent \$13 million. "Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan," Report to Congress, June 2008, p. 62; ISAF Project Database, 2007; CNA field research, Kunar, Khost, and Ghazni, September to November 2007; USAID province factsheets for Kunar and Khost, 2007; USAID province factsheets for Kunar and Khost, 2008.

74. Discussion with National Solidarity Program Provincial Director, Asadabad, October 27, 2007; discussion with Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development officials, Asadabad, October 28, 2007.

75. ISAF Country Stability Picture, 2007; discussion with provincial NSP Director, Asadabad, October 27, 2007; discussion with the Provincial Director of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Asadabad, October 28, 2007; discussion with Asmar reporter, Camp Monti, October 29, 2007.

76. Discussions with 25 local Afghan leaders, October 2007 to April 2008.

77. ISAF Country Stability picture database; CNA research at 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, Camp Blessing, November 2007; CNA research at 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, Camp Naray, October 2007.

78. CNA interview with 2006-07 Paktia PRT commander, July 25, 2008; CNA interview with 2005-06 Farah PRT State Department representative, August 10, 2008; CNA interview with 2007-08 Farah PRT commander, July 29, 2008; CNA interview with 2004-05 Zabul PRT commander, September 2, 2008; CNA interview with 2004-05 Helmand PRT commander, August 6, 2008.

79. Data taken from CJTF-82 Assessment Briefs from April 2007 to April 2008; and ISAF Country Stability Picture database, 2007.

80. Discussion with USAID representative, TF Bayonet headquarters, FOB Jalalabad, September 29, 2007.

81. Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos*, pp. 174, 323, 373.
82. National Solidarity Program Implementation Process as of 30th Qaws 1386, December 21, 2007.
83. Discussion with Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development office in Kunar, Asadabad, October 28, 2007.
84. Discussion with Kunar National Solidarity Program Director, Asadabad, October 27, 2007.
85. Elizabeth Rubin, "Battle Company is Out There," *New York Times Magazine*, February 24, 2008.
86. Discussion with Battle Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, Korengal Outpost, April 2, 2008.
87. Commander Larry LeGree, Korengal-Chowkay Road Strategy, October 2007; discussion with Korengali tribal elders, Korengal Outpost, April 3, 2008. The Khost PRT started a road into Sebari district, a similarly dangerous area. Conversation with Kael Weston, Washington, DC, October 13, 2008.
88. From August 2003 to November 2004, attacks on aid workers in Afghanistan went from 0 to 145. USAID weekly activity report, November 12–December 1, 2004.
89. CNA interview with 2005–06 Paktia PRT commander, July 31, 2008.
90. Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos*, p. 247.
91. CNA interview with 2005-06 Farah PRT commander, July 31, 2008.
92. National Solidarity Program Implementation Progress as of December 21, 2007, Fact Sheet; CNA interview with 2006-07 Farah PRT commander, July 23, 2008.
93. CNA interview with 2007-08 Farah PRT commander, July 29, 2008.

94. CNA interview with 2006-07 Paktia PRT commander, July 25, 2008; CNA interview with 2007-08 Panjshir PRT commander, August 4, 2008.

95. CNA interview with 2006-07 Nangarhar PRT commander, July 28, 2008.

96. CNA interview with 2004-05 Kandahar PRT commander, August 6, 2008; Michelle Parker, "Programming Development Funds to Support a Counterinsurgency: A Case Study of Nangarhar, Afghanistan in 2006," Case Studies in National Security Transformation, No. 10, 2007, p. 10.

97. ISAF Country Stability Picture database, 2007.

98. *Ibid.*

99. All numbers are for calendar year 2007, not fiscal year 2007.

100. The percentage fell to roughly 20 percent in 2008, but the total sum was still an impressive \$300 million. USAID Budget Presentation, November 13, 2008.

101. Discussion with USAID officers, USAID Headquarters, Washington, DC, October 10, 2008; CNA interview with 2006-07 Laghman PRT commander, August 1, 2008; discussions with PRT Kunar, Camp Asadabad, October 2007; "Agency Stovepipes vs Strategic Agility: Lessons We Need to Learn from Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan," U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, April 2008, p. 22.

102. Discussion with Provincial Administrator Fazl Akbar, Kunar Provincial Government Center, Asadabad, October 27, 2007; USIP interview #6, Afghanistan Experience Project, April 19, 2005, www.usip.org/library/oh/afghanistan_prt.html, accessed August 15, 2008; discussion with Lieutenant Colonel Dale Alford, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, January 2008; CNA interview with 2005-06 Farah PRT commander, July 31, 2008; discussion with Master Chief Slothower, Kunar PRT, Camp Asadabad, September 29, 2007.

103. Discussion with Commander John Wade, CNA headquarters, January 11, 2008.

104. Tamara Gabbard, "New Bidding Process Creating Standards Afghanistan Can Grow With," Combined Joint Task Force- 101 News Release, August 18, 2008.

105. Discussions with 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 1-91 CAV, Camp Naray, October 15, 2007; discussions with C Troop, 1-91 CAV, Camp Monti, October 18, 2007; discussions with civil affairs officers, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, February 2008.

106. Discussions with civil affairs officers, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, February 2008.

107. Michelle Parker, "Programming Development Funds to Support a Counterinsurgency: A Case Study of Nangarhar, Afghanistan in 2006," Case Studies in National Security Transformation, No. 10, 2007, p. 10.

108. Discussion with USAID representative, TF Bayonet headquarters, FOB Jalalabad, September 29, 2007; brief to USAID, USAID headquarters, Washington, DC, October 10, 2008.

109. Discussion with 1-91 CAV, Camp Naray, October 15, 2007; discussions with Kunar PRT, Camp Asadabad, September 2007.

110. CNA interview with 2004-05 Kandahar PRT commander, August 6, 2008; CNA interview with 2006-07 Paktia PRT commander, July 25, 2008; CNA interview with 2005-06 Paktia PRT civil affairs team leader.

111. Discussion with Soraya Nelson, NPR Correspondent, Camp Asadabad, March 22, 2008; discussion with Narang locals, Camp Asadabad, March 7, 2008; discussion with Chowkay District Governor, Chowkay district center, April 9, 2008; discussion with Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development officials, Asadabad, October 28, 2007; discussion with National Solidarity Program inspector, Kunar Provincial Government Center, Asadabad, February 13, 2008.

112. Discussion with USAID representative, TF Bayonet headquarters, FOB Jalalabad, September 29, 2007; discussion with Lieutenant Colonel Chris Kolenda, FOB Naray, October 14, 2007; meeting with Governor Jamal, Khost Provincial Government Center, October 19, 2007; meeting with Governor Wahidi, Kunar Provincial Government Center, March 10, 2008; meeting with the United Nations, Khost Provincial Government Center, October 25, 2007; discussion with Afghanistan Embassy to the United States, Afghanistan Embassy, Washington, DC, February 3, 2008.

113. "Policing a Whirlwind," *The Economist*, December 15, 2007; interview with Commander, Regional Command West, USIP Afghan Experience Project, Interview #43, August 11, 2005.