PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS – WHAT’S NEXT?

CHALLENGES OF RECONSTRUCTION IN AFGHANISTAN

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

PRAGUE, JANUARY 25–27, 2010

CONFERENCE REPORT
EDITOR’S NOTE

When debating how to present the proceedings, results and conclusions of the conference “PRTs in Afghanistan: What’s Next?” both to our esteemed participants and interested public, we decided not to transcribe the proceedings of the conference in its entirety with all of the comments, interjections and questions. Instead, we selected all contributions made by the respective panellists that represent a wide range of opinions on the conference’s main theme and compiled them in book form. In doing so, we made a concerted effort to limit the number of changes we made and to maintain the original intent of the speaker. The changes, therefore, are minimal and serve only to clarify the point. Any remaining errors are our own.

We would like to thank all who made the conference and this book possible.

Oldřich Černý, Eleanor Hammond, Stephen Christensen
INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 2010, Prague hosted a conference to deliberate on the successes and challenges of provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan. The idea was rather simple: to gather a broad spectrum of people involved in PRTs for a candid discussion of what works, what doesn’t work and how PRTs could strengthen coordination and effectiveness. Given the Czech Republic’s key contributions to the ongoing efforts in Afghanistan, Prague was a natural choice.

Over 250 representatives from 38 nations came to Prague. There were Afghans and non-Afghans; civilian and military officials; governmental and non-governmental representatives; specialists from the field and policy-makers from capitals; politicians and the press. The talks and papers revolved around practical, work-a-day issues.

As this report clearly illustrates, the PRT Conference in Prague was a tremendous success. NGO leaders stressed the need for a patient approach that incrementally weaves a fabric of trust within a community. Working journalists shared the stories that do not make the front pages. And governmental representatives crafted a series of principles to measure and improve PRT work in the fields of Governance, Economic Development, and Civilian-Military Coordination. Most importantly, Prague was unique because it provided a space enabling parties that too
often do not hear about each other’s experiences to engage in an open dialogue. This type of discussion needs to happen more often.

John Law,
Department of State Office Director for Provincial Reconstruction Teams
and Deputy Coordinator, Inter-Agency Provincial Affairs Office
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OPENING PLENARY SESSION

VENUE: MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CZERNIN PALACE
HELENA BAMBASOVÁ
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic

It is an honour and pleasure to welcome you in the Czernin Palace, one of the venues of the International Conference: Provincial Reconstruction Teams: What’s Next? For over ten years, the Czech Republic has been an active member of NATO, and our commitments within the alliance have been the priorities of our foreign policy; it is only natural that we should take part in the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and share the burden with other members and allies.

We’ve been participating in reconstruction activities in Afghanistan since 2005 when Afghanistan was put on our list of priority countries for development cooperation. The PRT projects in the province of Logar are perhaps the most visible activities that I would like to mention, but there are some other ongoing activities such as development projects delivered by Czech NGOs. The Czech Republic also contributes to several trust funds to help build Afghan National Army capacity, and we also provide support for civil society development via the National Solidarity Programme. Many of us here feel that the next two or three years will be crucial for the future of Afghanistan. The Czech Republic has adopted a strategy up to 2012 where we have identified three major fields: (1) institution building, good governance and the rule of law; (2) reconstruction & development; (3) enhancing and strengthening
security. These priorities reflect the Afghan National Development Strategy and the activities of our NATO partners. Though we are all committed and do the best we can, it is probably fair to admit that coordination among ourselves and cooperation with the government of Afghanistan are still big challenges. This is one of the reasons why we decided to take part in organizing this conference.

We expect that over these two days, many of the difficulties, challenges and problems will be discussed. Such discussions now will help us all to function better, to be more efficient in Afghanistan, and perhaps, to achieve better results. It’s not our ambition to solve everything, but sharing views and exchanging information is very important and it will contribute to better coordination. I will conclude by saying that the goal of my country is to leave Afghanistan, but to leave it at a moment when its people rule a stable and democratic country. Should this be a realistic future and not a Utopia, we also need conferences like this one. I wish you all every success.
It’s a great pleasure for me to be here today to talk about the work of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan. I would like to offer the perspective of the Minister of Defense of a country which, despite its size and limited resources, has been actively engaged in Afghanistan since day one. I’m very much looking forward to hearing from all the distinguished panellists whose experience, expertise, critical assessment and innovative ideas will make this conference worthwhile. I am convinced that by the end of the conference, we will have created a pool of lessons learnt and other relevant information that can then be taken forward. We have no time to waste. The Afghan people need to see results and so do our respective citizens. It’s time to be effective. It’s time to make smart choices. The stakes are high, no matter your vantage point. What makes our campaign in Afghanistan especially challenging is the fact that we are navigating largely uncharted territory. The days are long gone when armies were simply instruments to seize and protect territory, to destroy enemies and armed forces in battle or deter potential adversaries. Today, much more is expected of our ordinary soldiers to win the battle. Experience shows that modern-day conflicts require the application of all the elements of national and international power. In other words, political, diplomatic, social, economic, informational as well
as military tools all have to be applied when attempting to resolve a conflict. While we have a term available – the so-called “comprehensive approach” or “concerted approach” – and I’m sure other terms have been coined, we are now learning how to apply it in the field. And let’s even take a step back. The comprehensive approach has institutional implications while troops are still at home. It changes who we send into the field of operation, and with what education, equipment and training. We must have structures in place that guide communication between the civilian and military sectors: Memorandums of Understanding must be signed and the chain of command that governs both the civilian and military staff has to be established and understood. Let’s not forget that the comprehensive approach has to have sufficient financial backing, a condition that’s hardly welcomed by the taxpayers who foot the bill. We also have to know when to use our assets. We have to be flexible enough to be able to disrupt a terrorist net in a village one day and dig a well the next. We have to know the indigenous environment and communicate clearly with the host nation. Military and civilian efforts are clearly intertwined, but there has to be order and a clear pattern in the web we spin.

Having said this, I do not want to depreciate the work that has already been done in the domain of the comprehensive approach. Provincial Reconstruction Teams are an essential part of that effort: PRTs stepped in to help the political system in Afghanistan take root, and
they encompass a vast array of not only developmental, reconstructive
and humanitarian projects, but also security projects. By the same
token, most PRTs operate in challenging security environments. On the
one hand, PRTs are vehicles of change in Afghan government capacity
building at the local level. On the other, the civilians that deliver the
development projects cannot do so without proper security measures.
This is when our soldiers come in and help facilitate civilian projects.
There is a fierce debate about this between the civilian and military
sectors. I relate to those soldiers who feel that they don’t get enough
credit for putting their lives on the line so that development projects
can be carried out. I also hear those who fear that the military imprint on
civilian projects defeats the purpose of such aid altogether. Personally,
I see PRTs as temporary agents that should subsequently, when the
security situation permits, be replaced by traditional humanitarian and
developmental aid. Until we reach that state in Afghanistan, the output
of PRTs hinges upon the closeness and cooperation between the civilian
and military staff and their ability to work in synergy. No matter how
long I reflect on Afghanistan, or how much time I spend following the
news from all over the world and listening to both civilian and military
experts, one important word comes to mind: TRUST. Trust is the alpha and
omega in all interpersonal dealings, and I daresay it’s true in all cultures
throughout the world. A soldier has to be able to rely on his partner not
to leave him behind in battle. A surgeon has to know that his future nurse
will pass him the right instrument. Trust-based relationships between a child and his parents produce strong individuals. World records are broken and mountains are climbed based on trust. Trust between Afghans and internationals is the catalyst of improvement. Trust has to be earned and is very unforgiving. Trespasses are damaging, especially given the history of Afghanistan. I wish there was a quick way to earn trust, but I am afraid there are no shortcuts. We just have to keep that in mind and learn from our mistakes. Where are we now then? Our joint mission in Afghanistan has a sound strategy that General McChrystal has structured around and focused on the Afghan population. In turn, his strategy is based on civilian/military cooperation. Since the concept of PRT is relatively new, it is of the utmost importance that we exchange views and lessons learnt in forums such as this conference. We have to continue to build the core of the comprehensive approach and learn how to use it in the field. Our collective PRT experience must be grouped and analyzed. I don’t want to sound as if I have no reservations about the prospects of civilian/military cooperation in the form of PRTs because, of course, I do. But I trust that through day-to-day interaction, we can learn and we can grow. I also believe that PRTs can get us much closer to the Afghan population who are the key to bringing about positive change in Afghanistan.
This conference is being held at the right time. There is renewed interest in Afghanistan due to our newly-elected government, the Obama Strategy which has generated more interest in the security, governance and development sector in Afghanistan, and the upcoming London Conference where the international community, with the Afghan government, will agree on the roadmap for the future of Afghanistan. This will include handing over responsibility to the Afghan people and the government in the different areas of security, governance and development. In March there will be a conference in Kabul where all the decisions of the London Conference will be turned into different programmes with specific benchmarks.

This conference is of great importance because we will review the future role of PRTs in Afghanistan. PRTs have been part of our life for the past eight years in Afghanistan. They have penetrated the most difficult areas because of their military capabilities and they have stabilized a lot of communities because of their development work. Now we have to see what happens next, and we should take PRTs to the next level and make sure that they are more relevant to the local realities in Afghanistan.
Let me use this opportunity to pay tribute to all those PRT soldiers and civilians who have lost their lives in Afghanistan for a noble cause, the cause of prosperity and human development in Afghanistan. I was in Nangarhar a few days ago where there was a terrorist attack on the PRT when they were going to open schools in Rodat district. They have already made a lot of sacrifices, and their sacrifices and their efforts will be remembered in Afghanistan and will stay in our memories for a long time.

Over the past eight years a lot of attention has been paid to building national institutions, like the emergence of a strong police force and a strong army. But PRTs have been responsible for subnational governance in Afghanistan. They were of huge importance because they were the only technical, financial and human resources available at subnational level that our governors, district governors and subnational institutes could rely on and call for assistance. Usually they were very quick in delivering services or helping our subnational institutions. PRTs played a big role in the past and are still playing a major role in Afghanistan. This conference will discuss not only how to achieve better coordination and coherence in PRT activities, but also will discuss their future role. The government has a specific recommendation in this regard for making PRT activities more relevant to local realities in Afghanistan. Our delegations will be discussing and detailing over the coming two or three days on different panels what we expect of PRTs, what would
be more relevant entities at subnational levels and what their role should be. Briefly, the government of Afghanistan would like to see the PRTs not only as Provincial Reconstruction Teams, but as Provincial and District Support Teams. We see the role of the PRTs in the future as enabling subnational governance to perform their services, because the legitimacy of the Afghan government came from the ballot box, but also from the ability of the Afghan government to maintain security and provide public services. We want the PRTs to work through the Afghan government to make sure that the government is able to provide security and public services. But this should be done in such a way that they leave behind strong subnational institutions that are sustainable in the long-term. One of our requests is to change PRT so that they have a more supportive and institution-building role in Afghanistan. We believe there is a need for greater standardization of PRT activities. The PRT Executive Steering Committee has new Terms of Reference for the old PRTs, and we have a Policy Note which was approved unanimously in this Executive Steering Committee. We believe these should be fully implemented by PRTs which would bring a lot of standardization to their activities, give ownership of the process to the government of Afghanistan and make their work more relevant to national and local priorities. We also want a more equal distribution of PRT resources in different parts of Afghanistan, with PRTs having access to a common fund so that the benefits are equally distributed. One of the demands
of the Afghan people is for balanced development in all areas. One of the specific recommendations which we want to discuss in the coming few days is how we can standardize and equally resource PRTs. We want to see more institutional development experts in the PRTs in future to make sure that our subnational institutions are strong when they leave Afghanistan. To that end, we recommend that the PRTs should work through the Provincial Development Committees, which should take responsibility for long-term development. This is one of the areas we are very interested in, and which this conference should discuss. We’d also like PRTs to embark on long-term and bulky programmes and projects in peaceful areas. The Quick Impact Programme and Short-Term Programme are vital in conflict areas to stabilize the situation. In the peaceful areas, which means the North-East, Central, and North-West Afghanistan, we want PRTs to come with a programme which will be fundamental to future development. Because the PRTs are dealing at subnational, especially at district level, they don’t have a strong government partner there. Our existence in the South is very weak. There are two different partners: the government which doesn’t have resources, and the PRTs with the resources, technical capabilities and military ability. Because of that, there are some parallel structures created in parts of the country which, in the short-term deploy public services to the community, but in the long-term undermine the legitimacy of the Afghan government. Again, we will work with the PRTs in the future to become a better
partner, and this will allow us to eliminate parallel structures. We would like longer rotations of the civilian part of the PRTs, and we want the PRTs to be more of a development entity at subnational level and provide development services to the Afghan government. We'd also like to have better mutual information sharing capabilities and an equal partnership with them. To conclude, we invite our participants to discuss how we can work on the eighty priority districts we have already selected where we are going to implement the District Delivery Programme; the PRTs’ role will be essential to the success of this programme.

This programme in the coming eighteen months will not deal with the security situation, but with the governance and development activities to make sure that the Taliban will not return to those areas where good governance and good security and good development will work. I want to conclude my remarks by saying, in general, that in the coming five years PRTs should work with subnational governance, in this case with the Governor and the Director of Local Governance. Within our subnational policy, we are assigning our governors and the district governors to jobs which they have never done before: we will delegate more authority to them, more responsibility, relations with the centre will change, and they don’t yet have the capacity. While we are implementing subnational governance policy in Afghanistan, we want the PRTs to be our partner in this important endeavour.
BARRABA STAPLETON
Senior Political Adviser to the Office of the EU Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Afghanistan

Since 2006, every year has been designated a crossroads for Afghanistan. However, 2010 appears to be shaping up to be a crossroads for the international community as well. It is a year to change perceptions of the domestic populations of Afghanistan’s leading donors, to show them that at least the beginnings of substantive changes are under way with regard to governance and security that may result in significant changes in the nature of the international community’s involvement in Afghanistan. Though with some analysts arguing that mission creep rather than exit strategy is under way, it’s as hard as ever to make predictions. Concurrently, changing Afghan perceptions with regard to the Afghan government is at the heart of the counter-insurgency strategy led by General McChrystal. Previous attempts to change Afghan perceptions and deny the grounds for strengthening insurgency have included Regional Development Zones under General Barno in 2004 and Afghan Development Zones under General Richards in 2006. Both these attempts to combine similar ingredients: improved governance, service delivery, reconstruction & development as the means of reversing negative security trends. These failed efforts were unable to
square the security circle or to keep promises made to deliver services and reconstruction & development in a timely fashion.

The effort that will formally get underway in Helmand in operational terms next month is, by comparison, massively resourced, and considerable planning has gone into ensuring that this will be a joint effort in terms of Afghan government delivery once areas have been cleared. This is the other crucial part of the equation: the build that is supposed to occur to ensure a sustained hold. This joint effort in a situation where Afghans will, it is believed, be able to choose freely for the first time, should generate support at the grassroots level for the government. But realities in Afghanistan, as we all know, are infinitely complex. A leading German scholar, Bernt Glatzer, who sadly died a few months ago, summed up the situation succinctly in a 2008 interview: “The breakdown of the old order and the revolutionary war troubles turned the country into an arena of new political actors: war profiteers, mafia networks, terrorist organizations, parties manipulated from abroad, and agents of all kinds of countries, with few institutions that bind together the conflicting forces”. The domestic factors that the majority of serious analysts concur have fuelled the insurgency render the role of governance pivotal in the attempt to change negative trend lines. However, merely bringing a district governor to a district hitherto lacking one will make no difference if the experience of that district
judge is one of corruption rather than fairness and the provision of neutral redress.

The challenges are clearly immense, and, to a greater extent than before, in this post-Barno dispensation, the ball is now in the Afghan government’s court with regard to forward movement on service delivery to the district level. The District Delivery Programme involves seven line ministries, the Supreme Court and the Attorney General’s Office. This cross-cutting effort across Afghan line ministries also depends on the government’s ability to recruit staff locally or, failing that, from elsewhere in Afghanistan to implement the packages of projects and service delivery to cleared areas. The ISAF Staff Headquarters where CG9 is now located is focusing primarily on aligning PRT efforts with ISAF’s counter-insurgency operational goals. This is the plan. The question is whether, like all plans, it will survive contact with reality, which, it should be borne in mind in the Afghan case, has multiple manifestations that are often interrelated and highly fluid.
OLE MOESBY

Member of the Conference Steering Committee and
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark, Czech Republic

The initiative taken by my American colleagues to organize this conference and the participation of all of you shows the sheer commitment of all relevant partners to work together to promote the sustainable and peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan. I therefore warmly welcome this attempt to develop a constructive dialogue with all partners. For me, it’s extremely interesting and very relevant to discuss how we can continue and improve close cooperation between the PRTs and their Afghan partners to reach our common goals. And I’m extremely pleased with this initiative to gather civilian, military and NGO experts from around the world to share their experiences and perspectives, and to discuss the relevant issues prior to the conference taking place in London later this week. One important aspect in this regard is to achieve a coherent PRT reconstruction strategy in Afghanistan. We have already come a long way, and I must especially commend the PRTs and the efforts to make coherent plans that can guide the development in the Afghan provinces. Concrete steps are critical if we are to reach our goals. A comprehensive solution in the region depends not only on progress in reconstruction and state building, but also on overall improvements in regional security. In the past, our inaction and inefficiency led to deep
suffering for millions of people; it allowed radicalism to grow, and it made the civilian population vulnerable to recruitment from extremist groups. Today, it is important that we act with determination. And for me personally, I think it is crucial that the international conference on Afghanistan in London really sets out the way forward. Our joint efforts here in Prague may lead the way. Over these two days, we may play a constructive role in discussing the way forward for the PRTs. The relationship between partners is of vital importance in this purpose. We must seize this opportunity to set the agenda for our future efforts.
I’m not discussing PRTs: my mission is rather to attract PRTs. In terms of context, the shadow of the London conference has been dominant. Behind it, the new strategy of the President of the United States and the firm wish of President Karzai of Afghanistan for peace and stability constitute a strong point of departure. And the main idea is to develop civil actions more efficiently within the framework of PRT activities, which should play a major role in the roadmap. This is the reason why the Afghan delegation, which covers a large variety of civil activities in several sectors of life, is here among us, including the governors of some provinces. The international community is also closely associated with this approach. Most foreign countries have projects and a PRT, even if their experts are not here. I would like to point out that the PRTs are very closely linked to the larger idea of reform, associating the local population with governmental decisions. And this is why the delegation of Afghanistan is led by the General Director of the Independent Directorate for Local Governance, His Excellency Mr. Jelani Popal. I would like to add a last sentence: the people of Afghanistan need international help because peace in Afghanistan also means peace in the world.
PLENARY SESSION

VENUE: SENATE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC, WALLENSTEIN PALACE

Tuesday, January 26, 2010
Ladies and gentlemen, I’d like to welcome you in this historic hall to the International Conference on Provincial Reconstruction Teams. I’m pleased that the Czech Republic has for several years been involved in assistance to Afghanistan. Soldiers from the Czech Army were among the first to assist in April 2002, and later, some other military units, continuing the spirit of Masarykian humanism and democracy, which are at the core of the Czechoslovakian legionnaires’ traditions. Czech soldiers were active in a PRT in Faizabad from 2005 to 2008. I’m not a soldier so I cannot speak about the need for further military confrontation with the Taliban. But I am a politician and a doctor of medicine, so I am pleased that in Logar, on the 19th of March 2008, one of our teams, in addition to the Czech contingent, began to work. It is a team with experts in civil engineering, agriculture, security, veterinary medicine and media. These PRTs will bring a lot of hope to those Afghan citizens who want their war-tested country to finally find peace. I hope that your conference will bring a lot of inspiration to all the participants and many interesting ideas for the completion of these efforts.
SESSION A:
Fostering Interagency and Community Coordination
AKBAR AYAZI
Afghan Service Director, RFE/RL, Czech Republic

I am the director of Radio Free Afghanistan and Mashah Radio that broadcasts to the Pashtun-speaking people of northern Pakistan. It’s an honour to come here and facilitate this discussion which is on a very important topic, that of fostering inter-agency and community coordination, and how international organizations and NGOs can best coordinate in the country as a whole and in the provinces. I will just briefly give you a different perspective on this topic, then we’ll go to the panellists. The violent campaign by local and international terrorist groups on the one hand, and the increasing casualties of civilians in the military campaign of international forces on the other hand, have become the spotlight of local and international media. Since I work in the media, I want to give you some perspective from the lens of the media. The media has focused on violence: violence from terrorist groups and the casualties that are occurring with the military campaign of the international forces. Very little has been reported on major developments such as the four thousand kilometers of asphalt roads, the – up until 2008 – double-digit economy growth, the establishment of 17 private banks, 3 or 4 private airlines, multiple mobile phone companies, fibre optics around the country, over 13 private TV networks, and tens of FM radio stations established and operating. Many civilian or civil or military
institutions have been built. Nothing or very little has been reported on these developments. The media has largely ignored what PRTs are doing, what NGOs are doing in the country at the local, provincial and national level. On the other hand, 70% of the Afghan population is still optimistic about the future and the direction the country is taking. The continued insecurity in major parts of the country and the deaths of civilians and unequal distribution of resources by the international community has created mistrust. The recent crisis between the Afghan government in general and, in particular, President Karzai, over the elections has resulted in mistrust, in suspicion between people and the international community and also between the people and the Afghan government. Meanwhile, corruption in the Afghan government and the alleged abuse of funds and donations has become another source of distrust for the Afghan people. While all this is happening, in order to have effective, reliable and more systematic interagency and community coordination, and to have government and the international community and NGOs streamline their work at the local and provincial level, and to be able to regain the trust of the people, there has to be more of a media campaign to once again convince people that the military/civilian operations carried out by PRTs and NGOs have nothing to do with the war on terror. From my perspective, it is important for the PRTs and NGOs to coordinate their efforts and use the local and international media vigorously for this campaign to regain the trust that they have lost amongst the Afghan people.
Given that I work for an international NGO, I am going to give the NGO perspective. I don’t purport to speak for all NGOs. Anyone who’s worked in Afghanistan will know that there are probably as many NGO perspectives as there are NGOs on some of the big issues that the country is facing. But let me just offer a few general thoughts on the topic of fostering coordination. Let me start with some context. This year is going to be a year of surges in Afghanistan: we have the military surge deploying now, we’ve had a civilian surge over the last year that continues to expand, the U.S. government has almost tripled its civilian contingent on the ground in Afghanistan over the last twelve months. It’s been a consequent expansion of financial resources, and as we enter 2010, we are beginning to see what might perhaps be described as a negotiation surge, certainly in the lead-up to the London conference.

There is an awful lot of talk about negotiation, reintegration – one of the headline announcements of London, I suspect, will be the announcement of a re-integration fund. I won’t go into that but the issue of re-integration will be a very ripe topic, to talk about the challenges of coordination and cooperation. But another way to analyze these surges is to say that what we are seeing is a dramatic expansion of international coordination.
inputs into Afghanistan: military inputs, civilian inputs, financial inputs, and diplomatic inputs.

The question is, of course, whether the outcomes they are directed to achieve – greater peace and stability – can be achieved simply with expansion on its own. And history in Afghanistan clearly demonstrates that that’s not enough. We are seeing billions of dollars of development and reconstruction funds going into Afghanistan, but clearly the lessons from the failure of that effort is that failure to effectively cooperate and coordinate renders those very sizable efforts much, much less effective than they can or should be. Significant contribution to this are failures in coordination and cooperation, and those failures occur at all levels, both horizontally and vertically. Horizontally, we have failures of coordination at the highest level between the Afghan government, UNAMA, NATO, other governments, NGOs, and in parallel, vertically at the national level, the provincial level, the district level, and the village level. Such failures are perhaps understandable in such a complex environment with so many actors, but you would have thought that after so many years we would be doing a better job of coordination, and we would have learned some of the lessons instead of apparently being destined to repeatedly fail at the same challenges. There has been some improvement and there’s certainly much more of a high level focus on these issues. We repeatedly hear talk about the importance of coordination at the highest
levels, and again, in the lead-up to the London conference there’s talk of a reinvigorated effort for civilian coordination.

There was a trial balloon floated over a senior civilian coordinator that appears to have been shot down, so the focus is now back on the existing institutions and actors. There’s talk of a more empowered UN Special Representative, talk of taking the opportunity of the reappointment of the EU Special Representative, and NATO putting in a coordinator to lead to a better degree of coordination. But I suspect that again, we’re focusing perhaps on individuals and not on structures or processes that will contribute to greater coordination. To take one example of the challenges: the coordination between the military and civilians. Again, we see a dynamic that constantly repeats itself. The military too often sees civilians essentially as part of their own plan, civilians being deployed to achieve military objectives. There is that greater awareness of that challenge, but we still see a lack of understanding. When the military talks of clearing, holding and building, they often view the civilians as the build component of the military strategy. McChrystal, in an interview with Radio Free Europe last year, said that the idea is that after we clear an area of insurgents, we’ll hold it with security forces – Afghan and American – then we’ll start development projects. That’s the build that gives people a sense of ownership. Of course, we have to revive all the other things that the government does: rule of law and fair governance. And of course, that’s
perfectly reasonable and acceptable, except that I suspect the view is that the build will be predominantly done by civilians and that civilians may well have different views or objectives.

NGOs, in particular, may have a different perception of the validity of going into an area that’s just been cleared of insurgents. They may believe that it’s not conducive to their efforts to build trust and cooperation in a society that’s been damaged or fractured by recent conflict. They may see that it doesn’t fit their longer-term priorities of developing strong relationships with communities. They may see that being deployed essentially at the behest of the military further degrades what little humanitarian space remains. And of course, they have their own agendas and priorities as well, so there needs to be greater understanding. There’s certainly a lot more lip service being paid to this, but whether that translates into more effective cooperation on the ground remains to be seen.

In terms of coordination and cooperation at the highest levels, the military have certainly done a much better job than the rest of the group of international actors in Afghanistan at ensuring greater coordination internally with McChrystal coming on board. It’s almost a slipstream effect, with the military effort aligning behind a fairly decisive military component. But on the civilian side, there are still a lot of failures of coordination and cooperation, which I suspect is just the nature of the beast. I find that from the perspective of an international
crisis group where we look at such efforts not just in Afghanistan, but in Haiti, Congo, and in a whole range of conflicts and post-conflicts, these are new challenges. What one would hope, though, is that there is such an expression of political will from the governments engaged in Afghanistan and that would help address some of the problem. The problem of coordination at the most senior level is the unwillingness by actors to surrender a degree of authority over their own operations and organizations to align behind a common objective. It’s not just NGOs. It’s governments, all of which pay lip service to the importance of coordination. They want everyone to be coordinated to meet their own objectives, and there’s a repeated lack of willingness to coordinate centrally. Take one example: the European Union. There are differences between the Special Representative and the Delegation. Perhaps Lisbon will help us address some of this. But if you can’t coordinate at that level and if you can’t get coordination between the EU and UNAMA, how do you extend coordination and cooperation more broadly? So, those are some of the challenges.

Another challenge – and let me just wrap up on this – is that when you are talking about high level coordination and cooperation, don’t forget the Afghan side of the component: both proactive and perhaps, not as positive. President Karzai might not necessarily benefit much from a unified, coordinated international voice positioned to place much more pressure on achieving international priorities. We saw that
with the debate two years ago on the appointment of a new UN Special Representative, and that dynamic may currently be playing its own game. So, those are some of the challenges. I have kept my comments at a very general level because there are others on this panel who are much more experienced and can offer much better direct examples of some of the challenges at the provincial and PRT level.

Let me just finish by saying that coordination will only happen when governments and organizations agree to relinquish a degree of authority to someone authorized to act on their behalf, and that will require a degree of political will that we haven’t yet seen across the board in Afghanistan.
As an NGO, we are working in Afghanistan and we have experienced the continuous deterioration of the security situation on the ground, which has resulted in more difficult access to both field and communities in many places across the country. And as the direct involvement and participation of communities is a crucial instrument in our job, it becomes really challenging in such a complex environment. Places that were accessible three years ago are no-go areas for the majority of the stakeholders engaged in reconstruction efforts and the operational space for humanitarian actors has decreased consistently over the last years. The Red Cross claims that the current humanitarian access situation is the worst in 27 years. The increased number of attacks on the humanitarian community and the general perception of aid by local populations as a tool for winning hearts and minds indicates that the concept of a neutral and impartial NGO is quite simply compromised. At this stage, aid has become very politicized, and it’s a question of whether PRTs contribute to this situation.

PRTs became a key element in ISAF expansion across Afghanistan. Its open-ended mandate of enabling reconstruction has been interpreted differently across PRTs. While some have focused on security sector
reform, others have engaged directly in relief and reconstruction. Efforts to harmonize the PRT modus operandi across different national contingents have been complicated by different understandings of the problems on the ground. A number of policymakers from NATO countries place significant emphasis on winning hearts and minds through aid and reconstruction. Just one example: a few years ago there were repeated calls from ISAF for aid agencies to implement projects in the areas that had been cleared of Taliban. However, the reality is that some recent surveys suggest that the concept of development to bring stability and security is misplaced, and in many cases it just misses the point.

The deteriorating violence in Afghanistan doesn’t primarily result from poverty, nor will economic incentives supported by an opposed military presence ultimately succeed. Following a long history of aid and military intervention, Afghans are familiar with and suspicious of the hearts and minds strategy. I recently watched some old Soviet documentaries and I was surprised how similar the rhetoric in their propaganda films is to the current situation. Security is more fundamentally linked to improved government and the removal of unsavoury and compromised local leaders; small infrastructure projects are no substitute for ill-judged or incoherent political strategies. In my opinion, much greater emphasis should be given to addressing the political challenges and security issues. In this context, PRTs offer huge potential simply by building national security capacity. Unlike PRTs or
the military, we as an NGO have different tools to ensure our security. Acceptance by the community is crucial. In the current situation, any association – whether real or perceived – with the military simply compromises NGOs with the local population. The majority of NGOs have adopted a cautious approach to interaction with military forces for fear of being perceived as being aligned to one side of the conflict. This undermines the basic principles of humanitarian work, which are impartiality and neutrality. Such a threat exists not only for NGOs, but, particularly, for the local communities. There have been many cases where local villagers were punished or killed because of a real or perceived affiliation with the foreign forces, and international forces are engaged in development projects in which communities are very much involved. This situation poses a huge threat to the local population. In my opinion, the military should not implement community-based programmes, and they should focus on building the capacity of the national security forces and strengthening their role and accountability in security issues across the country.

As I was trying to show in this short presentation, there are several issues which make cooperation between humanitarian actors and the military very difficult. Those different subjects have different agendas and statuses, so their roles should not overlap. I don’t see much potential or space for further coordination or cooperation. I don’t want to portray PRTs as an evil; in some places, a PRT plays its role very well and so
contributes to stability in the area. But once again, PRTs should develop a stronger focus on security and the rule of law in coordination with police forces in order to tackle security, which is impacting the lives of ordinary Afghans much more than their underdeveloped infrastructure. I don’t think that PRTs should play such an important role in community development. As I pointed out previously, such attempts may be in contradiction with the ultimate goal, which is a peaceful and stabilized Afghanistan.
I’m privileged to be here as the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) official to share opinions, experiences and expectations with you. I hold the directorship of the unit within the MOPH which includes the project implementation units of all major donors to the health sector, including the European Commission, USAID, the World Bank, and the Global Fund. All of these donors, working closely through the MOPH, are providing services all across Afghanistan. So I am well aware of the contribution of the PRTs to the health sector, and I can say that the effectiveness and the coordination efforts of many of the PRTs with the MOPH and with NGOs have improved over the last few years. However, there still remain challenges to be overcome if we are to deliver more efficient and effective healthcare to Afghans.

I would like to direct my remarks to how we can improve our cooperation efforts. I will also look at the following: first, how we see PRTs working with health-related NGOs, MOPH, Directorate of Health Delivery System to Afghanistan. Next, what are the existing challenges to our collaborative efforts and some suggestions for improving collaboration? The PRTs are playing an important role in helping NGOs contracted by the MOPH to improve health services to the population and so play a constructive role in our stabilization efforts. The
involvement of many PRTs in the construction and innovation of health facilities, training of medical providers, contribution of equipment and supplies to health facilities, assistance with public health education, immunization campaigns, donation of ambulances to health facilities, and disaster responses is very welcome. However, it’s important that the PRTs coordinate these and all other inputs with the MOPH, particularly at the provincial level, to make sure that the assistance is justified and to avoid duplication of effort. At times, the types of health facilities built are not warranted given the population, the location and other factors. Sometimes, a health facility is established but no coordination has been made through the MOPH to arrange donor funding for its staff. There have been occasions where PRTs have donated supplies that have already been budgeted for by the MOPH, or more often by the NGOs. At times, PRTs have donated medicines that are not on the Ministry’s Essential Drugs List and are not known by the healthcare providers, which could lead to misuse. It may lead to expectations that cannot be met by the Ministry’s health delivery system. Uniformed PRT staff have visited health offices or health facilities, which could later place health facility staff in jeopardy. I want to emphasize the need for close planning with MOPH representatives in the districts where they are available, and certainly in the provinces where the Province Public Health Director and his staff are available. The PRTs in many, but not all, provinces are working closely with the Provincial Public Health Director and his
staff. Importantly, the PRTs should participate in monthly Provincial Health Coordination Committee meetings which bring together all of the contributors to the health services in the provinces. It’s essential that the PRTs help medical representatives coordinate closely with the Provincial Health Coordination Committee (PHCC) and attend the meetings as this is the means through which PRTs can learn about MOPH strategies, policies, and plans for the provinces in the area which the PRT serves. Some PRT representatives make plans for discussions with NGOs or with other entities within the province which may not lead to the best results, may not follow standardized Ministry of Public Health policies and procedures, or can lead to duplication of effort.

I asked my staff last week to survey most of the provinces where PRTs are working. They found that there is a tremendous amount of good work being accomplished through PRT assistance. However, we are looking for ways to improve this assistance and I will list the major problems that our survey and other sources of information have identified in some areas of the country. As discussed, the survey found that some PRTs do not participate in PHCC meetings. Some of the constructions funded by PRTs are not of high quality. I assume that the PRTs or other responsible entities did not have sufficient oversight or monitoring of their construction contractors. Ambulances provided did not come with customs documents, and license plates would not or could not be obtained. Visits by PRT staff to health facilities have led to threats from
the Taliban. The rapid turnover of PRT staff can lead to inexperienced staff, ill-informed decisions and insufficient time in country to develop relationships with the provincial authorities. Sometimes PRT promises to communities are not forthcoming.

Summing up, with reference to policy notes and those of the PRT Executive Steering Committee: while we strongly support it, we believe we can jointly achieve standardization, uniformity of activities of all PRTs across the country, support provincial head directorates, and provide direct support for building their capacity for greater efficiency and sustainability. We are very thankful to the PRTs for their tremendous assistance to the health sector and we are looking forward to working with them in utilizing the available resources as efficiently as possible.
I’m the civilian head of the German PRT in Kunduz, and so I am speaking only about my experiences on the civilian side. We have heard that winning hearts and minds is important. From my experience, let me add this: we are there on the ground and we can make a difference.

We have heard some stimulating questions about the role of a PRT. We have just heard about some specific issues and a PRT should be careful when trying to bring help to Afghanistan and to the provinces. We are in a very complex situation. I am a career diplomat and in about thirty years of service, I have never, ever witnessed such a complex situation as we have in Afghanistan. A PRT: What is a PRT? For me, there are three things that are important in daily life. One thing, and this is what I like to point out to our friends from the NGO community, is that a PRT can be and can serve as a safe haven. I have lived through some difficult experiences in Kunduz. The governor of the Province of Kunduz, Engineer Mohammad Omar, is amongst us, and he can bear witness to the situation there. Last year has seen some dramatic periods.

Number two: for me, a PRT can be a direct link to the international community for the local authorities. Once in a while I hear that even though it’s just a few hundred kilometers away, Afghans feel that Kabul
is very, very far away. And with Kabul, the international community seems to be very, very far away for the individual citizen. And here we are, with a PRT right in the midst of them, in the province, reaching out to the districts; giving them the opportunity for direct access to international assistance.

And the third point for me, and we have heard about the complex situation, is that a PRT can be something like a one-stop shop, rather than going to twenty, thirty or more different offices, trying to find out what each needs, which forms I must fill in, here and there, and in order to obtain this or this or that permission. Can we know everything? Are we born specialists on a foreign country’s administrative structure? Or is it the other way round where we can expect the Afghan community to know who to contact in order to process an application? I think a PRT can serve as a one-stop shop and identify who within the international community can best help. These are just some ideas I’d like to share with you. We are talking about cooperation. I can just speak about my experience in the province of Kunduz: we have various levels where we really try to coordinate things and to get together. One level is that of the United Nations, the multinational level. There we closely cooperate with UNAMA and UNDP which we regard in Kunduz as lead agencies within the UN family. We have regular meetings with them, and I would like to stress regular, because if you meet once in a while, it is different. But if you set up meetings on a regular basis, then you create an atmosphere
of trust. Then, within the PRT, we have the potential to coordinate and to cooperate with our own inter-agency process. We have heard from the NGO representatives here that there are a variety of actors in various fields, and it is important to bring them together, their expertise, and to share needs, and that is what we are doing. We have representatives of various German ministries in Kunduz but unfortunately we only have a few NGOs there; there were more when the security situation allowed for more activity on the NGO side. In brief, PRTs are very important, as is cooperation with the local government. The Afghan people know best what their needs are, and their needs are great. We have to prioritise and take things step-by-step. We would like to rely on our Afghan partners, the Afghan government and the local representative of the central government in Kabul. They know best what the major needs are and who has to be involved on the Afghan side. We would like to avoid offering assistance that might not stand up to the government and the administrative regulations. We want to operate with consensus and in conformity with Afghan laws and regulations. That is why we work closely with the Governor’s Office, and through the Governor’s Office with all the competent partners and authorities in the Province of Kunduz. So these are a few things from a grassroots level I wanted to share with you.
SESSION B:
Civilian-Military Coordination in the Field
SESSION 6: CIVILIAN-MILITARY COORDINATION IN THE FIELD
We’re about to see the start of the London Conference on Afghanistan. One of the outcomes for NATO will be directly relevant to the PRT issue in that a new NATO Senior Civilian Representative will be appointed who will play a more visible and significant role in coordinating civil/military activities. This is a reflection of the fact that it’s increasingly accepted that success in Afghanistan – and there have been successes – will depend more and more on the closer integration of civil/military cooperation & coordination.

I left Afghanistan in November after two and a half years as Deputy NATO Senior Representative, and what I’d like to do this morning is very briefly go through some of the lessons that we learned in relation to PRTs while I was there. These lessons came from the fact that we did have a very loose mandate to try and create coherence between PRTs. But before I go into one or two selected lessons, I just wanted to say a few words about the nature of coordination, because there is a tendency to discuss coordination as a good and an absolute activity in itself. In that sense, there is quite often discussion about improving coordination and appointing a new SCR to improve coordination. UNAMA should improve coordination, but no one actually talks about who is coordinating what, for whom, and for what purpose. And it seems to me that there are two...
types of coordination that we need to distinguish between. General McChrystal, COMISAF, set out his strategy, made his assessment and is fighting a campaign on what he calls Counter-Insurgency Principle. The counter-insurgency principles are broad, they're not just military. They require effort across the whole spectrum of activities both in terms of protecting the population – which has become a focus of the activity – but also in terms of helping the government exercise its authority so that they can protect the Afghan people. Therefore, in talking about coordination I think we have to distinguish between the coordination which is necessary to deliver the counter-insurgency campaign and those civilian requirements which are needed to complement what the military are doing. This can be local governance, helping local governors, development projects or coordinating the delivery of civilian effort to the military. The other, broader coordination is a longer-term coordination about developing Afghanistan so it becomes a sustainable country. And that coordination is, quite rightly, with the United Nations and involves a whole range of organizations that are removed from the military, such as the World Bank. So, I would make a clear distinction between these types of coordination. In London, when they appoint the new NATO Senior Civilian Representative, essentially his coordination responsibility will be to help General McChrystal gather resources and persuade people to devote both civilian resources, Afghan government resources and expertise to the campaign.
That said, I just wanted to go through very briefly one or two significant lessons that we learned about PRTs over the past eighteen months. The first lesson is that PRTs were established for a completely different purpose than what they are now increasingly being required to do. They were established as a development instrument because it was believed that some form of low-level local development would in itself help stabilize Afghanistan. As the security situation has changed and deteriorated in those conflict areas, particularly in the East and to some extent in the South, PRTs are doing development work and increasingly supporting the military in terms of their Hold and Build Strategy: clearing areas of insurgents, holding them and helping to build the structures of governance and a sustainable Afghan government presence. So, the main lesson is that PRTs need to evolve. We’ve gone through phase one of PRT evolution: their establishment and focus on development. They need to change to a more active civil/military role and some of them are already doing it in support of the priorities identified in terms of defeating the insurgency, particularly in those areas where it is most virulent.

A second lesson follows from the first: if ISAF is conducting a campaign based on the assumption that, at some point in the near or medium future, the Afghans will take more and more responsibility (we’re building up the Afghan forces), the Afghan government must take responsibility, must be encouraged to take ownership, and must be supported and enabled in any way we can in order to allow the
government to assume full responsibility when it’s able to do so. And it’s quite easy for international presence to underestimate the capacity of the Afghans to assume responsibility for their own affairs. So, it’s necessary to continuously promote Afghan ownership and leadership, particularly in relation to PRTs. The PRTs, though they are responsible directly to their capitals, we are trying in the next phase to ensure that they become more responsive to the requirements and the priorities of the Afghan government.

In the past year, we’ve revitalized the structure called the Executive Steering Committee, now chaired primarily by Mr. Popal (who spoke to us yesterday) and accompanied by COMISAF and the NATO Senior Representative. Through this mechanism, we hope that the Afghan government’s priorities, requirements, direction will get through to the PRTs and take increasing precedence over the directions coming from capitals. Another lesson I think is a problem as much for the Afghan government as for anyone else, which is that after several years of PRT activity no one fully knows what they have done. There’s no real database, there’s no real list of achievements, each PRT is different, and it’s quite easy to underestimate what they’ve achieved because no one has actually set out exactly what they’ve done.

In terms of persuading the Afghan people that the international presence is achieving something, it’s better to know and be able to
present what we have done. We've spent a lot of time trying to create a database that says exactly what we’ve done and what we’ve achieved.

I’ll finish with another lesson. I said that the main point of the PRT should be transiting to the next phase: greater Afghan lead, greater Afghan ownership, greater Afghan guidance and that the PRTs themselves should be further civilianized. A number of PRTs are already almost exclusively civilian, but the civilianization process should continue and intensify. This is not an issue about whether the military and civilians have different mindsets, it’s about expertise. When I was in Kandahar two years ago, Condoleezza Rice visited us and we had a significant debate between the British and American concepts of delivering civilian effect. The British argued that only civilians can deliver civilian effects. I think on the American side there was a feeling that the military, particularly the very well-trained American National Guard, have civilian expertise that can be used in PRTs. I think we concluded that it doesn’t matter whether it’s military or civilian, rather the nature of the expertise and whether it’s responsive to the requirements and the actual situation. Therefore, while the military can turn over and deploy rapidly, greater civilianization will make a better balance between the military elements of the PRT and the civilian expertise; this is required not just for development but in terms of building and enabling the structures of government in a district or a province. Implicit in everything I’ve said is that ISAF and the international community are trying to boost the
authority and the ability of the Afghan government to provide security, governance, development for its own people, reconnect the government to its own people, to legitimize it not just through the ballot box but also through the fact that it is perceived to be serving the interests of its own people. And that’s what we are trying to do. But there is a huge problem of corruption in Afghanistan that the government recognizes but the population suffers from, to the point that some people argue that corruption is at such a level that it’s an element provoking the insurgency. I think in London, the Afghan government will again set out its plans and intentions for dealing with this issue in terms of boosting and enabling its authority. At the same time we cannot forget that we must remain vigilant and sensitive to the issue of corruption and the abuse of power in relation to the population in Afghanistan, which feel increasingly disconnected and distant from their government that they feel is not serving their interests.
DAWN LIBERI
Senior Civilian Representative, ISAF’s Regional Command-East, Afghanistan

I would like to focus my comments on four key points following on from what my colleague, Mr. Williams, just laid out. The first point is that we need to very clearly define the problem that we are trying to address. And here, I would say that the fundamental thing that what we need to do is improve stability through a population-centred approach that will result in adequate, sustainable, locally-led institutions of governance and security. And here, I think it’s very important to change the emphasis and the access to focus very discretely on stability because what we have found over the years is that development in and of itself has not led to stability. In fact, in many instances stability has become worse because of a security issue. Thus, our first task on the ground is to define the problem and say what the challenges are.

The second point I’d like to make is that in order to meet that challenge, I think we need to fundamentally change our business model. I’m talking about changing the lexicon to move away from civilian/military to one that says Integrated Stability Operations. We need to move now to focus on stability and to address its root causes, particularly at the local level. In addition, we should focus on developing programmes and institutions in particular to help the government
of Afghanistan build its own institutions and processes. This would then lead to a District Stabilization Plan, which is something that the government itself is working on. Yesterday, Minister Popal recommended a shift from focusing on Provincial Reconstruction Teams to Provincial Support Teams and District Support Teams. And here again, I think it’s important, because words do matter. If we start to focus on stability and provincial support to the Afghan government, I think our orientation will begin to change and our business model will actually follow what it is we are trying to do in terms of achieving our stability goals on the ground.

The third thing I would say is that we need to restructure in order to meet the challenge. Here, I will emphasize a focus on unified action. While there are different types of coordination, I think we’re talking about more than coordination at this point. We’re talking about synchronization, unified action on the ground, it’s civilian unified action, it’s civilian/military unified action again focused on stability operations, and most importantly it’s unified action with our Afghan colleagues on the ground supporting the institutions that they are developing to address these issues. Just very briefly on what this has meant to the USG side where I now serve as the Senior Civilian Representative for RC East based in Baghlan: we have now shifted our whole emphasis in terms of unified action to have a Senior Civilian Representative who coordinates the activities of the USG civilians (U.S. Government Civilian Agencies
of which we have many) and to place a civilian at each level as a counterpart to our military colleagues. In Baghlan I am the counterpart to General Scaparatti, who is the Commander for Regional Command East. At the task force level, we have a Senior Civilian Representative who coordinates all activities in that area of responsibility, which then goes down to the PRT and to the District Support Teams. We have dramatically increased the number of District Support Teams that we have on the ground. This is also true in RC East, where we already have 18 and we’ll move to 23 across the country; we have over 22 and we’ll move to about 30 by the end of June. We’ve also dramatically increased the number of civilians that we have on the ground. By the end of February, there will be 400 civilians on the ground working at each level to help focus on this unified action and to make sure that we are looking at integrated stability operations.

The fourth and most important point I’d like to make is that all of this leads to the facilitation of an Afghan-led Stabilization Programme. This is essentially the District Development Programme that is being led by the government across the country. The emphasis is to enable, particularly at the local level, a focus on service delivery and to establish the relationships between the community, the district, the province and Kabul. The emphasis is also focused on a basic set of services that can be delivered over a very large area. In other words, the goal is to really expand service delivery geographically, but to be very focused
on supporting what is essentially a unitary system of delivery in Afghanistan; the line ministries will establish service delivery and would be developed to help support the process of subnational governance. As we know, once the subnational governance policy is actually passed into law, this will lead to at least 25% of the budget being passed from Kabul down to the provinces and districts. And so what needs to be put in place at this point are the processes and the institutions in order to enable that subnational governance process to take root. And that’s everything from establishing budgeting, planning, monitoring, evaluation, accountability, etc. In summary, what we’re looking at here is a shift to a focus on stability, a change in our business model, unified action to help support that, and all this culminating in support to the Afghan government’s focus on a District Delivery Programme that they would like to see develop throughout Afghanistan. I think that if we as the international community can shift our emphasis to help support this process, we will have achieved something that we haven’t achieved in the past, and get at some of the challenges.
Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I was looking at the topic, Civilian/Military Coordination in the Field. Several things came to mind, but I decided to go back to when I started working in Logar about a year ago. When I arrived, there was a significant change in the number of our American colleagues on the ground. The number of forces increased from about 300 to about 2,500. It was very clear that in order to achieve anything there, we needed to coordinate very closely. And we’ve come up with several core premises that led us throughout the whole year. I think the most important factor for our coordination is that we all share these core premises, which I would like to share with you now.

First: coalition forces should never be accepted as an alternative option for governance, nor should coalition forces desire to be seen as an alternative.

Number two: COIN = Counter-Insurgency in Afghanistan is a competition between Loya Jirga and the anti-government elements within the population.

Number three: when coalition forces directly engage local communities to determine needs and to provide projects, they undermine Loya Jirga. When coalition forces provide humanitarian assistance or conduct medcamps, vetcamps (unless these are emergency
cases), they actually undermine the local economy and Loya Jirga capacity.

And number four: when coalition forces plan their own development strategy, then Loya Jirga is undermined and delegitimized and projects are not sustainable without continuing coalition support. We have to work through Loya Jirga institutions, not create power structures.

The conclusion is that in order to separate the anti-government elements from the population and to execute sustainable development requires three lines of effort – security, governance, and social & economic development. Coalition forces must focus their effort on developing Loya Jirga capacity, which should be representative of and provide essential services to the population. Coalition forces, including PRTs, should not have their own development strategy, rather they should all be supporting the Loya Jirga plan that is sustainable and representative.

So, these are the four main points I wanted to share. There were obviously other areas where coordination was needed, and I have to say that the Czech PRT is only a small stakeholder in Logar Province (we are 300 people: ten civilians and over 270 military colleagues) and there are over 2,500 American colleagues). But we shared information, material resources, transportation, communications, etc. So these are some examples of coordination that so far have worked very well for us and have actually enabled us to work in areas that before were

/// Bohumila Ranglová,
Milen Lyutskanov,
Nicholas Williams ///
hardly accessible to anybody, not even the government. Thanks to our very close coordination, we managed to get to areas and we are slowly starting to establish, or have the government establish, their presence in some very, very remote areas of Logar Province. This is a direct result of very close coordination in the field.
A. CARSTEN DAMSGAARD
Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark

Not yet being a practitioner in the field, my remarks will be at a more general policy level. I think most of us can agree that the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan cannot be solved by military means alone. Even General McChrystal says so, so it must be true! This raises the question of how best to integrate our civilian and military components in an operational and interactive partnership that enables us to achieve our ultimate goals.

I would argue that a whole government approach is essential for success in Afghanistan. We need to practice real unity at all levels: in the field, at command level as well as in capitals, and not least, in our thinking. Provision must be made at all levels for a holistic and comprehensive approach that will allow for better civilian/military coordination and interoperability, and in many respects we are still far from getting our act together. On its side, the government of Afghanistan must deliver more capacity and progress on the ground, and gradually take on more responsibility. This is the very basis for transition.

Consequently, we must strengthen our focus on transition – military as well as civilian – including transition of PRT activities to the Afghan
leadership, which is far more challenging than many realized and cannot be reduced to simple training of large numbers.

The challenges are many. One is the dilemma of building the quality of the security forces while significantly expanding their numbers. We need to bridge the quantity-quality gap. Another challenge is the danger of focusing too exclusively on military capacity building without a similar rapid build-up of civilian capacity. At the local level, legitimacy of the Afghan government is also absolutely crucial. Without it, no security force, however capable, can be successful in a counter-insurgency framework; and legitimacy is closely tied to capacity and to how the government performs at local level, both in terms of good governance and in terms of effective service delivery.

One of the many challenges of civilian transition is to provide the framework for the Afghan government to extend its authority and service delivery to all parts of the country. The PRT plays a crucial role in the immediate “period after war” and in building the initial capability of the local authorities. PRTs are also key partners as the government agencies establish themselves and extend their services. But an overriding challenge for the PRTs is to avoid the temptation of just doing it themselves to meet short-term objectives. Perhaps in some cases this can’t be avoided, but we need to step back and place the Afghan local authorities in the driver’s seat as soon as we can. In some cases, our just doing it means weakening the local government. In our engagement
in Afghanistan, sustainable outcomes require the deployment and use of military and civilian instruments brought together under a joint political strategy. The ultimate aim is clear, which is to build the Afghan government’s capacity to take over responsibility in all spheres. Our experience demonstrates that stabilization and development rarely occur in a linear sequence. All key instruments at our disposal need to be deployed more or less synchronically rather than in a neatly-spaced approach. We can use simplifications such as clear, hold, build and transfer, but we need to understand that this often requires our ability to manage complex situations. This is the key civilian/military challenge because our modus operandi and structures may, in this scenario, not always correspond with the immediate tasks and priorities. In some cases, we might become too military. In others, we might become too civilian. So, a profound understanding of the specific local and regional contexts and dynamics is essential for successful planning, conducting of operations, capacity building, and it is a civilian/military challenge to avoid bringing in ready-made solutions to problems we often too poorly understand. We need to strengthen the capacity of our PRTs and task forces to better understand local dynamics, be they tribal, clan or family as well as local power dynamics and regional flows.

PRTs are very different in their institutional set up, objectives, funds and mandate. Such diverging PRT concepts have implications for their ability to define clear operating principles in command structures as
well as to ensure effective coordination. The current differences in how the PRTs operate make it hard for the Afghan government to devise a clear and uniform strategy for how best to engage with PRTs in rolling out services and assuming responsibility. Although there is no “one size fits all” solution, we should try to make a considerable effort towards a more coherent and harmonized approach in this field. In conclusion, significant differences do prevail among our PRTs, but they all have to work towards the same overarching goal to bring about conditions for transition of PRT responsibilities to the appropriate Afghan institutions. Greater “afghanisation” is the only long-term comprehensive solution, and it is consistent both with Afghan and international aspirations. It is an aspiration the international community needs to take into account as PRTs and civilian/military coordination evolves.
SESSION C:
PRT Practitioners’ Experiences
I’ve been working in development for over a hundred years. It’s true, look at me! In my old job, I was responsible for Asia for USAID. The U.S. government sets its priorities alphabetically, so Afghanistan was the country I focused on the most in Asia. I visited many PRTs when I was with USAID. I was often called upon to testify before the U.S. Congress about PRTs in the early days. The Pentagon always liked to have a young, attractive civilian testify with them, to talk about how the civilians like the PRT model, so I often went and testified; I am not a very good liar so I told the truth and my view in those days was pretty positive about the PRTs, and it’s still pretty positive.

In this job, I’m supposed to have the lead in the international community on donor coordination, and I’ve been at it for fifteen months. So for those of you who said this morning that donor coordination’s not working, it’s my fault because that’s my job. We can have another conference to talk about whether our efforts have been a failure or a success but the point for today is really to understand that it’s UNAMA’s job to stand up for the principle that the Afghans should lead. And ISAF’s PRT handbook says it right: PRTs are interim structures to be dismantled when they have fulfilled their mission. What’s their mission? I think that just about everybody would agree that it’s to build up the capacity of
the districts in the provinces and leave when the Afghans are capable of managing for themselves. A Czech lieutenant-colonel from Logar province wrote a very good paper and there was one great line where he said, “Our main goal is to leave Logar.” And we’ve heard that this morning from a lot of the speakers and I was encouraged to hear it.

However, something’s got lost along the way. There were no problems in 2004 and 2005. The PRTs were engaged in projects before the Afghan government was in place in the provinces and the districts. PRTs were really the only game in town. There was no real opportunity in those days for capacity building, so there wasn’t any harm done if the PRTs were doing what a local government should do. But five or six years later, the situation has changed a lot. First of all, the Afghan government is now present in many districts and provinces, and they’re managing small development projects themselves, as they should. They are getting better at it all the time and that’s something all of us in this room who are contributing should be very proud of. The second big change: the funds available to the PRTs to do projects have grown significantly. The U.S. PRTs in this new fiscal year are getting more than one billion dollars for projects in governance and development. That makes the PRTs one of the biggest donors that the government and I have to worry about.

Nick Williams was talking about what’s called the Afghan Country Stability Picture, which is the database you’re all talking about. It has over 22,000 projects in it. Nick’s right, it’s not complete but it’s
already got 22,000 projects in it undertaken by PRTs across the country. Unfortunately, while the facts have changed significantly on the ground in those two ways, the behaviour of many of the PRTs has not. In our view, the PRTs are missing an opportunity to carry out their real mission, which is to build local Afghan capacity. The problem is pretty simple: many PRTs are still doing Quick Impact Projects when the Afghans can do those projects for themselves. And because the PRTs often have more funds than local Afghan authorities, they are competing with the local Afghans to deliver services to the community, and they’re winning. This confuses the community. When they have a problem, we want them to go to Afghan officials to solve their problems. That’s how you connect the people and their government. But when the PRT is spending more money on local projects than the government is, why would a community turn to their government? And how are Afghan officials going to learn to manage money and to manage projects better if the PRTs keep doing those small projects for them? I don’t want to be one of those people who just lists all the problems. I’d like to offer some practical suggestions to improve the situation.

Number one, and this won’t be easy but it is doable: the PRTs should find a way to start providing some of their funding to the government, such as the National Solidarity Programme we heard so much about this morning, so that people can see the government getting things done in their province or district. The PRTs may be able to play a supporting
role, but the Afghans have to be in the lead and have to be seen to be in the lead. We have no problem with the PRT helping from behind, but we hope the community will need binoculars to see you. We applaud the United States Congress which, for the first time, agreed that a percentage of the funds it provides to its PRTs can be transferred to the National Solidarity Programme. This is a big step forward. We hope that percentage will grow in the future, but there’s also a responsibility on the government to improve its systems so that the U.S. Congress feels comfortable with these additional resources. That’s number one: spend money through government programmes, spend PRT money.

Second: Recognizing that some capitals won’t allow you to transfer PRT money to the government programmes, at least stop competing with the Afghans and use your funds for longer-term projects, more difficult projects that local Afghan officials may not yet have the capacity to manage. Take on a multi-year project instead of a quick win. Don’t insist on starting and finishing the project during your short military or civilian rotation. To use some of the clichés that have become too popular, stop looking for quick wins and low-hanging fruit. That low-hanging fruit was picked long ago and the approach is doing harm. Capitals in particular should stop rewarding PRT commanders for cutting ribbons during their rotation. Those incentives are delaying the day when the Afghans can manage their own affairs and our brave soldiers can go home. Domestic audiences in your countries should be seeing photographs of Afghans
opening schools, Afghans cutting the ribbons on a new irrigation canal, not your soldiers.

Third: reward a PRT commander for standing back and letting the Afghans do the work, for starting a complex multi-year project that the local Afghans can’t manage yet but show them how along the way. UNAMA is realistic. We know we will not change the behaviour of capitals and their PRTs overnight in beautiful, cold European capitals or by writing op-eds in newspapers. It’s going to take a lot more than that to change five years of behaviour, but we’re pleased to participate in discussions like this, and thanks again to all of you for hosting us. We’re hopeful that this new strengthened Senior Civilian in NATO/ISAF in Kabul will be able to help. Now, I began by saying that UNAMA stands up for the principle that the Afghans should be in the lead. Let’s be honest: that can put us in conflict from time to time with ISAF and some PRTs. Let me be clear on behalf of ISAF, and personally, that we have great respect for the brave men and women that your countries have sent to Afghanistan on the civilian side and on the military side. We grieve when they fall and so do almost all Afghans. We would just like them to get home as soon as they possibly can, and turning things over to the Afghans when we can turn things over to them is the way to accomplish that as quickly as possible.
I will speak about our working principles, the way we approach things, the major achievements of the Turkish PRT, and I will offer you my experience based on my operational days in Wardak. Before doing that, let me also say something about the environment in which we are working. Wardak Province has nine districts. Its provincial capital is Meydan Shahr where the Turkish PRT, and the U.S. FOB Airborne are located. Wardak has a population of 565,000 people. The population changes from season to season, and it’s a developing area with few commercial and industrial activities and no foreign borders. Almost all revenue comes from remittances and agriculture. Wardak is one of the strongest agricultural regions of Afghanistan and was formerly the food bowl for Kabul. Almost 60% of income is derived from here and 80% of the population is employed in agriculture.

Our PRT was established on November 12, 2006. Our efforts are part of Turkey’s longer-term strategy to re-establish social stability, governance and economic opportunity in Afghanistan, while joining international efforts to secure the Afghan people. The structure and purpose of the Turkish PRT was shaped taking into account the needs of the Afghan people and the experiences of the existing PRTs, because we are the 23rd PRT established in Afghanistan, and, of course,
the evolution of the PRT concept. Our authorities decided that using civilian leadership and expertise would allow better interaction with the provincial authorities and people in order to fulfill the mission. In Wardak, we are continually reviewing our working methods and policies in accordance with the PRT Policy Notes and conditions on the ground. We are continually adapting ourselves to the local environment, so our structure is not constant and we are flexible.

The Turkish PRT is a civilian-led PRT in Afghanistan. The civilian coordinator (currently me) is the head and is responsible for all duties of the PRT. All of our activities out of the compound – the planning and implementation of the construction and development projects – are carried out only by civilians. In accordance with our mission, the Turkish PRT engagement teams led by civilians and protected by civilian police officers have quickly mixed with people from every walk of life and cultivated close daily contact with local people. We are living among the local population in Wardak. Putting emphasis on PRT civilian work was very helpful in relaying the message to the Afghan people that the international community is nearby to assist reconstruction and development in their country. In our activities, the principle of Afghan lead is always at the forefront. The PRT is always in a secondary position in every inauguration or ground-breaking ceremony.

As part of our confidence-building measures, requests to the PRT from the local population on social development issues are first directed
to the provincial administration. These requests are fulfilled by our PRT only with official approval. When we plan our projects, we take into account the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS), the Wardak Provincial Development Plan, the priorities of the provincial government, and the needs of the local people. We have no parallel structures. We work with the Afghan authorities and we work through Afghan structures. Let me also underline that we concentrate our work on the following main areas: agriculture – as I underlined its importance in our region; good governance; health; education; capacity building; security sector; and public works. We are also placing increasing emphasis on agriculture and capacity building that can lead to job creation.

So what are the major achievements of the Turkish PRT so far? We have executed 105 projects that have earned the respect of the local people. The total value of the projects we have delivered to date is around USD 20 million. This excludes humanitarian relief operations, quick impact projects and local procurement for the PRT compound. Local procurement of the PRT alone has contributed about USD 5 million USD to the local economy. We have constructed five schools in four districts for around 2,500 students, among them there are schools for girls, and they have all been transferred to the Afghan authorities. These schools are fully operational. We have established six health clinics in five districts and have transferred them to the Afghan authorities.
Construction of eight high schools and four primary schools for 6,000 students in seven districts continues as part of our 2009 Work Programme. These schools are being constructed in close coordination and consultation with the Ministry of Education and local authorities. We hope to inaugurate them soon, and the construction of nine clinics in six districts is also underway. We expect them to open in the first half of 2010.

I would also like to take this opportunity to give you some information on our police training. Since December 2006, the Turkish PRT in Wardak has been providing training to the Afghan National Police on modern policing methods with the goal of increasing civilian police presence, improving public security, and supporting the rule of law in Afghanistan. Turkey constructed and fully furnished a police training and education centre in Meydan Shahr which was inaugurated in January 2008. The centre has capacity for 60 trainees for full-time training and education. It has a dormitory with 40 beds. A group of police trainers, working on rotation, are deployed in the PRT to train the Afghan police. The police trainers group comprises a course director and nine trainers who are Turkish professional police officers with wide-ranging and many years of experience in different areas of expertise. So far, we have trained 600 Afghan National Police Officers of lower rank, and have now completed basic training courses for 54 AMPs. Our course programmes are prepared in accordance with the International Police Coordination Board (IPCD).
Our intense communications efforts resulted in the establishment of Meydan Shahr FM radio; this is now operational, and it started broadcasting on January 6, 2010. It was officially inaugurated by the Governor of Wardak. As part of our capacity building efforts in support of local training programmes, the PRT started computer training courses for civil servants and there have been 62 graduations so far. We also support literacy courses that are conducted by the local line minister of education in 33 training centres. We also support the English language courses of the local authorities. The way ahead so far is very clear for us. We have proposed a programme of around USD 6 million for 2010 for Wardak Province.

I would like to share some of my experience from my operational days in Wardak. First of all, along with long-term development projects, we believe that PRTs should be supportive of Quick Impact Projects, and I totally agree with Mr. Ward’s ideas in that regard. We should be supporting Quick Impact Projects rather than creating our own. Secondly, local culture is very important. We should first earn the respect of local people by respecting them. This can only be achieved through day-to-day contact with the local population, with fewer physical barriers between us. It’s promising that COMISAF, General McChrystal, touches upon this issue in his reports and speeches. But I believe implementation is very important. Third, our development projects show that constructing buildings, schools and clinics is not enough
in itself. We should also participate again in a supportive role in many maintenance activities for a certain period of time, maybe two or three years. This is crucial and inevitable in terms of local capacity building. We should develop partnering in order not to undermine the credibility and responsibility of Afghan local authorities. This is why we need longer tours in Afghanistan for our personnel; I believe it’s currently one year. In our PRT, my Chief of Staff has been working for the last two and a half years. Fourth point: a very effective coordination mechanism among international actors in Afghanistan is a must. We also need an integrated approach for the PRT activities as Dawn Liberi has already said. Thanks to our geographical vicinity, we can exchange information with our Czech colleagues in Logar Province and visit each other from time to time. But we, the PRTs, need to establish periodic contact with each other, in Kabul, for example. My fifth point: capacity building is very important. That’s why the governors and district governors should have operational budgets to increase the capacity of their offices and line ministries. In terms of this, subnational governance policy is of the utmost importance, and should be approved immediately. My sixth point: we should be neutral and just in our activities. My seventh point: our experience shows that civilian efforts are the best way to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. In the long-run, I believe that civilian-led PRTs will be more instrumental in implementing social development projects and in engaging with the local population. My
eighth and last point: the Afghan people – elders and the governing élite – should be consulted on every occasion before developing any strategy in their regions. If you do not consult, there will be no Afghan ownership.
ROHULLAH NIAZI
Senior Advisor, Independent Directorate of the Local Governance, Afghanistan

In our view, PRTs are civil/military entities mandated to enable the extension, the reach and the influence of the Afghan authorities on a countrywide basis. They assist in promoting and consolidating security, stabilization, reconstruction, development, good governance and security sector reform efforts.

Today, I would like to talk about specific issues and specific recommendations. I would draw your attention to two important issues: the first one is that many but not all PRTs have significant resources for reconstruction; and the second point is: some PRTs often implement infrastructure programmes without coordinating with Provincial Development Committees or other government organizations, which makes coordinated action difficult.

To address the second issue, Policy Note No.5, which was endorsed by the PRT Steering Committee in October last year, deals with the process of designing and implementing the infrastructure projects after the projects have been selected in accordance with Guidance of Policy Note No.1. The main objectives of the Policy Paper are: 1) to make aid more effective; 2) to engender a sense of ownership by beneficiaries (this can be achieved by selecting projects that have been prioritized locally and
by hiring local labour forces; 3) build the local administration capacity to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate by engaging them in different cycles of the project (this type of project implementation will function both as a means and end in itself); 4) to improve the end-product of the project and complete the project with a greater degree of cost-efficiency (this can be achieved, among other measures, by putting an end to serial sub-contracting practice); 5) priority implementation and a thorough planning exercise with provincial Land Departments so that no infrastructure project is built until a sustainable level of staffing is foreseen (an example of that was given by our friends from the Ministry of Education where schools were built and we didn’t have teachers for those schools); and 6) all these objectives are based on major development principles that none of us here disagree with. For example, aid effectiveness: aid must be applied in accordance with the need and the priorities of the recipient.

Based on our experiences, we propose that local administrations be involved in the four major project implementation phases: 1) project design; 2) procurement & contracting; 3) monitoring; 4) evaluation. Involvement of the provincial administration in all four phases, to the extent that this is allowed within the parameters of policy and regulation of the PRT nation, will definitely contribute to achieving the objectives of aid effectiveness, local ownership, mutual accountability, cost efficiency, improved end-product of the project and transparency.
Now, I’d like to draw your attention to the best practice indicators that can help give us unity of vision and effort: 1) align PRT activities with the Afghan National Development Strategy in Provincial Development Plans; 2) strengthen Afghan involvement and ownership through PRT activities; 3) aim for longer-term and more sustainable activities; 4) strengthen governance through enhanced capacity building at the provincial and district level; 5) aim for closer cooperation with different actors in the provinces where PRTs are present and close coordination with ISAF’S Regional Commands; 6) make military & civilian efforts mutually re-enforcing by strengthening PRT/civilian components; 7) extend tour length of PRT personnel; 8) secure PRT support to build up our fund capacities in disaster relief assistance; 9) promote awareness and respect of Afghan culture and traditions within PRTs; 10) strengthen human rights awareness, including further support to judicial sector reform; and the last one, a very important point: long-term and sustainable projects and efforts. Here, on behalf of the IDLG, I would like to talk about the commitments that we make: 1) we’ll deliver governance, justice, security and development in remote areas of the country to the best of our ability; 2) subnational policy will be approved and implemented; 3) administrative and civil service reforms will be completed across all the provinces, particularly in the eighty districts targeted in the District Delivery Programme. And the commitments that we would like to have from the international community: 1) avoid
establishing parallel mechanisms that undermine the legitimacy and capacity of subnational governance institutions; 2) support subnational governance through priority programmes such as the District Delivery Programme, the Advanced Subnational Governance Programme, the Municipal Governance Support Programme, the Advanced Social Outreach Programme, and the Performance-based Governors’ Fund. There is the standardization of PRTs across the country: all PRTs should strictly adhere to the new Terms of Reference, the best practice principles and the Policy Notes approved by the PRT Executive Steering Committee. As a result, PRTs should transition to Provincial and District Support Teams with more emphasis at the district level, particularly in the eighty targeted districts. Again, I repeat a point here: PRTs should have more of a supporting and enabling role rather than direct intervention. Establishing good governance, security and development in Afghanistan is an enormous task, we understand that, and without the help of our international partners, international colleagues, we are unlikely to succeed.
HUGH POWELL
Former Head of British PRT in Helmand, United Kingdom

I’m going to take as my theme what Jelani Popal said yesterday about PRTs needing to become Provincial Support Teams or enablers of Afghan subnational governance. I think as every speaker has said, that is absolutely right, but I want to take a slightly different point, which is: it’s not new: in Helmand, at least, and certainly in Kandahar, which I know a fair amount about, that process started in early 2008. So, I’m going to make four quick points about what turning yourself into a Provincial Support Team meant and should mean in practice.

First: I think it does require a re-calibration of what a PRT focuses on. Pre-2008, the focus in Helmand – I think as elsewhere – was very much on visibles, on big R&D projects (roads, electricity or Quick Impact Projects). From 2008 onwards, however, our focus shifted to the invisibles of governance capacity, of traditional justice mechanisms, of communications as well as security sector reform. Why? Because those are the civilian efforts that matter most for counter-insurgency. I think the lessons of countless Shurahs at district and village level is that gifts – whether it’s roads, buildings, repairing a mosque, whatever, however big – simply do not get the locals to get off the fence and take personal risk to help contain the insurgency. The key thing that starts to get them off the fence is security, and there is no civilian substitute for that. And
the second thing that people look for, even at village level, is the sense that there is an organizing principle, a system out there that will pull things together and outlast the Taliban. Hence, our focus on counter-insurgency really did boil down to two things: security and governance. This is simplifying it somewhat, but I would argue that almost everything else is marginal. I think it is important to be clear that development and stabilization are not the same despite having considerable synergy. The motto of the British development organization DFID is “Fighting Global Poverty”; that is not what PRTs, or at least my PRT, was there to do. It was there to fight the Taliban and this brings me to the Civilian Space argument that has already been raised. Frankly, I think it simply doesn’t apply because the PRT civilian effort is part of the fight. There’s no point in pretending that what we are doing is independent of the fight that is going on.

My second point about what being an enabler, a support team, means in practice is the need to be realistic about how you do subnational governance, especially in the southern heartlands of the insurgency. We are not re-building governance, we’re building it from scratch. There’s never been anything down there in the south-west and that means not only the international community, but, frankly, the formal government of Afghanistan in Kabul has to avoid being over-ambitious in trying to roll out traditional governance models.
Let me give you three quick examples of what this realism means in practice: I think it means focusing on giving the provincial governor and district governors basic capacity by which I mean ensuring they have support staff, a civil secretariat. It means ensuring they have safe buildings to work out of, giving them operating funds, helping them develop communications teams, and ensuring they have access to a radio system that can reach the majority of the population in their areas. Also critical, it means giving them mobility which, in the dangerous South, means taking your very scarce supply of helicopters and prioritising the movement of Afghans. Again, a huge cultural challenge for the military owners of the aircraft. It also means connecting district governors in particular to the traditional systems at grassroots level. Hence, the focus for us from 2008 onwards was very much about helping district governors stand up district shurahs or community councils that, as a forum, provide not only collective decision-making, but also critical and collective dispute settlement according to traditional Pashtunwali codes. By doing that, you are tackling the Taliban in their most critical area. Frankly, the only service that the Taliban is actually able to offer people is a form of justice which is more popular, faster, and certainly less corrupt than the formal justice system. The third element of this then is as a PRT, you stand back and let the district governors and these community councils set out their own local R&D priorities and their own district development plans and channel your funding through the
provincial governor and those district governors. You can see the shift in that approach from how we undertook the Musa Qala operation at the end of 2007, and compare that with how we allowed the new district governor in Ghazni to set the pace in 2008 when Ghazni was retaken from the Taliban. So, I guess what I’m saying is that in Helmand and Kandahar, the sort of attitude and approach that Mark Ward is calling for is already the reality. My third point is that the Kabul government and the line ministries there must be engaged in this process. Now, there are two angles to that point. In 2008 and 2009, there was a growing view in parts of not only the military but also the international community that we simply needed to bypass the systemic roadblocks in Kabul, and provide support directly to governors and build capacity almost exclusively from the bottom up. I always argued the fact that, even at village level, people are judging that counter-insurgency question of who will win; they are looking for evidence of leadership from Kabul, not just from their provincial capital. The flip side of that point is that the line ministries in Kabul must accept that they cannot do or decide everything centrally. I think that the centralization in the current Afghan constitution has been a big part of the problem. There is a real need to delegate authority and resources to provincial and district governors, and the line ministries need to be realistic about what sort of capacity they have on the ground. There was far too much empire-building by individual line ministries; each wanted to develop its own delivery
system. There was no real buy-in at the Kabul level to the single cross-government platform for all line ministries operating at provincial and district level and frankly, the capacity is simply not there to build lots of parallel delivery systems. What that meant for the PRT is that a big part of the job was helping the provincial governor lobby the various chains of command – the Afghan chain, the civilian chain, and the military chain – for staff. By this I mean key appointments, whether it’s district governors or district and provincial chiefs of police. Again, what you see on the ground is the difference that leadership can make, and you also see how it is almost impossible to get beyond the first phase if some of these key figures are either useless or corrupt. Far too frequently, the elephant in the room is not only the lack of Afghan capacity but also the difficulties in building Afghan capacity. Obtaining good appointments is absolutely critical to making progress with governance on the ground. And the second area is in terms of getting line ministries to put some staff on the ground, at least in those districts that are critical to the counter-insurgency campaign. I very much welcome, and it was a big part of the lobbying effort to get going, the District Development Working Group and this idea that you should be aiming for Afghan District Stabilization Teams and bodies of representatives of the key ministries working with district governors. I would qualify that by saying I am slightly disappointed to discover that four months after I left Afghanistan, something that started in July last year has yet to get
off the ground: a single development model, developed in Kabul by line ministries rather than empowering local leaders to develop local plans with the support of line ministries. And my very last point on how to do this is: we should not focus just on transitioning, but focus on early transitioning. This isn’t about an exit strategy for the international community but about how to win the psychological battle to get locals to believe the government of Afghanistan can contain and outlast the Taliban. What that meant in practice, and was the mantra for our PRT, was that all programmes and programmers should ask themselves not what more can we do, but what more really needs to be done? Barely good enough is good enough; and always remember, it doesn’t actually take much on the civilian side to outmatch the Taliban because they don’t have much to offer. It also meant that for each new Clear and Hold Operation, and there were at least five in my time in Helmand, we pre-planned the government of Afghanistan taking government and security responsibility quickly. That meant that we insisted that the Afghan security forces should be the majority shareholder in the first echelon hold function in the newly-cleared areas. It meant that the very first priority was to get a district governor operating on the ground, get him capacity and help him to set up a Community Council, and use that to develop a District Development Plan which we would then help fund and encourage line ministries. It also meant lobbying both the government of Afghanistan and ISAF headquarters to allow maximum flexibility for
transitioning at sub-district level within this developing concept of TLSR (Transfer of Lead Security Responsibility). Again, it’s absolutely key to be able to demonstrate momentum on the ground, direction of travel, this idea that “yes, the Afghan state can do it for itself”. I would argue that even in Helmand, probably the single most difficult place for counter-insurgency in Afghanistan towards the end of 2009, there were already at least three areas that were ready to be transitioned to full government of Afghanistan lead that were still with both PRT and ISAF support. But you need to be prepared to take risk to start transitioning early – and that’s my final point.
BURKHARD DUCOFFRE
German Federal Foreign Office Counsellor,
German PRT in Kunduz, Afghanistan

Our role as the civilian part of the PRT is something which is very common: the international community runs development and cooperation political programmes with a huge number of countries worldwide, and I understand my role in the PRT to be somewhat similar. I agree that our military colleagues should go home as soon as the situation allows, but if I’m asked, Germany will stay on and help Afghanistan to further develop in a peaceful and civilian manner.

This afternoon’s session is labeled as Comparing Notes on Distinct PRT Experiences: How do PRTs Help Build Local Capacity? I’d like to share with you just two very brief examples. First of all, we heard about what a PRT should and should not do. In addition to that, I think the PRT can also be something like a link to external entities, for example NGOs. Most of the time the NGOs are not within a PRT, but they offer valuable assistance. They have experts amongst them and they want to keep their way of doing business. We should accept this, and if the civilian part of the PRT can be the link so that we can closely cooperate with all the partners in the field, I think that could be very helpful.

Within the German community in Kunduz, we have established the so-called German House where we offer a facility to meet in a
strict civilian environment. But coming to two practical things we have heard about Afghan ownership and capacity building, we take that very seriously. In addition to all the other efforts that we have touched upon already this afternoon, we have created two very simple things that have been accepted. We have created something like a Provincial Development Fund funded by the German government, and we have worked on it together with our Afghan partners. There is a committee to decide on projects and in that committee we have the Afghan partners and German donors. On the Afghan side, we have the respective departments: the Governor’s Office, the Provincial council and someone from the Elder Community on that Committee. They all have equal voices when it comes to the question of setting priorities. So, side by side, we share the experience of running such programmes and the aim of this programme is that step-by-step we are going to reduce the German seating on the Committee and hand it over to our Afghan partners so that, in the end, there will be just the Afghan partners. Mr. Popal mentioned the Subnational Governance Programme aimed at giving more authority to local government. I think these are possible areas where the local government could assume the lead role and act as the official Afghan institution to address the Afghan population.

A final example from me is a so-called community programme to clear roads in winter. When we heard about this programme, we said ok, maybe there we could assist and support it instead of the local
community, but support that programme and enlarge it. We suggested to our Afghan partners in Kunduz to have something similar for clearing irrigation canals, to do it themselves and not wait for an international entity to fund them. I think that is quick impact aid. It is good, but if we can help our Afghan partners to run these things themselves, then they are sustainable. If they need funding for a certain time, why not? Maybe we could be of help there. So, these are just two little examples I wanted to share with you. There are far bigger and far more important examples, but that is from the grassroots.
SESSION D:
Fostering Local Governance
I will talk about the challenges we face in building institutions at a subnational level. I will also briefly speak about our approach to working with community and tribal structures to create greater cooperation between the government of Afghanistan and its people. I will also elaborate on some major reforms we have introduced in our subnational governance institutions, the new approach to improving the links between national and subnational initiatives, and especially the new cluster strategy that was approved last week by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) in Kabul. And I will touch on the roles that the international community, the PRT in particular, can play in helping us achieve the end results.

Over the past eight years, Afghanistan, with the support of the international community, has made considerable progress in developing political institutions. Infrastructure and Afghanistan’s army and police institutions have re-emerged. However, there are daunting challenges to reaching people in districts and providing them with good governance, basic services, security and justice. These problems have chronic roots as the country has gone through decades of war and conflict, which has limited the ability of governance institutions to function effectively. The damage from decades of war and conflict is not confined to the
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governance institutions but has also reached the very social and political fabric of society thanks to the deliberate efforts of extremist establishments across the borders in our neighbouring countries. The main objective of these deliberate efforts was to change the power structure and decision-making at the community level, sidelining the traditional community leaders and elders and empowering elements aligned with extremists and warlords. As a result, the traditional community decision-making and solidarity system, which had both elements of democracy and altruism, was replaced by a decision-making mechanism powered by the barrel of a gun and extortion. Against this backdrop, the Directorate of Local Governance has started to introduce reforms to strengthen the formal governance institutions at the subnational level. You might think that we are establishing parallel mechanisms that could lead to conflict between the formal and informal decision-making systems. I would say rather that the smallest traditional unit of governance at the village level will complement the formal governance institutions in decision-making, be it any formal institution at district, provincial or central level.

After this long introduction, let me first start with the challenges of building formal subnational governance institutions. The challenges have three different dimensions: human capacity, physical capacity, and institutional capacity. The human resource situation in districts and provinces is discouraging, as 40% of the positions are still

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Barbara Stapleton,
Mohammad Mustafa Mastoor,
Paul van den Berg
vacant because of the lack of security and we cannot attract qualified candidates. Most of our educated young men and women have migrated to the city. They are working with the donor or international agencies I have mentioned.

The situation in individual provinces and districts is different: it is really bad in the south, south-east, west and north-west. As an example, last year just 5 out of 75 positions in Oruzgan’s provincial government office were filled. In Zabul Province’s provincial governor’s office, only 12 out of 110 positions were filled. Evidently, there is an urgent need to improve office infrastructure, subnational governance offices as proper government institutions and the human resource situation in the provinces and districts.

At the national level, we have formulated a comprehensive subnational policy with the full participation of many stakeholders at the national and subnational level. The policy is awaiting the approval of the Cabinet, and is expected to be endorsed in the next two months. This policy and its effective implementation has the potential to achieve parallel progress in the social, economic and security sectors. The policy will implement constitutional provisions for subnational governance and will establish good governance at the local level. We see this as an enabler of development; the policy improves coordination between the national and subnational level and among subnational entities, so improving service delivery. The policy brings the decision-making
process closer to the people and makes decision-makers more accountable. We are upgrading the capacities of provincial institutions in strategic planning and budgeting; provincial governors will lead provincial strategic planning; we will form a smaller version of the cluster that’s just been approved in JCMB between us and our partners in Kabul. This will be a smaller version of those clusters in the provinces. The Department of Sectoral Coordination under the Governor’s Office, with the initial support of the relevant PRT, should provide secretariat support at a provincial level for these smaller clusters. International level clusters: we need the representatives of the PRTs to attend all cluster meetings.

In order to extend the services of the government to the remotest districts, particularly in 80 priority districts, we are going to launch a major integrated district programme to tackle the challenges of security, governance and development. This District Delivery Programme paves the way for the consolidation of district administration in critical districts in the wake of military operations. This is a cross-ministerial programme that is led by IDLG and the Ministry of Finance. The main goal of the programme is to enable the government to establish a legitimate presence and respond to the critical needs of the population in terms of providing basic services, access to justice and, also, hope. The programme lays down a solid foundation for economic stability and sustainable human development. It will allow PRTs to align their
activities with it in areas where DDP is applicable. The programme will soon be rolled out to 80 districts.

Let me speak about how to engage people in decision-making through traditional governance structures. First, I’ll focus on the Afghanistan Social Outreach Programme (ASOP). There is huge social capital in terms of traditional governance structures at the village and community level; the traditional collective decision-making mechanism has sustained itself throughout the history of our country. Traditional governance structures have kept their place and they have played crucial roles in dispute resolution and resource management. ASOP capitalizes on this by creating community councils that could better communicate the priorities and needs of the village to the government of Afghanistan. This council creates a link between the community and the government institutions, enabling people to participate in governance, security and development affairs and making them play a role in the construction and development of their respective communities. The programme’s major goal is to consolidate peace and security by bringing people closer to the government through effective cooperation & communication.

Another programme, called Local Defense Initiative or LDI, will be led by the Ministry of Interior with extensive involvement of the community councils, and district and provincial governments. These two programmes enable people at the village level to take an active part in decision-making in governance development and security
affairs. This gives people a sense of ownership, and so will increase their loyalty towards the government. In addition, DDP and LDI establish the government’s legitimacy, enabling the district administration to deliver governance, justice and basic services. More importantly, the programmes help village people take responsibility for their security and offer employment opportunities at the village level.

President Obama’s strategy for Afghanistan has stated that his administration will encourage our government’s effort to integrate reconcilable insurgents. Our Directorate of Local Governance has been working on the programme of government-led reconciliation. This will give provincial government the lead in the process of reconciliation and provide re-integration services to demobilized members of armed groups. By combining these elements under the leadership of the governor, the programme will foster reconciliation.

What can PRTs do to help us meet our challenges? We request that PRTs do NOT overstretch themselves further, that they be consistent to the TOR that have recently been updated by the Executive Steering Committee, and consolidate those areas of their expertise where we do not have any other actors. We hope that PRTs will increase the number of civilian advisers and help subnational institutions to plan and implement better so that they can soon take over. Revitalization of the PRT Executive Steering Committee was another successful step in bringing the PRTs and government closer and improving coordination
and decision-making. From now on, the Minister of Finance will take a more active role in the Executive Steering Committee. This Steering Committee has approved policy notes on PRT engagement in development activities, in providing humanitarian assistance and direct involvement. We have redrafted the Charter of the Executive Steering Committee and adopted the Best Practices Paper for the guidance of PRT. In our last Executive Steering Committee, we endorsed a policy for how PRTs should design and implement infrastructure projects. These policy notes and best practices set a framework for PRT/government coordination. The government of Afghanistan urged all PRTs to strictly adhere to policy notes and guidance provided by the Executive Steering Committee. Implementation will make aid effective at the subnational level. We believe that the implementation of these policy notes will bring standardization and uniformity to PRT activities across the country. I would urge all PRTs to continue to support and coach our local government structures in better management and provision of better services, so that in the longer term they can begin to do it themselves with less or even no additional support. I urge the PRTs to allow and facilitate the development of systems and institutions in line with the national laws and regulations, particularly at provincial and district level.

Many but not all PRTs have significant resources for reconstruction. The challenge must be addressed, and as far as possible, funds for such programmes channelled through government structures or other
well-coordinated, full-funding mechanisms to ensure the balanced development of Afghanistan. I have spoken at some length about our initiatives and subnational governance support. To achieve coherence and unity of effort, I stress again that PRTs should focus and consolidate in fewer areas. PRTs should support national priorities as articulated in Afghanistan’s National Development Strategy and Provincial Development Plans, and promote the equal distribution of resources in all provinces. PRTs should align their capacity building efforts with the IDLG Capacity Building Strategy. PRTs in their reconstruction activity should be guided by the policy notes and papers issued by the Executive Steering Committee and they should ensure continuity by creating a sustainable institutional memory for their successors through inclusion of some local staff in their structures.

In conclusion, we see the PRT role as important to subnational capacity building and reconstruction. To make it more effective, we would like them to be focused, coordinated, and have a common vision to enable subnational institutions to become self-reliant. We are committed to cooperation and delivering our promises. Last and most importantly, let’s make the PRT model a successful approach for subnational institution building in both conflict and fragile situations.
It’s a pleasure for me to be here not only in Prague but on this distinguished panel. I was really heartened when I saw the name of Mr. Mastoor, the Deputy Minister for Finance, on this panel because as we have said many times over, what we are trying to do in Afghanistan is support the Afghan government’s reform efforts and have them lead off and lay out an articulate and comprehensive reform agenda.

What I will say will be categorized into four areas. First, I’ll quickly articulate the U.S. government’s objective when it comes to subnational governance. Second, I will quickly review the operating principles. Third, I will give some examples that are in accordance with these operating principles and examples of our efforts. Fourth, I will touch on some of the most difficult issues that we policymakers confront as far as subnational governance is concerned and how we support the Afghan government in improving governance.

President Obama is very involved with this issue of subnational governance. It’s something that came up repeatedly in the strategic assessment that the U.S. government and our agency focused on for several months last year. The president laid out the conclusions in his December 1st speech at West Point. Even in that speech, governance
came up a number of times and I think the aim of the U.S. government strategy when it comes to governance is to help make local government more visible, more accountable and more capable.

So, what are the operating principles for carrying out or realizing this objective? The first is to strengthen the ties between Kabul and the subnational institutions to recalibrate the balance between the centre and the provinces when it comes to the centre’s responsiveness to the subnational institutions.

Prior to serving as a Senior Advisor for Ambassador Holbrooke, I worked in two provinces and two Provincial Reconstruction Teams: one in the south in Oruzgan Province and then I moved to Konar in the east. Since I left Afghanistan in April last year, I’ve been traveling back and forth from Washington a number of times and meeting with provincial and district governors and mayors and line ministry representatives. When I meet them, there is a resounding message. They say, “Help us get Kabul’s attention! Help us get Kabul’s resources. We have Provincial Development Plans that have yet to be fully resourced, we have District Development Plans that have yet to be fully resourced, so try to do what you can to facilitate that!” And that message is not falling on deaf ears. All the time it has to do with “how”, it has to do with capacity at the subnational level, but there is obviously a lot more that we can all do in that effort.
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The second operating principle is flexibility. What I mean by that is that we have to recognize that local circumstances dictate the pace of formal government build-up in a particular area. We really need to be responsive to the needs of the people at that particular time and their exploration and examination of what is good governance for their particular community. So, it’s having enough flexibility in our approach to adjust our policies and programmes to that.

The third operating principle is the significant expansion of civilian expertise. I’m sure you’re familiar with the U.S. government’s efforts to triple our civilian presence throughout the country and assist not just in the provinces and districts but also in line ministries in Kabul, responding to the Afghan government’s request for specific expertise and identifying those individuals, whether it be through direct ministry to U.S. government programmes or through the Civilian/Technical Assistance Plan performed by the Ministry of Finance. I believe in April last year that plan was being revised, and it was a very good document that laid out the criteria for donors to support the Afghan government’s request for international technical expertise. A couple of those that really stick in my mind are that the request or the technical assistance must be demand-driven. Sometimes we may go ahead of the Afghan government and identify positions and individuals for positions that perhaps the Afghan government didn’t ask for. Our system must be demand-driven by the Afghan government and it must conform to their
standards of excellence, not to each individual country because that way you have an uneven approach to capacity development. So, it requires a significant expansion of expertise, not only in Kabul but all the way down the chain. We have set up 28 U.S.-led District Support Teams throughout the country and we hope to get up to 40 by the end of this year. This is another aspect of this capacity development effort to try to meet the needs of those individuals working at the most local level to meet the needs of the population.

The fourth operating principle is to increase our direct budget support assistance funds that are actually channeled through the Afghan government. This could be through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund or through the certification of line ministries so that once a ministry has been certified as capable of managing U.S. resources, moneys can go to that particular ministry. So those were the four key operating principles of our subnational governance strategy.

There are so many examples of what has been laid out already: the District Development Programme, NSP and Afghanistan’s Social Outreach Programme. I’ll just touch on a couple of them that have not been discussed much so far. One is the Civil Service Commission Training Programme. I think it’s technically called the Afghan Civil Support Programme. This is an ambitious effort by the Civil Service Commission to train 16,000 mid-level civil servants throughout the country, 12,000 provincial-level and district-level civil servants, and 4,000 in Kabul in
the critical line and service ministries. The training really centres on core public administration, internal management control programmes to establish accountability standards, performance-based standards, and is specifically targeted at mid-level so that we reach those who can influence others at the lower levels but who still have many more years to serve. The U.S. government is covering the cost of training these 16,000 civil servants, and I’m sure other countries are participating as well. Another example is the Afghan Municipal Government Development Programme and this is a very interesting programme because it aims to deal with the issue of the rapid urbanization of Afghanistan. So many people are flocking to these urban centres and they are obviously looking for services, for jobs, and this programme is paying for the coverage of 42 municipalities around the country. The resources are quite substantial, and when I’ve gone around the country and talked to mayors of big cities and small cities and asked about their operating expenses, the question for us is not whether the resources that this programme will be providing will be sufficient, but a matter of absorption capacity. But we’re tailoring it to the particular capacities of that particular municipality. Again, all municipalities in the North, the South, the East and the West will benefit from this Afghan programme. I’ll stop there in terms of examples. I just want to take a minute to deal with some issues that I think some of us have and we are trying to figure out how to deal with them.
There are two things that are particular challenges for us as we support the Afghan government reform agenda. One is the incredibly strong role of personalities, meaning individual actors, particularly at the subnational level where institutions are yet not as strong as they ought to be. In my experience, good governors can make or break the reform agenda. If you have a governor, be it at provincial or district level, who is committed to Afghanistan’s progress, who is committed to institutionalization, it makes the international community’s job a lot easier in terms of standing behind that person. When you have a governor who is not in that same category, it can really serve as an obstruction. So the role of personalities is an incredibly strong variable that can keep us up at night. A governor that we thought was good may for one reason or another no longer be in position. What does that do for our entire effort in that particular province?

The second issue is political strategy. I’ve had conversations with soldiers and with civilians on the ground and one of the things that we often talked about is that there are so many reasons for violence in the country or in one particular area that unless we really understand what the driver of instability is in that particular area, our policies and our programmes could be missing the mark and will not stabilize the situation. For example, economics could be a factor, corruption or criminality could be a factor, disenfranchisement of one particular tribe or one particular village could be a factor for violence and
anti-government elements. Warlordism could be another, and so it really compels all of us, the Afghan government and the international community, to think very seriously and to do as much as we can to work out what the drivers of instability are before we launch into a major programme. Personalities and a need for a tailored political strategy are two key areas, and I’m heartened by programmes like Afghanistan’s Social Outreach Programme that try to get at this issue, but it’s extremely challenging.
BARBARA STAPLETON
Senior Political Adviser to the EU Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Afghanistan

My office, which is the political one in the confusing EU structure in Kabul, is shortly to be streamlined when the Lisbon Treaty comes into force. But we have long proactively pushed the issue of governance up the international agenda. What do we mean by governance and how dependent is its success on the wider reform agenda? These remain central questions. Despite my office’s long-standing engagement in governance and rule of law areas, I feel I’m flying under a false flag on this panel as my area of focus is in fact, security sector reform. It’s interesting to note that this is not included in this conference, though some of us have long argued that a PRT focus on security sector reform rather than on reconstruction and development would have made more sense in terms of establishing the pre-conditions for sustainable stability for development in Afghanistan. I would emphasize that I’m rather out of my lane; I am not a practitioner and I am based in Kabul, which can feel as cut-off and increasingly with as diminishing access to the rest of Afghanistan as a foreign capital.

I will comment briefly on the involvement of communities in government, and I will draw on the work of a British legal adviser, embedded in the Lashkar Gah PRT, on the challenges involved in
improving access to justice. On developing community links to government, a bottom-up approach is now seen as critical in generating Afghan demands for transparency and accountability from local and central administrations. But so far, there is no enabling environment in place for the development of civil society, though the international community could do much more to protect and support the main civil society achievement, which is the nascent independent media. The CDCs in the community clusters set up under the National Solidarity Programme and the IDLG-appointed shurahs under the Afghan Social Outreach Programme are leading contenders in this process of community engagement. Nevertheless, the setting-up of shurahs at local levels by a variety of actors, including PRTs on more and more subjects, adds to the confusion that has characterized and persisted at the subnational governance level. The key question is whether the community representatives genuinely represent the community in question. This is one of the main problems for PRTs seeking to get the right people into the room to ensure delivery in the right area. Local power structures with links to the centre can and do interfere in this process in which control over resources is key to maintaining power.

The relative success of NSP has partly been attributed to the appointment of CDCs via democratic procedures. This was not the case with the IDLG-appointed shurahs. Independent oversight of the progress and achievement of nascent community structures is crucial, but in
many parts of the country, lack of access due to the security situation makes this virtually impossible. This means that one is left with official accounts of what is happening on the national and international side which may lack objectivity, particularly at local levels. It should also be noted that the success of NSP in opening up some political space at local levels has been due to the government empowering communities via the ownership of resources. But the other key aspect of the success of NSP has been the effective partnership between the government and the 26 or so experienced non-profit NGOs that are the implementing partners and co-authors of the programme. This is less acknowledged. Moving on to the challenges involved in establishing access to justice or, at least, access to some semblance of fairness in Afghanistan, I’m drawing on the findings and experience of Frank Ledwidge, a British legal adviser who was based in the Lashkar Gah PRT in 2008. He stresses that “in any society, order is dependent on a system of dispute resolution which is fair or perceived to be fair and enforceable.”

The international community has realized late in the day the critical importance of justice in all its forms. Instead of making it a fundamental component in the establishment of stability at the outset of its engagement, justice was memorably described by the first UN SRSG as “an affordable luxury once stability has been established.” That thinking has now changed, but the failure to prioritize justice earlier has inevitably affected national attempts at reform with the result that
legal advisers in PRTs are finding that the judicial system is typically “an unacceptable level of corruption both political and financial.” The core reasons that people fight in Afghanistan tend to be located in the fundamentals of family, home and personal possessions. This makes the issue of land grabs by the powerful a major problem, and one that has received little attention and certainly no effective action by the government or its international supporters. The powerful, usually referred to as “warlords” and often connected to commanders of illegal armed groups and to official security institutions that are either co-opted or manipulated, continue to act with impunity throughout the country. Remarkably, one of the first acts of Parliament following the 2005 parliamentary elections was to award its members immunity from prosecution that extended such immunity to actions alleged to have been committed before the members took office. These same actors are alleged to have been involved in land grabs. One example of how this affected stability is provided by the example of Mokhtar, an area of Lashkar Gah city. President Karzai gave a personal reassurance to refugees returning from Pakistan that their land would be restored to them. When they returned, they found instead that their land had been illegally appropriated by local cronies of the governor. Mokhtar is now, not surprisingly, one of the most pro-Taliban areas of the city.

It’s important to realize that alternatives to the virtually total absence of an official form of effective dispute resolution, mainly found
in the customary law of Pashtunwali based on mediation, honour and consensus, have been seriously eroded during the last thirty years of intermittent but devastating conflict. This has thrown up new political actors capable of co-opting state structures to their own end. Ledwidge remarks, “the last thirty years have shattered many of the presumptions of the old ways.” Moreover, traditional tribal methods of dispute resolution are affected by the Taliban’s imposition of Sharia punishment, regardless of the customary norms they oppose. Yet in the absence of effective forms of government dispute resolution, the Taliban’s forms of justice reportedly command people’s respect, largely because they’re not corrupt. This has placed the Taliban in the lead over access to justice, a situation that we are now attempting to reverse. This is easier said than done given the general view that the government system, so far as it is present, is seen by the majority of Afghans as moribund, expensive, slow and largely corrupt. Most people, as Ledwidge found from his field experience in Helmand and as is found elsewhere in the country, have little to do with the official criminal justice system that is often viewed as an alien construct. The international community focused for a long time on a reconstruction of the formal justice system in relation to rebuilding the formal state. This has had little effect in terms of opening up access to justice and it is now actively examining alternatives provided by informal justice mechanisms which Ledwidge identifies or enumerates along the following lines: certainly Pashtunwali, but
one would caution here again on the waning of the former old ways and influences due to the distortions, poorly understood, of the old social and cultural order that has occurred over the last thirty years. Also, not all the inhabitants of the South are Pashtuns (in Lashkar Gah it is estimated that over 30% of the population are Khazars and there’s also a significant Tajik population in Helmand). This would affect the extent to which Pashtunwali would be adhered to. Secondly, shurahs and jirgas: these mechanisms are not regarded by the Taliban as being as Islamic as punishments of the Quaranic Hudud variety, imposed via their courts. The ordering of executions can generate blood feuds, which locals may prefer to avoid. However, the Taliban appear to have little concern in this regard. Thirdly, Taliban courts are run on a Deobandi or Wahabist interpretation of the Hannasi’ school of Islamic law. Mobile shadow Taliban courts now exist in many parts of the country and have a reputation for not taking money from people. Finally, Ledwidge identifies self-help, mainly constituted by revenge by vendetta which has some links with the Pashtunwali code. However, the weakening of tribal systems has removed regulation from the process of revenge, which instead is now seen as a solution to disputes. In highlighting the justice gap currently exploited by the Taliban, increasing international attention is directed at formal justice systems precisely because they provide the counter-balance to the Taliban’s provision of justice. It’s what I tried to cover in this short address. But I heed these observations
of Ledwidge’s first-hand experiences in Lashkar Gah, which can also be extrapolated elsewhere in the country to some extent, and which underline the need for Afghanistan’s profound challenges to be addressed in the longer-term, although the need for fast changes in the right direction must also be emphasized.
Good morning ladies and gentlemen. My name is John O’Sullivan, I’m the Executive Editor of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and I want to welcome you here this morning for this important conference, What’s Next in Afghanistan on Challenges of Provincial Reconstruction. I’m welcoming you on behalf of Jeffrey Gedmin, the President of RFE/RL. He’s on his way back from overseas and will be with us later today.

I want to begin just by saying that it is a privilege to work with our partners in this important conference. We in radio rely daily on the support we receive from the U.S. embassies in the countries of the broadcast areas, particularly when the governments of those countries don’t always appreciate us as we think we deserve. We’re grateful to the Czech people and government for extending their hospitality to us over almost two decades, and it’s nice to return that hospitality in admittedly, small measure this morning. We are old partners with Oldřich Černý, Jiří Schneider and the Prague Security Studies Institute on conferences advancing the values of liberty, truth and human rights in numerous contexts. They have kept the flag of Western values and the transatlantic relationship flying proudly and at times, even defiantly in times good and bad in this city. You’re meeting in a building that I hope you will find comfortable and user-friendly. We certainly do. It’s purpose-built...
for broadcasts and internet journalism, and we’re very happy to be here. We hope that you will find it safe. Security precautions you experienced when arriving are rather like airports and can occasionally be irritating. But if anyone thought they were unnecessary, that belief was dispelled recently by the revelation in the Czech media that Saddam Hussein had sent a team equipped with rockets to fire them from a Prague hotel at the former Czech Parliament building that was RFE/RL’s home until last year. The plot was quietly averted by the Czech security service, but since the hotel was directly opposite my own office, I’ve been tolerant of security measures ever since.

In your own work in Afghanistan and elsewhere, you of course are facing risks that certainly match and probably exceed by far anything that we in this building experience. But of course, as I believe you know, some of our reporters have been murdered and others have been kidnapped, others have been beaten up. That’s true for us, it’s true for our partners in VOA and other American international broadcasting authorities. We are very aware of the risks that people like you take because we have to take some ourselves. Where do we fit into the work that you’re doing and discussing here today? Well, just to give the most practical answer to that question, we broadcast in Afghanistan in two languages and we do so for twelve hours a day. We started in 1985 and we resumed in 2002. We have people working from here, of course, but also from Kabul. We have a staff of thirty here, thirty-five in Kabul and
thirty stringers around the country. We have a 45% market share, and we are the most popular radio station in Afghanistan.

Now, we’re one of many international broadcasters around the world, the two most famous ones being BBC and VOA. We’re all acting in an increasingly difficult international environment. I’m not talking solely of Afghanistan, as governments become authoritarian and seek to control and block us. Secondly, as governments themselves try to get into the game with their own international broadcasting programmes across the region, we obviously don’t object to competition. But at the same time, we would prefer to compete with people who don’t use strong arm tactics to get a larger market share.

I leave it to my distinguished colleague, Bruce Sherman of the U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors, to outline the distinctive and invaluable role of VOA in this region. But let me concentrate briefly on the nature of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, or in Afghanistan, Radio Azadi and our new Pashto language service in Pakistan. We are what is called surrogate broadcasters. We provide a kind of domestic news and full service programme that a country would provide for itself if it enjoyed full democracy, a competitive media market and a tradition of honest and effective journalism. In regard to that last point, we offer a valuable example and training ground for showing what such journalism can and should be like. As surrogate broadcasters, we recruit locally. Our broadcasts are from the country in and to which we broadcast and our
programmes are in the local languages. Though we are congressionally funded, a firewall structure represented by the Broadcasting Board of Governors protects our editorial independence, and we protect and value that independence ourselves by trying to uphold the highest standards of journalism. What can that mean in practice? Well, a few examples will suffice. In the run-up to the Afghanistan’s presidential elections, Radio Azadi hosted the historic presidential debate featuring President Karzai and two of his leading contenders. You may remember it vividly, but even if you don’t you would know exactly what it was like because the same man who conducted your first session yesterday morning, which I gather was fiery, was the man who was the moderator in that debate, my distinguished colleague, Akbar Ayazi. This was Afghanistan’s first ever presidential debate featuring an incumbent president. It was televised on national TV as well as broadcast on our radio. Looking back, maybe that presidential debate was almost as important as the election itself in terms of spreading democratic values.

Another example: in April 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton paid a visit to our radios here in Prague and responded to questions submitted by listeners in Afghanistan during an interview conducted in Radio Azadi’s studios. We have the trust of our audience. In November 2008, the Taliban abducted and held for three days one of our reporters and what I think is one of the most interesting examples of what you might call Citizen Journalism was when the local people went to the
Taliban and said, “Don’t keep this guy captive, his journalism has been one of the best things that has happened to us. He’s held government ministers to account, he’s really changed things, he gives an honest picture of life where we live.” To our great relief, the Taliban responded and released our reporter.

There are many other examples I could give of that kind, but while you stay here you might want to talk to some of my colleagues in the Afghan Service. We receive hundreds of letters and calls each month from Afghanistan and neighbouring countries and we are very proud of what we achieve. Now, how useful is the work we are doing and where do we fit in? Well, in the direct, practical sense of giving everyday assistance, that’s not really what we are about. We are not in the business of strategic communications, that’s someone else’s job, we are not even in the business of defending American policy, that’s the job of the embassies, State Department and others. You might say we embody American values, some would say they are increasingly universal values of truth and liberty and the full range of human spontaneity. How do we help you? First of all we report honestly, and that means we will report from you, on you, and the people will get to know what it is you’re doing, what you’re achieving. By reporting on you, of course we are also holding you to account, but I don’t think you will mind that.

Secondly, in the more profound sense, free debate and honest journalism and the ability to find out what is going on, at a fundamental
level, these things change people’s minds. Changing minds is one of the most important elements in establishing, prolonging and sustaining a freer and more decent society. Now, that’s the point of view of a broadcaster. For a somewhat more detached and scientific account of the work that we and other international broadcasters do and its impact, I’m now going to hand over to my good colleague Bruce Sherman who is in charge of research for the Broadcasting Board of Governors.
SETTING THE SCENE: BRIEFING ON NEW SURVEY “AFGHAN MEDIA USE AND ATTITUDES 2010”
SETTING THE SCENE: BRIEFING ON NEW SURVEY ‘AFGHAN MEDIA USE AND ATTITUDES 2010’

Provincial
Reconstruction Challenges
Teams of Reconstruction
W ith NEXT? In Afghanistan
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It’s a great pleasure to be here. As John mentioned, I am with the Broadcasting Board of Governors, that is the presidentially appointed board that oversees all U.S. international radio and television broadcasting and internet work. It encompasses Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, of course, Voice of America, Alhurra television for the Middle East, Radio Free Asia, broadcasting to Cuba and a whole complex of international broadcasting organizations. I’m joined today by a colleague from the State Department, Ryan Harper.

The Broadcasting Board of Governors undertakes each year a very robust research programme in support of our broadcasting. Our research programme is principally aimed at capturing media habits and understanding how audiences around the world use media. At the same time, we capture attitudes and opinions that people have around the world, and we work very closely with our colleagues at the State Department. In that regard, our interest is to understand as fully as possible what our audiences are thinking in addition to the media that they’re using. So, what I’m going to do today is present some findings from research that we’ve done recently over the last few years. In fact, we’ll have research here that goes back even to the fall of Taliban in 2001.
to give you a longitudinal, or a long-view perspective on where things had been. But one thing I want to note before we get started, yesterday at the conference one of the presenters said it would be a very sad thing to have to learn about the work of the PRTs from a database and not from our colleagues on the ground. So in presenting the research, I’m very mindful of the fact that in the first instance, I’m speaking here and talking about Afghanistan to those who come from Afghanistan and who know the country intimately as residents and citizens of that country. I’m also speaking to experts in the development field, who’ve been working on the ground for a long time in Afghanistan and who also have a first-hand knowledge of what’s taking place in that country.

So, what we intend by sharing research with you is really to provide a complement to the information that you have from the lives you live both as residents of Afghanistan and those working in Afghanistan on development projects, and, specifically, in the PRTs. What we’ll do here, as I mentioned, is take a look at the research. But as opposed to looking at single data points or just this year’s information, we’ll try to give you a sense of how things have been over the last few years. We’re comparing surveys that have used similar and verifiable methodologies. It’s very important with as much research as is happening right now in Afghanistan to be able to understand the work that others are doing. The results of the ABC-News, BBC, German ARD poll, which were recently published, presented some important
findings that many people have been encouraged by in terms of pointing to optimism on the part of the Afghan people about the direction in which the country is moving. We take that into account in this presentation as well. While we get started, I won’t speak so much about methodology. If you have any questions about that, just let me know. Again, the polling that we do and that the State Department does is polling that is as scientific as possible. One point I would note is that in Afghanistan today, there is one leading polling firm called the Afghan Centre for Socioeconomic & Opinion Research (ACSOR) which is a subsidiary of a United States company. ACSOR is the organization that most government agencies and news and media organizations go to for polling, so there is a good attempt at quality control as opposed to having a dozen different firms operating with different methodologies and standards. There is one main polling firm in Afghanistan and others have come up. But polling in Afghanistan is quite rigorous, and again, we can talk about the methodologies.

Some of the key findings are that many retain confidence in the government. In fact, numerous data points indicate a fairly healthy degree of support for the Afghan government. The opinion of international security forces and NATO and the United States is not overwhelmingly negative, and we’ll talk a little bit more about that. And very important, I think is something that you might already know, but the data confirms it, and that is that very few sympathize with the Taliban.
I don’t know where all of you are from, obviously many of you are from Afghanistan, but others are from countries all over the world. I can only say from the perspective of residing in the United States that the media coverage of Afghanistan is overwhelmingly negative. It’s not because the media have an interest in portraying Afghanistan in a negative light, it’s simply that whenever there is conflict, conflict dominates the news, and that tends to be then what you see. The ABC-News, and BBC polls have generated controversy because 70% in the ABC-NEWS/BBC poll said that they thought that the country was headed in the right direction. That’s an astounding statistic for Afghanistan! But taking a longitudinal view or going back to 2004, you can see a progressive decline. In the 2009 timeframe, in the run-up to the elections, those saying that they thought the country was going in the right direction rose from 48% to 64%. It has trended down a little bit, and in our poll done in November, the BBGH Poll with INR, we show a slight downtake from there. So, not to confuse you as you’ll have different polls: the 70% follows the announcement of the new U.S. Strategy/NATO Strategy for Afghanistan, and that may, in fact, explain why there was a slight uptake there. But overall, we see some declines since 2004, but we’ve seen it stabilize in terms of the Afghan mood in the last year. In the run-up to the elections, there was a progressive rise in the public mood and people feeling that indeed the country was moving in the right direction. Elections seem to be a very positive development in the sense that people feel consulted, they feel
part of the political process, they become enthusiastic about that, and so that’s a very good thing. I would mention a couple of other data points that I think are interesting here.

Views of the national government: 61% of Afghans in the ABC-NEWS Poll rated the performance of the government as excellent or good; 61% rated the performance of the government as excellent or good; 83% said that the government can provide security and stability; 80% said the government enjoys support among the people. So, fairly solid numbers for the national government of Afghanistan.

Views of President Karzai: 71% rated the performance of president Karzai as excellent or good (this was in the December poll done by ABC-NEWS, BBC and a German network ARD). And this compared to 71%, compared to 52% a year ago and 83% in 2005. 70% rated the performance of the Afghan National Army as excellent or good, and that was up from 57% a year ago.

Views of living conditions: Afghans, as you’ll see, express great concerns about security and about the economy, about their own economic well-being. But overall 71% of Afghans in the December poll said that their living conditions were good, very good or somewhat good up from 62% a year ago, and slightly down from 83% in 2005.

The point is that when you take a look at where things are going, the public mood in Afghanistan, many of the statistical indicators are more robust than certainly media coverage generally would indicate
outside the country. Again, the top concerns are insecurity, violence, the economy generally, personal poverty and jobs. Those are the main concerns as many of you, of course, working on the ground know very well here is a case where it probably is a fairly simple confirmation that what the research would suggest and what you’re seeing on the ground would be quite similar. Standard of living: it’s still the case that Afghans are more satisfied with the standard of living now than during Taliban times, and you can see it’s quite a reversal. In terms of marks to the government, I just gave you some statistics from the ABC-NEWS/BBC Poll. But taking a look across a number of different specific indicators and again going back to 2006, education is something that the government is given strong, high marks for, and you can see the increasing standard of living, providing alternatives for poppy farming, combating corruption, reducing violence, providing security and development to all provinces, combating drug trafficking. You can see how all of these indicators cluster in the 50% range. In terms of the attitudes of Afghans towards their government and towards the Taliban, the State Department uses a series of questions that are combined into an index to give a read-out of where people are in the spectrum from being pro-Taliban all the way over to the left, to pro-government all the way over to the right. When they combine those questions, you can see on the percentage basis where Afghans fall out. Again, only 10% are pro-Taliban. Again, the clustering tends to be in the middle, sort
of weak pro-government, but that’s 52% of the population and very significant. There are important differences regionally. It won’t be a great surprise to you that in the south, south-central, you have a greater incidence of those who report being pro-Taliban and greater support for the government in the West, in the North and in the East. This probably conforms again in terms of looking at where you’re involved in the PRTs tracks with your experience. Again, in terms of views about the Taliban, I can’t overstate this enough. You take a look over time, it is not a recent phenomenon that the Afghans had negative views of the Taliban; it’s been the case for many years now. The public blames the Taliban and Al Qaeda for insurgent attacks.

Another indicator of Afghan society today: when asked about the Taliban and what people associate with the Taliban, they are seen as torturers, that they hurt people, they incite fear, that they kill innocent people, prevent girls from attending school and beat them. So, when we drill down in the research and try to explore exactly what it is that Afghans thought about the Taliban, these are some of the findings that we get. Why I spend time on this is because the overall take-away at the very beginning, the key finding, is that the population has very negative views of the Taliban, but there are various ways of portraying that.

Let me skip away quickly to media which currently plays a very important role in the development process. We as the Broadcasting Board of Governors are entertaining requests to construct multiple
additional FM stations across the country. However, one larger concern and part of my responsibility for the Broadcasting Board of Governors, is global strategy in addition to global research – not this year, next, but looking ahead five, ten years. To what extent does international broadcasting, and U.S. international broadcasting specifically, begin to draw down as local media rise up? We are in the business of planning our own obsolescence. We have ended our broadcasting in areas where we are right now: the Czech Republic, and Hungary, and Poland, and all across Europe. We used to broadcast to all of these countries; we no longer do. We can look out probably some time in the future and anticipate a day when Afghan media are sufficiently robust that there would not be a need for what we do.

Speaking to Akbar Ayazi who heads Radio Azadi and service for Afghanistan of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty last night, he mentioned that there are two critical factors: you need to have a substantial middle-class because if these stations are going to be self-supporting, there has to be an advertising base, advertising revenue for them, and you need to have education of the population overall. But the point is, we look forward to that day and I think we welcome working with our partners in Afghanistan to accomplish that. Today, Afghanistan, as many of you know, is still a radio culture: 80% of people own radios, 47% of people own television sets. Television is largely an urban phenomenon; radio is the national medium; use of the internet is not a significant factor.
in Afghanistan. Yet, as we see in so many countries around the world, cell phones are the technology that leapfrogs everything else, and 60% of Afghans now report having a cell phone in their home and 36% say that they personally own a cell phone. That creates, as all of you know, very significant opportunities that not only the broadcasting community, our community is seeking to take advantage of, but also of the larger outreach to the Afghan people through the United States government and our partners. So, the mobile phone story is a very good one. In terms of sources of information, looking generically at the media, most people get their news and information from radio. It’s the most important medium as I noted. When we take a look across the country by region as to which stations, which services are most important, the single most important source of information is our own Radio Azadi which is well regarded and widely reported as being the most important source across the country; satellite television, BBC, Radio & Television of Afghanistan, and so forth. In terms of yesterday’s listening, the international broadcasters continue to dominate the space (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, BBC, Voice of America), but also Radio & Television of Afghanistan.

We are noticing across Afghanistan, as many of you have noticed, the rise of local Afghan stations. Local Afghan stations, of course, are serving a local population. So when you take a look at national data, it skews the perspective on their performance, unless they’re repeated across
the country, FM radio stations are obviously just going to be reaching a local audience. At the beginning, the national broadcasters benefited from being national, with national distribution on shortwave still and medium-wave AM as well as FM. In terms of television, the independent channels have risen to the top, and most of you of course know the success of Ariana Television and other channels. What we have seen since the fall of Taliban in 2001 is the development of private media in Afghanistan, and we are very pleased to see this. I think it’s a very good thing for the future of the country.

Finally, I just want to close a little bit on support for international security forces in Afghanistan. We noted that the views of the U.S. and NATO presence in the country vary, but, overall, 68% say that they still support it. I would note that in terms of rating U.S. performance, the views are a little bit more negative, with only 40% giving a positive rating for the performance of the U.S. military. When asked if they want the U.S. military to stay, 68% say that they do. At any rate, I will close on this. If there are any questions, I’ll be happy to take those. I want to reiterate the point that we welcome your requests for information from the research that we do. We’re happy to share it with you, we’re able to take a look at the research regionally and quite locally, so that if you have a particular province that you’re interested in, you can talk to us about that and we’d be happy to work with you to provide the data.
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As you know, war has disrupted economic resources and has left millions of Afghans disabled, as refugees or martyred. The international community is now recognising that Afghanistan’s national crisis is becoming an international crisis and through the United Nations Security Council, has focused on security and economic cooperation that has resulted in the repatriation and normalization of the lives of millions of Afghans.

NATO and countries friendly to Afghanistan have also established Provincial Reconstruction Teams in 33 of the 34 provinces. In addition to stabilizing the security situation, these teams are providing vital support to the Afghan people in the sectors of health, education, road construction, business, agriculture, livestock and in private sector development. They have played a very important role in the rehabilitation of the Afghan economy and in bringing democracy to this country. We hope that by implementing a harmonious development programme, these teams will assist the Afghan government in achieving a sustainable democracy and peace.

Of the 34 provinces, U.S. Agriculture Development Teams (ADTs) are operating in about eight. They are accomplishing their programmes in coordination with provincial governors and line departments. However,
the international community, the government and the people of Afghanistan are not satisfied with project implementation, levels of coordination and with the imbalance in development. All the parties involved in reconstruction want greater transparency and coordination, but the problem remains unresolved. Our meetings with governments, PRTs, ADTs and other specialists reveal that both sides are pleased with the coordination and outcomes of the projects in provinces of Nangarhar, Laghman, Kapisa, Helmand, Wardak, Konar, Logar, Panjshir, Parwan, Kabul, Herat and Kunduz. The teams in those provinces have strengthened links and improved coordination levels with government institutions to achieve better results. Generally, the role of PRTs, USAID, AADT, GTZ and other entities in these provinces have been evaluated as cooperative and helpful, but more work needs to be done in the provinces of Baghlan, Ghor, Takhar, Badakhshan, Balkh, Bamyan, Samangan, Faryab, Oruzgan, Nurestan, Badghis and Kandahar.

We expect economic coordination to improve in all sectors, and agriculture development schemes need to be expanded to other provinces. This will help to build trust between the people, the international community and the PRTs. Unfortunately, some Provincial Reconstruction Teams don’t have sufficient resources to respond to the reconstruction and development needs of those areas. Frequent transfer of office staff and specialists is another factor slowing down the development and rehabilitation process.
The government of Afghanistan has taken steps to establish security, community infrastructure, law and order, good governance, and expects to work with the international community and PRTs at all levels. The people of Afghanistan, the farming community in particular consists of almost 80% of the population, wanted projects that would bring change and promote their livelihoods. Experience has proved that projects implemented with the Afghan government as a stakeholder are more effective and efficient. The government of Afghanistan has committed itself to recognizing the indispensable assistance of the international community to the people of Afghanistan and is aware that this assistance entails the rehabilitation and restoration of democracy, taking into consideration culture, religion and the role of women. The people of Afghanistan are obliged to use this assistance effectively. The cruel political and economic situation of the past has meant that the country requires time to heal and recover from its problems. The responsibility for designing and implementing projects should be given to the government of Afghanistan along with greater control of project delivery. A number of PRT teams have their own procedures for spending money. Since they're involved in contracting with companies directly for project implementation, government organizations have no role and get involved only when a project is in its final stages. In some provinces, project selection is done through the Development Fund. The project is handed to the provincial authorities, and funded by the
PRT, after receiving approval from the Technical Working Group. The Provincial Development Committee may then contract and this is a good process for effective progress monitoring. We would like to expand this process to other provinces as well. This would increase the capability of provincial organizations and impose transparency on government organizations, particularly in decision making. Contracts should be signed in the presence of the relevant government authorities, community leaders and other stakeholders. Information on corrupt companies and institutions could be shared with the media and the public informed. I would also reiterate the need for cooperation with the people of Afghanistan, especially in agriculture because climate change and global warming is severely impacting our country.
ATTIQULLAH LODIN
Governor, Province of Logar, Afghanistan

This conference on the reconstruction of Afghanistan has an important role. Afghanistan has been affected by thirty years of war. Everything has been destroyed and the international community is trying to ensure security in our country, a country ravaged by thirty years of war, with no democracy, and under attack by other countries. The international community has to concentrate on security because security is what we need first, and the international community must exert all its efforts to achieve security. Unless the Afghan police force and Afghan military get modern weapons and training, we will never achieve security. Of course, there are some who do not wish the Afghans to be properly armed, but the international forces are very helpful. Please help us with our army. I’m also going to speak about the PRTs and I would like to focus on the Logar PRT. Our American friends work alongside the Czechs in that province, and when I was in Logar last year, I saw the work being done there. A lot of work was done in agriculture, education, and construction. Almost 75% of the needs of the people were covered. And, as for the training of police officers and the establishment of military bases, a lot of good work was done last year. A new building was built to house the offices of various sectors, and a group was established where Czechs and Americans can collaborate. The results of the activities of all these people are considerable.
SESSION E1: COOPERATION WITH AFGHAN LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

RadioFreeEurope
Radio Liberty
A common approach is needed that integrates security, governance, rule of law, human rights, and social and economic development. Let us focus on how to engage the local population and develop mutual trust with local leaders. One of the Constitution’s fundamental principles is based on public participation, partnership and governance. The current legal and policy framework therefore provide sufficient basis for community and civil society participation in provincial governance.

In this part of my presentation, I would like to draw your attention to some important issues. Addressing these issues will help us achieve our overall aim of stabilizing Afghanistan.

First, security: security remains a fundamental priority for achieving stability. In the development of Afghanistan, it cannot be provided by military means alone. It requires good governance, justice and the rule of law reinforced by reconstruction and development. We must start a dialogue with local leaders and involve them in decision making about how and by what means we can improve local security conditions.

Second, governance, rule of law and human rights: the Independent Directorate for Local Governance will rapidly expand its capacity to provide basic services to the population throughout the country. It
will recruit professional and competent personnel, establishing more effective, accountable and transparent administration at all levels of the government. It will assist the local population in fighting corruption and narcotics, upholding justice, the rule of law and promoting respect for human rights.

Third, accountability: accountability is a key requirement for good governance. The provincial, municipal, district, and village administration shall be accountable to the people living in their jurisdiction. The local administrations are accountable to the people, to the respective locally-elected councils.

Four, provision of services to the people. These services include justice, security, safe passage of people and goods, public routes, water and sanitation, health and nutrition, education, electricity, roads, local transportation, rural and urban infrastructure, agriculture and irrigation, natural resource management, land administration, social protection, identity cards, private sector development, select services such as traffic management, street lighting, recreational facilities, libraries, and other services that people value most.

Five, participatory governance: this means freedom of association and expression on the one hand and organized civil society on the other hand. We should give value to local decisions in each sector of reconstruction and development.
Six, effectiveness and efficiency: good governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making best use of the resources at their disposal.

To address some of the issues, I just outlined what the distinguished panellists have discussed in the last two days and which need to be adopted as soon as we can. The Independent Directorate for Local Governance has decided to play its part by doing the following in the coming four months: Cabinet approval of the subnational governance policy; developing a subnational solidarity policy implementation framework; drafting required laws for local governance, municipalities and district councils; revising its five-year strategy work-frame and developing operational plans; launching a new pay and grading system for and restructuring the directorate; developing and implementing an anti-corruption strategy for subnational governance. I believe achieving this and the other objectives that we have set for ourselves depends not only on our hard work and dedication, but also on the support that you are providing.
On cooperating with Afghan local and national leadership, I have just a few short comments. Any foreigner who gets dropped into the complex realities of Afghan politics and society will be quite overwhelmed. Over the years, we’ve started to understand more and more that we need to engage with the local realities and understand them to be able to do what we do, particularly when we move into the provinces with PRTs. To simplify it, I’d like to distinguish four levels within the leadership that we’ve been engaging with over the last few years that overlap and coincide: it’s basically, the government, the commanders and the power-holders, the elders and community leaders, and a fourth group of people who explain things to us and who we often trust.

The formal position of ISAF and of a lot of international actors is that we are in Afghanistan to support the government and to establish a stable government which I think in theory is quite sound. In practice, it often puts us in a position where we’re faced with quite a few dilemmas, and I think anybody who’s been working in Afghanistan will see that there are instances where some of the people associated with or appointed by local government are part of the problem and supporting them may not necessarily help support a stable or respected government. Sometimes people in government do not behave as people...
in government should or have their own agendas, and so you may also find yourself discredited for working with them. This has been a dilemma for almost everybody who has been working at a local level. How do you deal with that?

The second group is the commanders, the powerful, and obviously the whole intervention in Afghanistan started off on different tracks. It was a state-building exercise but it was also a war on terror, and those were two different tracks. So often the first engagement with local leaders was with commanders and with people who promised that they would hunt the Taliban and so a lot of these people have been brought back on the scene in positions of influence. A lot of these people have then re-invented themselves or have diversified. In many situations, when you want to get anything done, when you want to arrange your security, you want to arrange your contracts, your logistics, these are often the people that you deal with or that you’re confronted with. It’s not necessarily a problem; it depends on how it plays out and what the balance is like: whether groups are being marginalized or not, how these people behave, and whether there are boundaries, limits, and whether or not there is impunity. It’s not just a moral issue. We’re working more and more in the context of an entrenched counter-insurgency strategy where we understand that you cannot alienate large parts of your population. So, it really is quite important how these groups behave.
Then we have the group of elders that we have discovered over the last few years as a group that we need to engage with, who have influence, and who can help create trust. We often romanticize elders and we often try to instrumentalize them, and we often overtask them. Most of my experience is in the South, so this is partly from Pashtun tribal areas but to a certain extent from other areas as well. There is this idea that there are traditional, robust structures, and that if you can identify the right leaders, get them on your side, you will then get large groups of the population on your side. It’s not as simple as that, and in many cases tribal structures have been weakened, leaders have been undermined by the years of war and upheaval, by migration, so you aren’t dealing with them in the first place because they can do what you want and deliver, because that’s not always sure. What you do is deal with them because these are people who command respect; you show them that you understand the make-up of society. You also show your intentions, the kind of people you want to deal with, and by dealing with them, you can strengthen people. What we don’t realize a lot of the time is that the society is not static and that we play a huge role in determining or, at least, shaping who has influence in the society or not. We have a tendency to want people to be on our side, and so we engage with leaders because we want them to say that they are on our side. In many cases a local leader is good if he can stay out of that, if he can keep his people as neutral as possible. What you want to do is
establish a climate of trust but you don’t necessarily want to force them to choose your side.

The fourth group is the people who explain things to us. They are often the people who speak our language and who have been educated in the same systems as us. We should limit this, and, I think, particularly if you’re working in the provinces, you need to find people who you can trust and respect. They don’t just speak for their own group and they can explain to you how things work, who is who, who is in conflict with whom, and the histories. I think there is an increasing realization of the necessity of understanding that this is not just village politics but that this actually affects our way of working.

One last comment: what we are trying to do is create relationships of trust. We’re trying to understand where people come from, what their problems, fears and threats are. We don’t want to be overly naïve and I think sometimes when we are in cooperative mode, we become overly naïve and we do need to remember that all the different groups we deal with tend to have agendas and enemies. We often try to instrumentalize relationships and the people we deal with do the same, so make sure you know who you are dealing with. You can be respectful without agreeing with everything; you can build relationships of trust without being naïve and we need to be quite clever in that.
Session E-2: Promoting Jobs and Economic Development in the Provinces
I have to start by confessing that I am not an expert on Afghanistan or PRTs. My job at NATO Headquarters in Brussels is to assess ISAF’s economic footprint. That includes PRTs, but is not limited to their activities; they are one of the aspects that we are examining. We’re looking to develop very practical recommendations, and a fuller report will be taken up at the Economic Committee in about six weeks’ time.

I want to share with you today some of the results we’ve identified that will have practical implications as we see them for PRTs and what’s next, as this is the title of this conference. Security cannot be achieved without economic development and economic development can’t be achieved without security; this is a mantra that you hear at every press conference, from heads of state, prime ministers and presidents all the way down. Surprisingly though, although we say this a lot, we don’t really have a very good picture of the relationship between the two and how they impact each other, and so we’re not in a position to show either the Afghan people what we have achieved or taxpayers whose money we’re spending in theatre for these activities. But what have we discovered in the almost twelve months that we’ve been doing research in this area?
ISAF and the ISAF contributors were certainly the biggest economic contributors to Afghanistan. But as we’ve heard, spending a lot of money doesn’t necessarily translate into development or stability; that’s one conclusion that we’ve drawn almost immediately. We are improving data on reporting of activities. A number of people have talked about databases that list thousands and thousands of activities that PRTs undertake. However, there is very little analysis on the economic impact, and so I can’t tell you how many jobs have been created as a result of these activities. One of our objectives is to increase the economic benefits for Afghanistan in terms of job creation and engaging and supporting local businesses, and we take this as businesses registered in Afghanistan; a very simple approach could be some kind of partnership or multinational company, but companies that are registered in Afghanistan who will be paying taxes in Afghanistan. This is a very macro-level study that we’re undertaking. There’s certainly scope to increase local procurement from our initial look at the data, and I’m happy to say that NATO is looking at its own procurement regulations and practices with a view to amending these. We would encourage nations who’ve not already done so to undertake a similar review so that you can procure more. I would say that procuring food is probably one of the most difficult areas because of the number of EU regulations, but there’s a whole range of other issues such as construction material. We hope to identify practical ways that we can help meet the challenge that

/// Esmatullah Haidary (left), Susan Pond (right) ///
UNAMA set last summer to the international community to increase local procurement by 10%.

So I want to highlight three areas where we will be taking work forward in our study: one is measuring progress; it’s not possible at this time to aggregate data. You all work generally for one national authority. I have the job with my team to put together data from almost 50 nations and I can tell you that it’s basically impossible to take data from one nation and add it to data from another nation, so I’m not in a position to provide an overview to the Council or to ISAF contributors as to what we’re doing economically. But we can identify three or four common economic measures such as volume of contracts given to Afghan companies, number of jobs created, engagement with women in terms of supporting UN Resolution 1325, and value of contracts. We want to keep it very simple. And then the more difficult task would be how you measure the impact in terms of stability. Secondary would be the impact on pre-deployment training for staff in theatre. We’re thinking particularly, but not limited to, contracting and tendering staff who are generally there for six months and then rotate through. Some nations have a pretty good handover, others have no real understanding before they come to theatre of what they could purchase or how they could engage with Afghan businesses, so we’re looking at options. For example, could we develop some kind of off the shelf “better business” toolkit for those nations who don’t address this and it could form part of
their pre-deployment training so before staff arrive in theatre, they have a better idea of the impact of PRT economic activity?

A number of nations have indicated that they see corruption as a cost of doing business. That may be true and I’m not suggesting that we are able to eliminate corruption as we are not even able to do that in our own NATO and EU nations. So we should be realistic in terms of what can be done in Afghanistan, but there may be things we can do to reduce the risks of corruption in terms of how we do business. In the past week the UN released a report saying that the cost of corruption in terms of bribes paid in Afghanistan is something in the region of USD 2.7 billion in the last twelve months. That’s as big as the drug trade, and bigger than the entire investment from the NATO common budget since the beginning of our operation. To anybody who thinks this is not significant and it’s a cost of doing business, I would say, “we should look at this because inevitably, some of this money is being used by the people who want to do harm not only to the Afghan people but to the forces on the ground.” It costs a few dollars to buy the components for an IED, so inevitably, some of that money is trickling down.

And finally, we want to make the results of the good work that PRTs are doing more visible not only to the Afghan people but to the broader community who are supporting us. I’m thinking of the taxpayers back in all our countries, so we are developing a report on good practices where we’re interviewing both people in theatre and back in capitals. Six
countries have very generously volunteered to be part of this study – the Czech Republic, Netherlands, Lithuania, Sweden, New Zealand and the United States – and we are very grateful to them. We are going to do this work both with the Joint Analysis Lessons Learnt Centre in Lisbon and with our colleagues in Paris at the OECD. This is a unique methodology in bringing together civilian and military to identify good practice. These are the things I wanted to put on the table for you to see that we are taking the work that is done in the PRTs and it is having an impact in terms of policy. If we don’t get it quite right, we have occasions like this when you can correct me if we seem to be going off in the wrong direction.
ESMATULLAH HAIDARY
Afghan Development Association (ADA), Afghanistan

I work for the Afghan Development Association (ADA) in South-West Afghanistan, the homeland of the Taliban. I will tell you about how we deal with the communities. We developed a one-year Integrated Rural Development Programme in Kandahar. It was a project in scattered areas. We considered the urgent need was to focus on rehabilitation. And that was a pilot scheme. We learnt from our pilot scheme and the community learnt what we were doing there. That was in 1991. We presented ourselves to the community as aid workers, not a group coming to intervene in politics. We made sure we approached the right people during our pilot scheme: the Shurah, which is a Community Council made up of important, influential people, the elders. We first approached them, and told them that we wanted to do some projects there. They welcomed this and came with us to the government, the Communist régime. We also visited the anti-government groups. We were finally able to proceed with some projects. We were gradually able to increase our activity and move to Oruzgan, the homeland of the Taliban and to Zabul. In those areas, we developed three Integrated Rural Development Programmes mainly focused on agriculture and the move from emergency to rehabilitation and some development activities. This was followed by a five-year Integrated Rural Development Programme.
We found potential donors and we got expertise and training through the support of our donors. We sent our key staff abroad to Birmingham and also the Netherlands, Pakistan and Bangladesh to learn about development. We expanded our area of operations to include the South, almost the whole provinces of the South-West and South-Central Afghanistan. We went East and to some areas in the North. We realized it was too big a challenge so we decided to withdraw from some areas. But withdrawing was very difficult, as well as handing over our activities. We eventually negotiated to coordinate our programme with others and we are now in fourteen provinces. We are doing emergency work, but not too much development activity.

In general, I can tell you that in Afghanistan there are two types of disaster: one is manmade disaster, the fighting that is going on all over Afghanistan; then natural disasters are also very difficult to respond to: floods, earthquakes and drought. There are many complicated situations in the areas where there is fighting. We are using this as a development concept of Do Know How, acting as the connector rather than the divider. Because the people are in dire need of this assistance, for us to act as connector bringing people together. We tested it in a very complicated situation in Oruzgan where there were two tribes who had been fighting each other for over a hundred years, regularly destroying each other’s irrigation systems and killing each other. We were in dire need of skilled people because we had a construction project there, and it was very
difficult and time-consuming for us to go to places such as to Kandahar to get skilled people. But we found out that the other tribe had the skills available. We invited them, we facilitated it, we paved the way for them, we guaranteed and supported them and gave them a chance to communicate with each other. At that time, there was not a single shop in the bazaar in one tribe’s area. Now, if you go there, despite the fact there’s no peace, despite the problems of the fighting there, these two tribes enjoy a very good life.

In one area, we wanted to implement a package similar to one we have introduced elsewhere in the province. But we realized that we were very close to dividing the people so we stopped, changed our intervention and then moved gradually to work as a connector which is not an easy job in Afghanistan. To bring a package from Europe or other countries and try to implement it in Afghanistan is totally impossible. That is why Do Know How activities are so important.

Some people, especially non-Afghan organizations, ask us how we develop our projects and we tell them that they have to respect the culture of the people, respect the real community representatives, and not intervene in religious affairs. Some wanted to establish a radio and broadcast religious issues, but it is not acceptable for a non-Muslim to come and talk about religion. These are the sorts of things we need to think about. A very simple example is when I’m travelling by truck, when I get to a village I get out because there are women there and this should
be respected. When the community sees that I respect them, they are happy. Once we’ve left the village, I’ll get back in the truck. Several times I’ve told the PRT in Oruzgan that they should not be stationed close to the villages but should be some distance away. Before the Dutch, there were other coalition forces there, very close to the villages, and they had a lot of problems. Now, the Dutch troops are leaving Oruzgan. In spite of the fact that they had a lot of problems, they were very successful compared with others. I’m suggesting that PRT intervention should be systematic and each step should be evaluated. This gradual approach is very important. But, at the same time, we need to coordinate ourselves. For example, we may be doing a development project, implementing a package that we developed in close collaboration and coordination with the local community, but another organization arrives with another package, and without proper coordination, one organization will damage the other.
BETH DUNFORD
Senior Advisor on Development to the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, USA

Today I want to talk about agriculture. I’m one of three people from the U.S. Agency for International Development detailed to Ambassador Holbrooke’s team, so I work at an office in Washington. I was a DAL officer in Afghanistan before, but I’ve been in Washington for a few years now so I welcome the perspective of my Afghan colleagues and people who are working on the ground now for a reality check. We’re focusing on reconstruction efforts in areas where we can quickly create jobs, especially in agriculture. We’re rebuilding Afghanistan’s once vibrant agriculture. It will sap the insurgency, not only foot-soldiers, but also income from the narcotics trade. We believe that agriculture is the most important non-security effort in Afghanistan, and this is something that Dereck Hogan and his colleagues discussed yesterday. To this end, we’ve developed a Whole of Government approach that unifies U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Army National Guard, agro-business development teams in their efforts to support the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock efforts to rebuild the sector.

To increase agricultural sector jobs and income, we need to do three main things: one is to increase productivity by increasing farmers’ access
to inputs and effective extension services; second is to regenerate agribusiness by increasing linkages between farmers and markets, supporting trade corridors. Efforts should focus on agribusiness, market promotion and trans-border facilitation, things like transportation and storage, working on food safety, pest risk management, packaging, post-harvest handling, and processing for sales. In this, it’s very important to expand farmers’ access to credit, as this is one of our major areas going forward. Farmer credit is not addressed by micro-finance programmes, and farmers do not have access to credit from commercial banks. Right now, some efforts are reaching some farmers, and credits are also reaching a large number of farmers through input voucher distribution as a stop-gap measure until we can extend the financial sector to meet farmers’ needs for inputs and also more significant efforts are needed to add value to their products. We also need to focus on natural resources management through watershed rehabilitation and irrigation infrastructure improvement.

I wanted to talk a little about the tension between short-term and long-term efforts. We are focusing in the South on counter-insurgency; we need to demonstrate progress now while at the same time building a foundation for sustainable progress. In Helmand, for example, we are moving into areas that have been recently cleared, and we’re working with Ministry of Agriculture officials to provide vouchers for high-value crops. We’re also at the same time providing cash for work opportunities
that build productive infrastructure and providing small grants to farmers’ associations and entrepreneurs to purchase agriculture-related equipment. This quick dispersing effort provides immediate assistance to farmers in the forms of salaries and seeds, but also encourages investment in the long-term: investing in infrastructure and also crops that may not bear fruit immediately but will provide a sustainable alternative to poppy in the long run and a chance to increase income in the listed economy.

Another example that I’ll mention from the Turkish PRT in Wardak: we’re using cold storage funded by the Turkish PRT and the U.S. AID assistance. That establishment is working very closely to help farmers sort and package apples and prepare them for sale and especially for export. We’re also linking them with buyers in India and through this effort we were able to help farmers export 15,000 metric tons of apples to India. Now, this success makes money for some farmers this year, but what it also does is that it shows what is possible, it builds links, and now there is infrastructure available to help more farmers to continue this in the future.

However, for all of this, we need to build the capacity of the Afghan government, particularly of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock to deliver agricultural services and to promote the private sector and farmers’ associations. So we in the U.S. government, as part of our overall effort to transform how we deliver assistance in Afghanistan,
are committed to channelling more of our resources to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Often in rural areas you find that local people’s contact with government officials may only be security-related – police or the like, or may be district officials; we want to make sure that they have contact with government officials in a positive way in addressing services that they need like agricultural extension services, so we really want to build up the extension service and have the government reach farmers.

We are currently working with the Ministry of Agriculture to assess their financial and programme systems to identify specific areas that require assistance to build accountability and transparency to a level that would allow it to be certified to receive U.S. government funds. This requires a lot of scrutiny, including from Congress, and we need to make sure that we can be accountable to our taxpayers as well. We’ve already certified three ministries to receive direct USG funding, and we hope Agriculture will be the fourth. To assist in this effort, to build the Ministry’s capacity in the revitalized agricultural sector as part of our civilian uplift that has been much talked about, we’re increasing the number of agricultural experts we have from 25 to 89 early this year. And these experts will be mainly in the field, working on Provincial Reconstruction Teams and District Support Teams and partnering with Ministry officials to build their capacity and deliver agricultural services. We’ll also have some experts in the Ministry in Kabul and
these agricultural experts will not only be focusing on very technical issues of soil finance and the like, but also on budgeting and programme management as requested by the Ministry.
SESSION E2: PROMOTING JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROVINCES
Promoting jobs and economic development in the provinces is essential for peace and stability in Afghanistan. Particularly at the provincial level, a PRT can play a vital role in this regard. For your information, the population size of Afghanistan as estimated on the basis of National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2007-08 sampling procedure is close to 25 million people. The Afghan population is overwhelmingly rural: 74% live in rural areas and only 20% live in urban areas. Poverty is multidimensional and accordingly, there is a wide variety of approach to statistical measurement. Conventionally, poverty has been defined in terms of income or expenditure, based on the assumption that a person’s material standard of living largely determines their well-being. The poor are then identified as those whose material standard of living is below a certain level.

The analysis in this presentation follows the method advocated by the World Bank and is based on the so-called Cost of Cost Needs Approach. The poverty indicator for Afghanistan is estimated at 36% of the total population, which indicates that some nine million Afghans are not able to meet their basic needs. Moreover, a large share of the population has a consumption level that is only just above the poverty threshold, implying that they are vulnerable to falling into poverty with
only a small downward shift in their livelihood. Average per capita per month consumption expenditure of the poor is only 950 AFAS, equal to USD 19. But the corresponding figure for the non-poor is still only less than USD 42 per month per capita. Unemployment is a real problem in Afghanistan. Afghanistan’s labour market has a typical characteristic of a less developed country; it is dominated by the agriculture sector and performs poorly in providing decent work, productive employment, secure income, gender equality and social protection. More than 90% of the jobs can be classified as vulnerable employment that does not secure stable and sufficient income. 8 million people in Afghanistan are currently actively engaged in the labour market either by working or looking for work. The given figure also indicates a clear gender disparity in the labour market with 5.3 million male and 2.8 million female members of the labour force. Most young people go to Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and other countries to support their families. Some of them lose their lives on the way to those other countries. Last year, more than 40 young people died on the way to Iran in a container because they did not have official documents; they are not able to pay passport and visa costs. Iran, Pakistan and other countries do not issue working visas to Afghans. Some of them are arrested on the way to Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and other countries, and they are put in jail. Some of them go to insecure areas where they cultivate poppy and they work with the owner of the plantation at harvest time.
What is the result of unemployment? Young people join anti-government groups, criminal groups and drug dealer groups. How can we tackle this problem? The government of Afghanistan and the international community have to work together as a united team, to properly assess the situation, fund and work with existing institutions and plan more long-lasting or multi-year programmes with proper consultation with community representatives and local authorities. For example, one of the new programmes will be Water Management where the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock has prioritized creation of permanent jobs and sustainable livelihoods. On one hand, we will manage our water to irrigate a huge area of unirrigated land, and on the other, we will have our own electricity which will boost our economy and will contribute to stability. I don’t mean that the government of Afghanistan and the international community have not contributed to job promotion and economic activity. I would like to thank the international community for their great human, financial and technical support to the Afghan government and, particularly, to the poor and most vulnerable people of Afghanistan.

We have some very good and successful programmes, funded by the international community and implemented by line ministries, such as the National Solidarity Programme, which is in 34 provinces. We have put in place 2,000 Community Development Councils and we have plans to have 12,000 more where we’ll cover the whole country.
They democratically elect their representatives and 35% of the elected representatives are women. They have projects and to date the government has disbursed USD 607 million to these. 35,800 projects have been completed which have created jobs in each community. They are managing their own finances. We are giving money directly to them, we are training them, and they are managing and implementing their projects. It’s much more cost-effective. One school built by the community will cost USD 60,000 where a contractor would charge USD 200,000. We also have the National Area-Based Development Programme where we have established 368 District Development Assemblies. Under this, more than 1,000 district-level projects have been implemented by their communities. We have the National Rural Access Programme implemented by MRRD, the Ministry of Public Works and funded by the international community. We have the National Rural Water Supply Sanitation Irrigation Programme where more than 80,000 water points have been installed. We recently launched the Afghan Rural Enterprise Development Programme in six provinces where people will establish central groups to provide technical and financial support to SMEs. MRRD and the Ministry of Agriculture & Livestock also started another initiative called the Comprehensive Agricultural & Rural Development Facilities. We have the Social Protection Programme and we will start the District Delivery Programmes; they are still in the design stage but we hope they will start soon. Each ministry has a
similar programme and these are only examples from the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

We have some recommendations for PRTs: use existing institutions such as Community Development Councils, Cluster Development Councils (we call them “CCDC”), District Development Assembly and Provincial Development Committee. Do not establish parallel community organizations that will create problems within the community. Involve people in local authority and the decision-making process. If you involve them, they will take ownership of the process and if you build a project or school, they will maintain it. There are examples like the schools you built under the National Solidarity Programme, only one or two were damaged. The rest are all maintained by the community.

Provide financial and technical support to the local authorities (PDC) where a representative of every ministry is there to deliver service to the people. You should not deliver services to the people, let government people deliver services to the people so trust can be built between the people and the government and local authority capacity can grow. Train them how to manage contracts, how to service the project, how to design the project, provide technical support to them. It will be more cost-effective. If the PRT builds a school, people will charge double or triple, but if you announce it through a government system, people will see that it’s a government project and they will give the real cost. Fund the existing national programmes for your provincial priorities projects.
Under the national programmes, we have flexibility. Whenever you want to implement a project, we agree to support you. For accountability and transparency, recruit technical staff to jointly monitor field activities with local authorities. We’re not saying that you should not monitor the project, but use the proper channels. You can recruit one person or two or a team and they will see the activities in the field, they will see the quality of the project, provide project cycle training to the PDC and equip them with the required instruments, participate in monthly PDC meetings, and provide and share your monthly workplan with PDC members. If you share your monthly workplan with them, you will create trust and the next month they will share their workplan with you.

Then there is information sharing at the provincial level: regularly update your team members about PRT coordination meetings that are held at the Kabul level (if you are close to Kabul, participate in the meeting because you should know what the policy is). I’m sure some PRT colleagues properly coordinate their activities with local authorities and community representatives and we really appreciate their good work. What we expect from PRTs is that they should be invisible in the field, no guns or weapons, but strong technical and financial support to our provincial governor, district governor and PDC to deliver service and create jobs for people. PRTs have to show us how to catch the fish; they should not give us the fish.
Session F-1 Measuring the Effectiveness of Stabilization and Reconstruction Efforts
Session F.1: Measuring the Effectiveness of Stabilization and Reconstruction Efforts
DAWN LIBERI
Senior Civilian Representative, ISAF’s Regional Command-East, Afghanistan

I’m Dawn Liberi, Senior Civilian Representative in RC. I’m just going to make a few opening remarks then I’ll have our colleagues lay out their presentations.

When I was thinking about this, I came up with an analogy: measuring effectiveness is a little bit like trying to lose weight, it’s hard and it’s not necessarily that we don’t know what to do, but like trying to lose weight, it’s as difficult. We know that we have to answer the “so what question”; what is the effect and what it is that we are trying to do? But too often what we do is get tied up measuring inputs, outputs, opinions, performance, but we don’t actually measure effects. So one of the challenges that we face here is trying to get at the “so what question.” A key piece of that is to get beyond individual projects, which is what we often focus on and try to actually get to a strategic outcome. Within that, try to look at it from a collective and strategic perspective. We spoke a lot about this yesterday and one of the key things that I think we came out with was a strategic outcome and focus on stability. I would like to suggest that that is one way that we can organize ourselves to measure effectiveness, particularly as we start to look at collective projects and programmes.
Further, we have the beginnings of this with the development of the District Stability Framework. How do we measure the root causes of instability? Secondly, how do we measure implementation to address the root causes of instability? Third, how do we develop an effect flowchart? This is a major aspect we’re trying to look at that actually shows the impact we’re trying to achieve towards the objective of stability. Putting that into a District Monitoring Report and then looking at this as a Monthly Stability Report. I would suggest that we’re trying to establish the beginnings of this in Afghanistan, and the extent to which we can actually do this and set this out and agree upon this so that we can have comparable data across geographic areas and over time. Collectively, we can actually start measuring effects and we can help our Afghan colleagues to set up a system that they can use so that we can all look at how our work is leading towards stability. So, these are just a few opening comments to frame the discussion.
Let me start by saying that this business of measuring effect was a key failure up to and throughout my time in Afghanistan until the end of October last year. There was an awful lot of measuring going on. What the development community referred to as logframes, detailed planning frameworks with regular assessments that frankly, from 2008 onwards, did include the Afghan government and the provincial governors. All that was happening, but nevertheless, it was a failure for a variety of reasons. Far too much effort went into measuring what were essentially outputs, not outcomes or effects. There was no commonality. There were divisions between what the civilians were measuring and what the military were measuring. There were divisions between the U.S. system and everybody else. There were differences between PRTs and between Kabul and the provinces. The third failure was that we were measuring far too much. It simply wasn’t focused on what really matters, nor was there agreement on what really matters, but rather a sort of combination of accumulated assessment from the ground, which really boiled down to captains or majors filling in complicated matrices sent to them by regional commands with fingers in the air and some pretty dodgy polling.

I know it’s a bit inflated to criticize polling because there’s not much else out there, but I’m unwilling to put my faith in a system which, in the
South at least, consistently showed over 70% approval ratings for the AMP when every other piece of evidence on the ground, every comment from every Afghan one ever met, showed the exact opposite. I am three months out of date in terms of where things have got to on pulling together measures of effect, but let me give you two broad overlapping prescriptions for the way forward.

First, reduce radically the number of measures of effect or key metrics – certainly less than ten, probably closer to five – for three reasons. First, to avoid policy and the allocation of scarce resource being driven by what is easily measurable as opposed to what matters. The problem here is a lot of classic R&D falls into the easily measurable category, and there’s a real risk that it becomes the easy metric to pull together. It then becomes the metric that drives things, and I don’t believe that most R&D carries that much weight in the counterinsurgency campaign.

Secondly, under this point about reducing the number of measures of effectiveness, I do think we need to avoid setting the bar for success too high; barely good enough is good enough. The focus needs to be on accelerating transition. As I was leaving in October last year, I was concerned that the TLSR process was becoming a bit of a behemoth with far too many criteria, and I feared that it was a mechanism for delaying transition. I’m told that it has been quite heavily pruned since then, but it still has an excessive number of benchmarks on the civilian side.
My third reason why we need to radically reduce the number of key metrics is simplicity. Focus is the key to effective communications, not only with our domestic public opinion in the media, but also with local Afghan public opinion. My second overlapping prescription is the need to focus those five to ten metrics exclusively on counter-insurgency effect rather than broader development effect. To me, that means simplifying a bit, but metrics that provide evidence of the government of Afghanistan taking the lead and containing the insurgency, and of the population taking personal risk to help them contain the insurgency. I think the former is relatively straightforward as the Afghan security forces take over the first echelon responsibility and as they move into forms, patrol bases, as district governors, District Councils take responsibility for governance. That is pretty hard evidence and we already have a reasonably good system of tracking and assessing the effectiveness of Afghan security forces as they are trained up.

It’s the latter which is much more difficult, and where I would like to see our efforts focused as people try to come up with measures of effect. I’m pretty sceptical about just how useful polling will be at getting at that question of the local population’s willingness to take personal risk. That said, there are some good ways of getting at this. One particularly good metric that was being developed as I left was the ratio of found and diffused IEDs in a given area compared to exploding IEDs. That helped capture the amount of local help in identifying IEDs. It’s also a pretty
good indicator of the acceptable level of local security, which will begin to persuade the local population that they are sufficiently protected from Taliban intimidation. Another area to look at is the growth of real-time intelligence being provided via hotlines. Again, this gets at the amount of active/passive resistance being shown by the local population to Taliban intimidation. But the Holy Grail here is trying to find the way to measure reduced interaction with Taliban shadow governance and, in particular, Taliban justice. An ideal for me would be somehow capturing a metric which showed the increased number of people coming to justice mechanisms that are under the overall aegis of the government of Afghanistan, primarily traditional justice under district governors and district shurahs and coming to that for dispute settlement as opposed to going to Taliban Justice Commissions. And if there was a way of measuring that changing market share, I think that would be a very good indicator of the degree to which the local population is genuinely getting off the fence and taking personal risk to support the government of Afghanistan.
IDRESS ZAMAN
Research Manager, Cooperation for Peace and Unity, Afghanistan

In the past, we have done a number of research projects on security-related issues. For example, we have done conflict analyses in five districts of Afghanistan. We have done research on PRTs entitled “Afghan Hearts, Afghan Minds”, and we are currently doing another piece of research on PRTs’ best and worst practices and delivery of assistance. We are also doing informal justice mapping in Helmand for DFID and an important piece of research on human security monitoring indicators where we will go beyond numbers of casualties to see livelihood and other security-related issues of communities.

I will actually focus on community perceptions of PRTs, and I have put together comments from different pieces of research that we have done in the past. Military and humanitarian actors alike use principles and concepts that are inspired by wider international experience such as humanitarian space, stabilization and winning hearts & minds to describe their mandate and objectives and experience in Afghanistan. However, ensuring that such terms are understood and translated in the context of prevailing Afghan social, cultural or religious norms remains a challenge.

While the principles of humanitarian space may have equivalents in Islamic social history, the type of debate which brings such concepts
to the fore has not yet taken place in the Afghan context. There has been work at the international level with Muslim scholars to interpret humanitarian principles within an Islamic framework, but the results have not been widely disseminated in Afghanistan.

In our research, interviewees have expressed their own theories about such activities. For example, they have said that winning hearts and minds is not a one-off event, but constant negotiation and renegotiation of the subtle balance of power in a relationship as a result of going through the trials and tribulations of alternating conflicts and cooperation.

Some Afghans obviously still see contact between PRTs, NGOs and civilians as a security risk and indicate that the problem may not be about being tainted by association rather than about the blurring of identities.

One interviewee told us that his relatives and distant relations in Oruzgan had told him not to visit them because he worked for the PRT, and one NGO was forced to leave the province and accused of spying for coalition forces after some Taliban positions were disclosed.

Our research also looked at whether certain troop-contributing nations are more problematic than others. In Oruzgan for example, “Americans” was a catch-all term used for all military. Even groups who knew that the Dutch were leading the PRT still referred to the military as Americans. In common parlance this now denotes a foreign
or non-local, even in the case of the Afghan National Army. This lack of distinction in speech was unusual since locals tended to like the Dutch for being respectful while they disliked Americans for being aggressive. In addition, the clean-shaven Afghan National Army personnel donning wrap-around sunglasses and dressed in uniforms that resemble those of Americans are probably an alien sight for rural Afghans used to seeing mujahideen and Taliban fighters in local clothes.

Although most interviewees said they and their communities could distinguish between NGOs, PRTs and other military personnel, some said that there was no differentiation between outsiders, and that includes Afghans who are working for foreign institutions in places like Oruzgan.

Origin of assistance: we have addressed this issue as well and it suggests that local people do identify differences in assistance channelled through different providers, including military and civilian. Interviewees had a range of views on whether the provenance of aid is important in terms of impact on security. It was clear that under the current circumstances, low-key contact was preferable to visible engagement. The research revealed that communities are desperate for assistance from whichever quarter. However, they are also sensitive to the political and consequent security implications of accepting aid associated with contested military international or government agendas.

Following a long history of international assistance, many Afghans we interviewed are aware of who are the main aid actors and what they
can deliver. For the most part, those interviewed had a clear idea and perspective on the different roles of government, NGOs and the military. Interviewees generally felt that NGOs and the government should implement development projects and provide humanitarian assistance. For example, a large-scale infrastructure project that is beyond the capacity of NGOs and government should be implemented by the PRTs. When asked whether they have experience of such projects being implemented by PRTs, they would answer in the negative but could not think of anyone else implementing such projects apart from NGOs and PRTs. In fact, people are at a loss as to what sort of organizations can implement projects of the type and scale that they now want. As part of clarifying NGO identity and handling expectations, communities must be engaged in discussions on what the current range of actors in the Afghan context can provide and what their limitations are.

Some interviewees had a clear preference for assistance from people in civilian clothes rather than military uniforms because they know that the responsibilities are different. The presence of uniformed soldiers monitoring or visiting a project, they say, indicates that the military are somewhat involved. People are keen to distance themselves from the military and do not always wish to receive assistance that can be linked to them. They also indicate that consultations with PRTs have been made difficult because people felt that their lives would be at risk if they are seen to become too familiar with PRT personnel.
Some interviewees indicate discomfort with PRT assistance and they felt it had strings attached and that people’s needs were being used to force them to provide intelligence. This is clearly against the “do no harm” principle. Humanitarian assistance is no longer neutral and, as a result, has become part of the conflict context. Assistance linked to the military will often be accepted but is not always welcome and is therefore viewed as provided with ulterior motives that can lead to insecurity. Some groups also felt that communities have been bullied into refusing assistance from certain quarters. For example, in areas that are effectively under Taliban control, people are wary of receiving assistance from America and Europe. In one area, NGO staff explained to us that USAID signs were smashed in the night while ECO signs were left untouched. The question of Muslim donors was also raised, but interviewees felt that there would still be suspicion in some quarters. These discussions made clear that visible symbols such as donor and government signs, stickers, logos, etc. could sometimes create security incidents for INGOs and ANGOs alike.
I worked with the Logar PRT over the past year and I’m proud of the work we were able to do. I just want to quickly go over a few points of how I see stabilization and what we can do collectively to support a common and consistent goal of stabilization.

Four general principles underline stabilization: governance and participation, security, justice and reconciliation, and economic and social well-being. These are things that we are doing already, but the question is why aren’t we looking at it correctly? Stabilization will occur when the sources of violence have been reduced to the extent that local institutions are developed to handle these matters and sustain peace. That’s what we’re all working towards. But the focus has been on resources expanded and programmes implemented instead of progress that could be measured in terms of outcomes. This is the fundamental shift that we need to make. The main obstacle in achieving this, however, is not conceptual; there are a lot of models and documents out there that explain how to do this. But the barrier that we have encountered, in my opinion, has been mainly political. It’s also about being able to act at the opportune moment to make that change.
I think we now have the opportunity, one with the increased capacity of the PRT Executive Steering Committee and two, with the establishment of the NATO Senior Civilian Representative. This allows us to look at these matters afresh and look at what we can do in order to approach stabilization in a collective, consistent and common way. This is not to detract from the other types of approaches that PRTs or NGOs are doing. What they are doing is very important. But as we all know here, PRTs have capacities in certain areas. NGOs are able to provide resources in certain areas. It’s not collective and that is ok but I think the PRT Steering Group and the NATO SCR have the ability to look at a common operating picture and to see what we can do collectively to achieve these new goals.

There are generally three steps that can be taken in order to achieve stabilization. The first one is understanding root causes and the strategies of intervening actors, which is reached through quantitative data and local perceptions, on the ground realities, to really understand who wins and who loses if peace prevails, who controls access to resources (food, energy and other resources). Are the problems on the ground a group grievance or are they individual grievances? These are understandings that can establish a baseline for us to get to the root causes of instability.

Number two: we then break these core outcomes into central tasks. Going back to the point that underpins stability for governance and
SESSION F-1: MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STABILIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS
participation, you would look at whether former fighters or outsiders have been brought into the political and peace process. Are people with grievances being addressed? For security, has freedom of movement increased? Are civilians being protected? Is the local security force responsive to legitimate political authorities? For justice, are effective accountability measures in place? Are fundamental rights being protected? And for social and economic well-being, are children having access to education? Are jobs being created? And is there forward movement on rebuilding a sense of community?

Number three: we must then be creative in how we recognize indicators of progress. For example, do formerly warring factions transit through areas controlled by others? What percentage of the population considers it safe to go to the market? What percentage of the population works in the same area where their families live? These are not comprehensive types of outcomes and we don’t want to get bogged down in what we’re looking for. But what is important is that these outcomes move away from what we’ve been traditionally looking at; how many judges have been trained, how many security forces have we generated, how many police are there? And again, while that information is useful and is important to report back to donors, to host countries, it isn’t necessarily useful when assessing stability.
I’m going to conclude by saying that again, these thoughts are not new and I take no credit for them; I’m not putting them forward as a department or an agency. I’m merely putting them forward as issues that we can discuss because I think we now have a collective opportunity with the PRT Executive Steering Committee and the establishment of the new NATO Senior Civilian Representative.
ŠEJMON PÁNEK
Director, People in Need, Czech Republic

I am from an NGO so I presume that I was invited to be a bit provocative, creative, and maybe a bit critical. My criticism is not against PRTs or the military presence, because I first visited Afghanistan in 2000 when the Taliban controlled almost the whole country. We had a very difficult journey to support our colleagues in Badakhshan. I’ve been back every year since then and our NGO has been active since 2001 in over ten provinces.

I will try to give you some of the feedback we are getting from the Afghan public in informal discussions. We have 250 employees in six provinces. It is absolutely necessary that the humanitarian community, including NGOs, cooperate with the military. I’ve been in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and in some cases, it’s the only way to save the nation and save the state. But let me take a step further. We cannot measure outcomes, we have to measure impacts; impacts on Afghanistan, on the situation, on the people, on society. Measuring impact is very complicated; basically the only thing that really matters is the impact of our joint efforts. In comparison with a typical humanitarian development programme, there wasn’t much baseline data before PRTs started operating. And every PRT is different, some are operating in environments that are easy for typical development work, while some
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of the PRTs are basically working in a war zone. It’s difficult to talk about PRTs as a universal system, so please be patient with me.

Another question: what is the objective of the PRT? Is it reconstruction or is it stabilization and security, or is it improvement of people’s life and eradication of poverty? And these three things are slightly different. If you don’t state clearly what your objective is, it’s difficult to measure whether or not you are getting close to achieving it. We heard about the four pillars, but I’m not sure that they can be addressed just by PRTs. The question of efficiency and effectiveness is also connected to financial issues and if humanitarian organizations see the statistics of how much PRTs are costing, our feeling is, “give up half of that money and we will do more reconstruction, more improvements for the communities than the military can.”

Another important thing is mixing the message. We heard about that from Idress, that people are often confused because some of the PRT contingents or groupings have to fight and kill. If part of a unit has to kill people, it’s confusing that another part of the unit wearing the same uniforms is trying to help them. So, in some environments, we are putting the Afghans in the very uncomfortable position of having to distinguish between the two. And it could change day by day, or week by week.

In community development, tiny things are tied up with the daily quality of life of the people: education, social issues, water and livelihood. You need to have real sympathy and empathy towards and
with the local people. And I’m not sure that military people are trained to have sympathy and empathy. They are trained to be effective and to achieve results. Quick results are not always sustainable results, and reconstruction itself does not often directly improve the life of the people and whether or not people feel their lives are improving they regard us as foreigners because they see us as one group. It’s a complicated new situation for the humanitarian community because we are losing our specific position and we are more linked with or sometimes confused with the military. I think we should change the name of PRT, change it to Provincial Stabilization Forces and say openly, the main reason we are here is to stabilize the situation. That is why there are so many soldiers; not because they are building schools but because we need to be able to use force against the insurgency and the Taliban.

Another step I would partly redefine is the mission of PRT. Leave the aid and development space for the people and for the communities to NGOs and to the international humanitarian community, because they know better how to deal with people directly and they are better trained in tiny social matters, in education and livelihood issues and it avoids forcing the Afghans to decide whether they want to be seen with the uniforms or not. So, I would allow the civilians to work more directly with the Afghan population and redefine the Provincial Stabilization Forces mandate into police, army, big infrastructure support for the government and security issues. And I think through this, it might clarify
the situation a little and it might solve some of the doubts and be more efficient and effective in the future stabilization of Afghanistan by giving the Afghans the hope that the future will be better than the past.
Session F-2: Communicating with the Public
Ladies and gentlemen, we are now speaking about an issue which is no less important than reconstruction work. This is the business of communication. In a country like Afghanistan, if the people do not know about what you are doing, you miss fifty percent of your goal. It is through communication that you give hope to the destitute and poor people of Afghanistan. Over seventy percent of the population live in rural areas. There are forty thousand villages, which are often isolated and inaccessible. In this kind of situation, information is really needed so you can provide hope to the people, and help people better understand what is going on.

Instead of complimenting each other, let’s find the gaps, let’s find the cracks and try to solve the problems in this very crucial sector. We should admit that there is a link between PRTs and the media. We in the media sector try our best to help each other and report everything about PRTs on the air or in the print media. But this link is not as strong as it should be. This means that there are still a lot of people in Afghanistan who do not know what PRTs are doing, and how and where they are spending their money.

I will give you an example. Three weeks ago I got a report from my reporter in Helmand about a press conference by the PRT in Helmand,
and Commander of ISAF in Helmand, who is a commander of the U.S. Forces as well. He told a large audience in Lashkar Gah that the U.S. Forces alone, since they arrived in Helmand three months ago, have spent USD 65 million on civilian projects. The audience, hearing this, was surprised and started asking questions among themselves. Where was this money? How had it been spent? While the audience was asking these questions, the head of the Helmand PRT came to the stage and said that the PRT had also spent USD 35 million in 2009. There was total confusion. USD 100 million had been spent, but nobody knew where. The meeting calmed down when journalists took the initiative and started asking questions of the PRT and the commander of U.S. Forces.

I carried out my own little survey before coming here. I contacted ten reporters in ten provinces and asked them the simple question: does the PRT cooperate with you when you ask for information about civilian projects? Six reporters out of ten said there was little or no cooperation from the PRT. Four said that cooperation was excellent. I would like to mention these provinces, but not because this is a blame game. We are here to listen to each other, and again, as these reporters are single sources, according to our rules of business, single sources never come from news. But if there is a problem, it could serve as a first step for the PRTs in these provinces to start looking into the problem. The reporter in Khost province says, “The PRT only provide information when there is a violent incident, such as a bomb explosion, or in press conferences.
which they call. No information on the activities, when we request it.” The reporter from Baghlan province says, “No cooperation at all, despite several requests for information on a PRT project. They are unwilling to cooperate.” From the Helmand province: “PRTs are very slow in providing information. And often, the PRT does not provide accurate information.” Kandahar: “Despite several requests, PRT never provided us with information.” Balkh: “PRTs do not provide information when we ask them. They only give information in press conferences, when they call them.” Herat province: “Cooperation from the PRT is excellent, they give us information whenever we ask for it.” PRT in Takhar: “PRT only provide their vision of information, whenever they want, which is often incomplete. No information at the media’s request.” PRT in Logar province: “The cooperation is very good, PRT gives us unfettered access to information, whenever we ask them.” Kunar province: “Cooperation is excellent, they ask for some time, but they come back to us with the information requested.” And finally, the Jowzjan province: “Cooperation is very good. Whenever we ask them, they provide us information.” If these journalists are correct, this means that there is a gap between the media and PRTs, which needs to be filled.
I have spent the past five years in Afghanistan training journalists, training Afghan journalists to be good reporters. I have taught them to be critical, I have taught them to ask tough questions, and I have taught them to look for facts. I have given them lectures on spin, and I have taught them how to look behind spin, how not to fall for spin. But I am still asked on numerous occasions to help get the message out to the Afghan media on the work of the PRTs. I have been pushed to task my reporters with covering success stories. If only people knew what we were doing, they would support us. That is how the argument goes. They would understand we are here to help them and they would not therefore support the insurgency. But every time I try to get a group of journalists together to ask them to come up with positive stories, or positive themes specifically, they stare at me in surprise and sometimes dismay. “So you want us to operate like the ISAF newspaper,” they say. This is something that we go over in our training. ISAF newspaper, for those of you who are not familiar with it, has a very good reputation in Afghanistan as excellent kebab wrap, but does not provide much in the way of information. And when we do, when we go over the standards of journalism, of fairness, accuracy, balance, and impartiality, ISAF newspaper and state newspapers, along
occasionally with RTA command, are pretty much at the same level, as far as violating those principles.

There is very little in what I understand of the mission or standards of journalism that would allow me or encourage me to ask journalists to focus specifically on positive messages. We do not deal with messages in journalism; we deal with facts. Messaging is the job of a public relations specialist. And that is a very good profession, and I would encourage people to use it. Building an image and putting a positive face on developments, no matter what, requires skills that journalists do not and probably should not possess. This is not to say that the PRTs are not doing good work. Many of them are doing good work. But it is up to the PRTs, as we saw in the example of the ten PRTs that were surveyed, or the ten provinces that were surveyed. It is up to the PRTs to engage the media to figure out a way of getting that message out. It is not up to us to task the media with putting a positive spin on things that perhaps do not have a positive spin. And we cannot make news where news does not exist. The sinking of a well in Helmand province cannot hope to compete for news space with the biggest poppy crop in history for example, which is what happened a couple of years ago. A bombing in which civilians are killed does not have the same news value and will not have the same news value. A building boom in Mazar-i-Sharif is welcome news. But a journalist cannot and should not cover that without trying to find out where those construction contracts are going.
SESSION F-2: COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC
Is the governor controlling the construction contracts? Is the money for those construction contracts going to the provincial government and by-passing other people? A new school for girls in Wardak is a very nice story, and very visual for television. But in fairness, the reporter would have to point out that there are fewer girls in school, many fewer girls in school in Wardak now than there were in 2005, for example. And some people would argue that there are fewer girls in school in Wardak now than under the Taliban because security has deteriorated so greatly over the past several years. You can build schools, you can build buildings, but unless the security is there, the parents will not let their girls attend school. Not because they are against female education, but because they are against the possibility of their child being killed or molested on her way to school.

The best way to get successes publicised is to get professional media relations people to build bridges to the audiences you want to conquer. However, and this has to be said, I know from my experience in Helmand, and I spent a great deal of time in Helmand, that the audience that most PRTs want to reach is their domestic audience. In Helmand, for example, the PRT would spend a great deal of time organizing trips for the BBC, or for Channel Four, because they want the message to get back to people at home. When a Helmandi journalist calls them, they are much less responsive. And in fact, there was a significant period of time when the PRT did not have a Pashto-speaking translator on the PRT to
work with the journalists. The only translator they had spoke Dari. And in Helmand, this is a cultural and political issue, and there are several journalists who just do not have a good command of the Dari language. So it is little wonder that there is not much information about the work of PRTs getting out to the Afghan public. If the word is getting out to your domestic audiences, and that is sufficient for you, then that is fine. But if you are trying to win hearts and minds, or to publicize your work, you have got to engage the Afghan media.

Afghans, in my experience and I have been in Afghanistan for five years now, are finely attuned to propaganda. They can feel it, taste it and smell it a mile away. It does not matter what you call it; you can call it news, you can call it strategic communications, you can call it whatever you like. You can put millions of dollars into it, you can build television studios, radio studios, you can bombard the air waves with feel-good messages and print a lot of very pretty posters, but you cannot hope to make people believe it. I do not want to be too harsh, but you should not waste time and money trying to create something in the media that does not exist outside the media.

We have been told by more than one research organization that the Taliban is winning the information war, sometimes called the propaganda war. This, in many parts of Afghanistan, is true. It does not however mean that the Taliban have found a magic formula to convince people that black is white, or vice versa. The edge that the Taliban has is
because they are closer to the people. They know the culture, they know the language, they know what people expect to hear, and they give them a version that is close to that. They are not trying to teach them, to tell them that black is white; they are trying to tell them that black is maybe grey. People are much more disposed to believe that even if there is a certain element of disinformation in there. We cannot hope to compete with that. Our strength and our only defense against the Taliban war of information or disinformation is to have solid achievements and solid successes, and to publicize those through media relations people. So if you want to convince Afghans that black is white, your best hope is to get a paintbrush and start painting.
I am the Director of External Liaison for the International Broadcasting Bureau, which is part of the Broadcasting Board of Governors. I am going to briefly speak about some of the research, and go a little more into the details that my colleague Bruce Sherman shared with you this morning regarding media habits, media consumption and media usage.

I was the Director of Strategic Communications for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad, where I first met Bay Fang in 2003, I believe. And I know that these are not the same countries in any respect, but I do think some of the lessons learned in Iraq may be useful to contribute to the conversation in Afghanistan. I will avoid boring you with a lot of details; I am simply going to tell you that the good news from the perspective of this institution where we sit today and in general, U.S. and western international broadcasting is a tremendous and extraordinary success. You have seen and you have heard from our colleagues about Radio Ashna, which is by far and away the most important medium for information in Afghanistan. There is a reason for that and we will drill down into that. The Voice of America also makes important contributions, both in the Dari and Pashto language, and then both organizations make important contributions in the Pashto language.
in the border regions between Afghanistan and Pakistan through Radio Deewa from the Voice of America and through the just launched Radio Mashaal, here from RFE/RL. But their strength is because these are field-based organizations with incredible legions of people all across Afghanistan, and increasingly in Pakistan, reporting the news from a local perspective. I can give you the details if you have any great interest into just how many hours and that entire sort of thing, but I really want to focus much more on media usage patterns.

As Bruce told you, this is fairly new data that we saw in October and November of last year. It is still being digested. But basically, even though it is preliminary, I want to go to the headlines and then drill down. The BBC, RFE/RL and VOA all have extraordinary reach of about fifty percent weekly share category. In most media markets that would be stratospheric, extraordinary and all kinds of superlatives. The mix is slightly different because VOA has TV and our programme every night. But basically, radio remains the most important medium of communication in Afghanistan. As we have heard, 70% of the population lives in rural areas, so we have to look at media consumption habits in rural areas. 83% of respondents to these surveys said they have a radio in their household, 39% report having a TV, so it is more than double. 51% of the respondents of this survey reported using the radio yesterday, only 30% reported using the TV yesterday. TV use is undoubtedly growing, especially in the urban areas. Daily TV usage rates
are now in the order of 80% in urban areas, which is almost twice as high as radio in those markets. But not surprisingly, there is negligible use of the Internet in either rural or urban areas. Only one percent said they used the Internet in the past week, only two percent in the past twelve months. We can expect here, as we have in lots of other societies, that the market is going to fragment as it opens up and becomes more competitive.

We have also found out, no surprises here, that Afghans are extraordinarily opinionated and they love to talk. The things that make a difference are the feeling that this is two-way communication, not talking to them, but listening to them and having a conversation with them. Almost without exception, the programmes that are most successful are the ones that make connections with the people who make up their audience, and it is a conversation.

We have to look very carefully at mobile phone ownership. It is growing, 50% of the households, as Bruce said this morning. 32% of individuals now own one. However, only about 15% use them to communicate anything other than phone calls. Only 7% of the general population have even sent an SMS message since they have had their phone. That is going to change as they become more familiar with this new technology. And we of course have to consider the implications of how that is going to influence their media consumption habits.
Many of you have read Rubin’s report in The New York Times on 21st January, which basically said that the Taliban has embarked on a sophisticated information war using modern media tools, as well as some old-fashioned ones. If worldwide trends are followed, this is increasingly going to be a TV market. But more importantly, it is going to be an FM market because of the nature of FM radio. It is smaller, it is easier to operate and it has a limited signal. If we are looking at the privatization of Afghan media or the localization of Afghan media, clearly FM radios are going to play a crucial part in that. We already have eight FM transmitters across Afghanistan carrying the programmes of VOA or RFE/RL. We have plans for seventeen more. Every time we have gone to the PRTs, and said, “Could you use more FM distribution?”, they have overwhelmingly said yes for the very reasons that we have heard here. It helps connect these rather isolated rural areas to the centre, to Kabul, to the region, to the larger world, and it helps in the process of accountability. Making clear what the government is supposedly doing on behalf of the people and then letting people hear whether there are grounds for truth.

My last quick set of comments I say with a great deal of humility, drawing upon what we have learnt in Iraq with the Coalition Provisional Authority. I have already said I know it is very different, but of the lessons that I think we need to take away, the most fundamental one is to watch the research. You heard Bruce Sherman talk about the research
that is out there for you. The ability to get it localized, and I cannot stress enough how important it is for you to use that research constantly, to figure out what you should be saying and doing, to figure out whether it is working, and then to recalibrate it if it is not. That has got to be a constant process, and it has got to be almost overwhelming in what you are trying to do.

A cautionary tale: In the summer of 2003 as I was going into Baghdad, I got to see some early audience research coming in from the very first nationwide survey. While we in the Coalition Provisional Authority were focused on the big themes, weapons of mass destruction, the search for Saddam Hussein, tensions between ethnic and religious communities and the institutions of civil society, Iraqis were looking at things that were much, much closer to home. As we were saying that we were succeeding, a couple of things leapt out. One was the woman in the south, who said, “By this time, I thought they would have built more playgrounds for the children. Where are they?” And when I saw that, I realized that what we were focusing on was not what they were using as benchmarks and indicators of quality of life, of things getting better, of their children having places to play.

I also want to stress to you that you need to be acutely aware of how people get their information. We heard in this morning’s panel the sort of broad categories of people and influence, and how they impact society. That same research shows me that there is a very important
category and that is the information sharer in the communities. We found in our early research that there was a big difference between who we thought the opinion leaders were, and who they really were. Overwhelmingly, it was not necessarily the religious leaders, it was not the tribal leaders and it was not the traditional leaders. It was one category overwhelmingly, the men down the street. And it was a man with larger respect, at that time, and it still is in many Afghan villages. But it was much more what they thought was going on. And those people often did not correlate with a prestigious religious position, they did not correlate with being particularly well-informed. Sometimes they were simply gossips. But the fact is when people were looking for analysis, even commentary, they turn to the man down the street. And if we do not understand who the man down the street is and how he gets his information, then we are communicating to the wrong audience, or we are missing an important audience segment. Can you invite them to come and sit down for a coffee? In some cases, you probably cannot. But if you do not know how he gets his information and you are not in those same media channels and you are not talking to the people he talks to, then you are missing an opportunity. So that is an audience segment and I think it is critical to reach.

And now I want to give you a little glimpse of a conversation that took place. We were running through the powerpoint slides with very senior CPA officials, explaining the communications effort. And this leads to a
point that I hope you will understand, one powerpoint slide said very bluntly, “The coalition forces in Iraq were not trusted.” They simply did not have the trust of the people. About four or five slides later, there was something about what the people of Iraq were concerned about and one of the top things was that the coalition forces would leave. I was interrupted and told that this was nonsense. How can both things be true? They do not trust us, but they do not want us to leave. And I said, “Actually, they are true.” The research holds both of them to be true, which leads me to the point in Afghanistan and in the business where I am we all have to learn to live with ambiguity, with paradox. And I say that to those of you who are practitioners, to those of you who are Afghan officials, we have learned it on the ground and more importantly, we have to accept that that is just the way it is going to be. And finally, to end with a special note of appreciation and thanks to those of you who are on the ground in PRTs, those of you in the governments who support them, those of you who are Afghan officials, who interact with them. I know you do not do this for the glory, I know you do not do this for the luxurious surroundings, I know you do not do it for the envy in which your communities hold you. You do it for other reasons, and we are deeply, deeply grateful and appreciative of your efforts.
I am a journalist from Germany, and I have been to Afghanistan several times, including six times since 2002. I can describe the developments I have seen there. Take communication with the public in Kunduz, for example. In October 2003, the Germans took over the PRT in Kunduz from the American army. I was there and saw this process take place, and I have a clear recollection of it. The Germans quickly started to produce flyers and newspapers for the people in Kunduz and the surrounding region. A small team of OpInfo soldiers made a relatively good job of producing information about the activities of the German PRT, but to a certain extent, it was nothing but propaganda. They produced radio spots and broadcast them with the help of local stations and everything was working rather well from the point of view of the German army. But in reality, the Afghan population did not get a complete picture of what was happening in the German PRT. The German Army communicated without its partners, without the GOs and NGOs, who were also in Kunduz. And I found the same situation in Fayzabad, where the German PRT started in July 2004. But in Kunduz, there were some good examples of training Afghan journalists. A media centre was erected and German journalists went there to train young journalists from Kunduz and the region. They produced newspaper articles, and they learned to write articles, and to produce interviews,
and to produce radio interviews, to work in a radio station. I am not sure whether this system still works because I have not been there since 2006.

The situation has changed. Nowadays, there are no German NGOs in Kunduz and the region. Even the local partners of the German NGOs have stopped their work. Kinderberg is still active there, and Kinderberg does not work under the shelter of the German Army, but in close cooperation. The army itself has changed its activities in Kunduz. It is no longer possible to drive cars with loudspeakers on the roof through the villages and through the town of Kunduz. So they concentrate on producing TV spots and radio spots and they print flyers, and sometimes they produce comics for the children, newspapers and they use the Voice of Freedom and the ISAF newspaper, but this is like propaganda. Communication could be better, even under the circumstances in Kunduz today. The difficulties originate in the structure of the German PRTs, and I hope that in Kunduz and further afield as well, the situation will improve soon.

There must be a new start in informing the public because you cannot get acceptance and to a certain extent, assistance without communicating about your work and what you are doing. And that isn’t happening at the moment. I hope that the NGOs from Germany will come back and start work again. The people in Kunduz and in the surroundings need them. Perhaps after the conference in London tomorrow, things will improve. They must improve because the situation at the moment is not good.
BAY FANG
Senior Advisor for U.S. Government Representative for Southern Afghanistan, Embassy of United States of America, Afghanistan

I work as the strategic communications advisor to the U.S. government representative in southern Afghanistan. I am based in Kandahar not at a PRT, but at the headquarters for the Regional Command South, and as such, I play a few different roles I want to explain to you. One is to just try to communicate what we are doing as an integrated civilian military entity to local and international audiences through both journalists and visiting delegations. I have covered the country as a journalist since 2001 and only joined the State Department last year. I believe that I understand how journalists think, and I think that the worst thing that you can do is to try to sell or create a false reality that does not reflect the facts on the ground or to be obstructive if a journalist is trying to pursue a certain story.

I generally think that journalists, both the international journalists who come into the country and the journalists based locally, have a very good understanding of what is happening there. But I also know the way that journalists perceive conflict, and what is a story, and what is not. Often something that is a positive development is not seen as a story. If they are covering conflict, they want conflict. So, for example, Anderson Cooper from CNN came to the south and I met up with him in Nawa, which is a town in central Helmand which had just recently been cleared
by the marines, and where our civilians were working with military and manoeuvre units on the ground to start stabilization projects.

And when I met the team, they said, “We haven’t seen any fighting. All we have seen all week is a bunch of shuras, with civilians and marines sitting around with these tribal elders talking about what development projects they should do.” It took a little while talking through the idea that it was just as valid a story. It may not be what is happening all over the south, by any means. But it is also an illustration of progress, and it is something that was actually happening in that area at the time so they should be just as interested in covering it. I am not sure how convincing I was!

Another part of my job is to work with the military on information operations and what the State Department has now been calling counter-propaganda, and that is a real challenge. My position was initially created because it was thought that it would be a good idea to inject some civilian perspective into what is traditionally a military area of information operations, or PSYOPS – psychological warfare.

While for the most part I have found that my military colleagues have been on the same page as me in terms of what is reasonable and realistic, it is sometimes difficult to work with what can be an institutional mindset of what psychological warfare is all about.

One of the first principles of strategic communications, which was drilled in throughout my time there, is to be first with the truth. That
was something that General McChrystal also talked about in terms of responding to civilian casualty incidents and knowing that it was something that really resonated with Afghans. And that is something that we have been working on. Responding quickly to incidents is difficult with different chains of command and it is something that I have been learning since I have been working with the military over the last six months. Occasionally, I will come across something that I see as needing a bit of a civilian check, something simple that I can provide just because I can see how something might be perceived by non-military eyes.

For example, one day someone who was doing information operations for a particular unit came to me and was really excited about a new campaign that he had thought up. It was to produce leaflets to counter insurgent propaganda saying that coalition soldiers had been doing things like desecrating the Koran. In the leaflets he wanted to show that the Taliban had been going into people’s homes and desecrating the Koran. I asked him if this was true. Was there any evidence? He shrugged and said, “No, not really.” He did not understand my point and this was not due to ignorance on his part. He just assumed that if the insurgents used disinformation, it was just as valid for us to play dirty. And we had to talk through how doing something like that ruins our credibility in the long run and that disinformation cannot be fought with disinformation.
Lastly and probably the most rewarding part of the job is working with local journalists to try to inject some of the resources that we have in the government into building up free and opinionated media. So we have started to embed Afghan reporters with the military. And in Kandahar this week, the Independent Kandahar Press Club held their first elections for their chairman and deputy-chairman. They plan to start training. For us, a measure of success would be having raucous local media that questions what we do, as well as what the insurgency does.
CONCLUDING REMARKS: WHAT’S NEXT?
The purpose of this conference was to put together people who have not had much chance to talk to each other. I think we have succeeded in this, but it is not up to me, but to the speakers in this concluding session to say if this is their view too. I will just say that the PRT practitioners, the people who have experience of PRTs and who are currently working for PRTs who have met on the margins of this conference, were able to produce a document that will be ready for distribution upon departure. Judging from that, the conference was not inconclusive. It produced some results. Now I would like to ask the representatives of the key groups who put this conference together to say a few words to wrap up and to tell us “What’s next?”, which is the title of this conference and this panel.
MARY THOMPSON JONES
Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of the United States of America, Czech Republic

One of the recurring themes of the discussion has been the obvious need for better coordination and better communication. Amid the vast range of issues discussed and the vigour of the exchanges we witnessed, no one can deny that this conference has been a step in the right direction towards that. It is really no surprise that we have not answered all the questions nor resolved all the remaining differences and viewpoints in the few hours that we have had to talk. But I think there are several points that are absolutely clear.

First of all, we have all agreed on the tremendous need for continued, effective and sustained international support for Afghanistan. Not just on the part of governments, but also from the very important non-governmental organizations.

Secondly, as many of the speakers have mentioned, we really need to communicate more clearly to each other so that we can better coordinate and integrate our efforts to the people of Afghanistan from the grassroots on up, and so we can better involve them in these efforts, and back home to the citizens of our own countries so that everyone better understands what we are working to achieve through the PRTs.
We owe it to these citizens to make it clear why we are there, what we are doing, and how we are working to achieve these goals.

Too often media emphasize acts of violence and destruction. Afghanistan has certainly suffered far too much of that, but conferences such as this also give media and practitioners a chance to shine the spotlight on efforts and accomplishments. It is essential that all of our publics clearly understand the purpose and the goals of the PRTs so that we continue to strengthen the institutions in Afghanistan and we help to continue building Afghan capacity at every level; from the villages on up, to ensure stability, security, good governance and the development that the Afghan people themselves are demanding, which they deserve, particularly after so many decades of tragedy and destruction.

Third, what we can accomplish together in Afghanistan is of vital importance for the national security of all of our countries.

Lastly, I believe the conference has vividly shown the value of these kinds of gatherings. We cannot afford to let the end product merely be a collection of well-meant words. Our challenge even now, as we look ahead to the conference in London is to put the words, the plans, the ideas, the stories that we heard, into reinvigorated action. We have had representatives at this conference from thirty-eight countries, all here in Prague. I think there is no doubt as to the strength and the goodwill that is still present for Afghanistan in the international community. Each of these countries and many more besides have an abiding interest in the
success of these efforts. And of course no one has more of an interest than the Afghan people themselves. I particularly want to single out Ambassador Fazelly and Deputy Minister Mastoor, and the entire Afghan delegation for their willing participation, their contributions and the chance that all of us have had to get to know them and their truths and their reality on the ground. So thank you all. I hope that this in some small way contributes to a brighter future for Afghanistan.
CONCLUDING REMARKS: WHAT'S NEXT?
I’ve really enjoyed being here. I enjoyed the cold weather of Prague, but the warm hospitality of our hosts; hosts from the Czech government, the embassies of the United States, Denmark and our own embassy and our ambassadors here; also from the Prague Security Studies Institute, Radio Free Europe, and all the other hosts who helped to organize this conference.

It was an excellent initiative to bring colleagues from forty-five countries here from their headquarters, from the provinces, the PRT representatives, donors, diplomats, civil society, research centres, media, and governors, and all other friends of Afghanistan. It made the conference and the debates so rich, speaking to many colleagues, whether Afghans or non-Afghans. We talked about limitations and we talked about strengths and the opportunities for learning. We should change business as usual. And we should adjust our future programmes accordingly. We also found that the understanding among participants about the effectiveness of the PRTs and their role was a mixed one. Information related to PRT works was limited, either to our own PRTs, or our own province. We found out many other things about what is going on in other PRTs, and what is going on in other provinces.
I also discovered how we are all enthusiastic and impatient to do better, to hand over our responsibilities to Afghans and go home as soon as possible. Having said all this, we had many shared views as well about the challenges and the way forward. We had common views about poor coordination, lack of proper ownership by Afghans, inadequate governance capacity, and the government offices, particularly at the sub-national level. There was agreement that we are not adequately transparent in our operations. We heard a number of times that the resources are not allocated equitably, especially in those areas that have done a good job in terms of security, counter-narcotics, governance, and other good programmes. We’ve also heard that PRTs are overstretched and need to sharpen their focus. We agreed that there is an obvious disconnect between the national level initiatives and sub-national level efforts to implement the excellent programmes that we designed or are implementing at the moment. A number of participants were not sure that quick impact projects are effective. We’ve just had some reports by a number of civil societies published in Afghanistan on this issue as well. We also discussed dependency and self-sufficiency and effective and sustainable programmes. We also talked about a number of settled and established programmes, like the basic package of health services, community education, the NSP, and others to work through.

But we also should learn that some programmes that are very well-known and favoured by donors have a limit of absorption capacity. We
should not overfund those programmes. There needs to be national-level knowledge about how funds are allocated to those programmes. I think many PRTs and many donors know how much they are putting into the successful programmes, but they should probably find out what the total funding is nationwide for those, and whether they are capable of spending or absorbing such generous support in the short fiscal year periods required. We also noticed that some panellists and other participants were not sure whether the government or the international community was taking the leading role in coordination. Some were saying it should be the governments, some were saying it should be the United Nations or UNAMA, and there were questions about whether our interventions are effective. There was talk about why we are engaged only in picking the low-hanging fruit. Mr. Popal stressed that we should shift to bulky and long-term projects. But these challenges should not discourage us because we also found that the government of Afghanistan, as well as the international community have very good programmes to address these issues and we have heard about many of them, especially from the PRT representatives who are here.

With all these challenges, we can easily define our next calls for action. I have put them in three categories: the immediate, the medium and the long-term. The immediate steps when we go back to our offices are that PRTs should not expand their areas of involvement but consolidate, especially in capacity development, and at the sub-national
level. This should be the first priority. They should link their programmes with national-level strategies, policies and programmes like the National Development Strategy of Afghanistan, and the Provincial Development Plans. And one of the things that they should consider is improving the preparation, design and feasibility stages of their programmes, for them to be sustainable and to have continued and long-term impact. A working and practical coordination mechanism is the next step that we should think about. Better communication between the national and sub-national level is another challenge. I have already drafted a sketch that I shared with some colleagues for how we should work at national and sub-national level, especially through the new cluster initiative. We should better publicize the effectiveness of PRT work. The recent report is a discouraging one. It means that we did not work much on publicising the effectiveness of our work.

We should show that the success measure was not only how fast we spent the money or how durable the projects are, but also what their long-term impact will be. Relevant organizations in Kabul and other provinces should take a better role, especially in the lead, such as IDLG and the Ministry of Finance on the central level and the governors’ offices on the province and district level. Coming to the medium-term steps that we should take, we should have a regular conference like this. This was a good example of information sharing.
We should increase the number of civilians in the PRT teams. There should be a proper finance strategy, longer-term than we have now, and a medium-term strategy for more equitable resource allocation, both sector-wise and geographically. And funds should be distributed through the budget. We should also talk about division of labour. Within a province, we have many actors, including PRTs. Many of them are doing similar things and sometimes duplicating roles and responsibilities. When we are talking about equitable resource allocation, we should also talk about mechanisms such as pooled funding, especially for those provinces where PRTs have limited resources. We should work on a better long-term communication strategy, on some sort of unified matrices to measure programme effectiveness. I know that there are PRTs that have mechanisms to measure their activities. But let's work in the Special and Executive Steering Committee on some sort of unified measures. And then measure our effectiveness nationwide.

Continuity, sustainability and building institutional memory of sub-national level offices should be another aim to consider in the medium-term. We have successful examples of other mechanisms, where local staff were attached to teams to ensure institutional memory; they ensured continuity of the activities, and they ensured better information sharing. PRTs should prepare themselves to work on a more integrated approach among different programmes that we are already implementing. We also talked about some new approaches like PDP
and DDP. We should integrate all our programmes, and an integrated approach should be one of our main priorities.

As for the long-term, PRTs are a new concept. We cannot say that six years or five years was enough, and we should not, at least I cannot, talk about exit strategy now. We can talk in the long run about exit strategy. And also, as I heard from His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister, there might come a time when PRTs transform into international communitarian and development organizations. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I hope that what we’ve gathered here will help set our next course of action.
Welcome to everybody, I am Jeff Gedmin and I am president of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Of course you know why Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty is in Prague. It is because a great Czech named Václav Havel at the end of the Cold War invited this company to move here from Munich. It was his strong conviction that even though the Cold War was over, the need for fair, reliable, accurate, independent journalism as a component of civil society and of democratic life was essential and would continue to be needed.

So we moved here because of that great Czech, and when we opened this new building last spring we invited ex-president Havel to come and chair the first editorial meeting as the honorary chairman. I can tell you he was not interested in photographs, he was not interested in a glass of wine, he was interested in working, and he was interested in Afghanistan. And I think that he asked more questions in that meeting about Afghanistan than anything else.

I know Afghanistan principally through our station, which is called Radio Azadi, which broadcasts in the country. And one thing I have learned from our colleagues in Kabul and here in Prague, is what this country once was pre-war, and most surely what it can and will be again. I also know Afghanistan through our listeners. We get in
Kabul and here in Prague, bags and bags of mail from every province, and phone calls as well; sometimes a couple of hundred a day with people expressing everything unimaginable and moving. And you know this world far better than I because you are on the ground and you are doing the work that protects and builds and grows this great nation again.

We had a caller recently who rang up and said, “There are foreign nationals in our village, and they are inciting violence and we do not want them here and we need help. Can you connect us to the government or NATO, or other authorities who can help?” We had another caller who said, “In my village there is a small school,” this was right on the Pakistan side of the border, “and they are inciting violence with young kids, and teaching them terrible things and we need help because this is not what we want.” Those letters that we get, I am happy to say, touch many people here and also in Washington D.C. The Library of Congress is going to do an exhibit of dozens and dozens of the beautiful letters we receive from our listeners. The purpose of the exhibit is not to talk about reconstruction, or defense and security, or politics, or ideology, or foreign policy. The purpose behind the exhibit is simply to help us Americans learn more about the people of Afghanistan, how they think, what they aspire to, and how they dream. I do not think we can do enough of that.
Concluding Remarks: What's Next?
TOMÁŠ POJAR
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic

Please allow me a few concluding remarks on behalf of the government of the Czech Republic and on behalf of my minister specifically. I would really like to thank the organizers who did the practical work of bringing everyone to Prague. I thank the U.S. Embassy, the Danish Embassy, the Afghani Embassy, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and the Czech Senate. Last, but not least, definitely, PSSI. I have heard that this conference was full of fruitful discussions, open debates, sharing experience, direct experience from the field in Afghanistan: be it on the panels, or the floor, or in the corridors. There were a lot of practical meetings to try to solve practical issues. I must say that I view this as the most important part from my experience of working for a humanitarian aid organization, as well as from the last couple of years as a diplomat. So I wish you all the best in your work, and I hope that once we get there for a similar conference and we will be able to say that something has really been achieved, that we are moving in the right direction, that Afghanistan is moving in the right direction, and that we will be able to see some real success and positive steps on the ground.
PRT PRINCIPLES
PRT PRINCIPLES

In Prague, government representatives of PRT contributing nations gathered from the field and from capitals on January 25th 2010 to share lessons learned and identify priority areas for coordination of their efforts to support Afghanistan. The delegates discussed Governance, Economic Development, Civilian-Military Coordination, and Ensuring Effectiveness.

The delegates agreed that enhanced cooperation in accordance with the following principles would improve PRT effectiveness:

**Governance**
- Encourage the passage and implementation of the Sub National Governance Policy.
- Strengthen the GIRoA-led PRT Executive Steering Committee to enhance coordination at the district, provincial and national level among the PRTs.
- Build local capacity of Afghan government officials and institutions through PRT personnel and programs in conjunction with the Afghan government’s Civilian Technical Assistance Plan.
- Promote transparency and accountability of PRT activities for both Afghans and international donors.
Economic Development
— Increase local procurement to stimulate the economy, while striving to avoid market distortions.
— Beyond our focus on staple crops, increase efforts to regenerate agribusiness to provide jobs and economic opportunities, help increase production of high value crops and explore new ways to help farmers access credit.

Civilian Military Coordination
— Increase capacity and consistency of civilian-military training opportunities for PRT personnel through such institutions as the NATO Academy in Oberammergau, Germany and the COIN Academy in Kabul.
— Strengthen civilian leadership and expertise in PRTs to enhance governance and development to increase stability and security.

Ensuring Effectiveness
— Solicit input of the population to identify root causes of instability.
— Develop plans and program activities that mitigate sources of instability and analyze the impact at the district level as well as the connections to the provincial and national levels.
— Support the efforts of Kabul headquarters and provincial officials to visit districts and engage with local populations.

This document only reflects the sense of the participants.
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Head of the Turkish PRT in Wardak Province since 2009, Mr Ari joined the Turkish Foreign Service in 1994. His other overseas posts include: The Netherlands, Bulgaria, Morocco and Italy. Home postings include the Far East Directorate (covers Afghanistan) and the International Security Affairs Directorate. Mr Ari is a graduate of NATO Defense College (Rome).

Akbar Ayazi
Director of Radio Azadi, RFE/RL’s Afghan service. Before immigrating to the United States during the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan in 1980, Mr Ayazi was a broadcaster for Afghan National Radio and TV. In the U.S. he worked as a broadcaster and later as executive producer of the West and South Asia division for the Voice of America (VOA). Mr Ayazi was born in Kandahar, Afghanistan. He graduated from Kabul University in 1976 with a degree in Economics and Industrial Management. His analysis has been featured on CNN, Al-Jazeera, and in news outlets across Europe and Asia.

Helena Bambasová

Martin Barták
Paul van den Berg
He has been working for Dutch NGO’s on Afghanistan for the last 7 years. Mr Van den Berg is currently employed as political adviser and program officer with the Dutch NGO Cordaid, which supports approximately twenty local NGO’s in Afghanistan. He has been engaged in civil-military interaction with the Dutch military since 2005, when the Dutch were responsible for the PRT in the province of Baghlan. Mr Van den Berg has been a member of the Steering Group of ENNA, the European Network of NGO’s in Afghanistan since 2005.

Martine van Bijlert
Co-Director of the Afghanistan Analysts Network, Ms van Bijlert has spent over 10 years working in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. She visited Quetta twice in the early 1990’s to study the situation of Afghan refugees. She has since then worked in Kabul for an international NGO under the Taliban (1997–98), as Political Secretary for the Netherlands Embassy in Tehran (2001–2004), and as Political Advisor to the EU Special Representative for Afghanistan in Kabul (2004–2008). She has travelled extensively in Afghanistan, most frequently to Oruzgan and speaks Dari.

Klaus von der Brelie
Chief Political Affairs Editor at the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung. Following his studies (politics, English studies and history) at Hanover University and his qualification as secondary modern school teacher, von der Brelie’s journalistic career began in 1975 when at first he worked as a trainee and subsequently as an editor at the “Cellesche Zeitung.” In 2001, he joined the editorial staff of the “Lower Saxony” section of the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung, becoming its chief editor in 1983. In 2001, Mr von der Brelie is the 27th winner of the Karl-Winnacker Prize, awarded by the German Atomic Forum.

Oldřich Černý
Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Prague Security Studies Institute and Executive Director of the Forum 2000 Foundation. Previously, he served as Director General of the Czech Foreign Intelligence Service (1993–1998) and National Security Advisor to President Václav Havel (1990–1993). He is a lecturer at New York University in Prague.
A. Carsten Damsgaard
Danish Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan and nominee Danish Ambassador to Afghanistan (pending approval from the Afghan Authorities). Before his appointment as Special Representative, Mr Damsgaard was Political Director in the Danish Foreign Ministry. He served as Danish Ambassador to Israel from 2003–2008. Other postings include Head of Foreign and Security Policy at the Danish Foreign Ministry and Deputy Permanent Representative to NATO and the WEU.

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Beth Dunford
Foreign Service Officer with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), currently serving as Senior Development Advisor to the Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Previous to her assignment at the State Department, she was on the USAID Administrator's policy staff, focusing on Afghanistan and strategic planning. Ms Dunford has served as Director for Alternative Livelihoods at USAID/Afghanistan and Director of the Assets and Livelihoods Transition Office at USAID/Ethiopia. She holds a PhD in Sociology from Michigan State University.

Bay Fang
Senior advisor to the U.S. government representative in southern Afghanistan. She focuses on strategic communications, working closely with the military command, and on information strategy for the region. She was the diplomatic correspondent for the Chicago Tribune (2007–2008) and for News and World Report magazine as well as an adjunct professor of journalism at Georgetown University (2007–2008). Ms Fang is a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and was awarded its International Affairs Fellowship in 2009.

Mohammad Kacem Fazelly
He has been Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Afghanistan to the Czech Republic since 2007. With a long career of lawyer and University professor, Mr Fazelly participated in many governmental commissions for the reform in administrative and judicial systems in Afghanistan. He is the author of many books in Dari and French on law and politics related to Afghanistan. Active at the Peace process in Roma and Bonn Conference, he served as Minister Counsellor and legal adviser to the President Karzai’s office (2002–2006).

Amy Frumin
International Affairs Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations (2007–2008). Ms Frumin was recently based in Panjshir, Afghanistan, where she was the USAID representative to the Provincial Reconstruction Team. She works as an independent consultant.
Jeffrey Gedmin
President of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Prague. He has been the director of the Aspen Institute Berlin from 2001 until 2007. From 1996 to 2001, Dr Gedmin was Executive Director of The New Atlantic Initiative.

Nick Grono
Deputy President at the International Crisis Group with responsibility for Operations. He leads Crisis Group’s work on international justice and has written extensively on justice, Afghanistan, and other conflict-related issues. A lawyer by background, he was previously Chief of Staff and National Security Advisor to the Australian Attorney-General.

Esmatullah Haidary
Managing Director/Deputy Managing Director at the Afghan Development Association (ADA) since 2005. He assumed this post after serving as a senior consultant with ADA’s regional office in Peshawar, Pakistan (2002–2004). Mr Haidary has been with ADA since 1992 as a planning director. Prior to joining the agency, he was the Irrigation and Technical Services Senior Manager at the Agriculture Development Bank of Afghanistan (1977–1992). Mr Haidary is the Board member and Head of Board Audit Committee of Afghanistan Rural Finance Company. He holds a degree from the Institute of Polytechnique in Kabul. Mr Haidary also completed training in Development Studies, Micro-Finance, Report Writing, Conducting Feasibility Studies and other relevant topics.

Dereck Hogan
A career U.S. Foreign Service Officer, Mr. Hogan is Senior Advisor to President Obama’s Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Prior to his current role, he served as the Department of State Representative in Afghanistan’s Oruzgan and Kunar Provinces where he was responsible for co-ordinating U.S. efforts to improve local governance (Kunar Province), articulating U.S. foreign policy interests to the Dutch-led PRT (Oruzgan Province) and advising the U.S. Ambassador and Department of State on both provinces’ needs and the opportunities for U.S. engagement. His other overseas assignments have included Russia, Belarus, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic.

Tomáš Kocián
Mr Kocián is currently a regional co-ordinator for Afghanistan and Pakistan at People in Need’s headquarters in Prague. Previously, he worked for over three years as an aid worker in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Jan Kohout
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. Mr Kohout served as the Czech Republic’s Permanent Representative to the EU (2004–2008) and previously as Deputy Head of the Permanent Mission to the UN and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Since 2000, he held several positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including European Correspondent, Deputy Director of the EU and Western Europe Department, and Political Director.
Ester Lauferová
Special Envoy for Provincial Reconstruction Team, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Dawn Liberi
Senior Civilian Representative for the Combined Joint Task-Force 82 (CJTF-82) at ISAF’s Regional Command-East at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan. She serves as the U.S. Government’s lead proponent for sub-national governance, stabilization and civil-military integration at regional level. Ms Liberi is a member of the U.S. Senior Foreign Service. She has worked at USAID for more than 25 years including as Mission Director in Iraq (2005–06), Nigeria (2002–05) and Uganda (1998–2002). She is the recipient of two Distinguished Honor Awards and also holds Superior Honor, Unit Citation and Meritorious Honor Awards from the U.S. Department of State.

Attiqullah Lodin
Governor, Province of Logar, Afghanistan

Milen Lyutskanov

Jean MacKenzie
Based in Kabul, Ms MacKenzie is Correspondent for Global Post and Program Director for the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR). In this role, she created a network of Afghan reporters who lend a critical local perspective to coverage of the conflict. She is a respected analyst and commentator and contributes frequently to projects for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, CNN and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Prior to Afghanistan, Ms MacKenzie spent over a decade as a journalist in Moscow.
Mohammad Mustafa Mastoor
Mohammad Mustafa Mastoor is the Deputy Minister of Finance of Afghanistan. Since 2000, he worked extensively in the fields of financial management, public health, procurement, general management, aid management, policy & strategy development and public finance in different international and national agencies within the country. Dr Mastoor worked as Director General (DG) Budget in the Ministry of Finance (2005–2009). He also served as Director of Grant and Contract Management in the Ministry of Public Health (2003–2005). In 2000–2003, he managed the Comprehensive Disabled Afghan’s Program (CDAP) and in 2003 also worked in the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan. Dr Mastoor has been an active member of several regional and international economic & development organizations. He has an MD Diploma from Medical Faculty of Kabul University (1992); EMBA in Management from Preston Educational Institute in Peshawar, Pakistan (2002); and will receive his M.Sc. in Health System Management (Distance Learning) from the London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM).

Zsolt Mikusi
Deputy Director Development at the Stability Division with the ISAF Headquarters. Lieutenant Colonel Mikusi also served as a course director and instructor within the Joint Operations Department at the NATO School.

Ole Moesby
Danish Ambassador to the Czech Republic, Mr Moesby is a career diplomat who has previously served in Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Egypt. After a post as Deputy Permanent Representative at the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN, Mr Moesby was appointed Head of Multilateral Development Co-operation at the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During this time, he acted as Governor for the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Amin Mudaqiq
Kabul Bureau Chief for RFE/RL’s Afghan Service, Radio Azadi–Afghanistan’s most listened to radio station. Prior to joining RFE/RL, Mr Mudaqiq served as a media specialist for the Afghan section of the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan.

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Executive Editor of RFE/RL. He is also Editor-at-Large of National Review where he served as Editor-in-Chief for nine years. He was editor of the National Interest (2003–2005) and Editor-in-Chief of United Press International (2000–2003). His previous posts included special adviser to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, associate editor of the London Times, editor of Policy Review, and parliamentary sketchwriter for the Daily Telegraph (1972–1979).

**Šimon Pánek**  
Executive Director of the humanitarian organization People in Need, which he co-founded in 1992. He was one of the student leaders during the Velvet Revolution of 1989. In 1992 he founded the news agency Epicentrum, specializing in conflict reporting. He worked in the Office of the Czech President Vaclav Havel (1992–97) as a policy analyst and specialist for the Balkan region and human rights issues.

**Tomáš Pojar**  
First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Previously, Mr Pojar served as Deputy Minister with responsibility for Bilateral Relations (2005–2006). From 1997–2005, he was Director of People in Need and, previously, its co-ordinator in the former Soviet Union.

**Susan Jane Pond**  
Senior Officer in the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division at NATO HQ. She has more than twenty five years experience at NATO and in the Canadian Public Service advising on policy, assessing risks, and developing practical tools to manage change/ transformation. In her current appointment in the Defense and Security Economics Directorate, she leads a project assessing the economic footprint of ISAF. Ms Pond studied at College St. Anne (Nova Scotia); she has a BA from College St. Boniface (Manitoba) and a Graduate Diploma in International Relations from the University of Lancaster (UK).

**Ghulam Jelani Popal**  
Director General at the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG). Prior to assuming this post in 2007, he served as the Deputy Minister for Revenue and Custom at the Afghan Ministry of Finance (2003–2005). Mr Popal was the Senior Social Worker at the San Joaquin Country in California (2000–2003) and a Representative of the Afghan Civil Society to UN summits (1995–1999). He managed the Afghan Development Association (1990–2000) and was the program officer in the Salvation Army Refugee Assistance Program (1982–1989). Mr Popal received a degree in political science at the Kabul University in 1978. He is fluent in Pashto, Dari, Urdu and English.

**Hugh Powell**  
Former Head of the British PRT in Helmand.
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*Head of Civilian Team of the Czech PRT in Logar Province, Afghanistan.*  
Ms Ranglová leads a team of ten civilian experts who are assisting the government of Afghanistan in providing basic services to the population while building governmental capacity at both district and provincial levels. Her background is as a non-governmental programme manager with experience of building and managing projects requiring financial management, fundraising, human resources & logistics. Her geographical areas of specialisation are the Middle East and Southeast Asia and she is experienced in disaster assessment and relief management. She holds a Masters Degree in Middle Eastern Studies from Charles University in Prague and speaks English and Arabic.

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**Matthew T. Sherman**  
*Department of State Senior Regional Representative for Logar and Wardak provinces in Afghanistan.*  
Prior to this appointment, he was a principal with SCI Consulting and an adjunct with the RAND Corporation. Mr Sherman advised both senior Iraqi and Coalition personnel on non-military security matters relating to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior (2003–2006). From 2006 until 2007, Mr Sherman worked as the political adviser to the First Cavalry Division, the military unit in charge of the “surge” operations throughout Baghdad. Prior to his appointments to Afghanistan and Iraq, he had other foreign assignments with the State Department and the OSCE to the Balkans, Ukraine and Moldova. Mr Sherman received his B.A and J.D. from the University of North Carolina, and an M.Phil. in International Relations from Cambridge University.
Bruce Sherman
As a Director at the Office of Strategic Planning & Performance Measurement, Bruce Sherman is responsible for global strategy and research for the U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), an independent federal agency and the parent organization for all government-supported, non-military broadcasting overseas. He joined the BBG in 1996 after twelve years at Radio Marti, the broadcasting service for Cuba, including five years as the station’s Deputy Director in charge of all daily operations. Mr Sherman has played a central role in launching new strategic broadcasting initiatives for the Muslim world, including Radio Sawa, Alhurra TV and Radio Farda for Iran. Mr Sherman directs the BBG’s global media research program, coordinating research directors at each of the partner broadcasters and a 60-person team at the BBG’s principal contractor, InterMedia. In 2005, he took temporary leave from the BBG to design and implement the first-ever U.S.-European, Muslim-to-Muslim dialogue in Brussels. Mr Sherman holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Florida and a master’s degree in liberal arts from St. John’s College.

Jiří Schneider

Přemysl Sobotka
President of the Parliament of the Czech Republic and Senator for the Liberec constituency (elected in 1996, re-elected in 1998 and 2004), he previously served as Councillor of the City of Liberec (1990–1998). A graduate of the School of General Medicine of Charles University in Prague, Dr Sobotka worked as a surgeon and radiologist at the Liberec Hospital, where, from 1991, he was the Head of the Radiology Department.
Barbara Stapleton
Senior Political Adviser to the Office of the EU Special Representative for Afghanistan & Pakistan. Ms Stapleton’s role covers security sector reform processes and support for the development of an independent media and civil society. She works closely with NATO and ISAF commands. Previously, she was Advocacy and Policy Co-ordinator for ACBAR, the main NGO co-ordination body for relief to Afghanistan. During the 1990’s, Ms Stapleton was a researcher and co-writer for the BBC’s human rights programmes and her research on the Shias of Iraq was published by the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group. She holds a post-graduate degree in Middle East History from the School of Oriental & African Studies at London University and completed her LLM in the International Law of Human Rights at the University of Essex.

Gary Thatcher
Journalist and editor. He has been with the Broadcasting Board of Governors—the umbrella agency which funds all U.S. non-military broadcasting—since 2000. Currently he serves as Director of External Liaison for the International Broadcasting Bureau where he focuses on delivery of programs to high-priority countries, including Afghanistan and Pakistan. Mr Thatcher has handled a number of major assignments for the Board, including creation and launch of Radio Sawa, the Board’s popular Arabic-language service. He served in Baghdad as Director of Strategic Communications for the Coalition Provisional Authority (2003–2004). Prior to joining the U.S. Government, he was National Editor of the Chicago Tribune.

Mary Thompson-Jones
Senior Foreign Service Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Prague since 2007, Ms Thompson-Jones has also served in Spain, Bosnia, Guatemala and Canada and has received three Meritorious Honor Awards for her overseas work. Her Washington D.C. assignments include as Deputy Staff Director for the Public Diplomacy Advisory Commission; Senior Press Officer in the Bureau of European Affairs; Deputy Policy Co-ordinator for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs; and Branch Chief for International Educational Advising in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Ms Thompson-Jones was a journalist.

Mark Ward
Based in Kabul, Mr Ward is Special Advisor on Development to the Special Representative of the Secretary General for the UN’s Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). He is responsible for the implementation of UNAMA’s mandate to improve donor co-ordination and aid effectiveness. Prior to this, he was Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Asia at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Mr Ward was responsible for USAID programs in South and East Asia and was Chair of the Agency’s tsunami task force, the South Asia earthquake task force and the Lebanon Reconstruction task force. In 2006, he was awarded the Service to America Medal for International Affairs.
**Nicholas Williams**

Recently appointed Head of Operations Section within the Operations Division of NATO International Staff. In November 2009, Mr. Williams completed a row and half year post in Afghanistan with ISAF, first as Political Advisor to ISAF forces in southern Afghanistan, and latterly as Deputy NATO Senior Representative in Kabul. Mr Williams has worked extensively in other conflict and post-conflict countries, including Iraq and the Balkans. He was awarded the Order of the British Empire in 2005 for having negotiated the first post-Saddam provincial Council in Basra and, in 2007, received the Queen’s Medal for distinguished service in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Idrees Zaman**

Researcher at the Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU). With a vast study of the history and political dynamics of Afghanistan and the region, he has been part of major research activities, including: Mid-term Evaluation of National Solidarity Program NSP (2005–6), Religious Civil Society (2006), Transformation of War Economies (2006), NGOs, PRTs, Government and Communities in Afghanistan (2007), Analysis of Asia Foundation survey “Afghanistan in 2007” (2007–8). His major publications include, among others, series of Conflict Analysis on provinces and districts in Afghanistan. Mr Zaman is currently involved in a project on Pilot Human Security Monitoring Indicators 2010, a report of which will be published this year.
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UNAMA  
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Kateřina Weissová  
Advisor to Senator Karel Schwarzenberg  
Czech Rep.

Bas Wels  
First Secretary  
Embassy of the Netherlands  
Czech Rep.

Jerzy Więcław  
Head of South Asia Division, Asia - Pacific Department  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nicholas Williams</td>
<td>Head of the Operations Section, Operations Division NATO</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>Michael Yon</td>
<td>Freelance Journalist, USA</td>
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<td>NATO Deck Responsible-ASIF, United Nations and International Conferences</td>
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<td>Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan</td>
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<td>Undersecretary / Civil-Military, Cooperation Civil Defense Office, Ministry of</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sam Zia Zarifi</td>
<td>Asia Director, Amnesty International, United Kingdom</td>
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<td>Gabor Zord</td>
<td>Journalist, Magyar Nemzet, Hungary</td>
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CONFERENCE PROGRAM
MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2010
Venue: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czernin Palace

12:00–16:30  PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP: BEST PRACTICES IN KEY AREAS AT PRTS (by invitation)

17:00–18:00  OPENING PLENARY SESSION
The year ahead: Working together for a more secure, stable and successful Afghanistan

Chair: Oldřich Černý, Executive Director, Prague Security Studies Institute, Czech Rep.
Helena Bambasová, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Rep.
Martin Barták, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Czech Rep.
Ghulam Jelani Popal, General Director, Independent Directorate for Local Governance, Afghanistan
Barbara Stapleton, Senior Political Adviser to the EU Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Afghanistan
Ole Moesby, Member of the Conference Steering Committee, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark, Czech Rep.
Mohammed Kacem Fazelly, Member of the Conference Steering Committee, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Czech Rep.

18:00  EVENING WELCOME GATHERING

Welcome Remarks:
Jan Kohout, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Rep.
TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2010

Venue: Senate of the Czech Republic, Wallenstein Palace

9:00–9:15  PLENARY SESSION

Welcome Remarks:
Přemysl Sobotka, President of the Senate of the Czech Republic

9:15–10:45  SESSION A: FOSTERING INTERAGENCY AND COMMUNITY COORDINATION

Governments, international organizations and NGOs: How can they best collaborate across and within provinces? How can PRTs best work with NGOs?

Chair: Akbar Ayazi, Afghan Service Director, RFE/RL, Czech Rep.
Tomáš Kocián, Desk Officer for Afghanistan and Pakistan, People in Need, Czech Rep.
Ahmadshah Salehi, Acting Economics Director, Ministry of Health, Afghanistan
Nick Grono, Deputy President, International Crisis Group, Belgium
Burkhard Ducoffre, German Federal Foreign Office Counsellor, German PRT in Kunduz, Afghanistan

9:45–11:00  COFFEE BREAK
SESSION B: CIVILIAN-MILITARY COORDINATION IN THE FIELD

Strengths and responsibilities of civilians and the military: How to get the balance?
Key elements of effective pre-deployment training; military support for
civilian leadership on governance and reconstruction?

Chair: Milen Lyutskanov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bulgaria
Nicholas Williams, Head of the Operations Section, Operations Division, NATO, Belgium
Zsolt Mikusi, Deputy Director Development, Stability Division, ISAF, Afghanistan
Bohumila Ranglová, Head of Civilian Team, Czech PRT in Logar, Afghanistan
A. Carsten Damsgaard, Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark

LUNCH

SESSION C: PRT PRACTITIONERS’ EXPERIENCES

Comparing notes on distinct PRT experiences: how does each define and support
unique local needs? How do PRTs help build local capacity?

Chair: Ester Lauferová, Special Envoy for Provincial Reconstruction Team, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Rep.
Mark Ward, Special Advisor on Development to the SRSG, UNAMA, Afghanistan
M. Türker Ari, PRT Head, Civilian Coordinator, Turkish PRT in Wardak, Afghanistan
Rohullah Niazi, Senior Advisor, Independent Directorate of the Local Governance, Afghanistan
Hugh Powell, Former Head of British PRT in Helmand, United Kingdom

COFFEE BREAK
15:45–17:15 **SESSION D: FOSTERING LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

*Developing community and provincial governments and courts; Creating effective and durable institutions; Working with Afghan community and tribal structures.*

**Chair:** Paul van den Berg, Political Adviser, Afghanistan Team, Cordaid, The Netherlands

Mohammad Mustafa Mastoor, Deputy Minister of Finance, Afghanistan

Dereck Hogan, Senior Governance Advisor, Office of U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, USA

Barbara Stapleton, Senior Political Adviser to the EU Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Afghanistan

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19:30 **EVENING RECEPTION HOSTED BY THE U.S. EMBASSY IN PRAGUE**

*Venue: U.S. Ambassador’s Residence*

Přemysl Sobotka, President of the Senate of the Czech Republic, Czech Rep.

Mary Thompson Jones, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of the United States of America, Czech Rep.

Mohammed Kacem Fazelly, Member of the Conference Steering Committee,
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2010
Venue: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

9:00–9:15      PLENARY SESSION
Opening Remarks:
John O’Sullivan, Chief Editor, RFE/RL, Czech Rep.

9:15–9:30      SETTING THE SCENE: BRIEFING ON NEW SURVEY “AFGHAN MEDIA USE AND ATTITUDES 2010?”
Bruce Sherman, Director, Office of Strategic Planning & Performance Measurement, U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors, USA

9:30–9:35      TRANSFER TO THE CONCURRENT SESSIONS

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

9:35–11:00      SESSION E-1: COOPERATION WITH AFGHAN LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP
Engaging the local population and developing mutual trust with local leaders.

Chair: Nick Grono, Deputy President, International Crisis Group, Belgium
Martine van Bijlert, Afghanistan Analyst Network (AAN), Afghanistan
Syed Qotbuddin Roydar, General Director of Coordination and Council of Provincials Relations, Independent Directorate for Local Governance, Afghanistan
Attiqullah Lodin, Governor, Province of Logar, Afghanistan
Mohammad Hussain Safi, Director of Agriculture, Province of Nangarhar, Afghanistan
9:35–11:00  **SESSION E-2: PROMOTING JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROVINCES**  
*Fostering local educational, infrastructural, agricultural and small business capacities; Promoting community social support structure.*

**Chair:** Amy Frumin, Independent Consultant, USA  
Beth Dunford, Senior Advisor on Development to the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, USA  
Esmatullah Haidary, Afghan Development Association (ADA), Afganistan  
Mohammad Najib Amiri, Advisor in Deputy Office for MRRD Programs, Afghanistan  
Susan Pond, Senior Officer, Defense and Security Economics Directorate, Political Affairs and Security Policy Division, NATO, Belgium

11:00–11:15  **COFFEE BREAK**

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

11:15–12:30  **SESSION F-1: MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STABILIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS**  
*Feedback from Afghan populace: getting it, understanding it, using it. What are our common metrics for measuring impact?*

**Chair:** Dawn Liberi, Senior Civilian Representative, ISAF’s Regional Command-East, Afganistan  
Šimon Pánek, Director, People in Need, Czech Rep.  
Matthew T. Sherman, Senior Regional Representative for Logar and Wardak Provinces, U.S. Department of State, USA  
Hugh Powell, Former Head of British PRT in Helmand, United Kingdom  
Idress Zaman, Research Manager, Cooperation for Peace and Unity, Afghanistan
11:15–12:25 SESSION F-2: COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC
Communicating the work of provincial officials and PRTs to the local population and contributing nations. Highlighting successes in the face of threats and disinformation.

Chair: Mohammed Amin Mudaqiq, Kabul Bureau Chief, RFE/RL, Afghanistan
Jean MacKenzie, Programme Director for Afghanistan, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Afghanistan
Klaus von der Brelie, Political and Security Editor, Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung, Germany
Bay Fang, Senior Advisor for U.S. Government Representative for Southern Afghanistan, Embassy of United States of America, Afghanistan
Gary Thatcher, Director of Marketing and External Liaison, International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB), USA

12:30–13:00 CONCLUDING REMARKS: WHAT'S NEXT?

Chair: Jiří Schneider, Program Director, Prague Security Studies Institute, Czech Rep.
Mary Thompson Jones, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of the United States of America, Czech Rep.
Mohammad Mustafa Mastoor, Deputy Minister of Finance, Afghanistan
Jeffrey Gedmin, President, RFE/RL, Czech Rep.
Tomáš Pojar, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Rep.

13:00–14:30 BUFFET LUNCH
ASSOCIATED EVENTS
MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2010
Venue: American Center Prague, Tržiště 13, Prague 1

AFGHANISTAN TODAY

18:00 AFGHAN MOVIE SCREENING
19:00 OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION AND DISCUSSION

TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2010
Venue: American Center Prague, Tržiště 13, Prague 1

17:00 RECONSTRUCTION OF AFGHANISTAN – MAIN PUBLIC PROGRAM
Premiere of a new documentary about the Czech Provincial Reconstruction Team in Logar entitled “Czech Aid under the Hindu Kush” with movie director Lukáš Roganský. Panel discussion with members of international Provincial Reconstruction Teams about the challenges of reconstruction in Afghanistan.
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2010
Venue: Hungarian Cultural Centre in Prague, Rytířská 25-27, Prague 1

17:00  AFGHAN REALITY THROUGH THE EYES OF JOURNALISTS
Panel discussion of Czech journalists debating how the PRT concept and its objectives, shown in a short documentary filmed by the Czech Defense Ministry, is reflected in the day-to-day reality they saw while working in Afghanistan. The documentary exhibition “Making the Future Safe” about humanitarian and development efforts in Afghanistan will also be opened.
ORGANIZERS / PARTNERS
STEERING COMMITTEE
Chair: Mary Thompson-Jones, Embassy of the United States of America

Members:
Ingrid Amer, Embassy of Estonia; Darian Arky, Embassy of the United States of America; Amy Carnie, Embassy of the United States of America; Oldřich Černý, Prague Security Studies Institute; Mohammad Kacem Fazelly, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; Eleanora Georgieva, Embassy of Bulgaria; Malene Hedlund, Embassy of the Kingdom of Denmark; Boris Kaliský, Prague Security Studies Institute; Jakub Klepal, Prague Security Studies Institute; Miroslav Konvalina, American Center; Julian Knapp, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; Petr Lang, Prague Security Studies Institute; John Law, Embassy of the United States of America; Ole E. Moesby, Embassy of the Kingdom of Denmark; Zdravko Popov, Embassy of Bulgaria; Jiří Schneider, Prague Security Studies Institute; Slobodan Srdanovic, Embassy of Bosnia-Herzegovina; Karla Štěpánková, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic; John Vance, Embassy of the United States of America; Catherine von Heidenstam, Embassy of Sweden.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE
Chair: Oldřich Černý, Prague Security Studies Institute

Members:
CONFERENCE TEAM

THE ORGANIZERS WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE FOR THEIR HELP:
The conference was held under the auspices of

PŘEMYSL SOBOTKA, President of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic
JAN KOHOUT, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and
MARTIN BARTÁK, Minister of Defense of the Czech Republic.