

# **Who is responsible for training the civilian members of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)?**

**A Monograph  
by  
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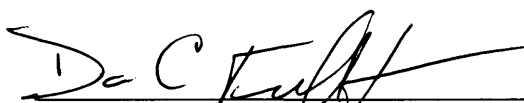
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## **Abstract**

Who is responsible for training the civilian members of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)? by Major J. Curtis Sawyer, II, United States Army, 52 pages.

The purpose of this monograph is to attempt to determine who is responsible for establishment and enforcement of standards that the civilian members of PRTs must accomplish in training before they deploy overseas. The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) have proven to be a very effective instrument in the conduct of stability operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, yet there is no set government standard to ensure proper training or preparation for personnel from US Government agencies before they arrive at a mobilization post for pre-deployment training. Apart from not having a stated mission, the most significant issue for PRTs and therefore the purpose of this paper is to address the preparation of government civilians from other agencies before they deploy.

Due to the newness of the PRTs, there are a limited number of books about them. Therefore, most of the research was conducted by looking at periodical, government testimonies and through the power of the internet. The key challenges continuing to face the PRTs are a lack of national strategy for their employment, changing reporting channels, variations of training standards, lack of doctrine, and uncertain chain of command. To date, the State Department has not published a training or preparation standard that personnel from other agencies must accomplish before they deploy to a mobilization site or overseas.

The results of this paper can be used to critically examine the current methodology and improve the training and preparation of the PRTs before they deploy. One possible solution is implementation of a Department of Defense coordination cell that works exclusively with the State Department to ensure that the training, preparation, and lessons learned are relayed to other agencies in a timely manner. As the United States learned in Vietnam with the CORDS program, "PRTs illustrate the need for effective, integrated action to achieve government-wide "unity of effort" in complex contingency operations.

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# Introduction

*Let us disappoint the Men who are raising themselves upon the ruin of this Country.*<sup>1</sup>

The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) have proven to be a very effective instrument in the conduct of stability operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, yet there is no set government standard to ensure proper training or preparation for personnel from US Government agencies before they arrive at a mobilization post for pre-deployment training. Apart from not having a stated mission, the most significant issue for PRTs and therefore the purpose of this paper is to address the preparation of government civilians from other agencies before they deploy. As defined by the 2008 House Armed Services Committee report, *Agency Stovepipes vs. Strategic Agility*, Provincial Reconstruction Teams are teams of civilian and military personnel charged with working in areas of conflict with host-country locals and governments below the national level that focus on civil community building and development.<sup>2</sup> To date, research for this paper has not discovered a published training or preparation standard by the State Department that personnel from other agencies must achieve before they deploy to a mobilization site or overseas. The results of this paper can be used to critically examine the current methodology and improve the training and preparation of the PRTs before they deploy. One possible solution is the implementation of a Department of Defense coordination cell that works exclusively with the State Department to ensure that the training, preparation, and lessons learned are relayed to other agencies in a timely manner. Based on current terminology, United States government civilians

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<sup>1</sup> John Adams, *The Votes and Proceedings of the Town of Boston* (November 20th, 1772) Signor of the Declaration of Independence and second President of the United States quoted in a pamphlet that was sent to each Town stating the Rights of the Colonists.

<sup>2</sup> House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. *Agency Stovepipes vs Strategic Agility*. Committee Hearing Report, 2008, 13.

from the Departments of State, Agriculture, and the Agency for International Development are referred to as personnel from other agencies or simply as Interagency.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams have proven to be incredibly effective in conducting stability operations in Afghanistan when employed and supported properly by their agencies and the battle-space owner. While the initial mission of the PRTs was to facilitate security and reconstruction by helping extend the reach of the host nation's government, their purpose was expanded to include strengthening local governance, facilitating humanitarian and community development efforts.<sup>3</sup> Since the first PRT formed in Gardez on 31 December 2002, the number and character of the teams has grown to twenty-three comprised of personnel from fifteen countries as of December 2009.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, the effectiveness of the PRTs is largely dependent upon how well they are supported and how well they are incorporated into the campaign plan of the battle-space brigade.<sup>5</sup>

The 2006 edition of Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operations Planning*, defines a campaign as "a series of related military operations aimed at accomplishing strategic and operational objectives within a given time and space."<sup>6</sup> While there is currently a debate within the military as to whether the new modular brigades are straddling the line between the tactical and operational levels of war, PRTs affect and influence all three levels; strategic, operational and tactical.<sup>7</sup> With proper incorporation at the tactical level, the PRT can support the battle-space brigade's objectives through its interaction with the local populace. These improved relationships

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<sup>3</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and Iraq*. Report number GAO-09-86R (Washington: 2008), 1.

<sup>4</sup> USAID, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams," January 20, 2010, <http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/program.31a.aspx> (accessed January 27, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> COL Sean W. McCaffrey, *PRTs in Regional Command-East (OEF-VIII)*. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College Strategy Research Project, 2009), 5.

<sup>6</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*. (Washington: 2006), IV-2.

<sup>7</sup> US Army, *FM 3-0, Operations*. (Washington: 2008), 6-1.



can provide information and external assessment to the brigade, enabling a more complete picture of the environment. At the operational level, the PRTs provide a venue to link tactical tasks with strategic goals. The sequencing of the projects both the battle-space brigade and PRT accomplish also shapes the environment.

The PRTs derive the majority of their objectives from stated policy and directives from the National Command Authority and the Department of State through the offices of the Ambassador or their designated representative. The regional combatant commander or their designated senior military commander, such as the current International Security Assistance Force commander in Afghanistan, can also influence the strategic objectives of the PRTs through the military chain of command.<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, the reconstruction and stabilization approach in Afghanistan that led to the development of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams always used a bottom-up approach.

One of the significant issues affecting the preparation and training for the PRTs is the establishment of standards across the whole of government. Currently, the Department of State is tasked by *National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD 44)* to “empower the Secretary of State to improve coordination, planning, and implementation for reconstruction and stabilization (R&S) assistance for foreign states and regions at risk of, in, or in transition from conflict or civil strife.”<sup>9</sup> However, research for this paper was unable to determine a published training or preparation standard from the State Department that personnel from other agencies must accomplish before they arrive for pre-deployment training at a military post. As explained in the 2008 House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations report, “there is no clear definition of the PRT mission, no concept of operations or doctrine, no standard

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<sup>8</sup> House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. *Agency Stovepipes vs Strategic Agility*. Committee Hearing Report, (Washington: 2008), 47.

<sup>9</sup> President, Directive, *National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD 44*. (Washington: December 7, 2005), 2.

operating procedures.”<sup>10</sup> It is unscrupulous to ask PRTs to improve the quality of life for the people of Afghanistan or have quantifiable benchmarks for their success without a clear mission or doctrine as a basis for their existence.

As the designated lead for reconstruction and stabilization (R&S) assistance to foreign states, there should be an office in the Department of State responsible for training the PRTs of both theatres since currently the PRTs are the organization in use to provide assistance.<sup>11</sup> Within the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) at the Department of State, there is the Interagency Training & Education office whose mission is “to improve and maintain the operational readiness of the Civilian Response Corps and other personnel who are involved in implementing reconstruction and stabilization operations.”<sup>12</sup> However, the training is provided in collaboration with other US Government agencies and is not directed by the Department of State. Research for this paper has determined that there are already numerous offices and personnel from numerous agencies which are studying and developing more information about the PRTs. The Department of State maintains a PRT SharePoint® website for those who are preparing to deploy on PRTs and for information sharing. The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) does participate in the training and preparation of some civilian members of the PRTs but the standard for who attends the FSI or attends the military-led training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina is uncertain.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, 18.

<sup>11</sup> President, Directive, *National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD 44*. (Washington: December 7, 2005), 2.

<sup>12</sup> Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), “Interagency Training & Education,” <http://www.crs.state.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.display&shortcut=CSZJ> (accessed March 30, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> “The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) is the Federal Government’s primary training institution for officers and support personnel of the U.S. foreign affairs community, preparing American diplomats and other professionals to advance U.S. foreign affairs interests overseas and in Washington.” Taken from the State Department website, <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/> (accessed 25 March 2010).

Research for this paper and investigations by the Government Accountability Office and Congressional Committees cannot locate published doctrine or regulations by the Department of Defense or State specifically focused on the PRTs; however, there are numerous articles, hearings, and findings periodically published about the PRTs changing the research information.<sup>14</sup> It is difficult to locate information on the PRTs because different agencies and departments publish internal information on the PRTs and this information is not centrally located for others agencies to access. Similarly, there are personnel from the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF), West Point, the Senate Research Service, and the Fort Bragg Training Support Brigade who are also researching ways to improve the effectiveness of the PRTs, but not all of this information is being shared within the US government. Communication issues within the US government are principally the result of bureaucratic stove-piping.

The complexity of training and preparing Government members to deploy to a foreign land and accomplish numerous governmental infrastructure projects within a limited tour cannot be understated.<sup>15</sup> When the PRTs deploy, they will have to communicate and receive supplies through an austere support mechanism. Numerous hearings and findings reiterate the impressiveness of dedicated individuals on PRTs being able to accomplish national goals despite significant challenges. Proper selection and training of personnel for the PRTs is critical to their success. The next chapter provides more information on the literature resources used for research on the PRTs and the challenges they face.

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<sup>14</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Stabilization And Reconstruction; Actions Needed to Improve Governmentwide Planning and Capabilities for Future Operations*. Report number GAO-08-228T. Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, (Washington: Government Accountability Office, October 30, 2007), 7 and House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. *Agency Stovepipes vs Strategic Agility*. Committee Hearing Report, (Washington: 2008), 42.

<sup>15</sup> House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, 25.

## Literature Review

In order to determine how to improve the training and preparation for the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) research for materials included a variety of resources. Due to the newness of the PRT program, and the fact that PRTs receive little of the press attention they deserve, there are a limited number of publications and references about the PRTs. Information sources are divided into the following categories; Government publications, interviews, articles in periodicals and articles on the internet. Government publications include testimony before Congress, Congressional delegation research projects, and press releases. Various agencies and publications such as the U.S. Institute of Peace, US Department of State, USAID, and the Small Wars Journal conducted interviews with personnel involved with the PRTs. Articles that reference the PRTS are published in newspapers, paper works, and magazines. The power of the internet to search for information on the PRTs, and the reference staff at the Combined Arms Library (CARL) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, have been indispensable in locating references and material for this paper.

The majority of the Government policy publications do not cover the PRTs in specific detail as organizations; nonetheless, the PRTs are expected to derive their objectives from leaders in Afghanistan and the published National Strategy documents. The fact that Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are at the forefront of operations, conducting what is viewed as the decisive mission on two war fronts, and yet are not explicitly mentioned in national policy, highlights a seam in the whole of government approach and is in line with the ad-hoc basis of staffing and funding the teams. The January 2005 edition of the US Army manual on planning and orders production, FM 5-0 *Army Planning and Orders Production*, states in its preface “doctrine provides a military organization with unity of effort and a common philosophy,

language, and purpose.”<sup>16</sup> While this is a military view that is not necessarily shared by civilian counterparts, it does illustrate the point that without a common reference point, civilian and military organizations will have challenges working together. Members selected to join PRTs are chosen from all branches of military service and from all components of each; active, National Guard and Reserves.<sup>17</sup> As a result, the teams trained at Fort Bragg pull together in less than four weeks to become an operational unit. The three civilian members from the other agencies and the commander each bring different funding sources to the team since the PRTs do not have an operational budget. PRTs are referenced and highlighted by the White House and State Department, mentioned to be supported by military units in Department of Defense (DoD) Directives, but are not specifically described as extensions of policy. While not mentioned by name in such items as the United States Strategy or the *National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD-44)*, they are the government’s chief representatives responsible for executing operations in pursuit of National goals on the ground in Afghanistan.

Difficulties experienced in reconstruction and stabilization in Iraq with the Coalition Provisional Authority highlighted the challenges faced by US Government agencies working together overseas. President George W. Bush provided strategic guidance in *NSPD-44* on December 7, 2005 to “promote the security of the United States through improved coordination, planning, and implementation of reconstruction and stabilization (R&S) assistance for foreign states and regions at risk of, in, or in transition from conflict or civil strife.”<sup>18</sup> This document is significant because it specifies that the Secretary of State shall coordinate and lead integrated

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<sup>16</sup> US Army, *FM 5-0 Army Planning and Orders Production*. (Washington: 2005), v.

<sup>17</sup> Information provided from interviews in October 2008 with current and former PRT Commanders and members of the 189<sup>th</sup> Training Support Brigade, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the US Army unit that was tasked with developing and conducting the training of the PRTs.

<sup>18</sup> Department of State, “FAQ- What is NSPD-44,” <http://www.crs.state.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.display&shortcut=49QT> (accessed March 17, 2010).

United States Government efforts involving all U.S. Departments and Agencies with relevant capabilities, to prepare, plan for, and conduct stabilization and reconstruction activities.<sup>19</sup>

As such, the Secretary of State is responsible for developing of strategies for reconstruction and stabilization activities, coordination of interagency processes, and leading U.S. development of a strong civilian response capability. In situations where there is armed conflict and the U.S. military is involved, NSPD-44 directs the Secretary of State to coordinate with the Secretary of Defense to ensure harmonization of civilian reconstruction and stabilization activities with any planned or ongoing U.S. military operations across the spectrum of conflict. To support the Department of State in reconstruction and stabilization efforts, the Department of Defense issued Directive 3000.05 on November 28, 2005 that establishes how the Department of Defense will address and develop its functions for stability, security, transition and reconstruction.<sup>20</sup>

In 2007, the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) in the Department of State created the Interagency Management System for Reconstruction & Stabilization (IMS). The Interagency Management System was developed in order to implement guidance received in *NSPD-44* and was an attempt to streamline the management system for Reconstruction and Stabilization efforts that includes the PRTs. In March 2007, Janet Beik, a Senior Advisor in the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization released a well-written paper describing the background and way ahead of the IMS. Her report poignantly states,

the Interagency Management System addresses strategic, operational and tactical levels of engagement for highly complex crises that are national security priorities, where multiple U.S. Government agencies are involved, and that might require military operations. At the strategic level, among headquarters offices in

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<sup>19</sup> Department of State, "FAQ- What is NSPD-44," <http://www.crs.state.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.display&shortcut=49QT> (accessed March 17, 2010).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. and Department of Defense, *Directive 3000.05*, (Washington: 2005).

Washington, the new system calls for a **Country Reconstruction and Stabilization Group** to coordinate policy and planning. At the operational level, the Interagency Management System projects an **Integration Planning Cell** that could deploy to the U.S. geographic combatant commands or to an equivalent multinational headquarters. At the tactical level, the **Advance Civilian Team** is designed to coordinate and support the execution of U.S. plans for reconstruction and stabilization under the authority of the chief of mission in the crisis country.<sup>21</sup>

Once this system is fully implemented, the PRTs, or possibly future Field Advance Civilian Teams, would work under the Advance Civilian Teams.<sup>22</sup> Advance Civilian Teams (ACT) are the Department of State's rapid response teams which deploy to the field to support the Chief of Mission in implementing the U.S. Reconstruction and Stabilization strategic plan. The ACT can then "deploy Field Advance Civilian Teams (FACTs), to provide maximum capacity to implement Reconstruction and Stabilization programs at the provincial or local level, similar to PRTs that have been operating in Iraq and Afghanistan. Depending on the situation, FACTs can integrate with U.S. or other military forces to foster U.S. and coalition unity of effort."<sup>23</sup>

A report from the United States House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services titled *Agency Stovepipes vs. Strategic Agility; Lessons we need to learn from Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan, April 2008* is a US Government document that covers all aspects of the PRTs. It compiles information taken from sixteen Oversight and Investigations Hearings, numerous Member briefings and Staff meetings, Congressional Delegation (CODELs) and Staff Delegations (Staffdels) trips, and surveys from members of

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<sup>21</sup> Janet Beik, *Developing the United States Government's Interagency Management System for Reconstruction and Stabilization: A Work in Progress*. Agency Overview, (Washington: United States Department of State, 2007), 2. emphasis added by Beik.

<sup>22</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Stabilization And Reconstruction; Actions Needed to Improve Governmentwide Planning and Capabilities for Future Operations*. Report number GAO-08-228T. Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, (Washington: Government Accountability Office, October 30, 2007), 7.

<sup>23</sup> Ambassador John Herbst, Prepared statement before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation. (Washington: House Armed Services Committee, October 30, 2007), 4.

PRTs and will be referenced throughout this paper. The literature researched for this paper relayed how the concept of the PRTs developed and the need for stabilization evolved. The section describes how the PRT concept evolved.

## **Formation of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams**

Military operations in Afghanistan swept the Taliban from positions of authority in 2002. The military offensive displaced the former governmental entities creating a vacuum specifically with regard to government services to the provinces. Without government services from the national level, the provinces reverted to a society principally run by warlords and a people without a true national identity. This ungoverned space created a problem for the United States' efforts to provide stability in Afghanistan and support the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan government. The initial military solution was to use Civil Affairs teams in Coalition Humanitarian Liaison Cells (CHLCs) and Civil Affairs Teams–Afghanistan (CAT-As) to support humanitarian, relief and reconstruction efforts.<sup>24</sup> These teams consisted of ten-twelve Soldiers which provided information to the U.S. military on humanitarian needs of the local populace and conducted small, DoD-funded projects to build trust and confidence among the local population.<sup>25</sup>

Typically composed of US Army Reservists that have civilian occupations such as civil services, construction and education, Civil Affairs Soldiers are unique, and their military specialties often correspond to their civilian occupations. Civil Affairs Officers are specifically trained to act as a liaison between the Army and civilian authorities, non-governmental

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<sup>24</sup> Colonel Michael K. Seidl and Michael J. Dziedzic, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams*. (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, Special Report 147, September 2005), 3.

<sup>25</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and Iraq*. Report number GAO-09-86R (Washington: 2008), 3.



organizations (NGOs), and populations.<sup>26</sup> While culturally trained to assess the needs of the civilian populace and facilitate humanitarian assistance activities, the Soldiers in Afghanistan faced a lawless region where government services did not extend much outside the city lights. In many cases, the Soldiers found conditions that had not changed in hundreds of years as they visited locations where the previous governments had not provided services. Due to the scope and complexity facing these Soldiers, the military leadership in Afghanistan realized they needed assistance from other United States agencies to improve governance, reconstruction, and stability to the people of Afghanistan.

In 2002, a joint planning effort by the United States Central Command, the unified regional combatant command with military responsibility for Afghanistan, the Departments of State (DoS) and Defense (DoD), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), developed the concept for the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). As stated in the 2008 Government Accountability Office report, *PRTs in Afghanistan and Iraq*, the teams were to consist of both civilians and military personnel to provide the team's own security and transportation, had broad expertise, and were intended to be interim structures and dismantled after the military achieved stability.<sup>27</sup> Defining and quantifying what stability means is not the purpose of this paper, but given the mandate to assist in reconstruction and stabilization until the military achieved stability in Afghanistan, PRTs remain gainfully employed for the foreseeable future.

While military operations were successful in establishing security in the provinces of Afghanistan, there was still a need to provide government services to the local populace.

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<sup>26</sup> GoArmy.com. "Army ROTC-Civil Affairs Officer" <http://www.goarmy.com/RotcViewJob.do?id=302> (accessed March 17, 2010). Civil Affairs Soldiers traditionally serve to coordinate military operations, distributing aid and supplies directly and are able to assess need for critical infrastructure projects.

<sup>27</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and Iraq*. Report number GAO-09-86R (Washington: 2008), 1.

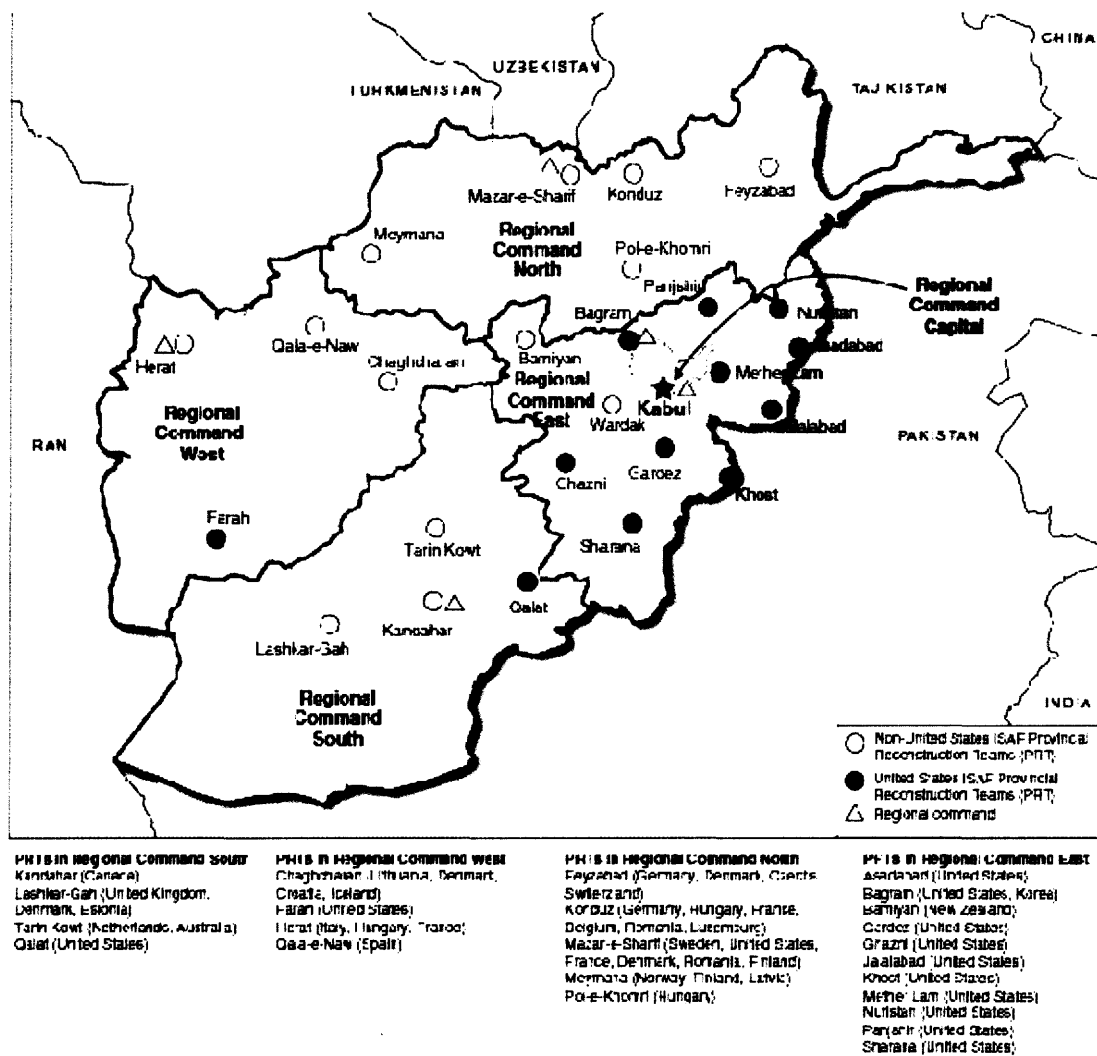


Figure 1: PRT and Regional Commands in Afghanistan, 2008<sup>33</sup>

Success of the PRTs is also dependent upon the quality and composition of the personnel assigned to the teams. Provincial Reconstruction Teams are teams of civilian and military personnel charged with working in areas of conflict with host-country locals and governments

<sup>33</sup> Source: GAO-07-801SP Securing, Stabilizing, and Reconstructing Afghanistan, p.20, ISAF and Department of Defense.

Designed as an economy of force, the PRTs were to assist in restoring stability in ungoverned spaces without a large number of military forces.<sup>28</sup> As stated in the United States Institute for Peace's Special Report 147, PRTs "are the grease, not the wheel, for enabling local government and security forces to function within accepted norms."<sup>29</sup> The initial mission of the PRTs was to facilitate security and reconstruction by helping extend the reach of the central government through improvements to infrastructure and communication. Their goal was to extend the reach of the Afghan government to the provinces, not the reach of the US military.<sup>30</sup> However, once functioning on the ground and understanding the complexity of the situation, the PRTs purpose expanded to include strengthening local governance, humanitarian and community development efforts.<sup>31</sup> Their efforts included providing the funds for the building of facilities, education improvements, and providing skilled facilitators and technical experts to build Afghan capacity.<sup>32</sup> The team's missions grew because they were best positioned to interact with the Afghanistan civilians allowing the military efforts to focus on security operations. In military terms, the PRTs experienced mission creep as their roles and responsibilities evolved over time. As will be discussed later in this paper when reviewing the history of the CORDS Program in Vietnam, having a mixed civilian-military organization focused on humanitarian, governance, and reconstruction operations, i.e.: stability, military forces are better able to provide security for the local populace.

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<sup>28</sup> Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs. *Provincial Reconstruction Teams*. Factsheet, (Washington: Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, 2007), 1.

<sup>29</sup> Colonel Michael K. Seidl and Michael J. Dziedzic, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams*. (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, Special Report 147, September 2005), 8.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and Iraq*. Report number GAO-09-86R (Washington: 2008), 1.

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Department of State, "2009 Year In Review: Smart Power in Action." March 01, 2010. <http://www.state.gov/s/crs/rls/rls/137259.htm#> (accessed March 17, 2010).

below the national level that focus on civil community building and development.<sup>34</sup> Given the limited personnel that were to be assigned to the teams, every individual chosen provided a different specialty to the team. As such, the team's progress can easily be thwarted by the injury of any member, so personnel that provide security compose almost half of the team. The Government Accountability Office describes the different roles and responsibilities of members of the PRTs as:

Members of the PRT leadership team have different roles. According to the DoD, the PRT commander is responsible for PRT security, coordination of interagency efforts, and provincial and district capacity-building. The USAID field program officer carries out activities for USAID's PRT-managed program. The field program officer facilitates, coordinates, monitors, and reports on all USAID projects in the area, and identifies local development needs and builds relationships with local leaders. According to a State official, the State representative at a PRT reports to the embassy on the political situation in the province, works with local government officials, and serves as a political advisor. The USDA official serves as an agricultural advisor and trains and mentors Afghan agricultural officials in developing and implementing agricultural activities.<sup>35</sup>

Personnel from all components of the United States Army, both active and reserve, the United States Air Force, and the United States Navy staff the PRTs.<sup>36</sup> The teams are organized functionally with its own support structure and the capability to improve the stability, reconstruction, and governance of the people of Afghanistan. The Commander, an Afghanistan representative and the three members from the Department of State, Agriculture, and USAID serve as the leadership for the team. With assistance from the military enablers on the team, the

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<sup>34</sup> House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. *Agency Stovepipes vs Strategic Agility*. Committee Hearing Report, (Washington: 2008), 13.

<sup>35</sup> Government Accountability Office. *Military Operations: Actions needed to Improve Oversight and Interagency Coordination for CERP in Afghanistan*. Report to Congressional Committees, (Washington: GAO, 2009), 8. Roles of PRT members: sources for the above statements are based on numerous interviews and listed in the appendix of the GAO report.

<sup>36</sup> Information provided from interviews in October 2008 with current and former PRT Commanders and members of the 189<sup>th</sup> Training Support Brigade, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the US Army unit that was tasked with developing and conducting the training of the PRTs.

leadership focuses the team's efforts on improving life for the Afghanistan populace and habitually leaves their bases to interact with Afghan leaders under the protection of the Force Protection Platoon. The Administrative/Operations and Combat Service Support personnel focus their efforts internally to provide support to members of the PRTs.

The commander of Afghanistan Provincial Reconstruction Teams is a United States Air Force Lieutenant Colonel or a United States Navy Commander. During formation of the PRTs, the Army determined that it did not have the personnel available to command the PRTs, so the Air Force and Navy were asked to provide the commanders as in-lieu-of assignments. This meant that a service member from one service could accomplish the same task as a service member from a different service based on their experiences. Additionally, the Air Force and Navy requested that since they were providing personnel, they also requested to provide the commanders of the teams. Regardless of component service, the PRT commander is a product of a selection process similar to the United States Army's board process for selection to command a battalion.<sup>37</sup> The three personnel from the Interagency are selected based on the individual agency's criteria to conduct operations overseas without direct supervision.<sup>38</sup> The rest of the personnel on the teams organize themselves along functional positions. The Administrative/Operations personnel specialize in administrative, logistical, and operational tasks such as processing paperwork, completing training schedules and communication tasks. Providing the "beans, bullets and band-aids" for the team are the Combat Service Support personnel.<sup>39</sup> The Force Protection/Security element is usually a platoon from the National Guard from an Infantry, Armor/Cavalry or Field artillery unit charged with securing the perimeter of the PRT compound or movement of the team

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<sup>37</sup> Information provided from interviews in October 2008 with current and former PRT Commanders and members of the 189<sup>th</sup> Training Support Brigade, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the US Army unit that was tasked with developing and conducting the training of the PRTs.

<sup>38</sup> USAID, "PRT Quick Impact Projects." January 20, 2010.  
<http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/Activity.91.aspx> (accessed January 30, 2010).

<sup>39</sup> "Beans, bullets and band-aids" is a common military expression of logistical support.

in vehicles. Lastly, the team Enablers are military personnel with expertise in community stabilization, reconstruction, and security.<sup>40</sup> The chart below depicts teams that are designed to function without additional staff support from a higher organization.

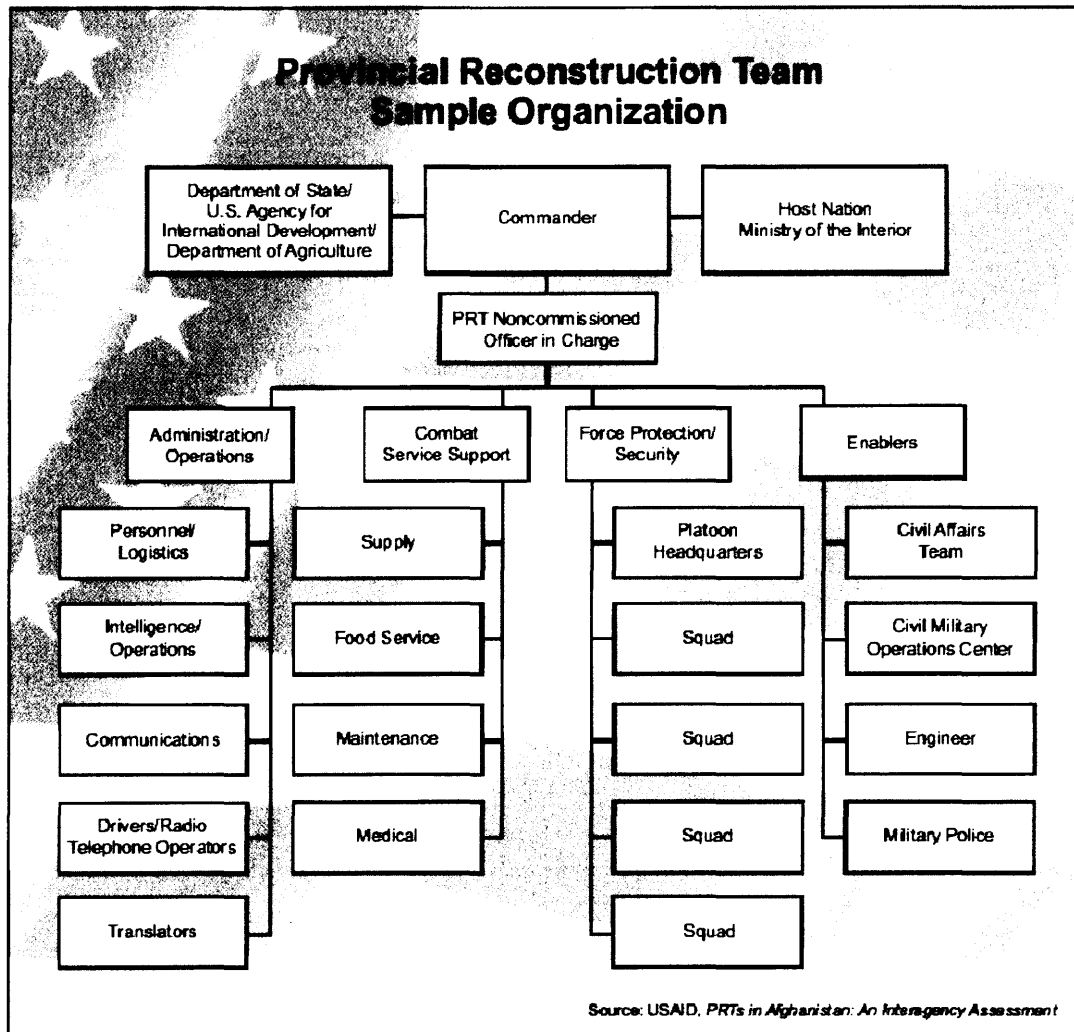


Figure 1: PRT Core Organization

<sup>40</sup> Information provided from interviews in October 2008 with members of the 189<sup>th</sup> Training Support Brigade, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the US Army unit that was tasked with developing and conducting the training of the PRTs.

Colonel Sean W. McCaffrey, while serving as the Deputy Commander for the Fourth Brigade Combat Team, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, and specifically as the officer charged with oversight of the unit's four U.S., one Czech, and one Turkish PRTs, provided the following examples of how the teams have diversified their mission. First, the teams contacted soil and water experts to help develop local capacity and assisted agricultural growth.<sup>41</sup> Secondly, a senior officer from the Afghanistan Ministry of Interior augments each team within the 82<sup>nd</sup> Division's sector to further its effort of improving communication between the provinces and the national government. PRTs also conducted Rule of Law training and gatherings of provincial and district Afghan lawyers through funding support from USAID. This funding also provided for an Afghan lawyer on the U.S. Military Brigade Staff that greatly improved needed services, relations, and Rule of Law training.<sup>42</sup> PRT mission diversification also occurred when one team conducted a "contractor fair" for the males in Qalat province, northwest of Kandahar, Afghanistan. While the PRT was employing locals for projects, they realized that with better training on organizing workers, submission of contract bids, and basic construction skills, the Afghan males' chances of fruitful employment would increase.<sup>43</sup> To improve the quality of life and education for Afghan children, the State Department reports:

Since 2001, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) repaired or built more than 670 schools, printed 69 million textbooks, and improved the qualifications of 54,000 Afghan teachers in instructional methodologies, subject knowledge and professional attitudes. These programs have expanded and improved the quality of community-based education in areas where there are no government schools. **USG assistance has extended to 18 provinces, 1,565 communities, more than 43,000 children (60 percent of whom are girls), and 1,565 teachers. In the last fiscal year, we provided literacy training and**

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<sup>41</sup> COL Sean W. McCaffrey, *PRTs in Regional Command-East (OEF-VIII)*. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College Strategy Research Project, 2009), 20.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>43</sup> War is Boring, "Reconstruction Teams to the Rescue!" May 15, 2007. <http://warisboring.com/?p=237> (accessed November 18, 2009).

**instruction in productive skills to more than 100,000 people from over 1,500 communities in 20 provinces.<sup>44</sup>**

Key challenges facing the PRTs are a lack of national strategy for their employment, changing reporting channels, variations of training standards, lack of doctrine, and uncertain chain of command. Findings from the House Committee's research highlight that neither the Departments of State nor Defense have ensured that there is a strategy, goals or milestones for the PRTs in Afghanistan.<sup>45</sup> *National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD 44)* empowers the Department of State as the lead agency for reconstruction and stability operations on foreign lands but the Department of Defense has taken the lead on training and funding personnel for the teams.<sup>46</sup> Numerous Congressional hearings have reported that there is no stated mission, funding source, or reporting structure for the PRTs; each team accomplishes its mission to the best of its ability based on the strength of its leadership personalities rather than as an instrument of national power. The current command and reporting structure prevents coordination of effort and limited success for the teams as a whole without a coordinated PRT effort from the United States Government civilian leadership. This disparity of effort has continued because there is not a quantifiable way to determine the success rates of PRTs as a baseline for improvement. When highlighting the unclear objectives or mission of the PRTs, the House Armed Services Committee accurately states, "the PRTs thus lack clean lines of authority, and the coordination procedures between civilian and military personnel are disjointed and incoherent, which can have the

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<sup>44</sup> Department of State, "Advancing the Rights of Women and Girls: Keys to a Better Future for Afghanistan." January 29, 2010. [http://www.state.gov/s/special\\_rep\\_afghanistan\\_pakistan/2010/136250.htm](http://www.state.gov/s/special_rep_afghanistan_pakistan/2010/136250.htm) (accessed March 16, 2010). bold emphasis in original State Department document.

<sup>45</sup> House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. *Agency Stovepipes vs Strategic Agility*. Committee Hearing Report, (Washington: 2008), 34. See Appendix A for the full findings and recommendation of the House Armed Services Committee report.

<sup>46</sup> President, Directive, *National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD 44*. (Washington: December 7, 2005), 2.



unintended effect of making a PRT's operations personality-driven."<sup>47</sup> The military goal of unity of command for the Provincial Reconstruction Teams is often construed as a bridge too far, but making administrative changes within the authority of the civilian and military leadership can create the more important unity of effort.

Unity of Command is one of nine military Principles of War currently used in US Army manuals and states "for every objective, ensure unity of effort under one responsible commander."<sup>48</sup> By making changes within their authority, civilian and military leaders can set the conditions for a unity of effort. As stated in the US Army planning manual, "a common understanding of the situation...provides the basis for unity of effort and the exercise of subordinates' initiative during execution."<sup>49</sup> The PRTs will benefit from the leadership's unity of effort and the process of project selection will become more efficient. The below chart depicts the complexity PRTs face reporting to and receiving instructions from the PRT Executive Steering Committee in Kabul (co-chaired by the Afghan Minister of the Interior and the ISAF Commander), PRT Working Group (the United Nations (UN) and relevant embassy representatives), and the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) commander.<sup>50</sup> If the reporting and command relationship structure of the PRTs were more unified, the reconstruction and stabilization process would become more efficient.

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<sup>47</sup> House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. *Agency Stovepipes vs Strategic Agility*. Committee Hearing Report, (Washington: 2008), 20.

<sup>48</sup> US Army, *FM 3-0, Operations*. (Washington: 2008), A-3.

<sup>49</sup> US Army, *FM 5-0 Army Planning and Orders Production*. (Washington: 2005), 1-13.

<sup>50</sup> House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, 20.

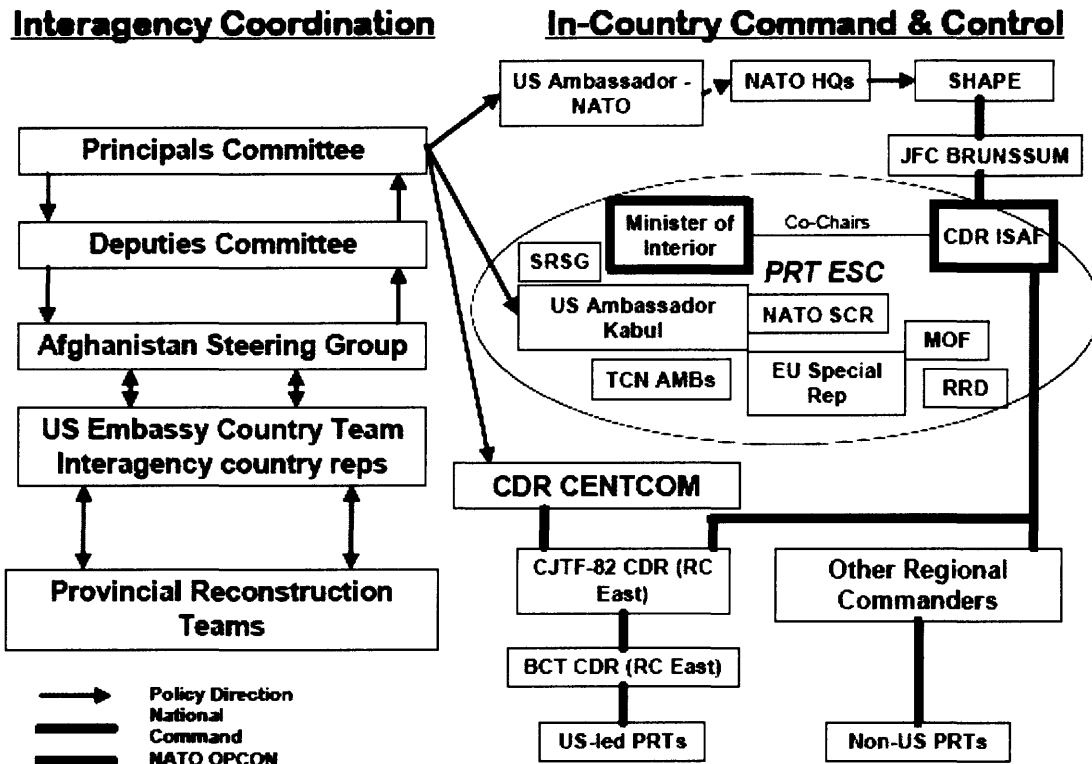


Figure 2: Department of Defense slide depicting complexity of reporting channels for PRTs <sup>51</sup>

The PRTs have evolved into a functioning example of a civil-military organization supporting reconstruction and stabilization activities in Afghanistan. The process that directs and funds the teams is needs efficiency improvements, but is mostly successful in extending the reach of the central government to the provinces. Since operations in Afghanistan are compared to the US experience in South Vietnam, efforts to achieve stability by use of the PRTs are compared to the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) Program in South Vietnam. The next section provides information on how the CORDS Program came to existence and then compares it to the PRTs.

<sup>51</sup> House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. *Agency Stovepipes vs Strategic Agility*. Committee Hearing Report, (Washington: 2008), 21.

# **The Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support Program (CORDS)**

## **History of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support Program**

Military support to nation building has been a component of warfare since written records were kept and leaders recognized a linkage between civil and military relations. Alexander the Great brought experts in government, arts, and engineering as part of his campaigns across India in 334 BC which prepared to meld Greek laws and customs with the local laws and customs. When Napoleon set off to conquer Egypt in 1798, he included French academicians and government officials to help extend the French Empire.<sup>52</sup> In more recent times, the U.S. included civilian personnel from numerous U.S. agencies with military operations in Vietnam to support the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program. Detractors of operations in Afghanistan often compare the current US fight in Afghanistan to the fighting in Vietnam, so the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program naturally compares to the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). Listed as an example of successfully combating a counterinsurgency in the new Army and Marine Corps manual, FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency, “the effectiveness of CORDS was a function of integrated civilian and military teams at every level of society in Vietnam.”<sup>53</sup> This section will initially describe the history of the CORDS program, compare the CORDS program to the PRT program, and then lessons learned from CORDS will follow.

In Vietnam, there were numerous attempts to find the correct balance of civil-military cooperation before the CORDS program evolved. Ambassador Frederick E. Nolting, American Ambassador to South Vietnam from May 1961 to August 1963, gave supporting US agencies in

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<sup>52</sup> “Along with the soldiers came nearly 1,000 civilians, who were to have a more lasting effect on history. These consisted mainly of administrators, but also included artists and poets, botanists and zoologists, surveyors and economists.” <http://www.love-egypt.com/napoleon.html>, (accessed 16 February 2009).

<sup>53</sup> US Army. *FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency*. (Washington: 2006), 2-12.

Vietnam “full authority over their operations” but since each agency still had to report to its Washington headquarters, this allowed de-centralized decision-making and actions were not coordinated.<sup>54</sup> As is today with the built-in inefficiencies in the United States government, agencies have statutory charters and mandates to follow in peacetime that take both time and Congress to modify. Often times, the legacy peacetime funding streams are not modified and agencies are left with adapting their peacetime budget with the assistance of “supplementary” funding. This is especially true if the conflict is viewed as a limited or short-term contingency, as was the case of Vietnam in the early 1960s prior to the assassination of President Kennedy. This “short-term mindset” led to “attempts to achieve a balance between Washington-based direction and Vietnam-based execution.”<sup>55</sup> Starting in 1964 in Vietnam, a Country Team concept was attempted to improve civil-military coordination. John D. Jernegan, former United States Ambassador to Iraq and Algeria defines the Country Team concept in the following statement:

The Country Team is not mentioned by name in any legal document and has no legal standing, nor are its composition or functions laid down anywhere in a formal document. It is essentially a creature and a creation of the Ambassador. One definition of the Country Team is: “Whatever group of United States Government officers a particular American ambassador chooses to select to assist him in meeting his responsibilities to coordinate official American activities in his country of assignment.”<sup>56</sup>

Of note, the Country team was not designed to be decision authority, “its primary function is that of an advisory body, a group of people whose purpose is to pool their knowledge and ideas and

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<sup>54</sup> Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: US Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*. (New York: Free Press, 1977), 117.

<sup>55</sup> MAJ Ross M. Coffey, *Improving Interagency Integration at the Operational Level, CORDS-a model for the Advanced Civilian Team*. (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, Monograph, 2006), 21.

<sup>56</sup> Ambassador John D. Jernegan, "The Ambassador and the Country Team," *Readings in Military Employment-Counterinsurgency*, (March 1966): 39.

promote cooperation.”<sup>57</sup> The below chart graphically depicts the relationships of the Country Team as it was in Vietnam during the 1960s.

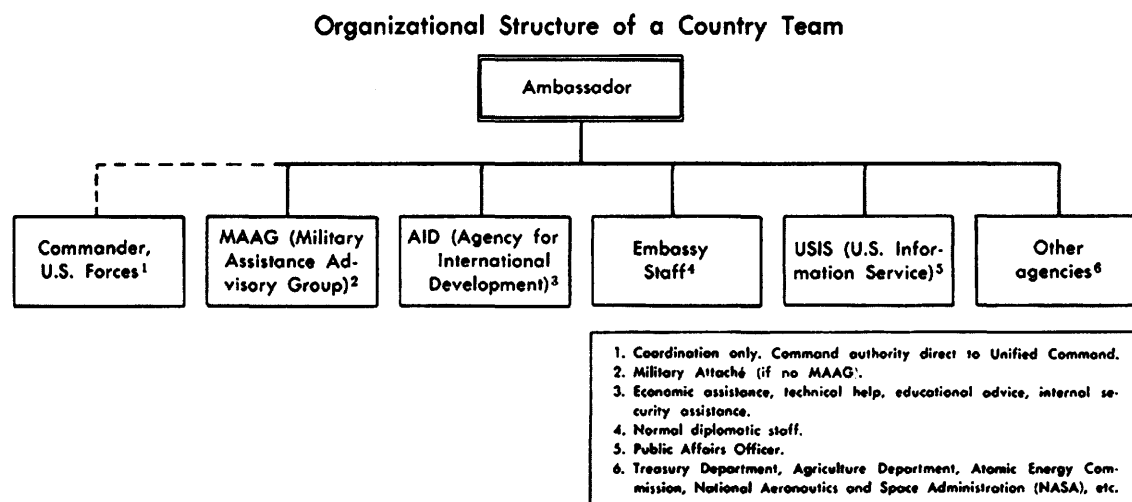


Figure 3: Organizational Structure of a Country Team in Vietnam circa 1960s <sup>58</sup>

Despite being a cooperative body in principle where “the ambassador became technically in charge of all agencies in country,” different agencies were still funded by their own agency in Washington, signifying that “no one was really in charge.” <sup>59</sup> When Ambassador Maxwell Taylor departed Washington in 1964 to assume the post as Ambassador to Vietnam for one year, President Johnson gave him “sweeping delegation of authority” to coordinate military and civilian activities.<sup>60</sup> The statement below provides the direction and authorities which President

<sup>57</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Ross E. Hamlin, “The Country Team—a model for coordination,” *Air University Review*, (July-August 1967), 1.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> MAJ Ross M. Coffey, *Improving Interagency Integration at the Operational Level, CORDS-a model for the Advanced Civilian Team*. (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, Monograph, 2006), 21.

<sup>60</sup> Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: US Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*. (New York: Free Press, 1977), 233.

Johnson gave Ambassador Taylor to improve civil-military relations in Vietnam before he departed Washington in 1964:

As you take charge of the American effort in South Vietnam, I want you to have this formal expression not only of my confidence, but of my desire that you have and exercise full responsibility for the effort of the United States Government in South Vietnam. I wish it clearly understood that this overall responsibility includes the whole military effort in South Vietnam and authorizes the degree of command and control that you consider appropriate.<sup>61</sup>

Ambassador Taylor renamed the Country Team structure "Mission Council" but changed little else. Consequently, "the military matters remained in military channels," and his agenda was not followed without support and involvement of the military.<sup>62</sup> This is interesting considering that Ambassador Taylor had just retired as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and he had authority from President Johnson to make changes as he saw fit during his planned one year tour as Ambassador.<sup>63</sup> The former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs was probably chosen to be the Ambassador because of his military experience and leadership during the Cold War but ultimately did not use his authority to integrate the civil-military effort. Additionally, the former general had written a book espousing his "Strategy of Flexible Response" that highlighted how "limited wars" would occur in less developed areas with limited US forces for short duration so this could have affected his decisions.<sup>64</sup> His concern could have been that any changes he made in Vietnam would end up negatively affecting the military's response in a possible Cold War fight in Europe given the environment in 1964.<sup>65</sup> Without a unified command structure in

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<sup>61</sup> Department of Defense, *Pentagon Papers, Gravel Edition, volume III*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 79.

<sup>62</sup> Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: US Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*. (New York: Free Press, 1977), 233.

<sup>63</sup> Douglas Kinnard, "The Soldier as Ambassador: Maxwell Taylor in Siagon, 1964-65," *Parameters*, (Spring 1991), 31.

<sup>64</sup> Maxwell D., *The Uncertain Trumpet*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 6.

<sup>65</sup> As a frame of reference, by the time Gen. Taylor was appointed Ambassador, the US involvement in Vietnam was approaching its fifth year.

Vietnam however, individual agencies continued to use their peacetime channels for personnel and administrative functions and there was limited coordination of civil-military objectives.<sup>66</sup>

After the failure of Ambassador Taylor to integrate civil-military operations in Vietnam, President Johnson appointed Robert W. Komer as the Special Assistant to the President for supervision of nonmilitary programs relating to Vietnam. Robert W. Komer was an experienced diplomat in the Department of State and in 1966 used his position to argue for the creation of the Office of Civil Operations at the US Embassy in Saigon to improve coordination efforts.<sup>67</sup> In a 1970 article titled "Clear, Hold, and Rebuild" in *Army* magazine, Komer again argued that an uncoordinated government approach was inefficient but a unified command "could hope to have a major cumulative effect."<sup>68</sup> The combination of increasing North Vietnamese and Viet Cong attacks, US political repercussions of the Tet offensive of 1968, and the energy Komer brought to his role as the president's special assistant worked to set the conditions for the formation of CORDS.<sup>69</sup> Consensus eventually developed among the president, the secretary of defense, and the Joint Chiefs because unification of the civil and military efforts was necessary to achieve pacification of South Vietnam.<sup>70</sup>

The CORDS approach directly addressed the lack of unity of effort by partnering the civilian agencies with the military at all levels of command.<sup>71</sup> Civilians were placed in all organizations from the highest level of military involvement at the Military Assistance

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<sup>66</sup> Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: US Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*. (New York: Free Press, 1977), 233.

<sup>67</sup> John A. Nagl, *Counterinsurgency lessons from Malaya and Vietnam: learning to eat soup with a knife*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., 2002), 165.

<sup>68</sup> Robert W. Komer, "Clear, Hold, and Rebuild," *Army*, (May 1970), 19.

<sup>69</sup> MAJ Ross M. Coffey, *Improving Interagency Integration at the Operational Level, CORDS-a model for the Advanced Civilian Team*. (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, Monograph, 2006), 24.

<sup>70</sup> Blaufarb, 238.

<sup>71</sup> Coffey, 25.

Command-Vietnam (MAC-V) down to every district, while military personnel were placed within the civilian agency offices in Vietnam. This meant that military commanders at MAC-V, Corps, Division, and Brigade, as well as US Military advisors in the South Vietnamese Provinces and Districts, all had a civilian counterpart.

Thomas J. Barnes, who was a civilian province senior advisor in Binh Long Province during 1967-68 and then Deputy for CORDS, Military Region II in 1970-71, wrote a paper about his experiences in Vietnam titled *Provincial and Regional Pacification in Vietnam*.<sup>72</sup> Mr. Barnes, who spent six years in Vietnam between the years of 1958 to 1973, related that half of the provincial advisors were civilian with a military deputy and the other half had a military officer in charge with a civilian deputy. This civilian counterpart had access and communication through civilian channels back up to the Military Assistance Command-Vietnam providing redundancy in communication channels and improved civil-military coordination. By placing one person in command of the “combined entities with support from civilian and military personnel in a staff directorate at the United States Military Assistance Command-Vietnam,” there was forced unity of effort.<sup>73</sup> This program placed a civilian in charge of the CORDS program and he was given direct access to military leadership as the number three person in charge of Military Assistance Command-Vietnam. The civilian deputy of the Military Assistance Command-Vietnam was now a three star-equivalent position within a combined civil-military organization with direct access to military leadership. The Department of State selected experienced diplomats such as Robert W. Komer to fill these CORDS Director positions since he was experienced as a diplomat in Vietnam and was familiar with the US Military. This collaboration allowed “placement of the pacification

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<sup>72</sup> Thomas J. Barnes, “Provincial and Regional Pacification in Vietnam,” (Memorandum for the Vietnam Archives, Vietnam Center, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas: Texas Tech University, 2005).

<sup>73</sup> Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: US Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present*. (New York: Free Press, 1977), 240.



programs under military command and control since the military controlled the practical resources.”<sup>74</sup> What were considered “pacification” programs in Vietnam would now be termed reconstruction and stabilization efforts in the current lexicon.<sup>75</sup> Many of the civilian agencies had expertise in farming or economic development, but they needed additional manpower and funding that only the military could provide to achieve success. In addition, there was a need to coordinate security measures so civilian-led programs had an opportunity to succeed. Also unique at the time was that superiors in CORDS completed official evaluations on subordinates regardless if they were civilian or military and “civilians (were placed) in charge of military personnel and resources.”<sup>76</sup> The below graph depicts the organization of the Military Assistance Command-Vietnam in 1967 with the position of the Director of CORDS described as the Deputy Commander of the US Military Assistance Command-Vietnam.

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<sup>74</sup> MAJ Ross M. Coffey, *Improving Interagency Integration at the Operational Level, CORDS-a model for the Advanced Civilian Team*. (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, Monograph, 2006), 28.

<sup>75</sup> Definition of stabilization: to make stable, steadfast, or firm, to maintain the stability of, to limit fluctuations of. From <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stabilization>. (accessed on 07 April 2010). Definition of reconstruction: the action of reconstructing, the state of being reconstructed, the reorganization and reestablishment of. From <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reconstruction%20>. (accessed on 07 April 2010).

<sup>76</sup> US Army. *FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency*. (Washington: 2006), 2-12.

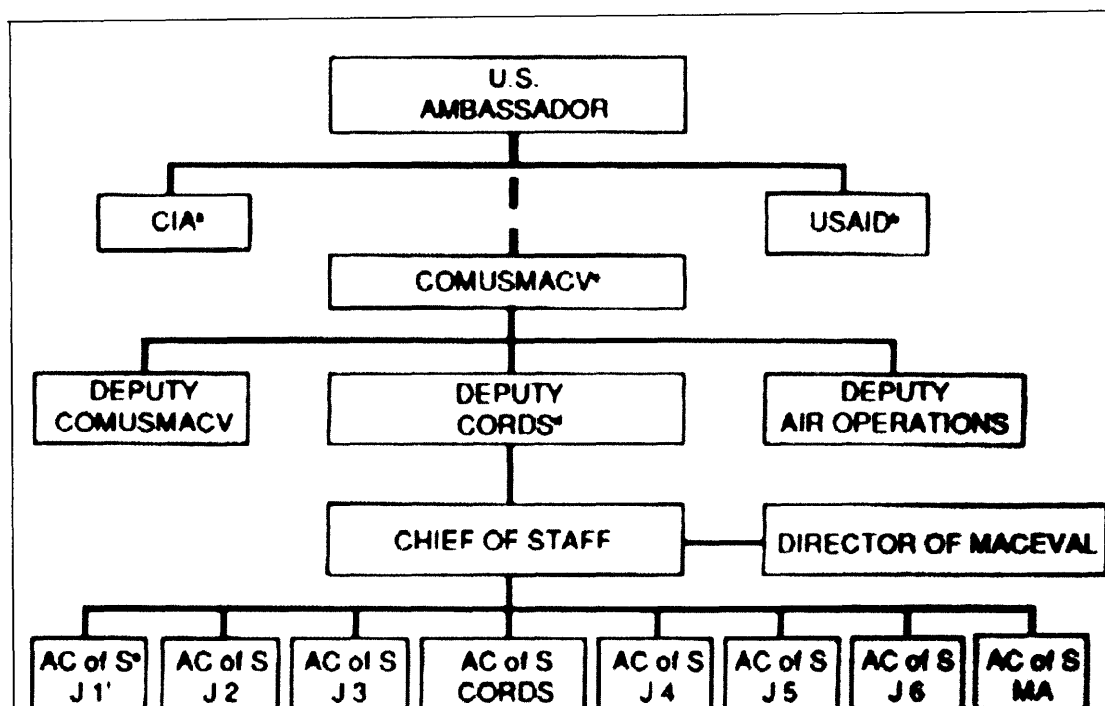


Figure 4: Structure of the US Mission in Vietnam showing position of the Director of CORDS, May

1970<sup>77</sup>

The CORDS program was significant because it focused civilian support and military security on the local populace and allowed the military to focus its resources on defeating the enemy. After more than ten years of fighting the Viet Cong amongst the local populace, the US military decided that if they could prevent the Viet Cong from influencing the Southern Vietnamese, pacification efforts would have an opportunity to take root. Master Sergeant Raymond Davis, who was the Chief Information Non-Commissioned Officer in Headquarters, MAC-V, stated in the July 1971 issue of *Soldiers* magazine, "the key to CORDS (was populace) protection."<sup>78</sup> This was accomplished through increased allocation of aviation and field artillery

<sup>77</sup> Thomas W.Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, (Washington: Center for Military History, 1982), 58.

<sup>78</sup> Raymond.Davis, "CORDS: The Key to Vietnamization," *Soldiers*, (July 1971), 34.

assets to the military advisors located with the District and Province headquarters and military training for the local populations. As part of the CORDS program, the US created the Peoples Self-Defense Force from local inhabitants in June 1968 to defend their villages and hamlets.<sup>79</sup> Similar in nature to the Minutemen or a local militia concept, the mindset was that the locals were better than the Americans were at determining enemy Vietnamese. Additionally, by empowering locals to defend their homes from enemy forces, this made them supporters of the South Vietnamese government and allowed for increased flexibility and maneuverability of US troops to fight the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese main forces.

Major CORDS achievements included establishing a functional rural administration, improved health and human services functions, and refugee care.<sup>80</sup> Philip Bolté, who was a U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel assigned as a province senior adviser in Quang Tin province, I Corps section of South Vietnam in December 1967, provides an example of CORDS success, “we made progress in feeding refugees, building schools, improving roads, etc., but providing security was critical.”<sup>81</sup> Additionally, as part of the pacification plan, CORDS provided the necessary training to elements of the Vietnamese government so they were better prepared to govern the provinces and districts. One example is when CORDS representatives trained the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture so they could provide farmers with better crops and farm credits.<sup>82</sup> The introduction of the so-called “miracle rice” in 1968 increased the productivity of Vietnamese rice farmers by

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<sup>79</sup> Another viewpoint on their creation: “When the enemy attacked during the TET, thousands of Vietnamese citizen asked the government to give them arms so that they could defend themselves, their families and their property from attack. The Government answered the appeal of the people by furnishing them weapons through the Peoples Self-Defense program, which was established by the Mobilization Law of June 1968.” [http://www.vnafmamn.com/SelfDefense\\_Force.html](http://www.vnafmamn.com/SelfDefense_Force.html) (accessed 16 February 2010).

<sup>80</sup> Richard A. Hunt and Richard H. Schultz Jr., ed. *Lessons from and Unconventional War: Reassessing U.S. Strategies for Future Conflicts*, (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982), 57.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted from an interview conducted by Al. Hemingway, “CORDS: Winning Hearts and Minds in Vietnam,” *Vietnam Magazine*, (February 1994).

<sup>82</sup> Brig. Gen Dinh Tho Tran, ARVN, *Pacification*, (Washington: U.S. Army Center for Military History, Indochina Monographs, 1979), 80 & 85.

ten times.<sup>83</sup> The “miracle rice” was labeled IR-8 and was imported from the Philippines. It was different from the traditional rice in that instead of broadcasting the seeds across a paddy, the new rice had to be hand planted and required more fertilizer than the traditional “Indigo” rice.

Because of its increased training and resources, the administrations at the district and province levels were then able to serve as a conduit for the national government and helped stimulate community development similar to modern American community organizers.<sup>84</sup> Another example of how aid was provided was the providing of “package loans” to farmers in the city of Long Xuyen. The loans were not of cash, but of seed, fertilizer, and farm equipment under the close supervision of agricultural advisors from numerous countries.<sup>85</sup> The agricultural advisors worked with the farmers from land selection, to planting, harvesting and marketing. The United States also provided aid directly in the form of economic aid. United States funding supplied oil, milk, medication, and fertilizer through the South Vietnamese government to the people of South Vietnam.<sup>86</sup>

The main negative comments of the CORDS approach center on land reform and use of strategic hamlets. As a society with deep family roots to the land they inhabited, efforts to move the South Vietnamese from areas that were heavily influenced by the North Vietnamese met stiff resistance. If the coordinated efforts of the US and South Vietnamese civilian and military leadership could not pacify an area, they would forcibly move the inhabitants to a “strategic hamlet” and the land would be re-allocated to other personnel. The US implemented “The Hamlet

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<sup>83</sup> Phan Quang Dan, "The Vietnam Experience," *Asian Affairs*, (March 1977), 256.

<sup>84</sup> Raymond Davis, "CORDS: The Key to Vietnamization," *Soldiers*, (July 1971), 34.

<sup>85</sup> Ministry of Information of the Republic of Vietnam, *Anatomy of a Pacified Province... An Giang*, (Saigon: Ministry of Information of the Republic of Vietnam, illustrated pamphlet, 1968), 14.

<sup>86</sup> Le Hoang Trong, "Survival and Self-Reliance: A Vietnamese Viewpoint," *Asian Survey*, (April 1975), 287. Of note, this article was written six weeks before the Communist forces overwhelmed the South Vietnamese forces and took control of the country.

Evaluation System” to determine the effectiveness of the hamlet system in January 1967.<sup>87</sup> Land reform in South Vietnam has been a point of contention since World War II and was used by the communist as a leverage point on the South Vietnamese farmers.<sup>88</sup>

## Comparisons of the CORDS Program to the PRTs

There are numerous examples available to compare the CORDS Program to the PRTs. At the national level, reconstruction and stabilization efforts overseas are still limited by legacy funding sources. Attempting to overcome the traditional or peacetime funding challenges is still an unresolved issue that affects decisions made in Iraq and Afghanistan to this day. As the USDA encouraged Vietnamese farmers to use “miracle rice,” USAID and USDA civilians are now encouraging local farmers to shift their crops from opium to soybeans or flowers in Afghanistan. The number of civilians in leadership positions was significantly higher in the CORDS program than in the current use of PRTs. The key difference between the two programs is that CORDS was a combined civil-military organization from the embassy down to the districts and the PRTs are merely civil-military teams that work with direction from the embassy and military at the province level.

## Lessons Learned from the CORDS Program

The concept of “Clear, Hold, and Rebuild,” which Robert W. Komer espoused as a technique to limit the negative influence and increase protection of the local populace in Vietnam, has been rebadged as Clear, Hold and Build in current doctrine.<sup>89</sup> This is often referred to as the “by, with, and through” concept of enabling the local populace to fight insurgents and is covered

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<sup>87</sup> Colonel Erwin R. Brigham, “Pacification Measurement in Vietnam: The Hamlet Evaluation System,” (presentation at the SEATO Internal Security Seminar, Manila, 3-10 June 1968), 1.

<sup>88</sup> James L. Tyson, “Land Reform in Vietnam: A Progress Report,” *Asian Affairs*, (September-October 1973), 32.

<sup>89</sup> Robert W. Komer, “Clear, Hold, and Rebuild,” *Army*, (May 1970), 19.

in the military's 2006 edition of Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency.<sup>90</sup> Protection of the populace from harm is still a cornerstone of counter-insurgency (COIN) doctrine but it has evolved into the current military becoming more selective with the application of force and firepower. The military has learned that even if tricked or baited into firing upon or harming the local populace, unrestrained use of force inhibits the military's efforts and supports the insurgency's rhetoric. The effectiveness of the Hamlet system used in South Vietnam in removing the people from influence by insurgents or guerrillas is debatable, but is not being used in Afghanistan. Information on the current, and then recommended, training members of the PRTs receive follows.

## **Current Training of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams**

As recognized by the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, during testimony, "training is the keystone of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) effort."<sup>91</sup> To that end, the Army 189<sup>th</sup> Infantry Training Support Brigade at Fort Bragg, North Carolina is in charge of the training for Army, Air Force, and Navy personnel and conducting the mission readiness exercises for the full Provincial Reconstruction Teams.<sup>92</sup> This includes training and preparing members of the Army and Air National Guard and the Reserves, as well as orientation on military equipment and familiarization firing of military weapons for the civilian PRT members. The civilian members join the military element at Fort Bragg for the last three weeks of training as the teams learn to work together in a realistic training exercise.

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<sup>90</sup> US Army. *FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency*. (Washington: 2006).

<sup>91</sup> House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. *Agency Stovepipes vs Strategic Agility*. Committee Hearing Report, (Washington: 2008), 40.

<sup>92</sup> Currently, members of PRTs receive training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina but there is a possibility that the training will move to another military installation.

However, based on the civilian cycle of replacements, some replacement members do not attend the full training regime at Fort Bragg and instead receive familiarization training from the Department of State Foreign Service Institute before they deploy. Habitually, the PRT Commanders have been able to conduct pre-deployment site surveys to Afghanistan, visit their future area of operation, and meet the team they will replace in order for them to have a better understanding of the challenges they face. According to a survey conducted by the House Armed Services Committee in 2007 and 2008 however, 69% of PRT members reported that their training was “insufficient.”<sup>93</sup> Additional findings from the same survey state how valuable interagency training is to the overall PRT mission and the Department of Defense is reimbursing the other agencies for travel, personnel, and other costs in order to ensure federal civilians can participate in the training and deploy overseas.<sup>94</sup>

Efforts to improve the training of the PRTs include a regularly scheduled teleconference with representatives from agencies that support and train personnel on PRTs. This teleconference is led by the Department of State and is called the “PRT working group.” Topics of the group include issues pertinent to PRT training, doctrine, and employment. As noted in the PRT Working Group notes, “the Best Practices Working Group (BPWG), formed under *National Security Presidential Directive-44 (NSPD-44)*, Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization, has been exploring options for developing a U.S. whole-of-government reconstruction and stabilization (R&S) lessons learned capability.”<sup>95</sup> The BPWG, co-chaired by representatives from State Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Office of the Secretary of

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<sup>93</sup> House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. *Agency Stovepipes vs Strategic Agility*. Committee Hearing Report, (Washington: 2008), 70.

<sup>94</sup> House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, 45.

<sup>95</sup> Taken from PRT Working Group notes Wednesday, November 5, 2008; 9:00 AM EST, Department of State Iraq Policy and Operations Group.

Defense (OSD-P) Stability, reviews the proposed concept for an institutionalized lessons learned hub to collect, vet, distribute, and, most importantly, support implementation of lessons in a timely fashion.

The training that best prepares the PRTs with the opportunity to understand the local populace is language training. Receiving location-specific language training that is either Dari or Pashto greatly enhances the Provincial Reconstruction Team's ability to communicate and build relationships with local citizens and government representatives. Recognizing how critical language training is, future PRT commanders receive training at the University of Indiana in an intensive two-week period. Started in 2008 at the request of the Department of Defense, the University of Indiana received a grant to provide language and cultural training to commanders of the PRTs. Since the University of Indiana is the only U.S. University which offers accredited courses and develops training materials in Pashto, this is an invaluable and necessary step to better prepare team members for Afghanistan.<sup>96</sup> The remaining personnel on the PRTs receive web-based language training throughout their preparation and during their deployment. The following section outlines suggestions on how to improve the training of the PRTs based on what they currently experience and what will make them more effective.

## **Recommended Training for the Provincial Reconstruction Teams**

Refinement and improvement of training for the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) is required in order for the teams to remain relevant and productive. The Department of State led PRT working group conducts its teleconferences on a regular basis to achieve this for the PRTs.

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<sup>96</sup> Indiana University Press Office. "IU receives grant to train Provincial Reconstruction Team commanders heading to Afghanistan," June 3, 2008. <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/preint/6422.html> (accessed November 18, 2009).



Additionally, research for this paper has provided information on areas of training that are recommended to improve the training of the PRTs. This section explains these recommendations.

A common theme in the research of the training deficiencies of the civilian members on Provincial Reconstruction Teams is that they are junior members of their organization or contractors hired with limited approval authority, yet they are expected to operate with minimal supervision. Often, those assigned state that these important missions will serve as career detractors instead of enhancers since there are no incentives to serve on these teams. As highlighted by Robert Perito, Senior Program Officer for Post-Conflict Peace and Stability Operations at the United States Institute of Peace, “State Department and USAID representatives should receive pre-deployment introduction on Afghan culture and society, and orientation on the unique requirements of working with the US military.”<sup>97</sup> Another recommendation on the same page is that USAID and USDA representatives, whether employees or non-direct hire contractors, need to “have authority to directly oversee projects in their area.”

Specific training recommendations for inclusion into mission readiness exercises on the role and operating norms of other humanitarian relief organizations include the “Sphere Standards” for working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or International Organizations (IOs) published by the Red Cross and Red Crescent organization.<sup>98</sup> As stated on the Red Cross website,

The Sphere Standard is based on the Humanitarian Charter and sets minimum standards in five areas: Food Aid, Nutrition, Water & Sanitation, Shelter & Site Selection, and Health Services. It is a consolidation of agreed upon indicators and it constitutes a framework for disaster response in each area. They constitute a

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<sup>97</sup> Robert M. Perito, *The U. S. Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan*, (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, Special Report 152, 2005), 13.

<sup>98</sup> Colonel Michael K. Seidl and Michael J. Dziedzic, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams*. (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, Special Report 147, September 2005), 12.

reference point for the media to use as the minimum standard parameter for understanding performance in relief operations.<sup>99</sup>

Synchronization of the civilian and military PRT members tours and tour lengths can mitigate training or experience deficiencies.<sup>100</sup> Effectiveness of the teams is further limited because of the length of tour differences between the different agencies and military departments. As an example, a contracted hire for the USDA will have a twelve-month tour, but the Air Force Lieutenant Colonel that is the PRT Commander will only deploy for six months. Therefore, when the Army, Navy, and Air Force team members meet at Fort Bragg for the final portion of their training, some of their civilian team members will already be in country.

While much attention has focused on training and preparing the civilians to work with the military, little has been addressed on preparing the military for working with civilians. The military's passion for synchronization, standardization, and timeliness inadvertently works against civilians' operating environment. While "streamlining and focusing the PRTs work" is efficient in the eyes of the military, numerous meetings are foreign to most civilians and can serve to restrict civilian coordination efforts if they are unable to meet frequently with local leaders.<sup>101</sup> Educating the PRTs on cultural differences has been a cornerstone of the training since their inception, but all of that training focuses on learning about the Afghan culture. Another aspect of cultural training that needs incorporation is the civilian-military cultural differences to inculcate improved interoperability. Colonel McCaffrey fittingly states, "a multi-service, mixed civilian-governmental, mixed gender organization needs to be prepared for the cultural change of

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<sup>99</sup> Danish Red Cross and International Federation. "Use and Development of "Sphere" Standards," 2009, [http://www.redcross.int/en/conference/ws\\_reports/ws\\_report10.asp](http://www.redcross.int/en/conference/ws_reports/ws_report10.asp) (accessed February 21, 2010).

<sup>100</sup> USAID. *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan*, Interagency Assessment (Washington: 2006), 17.

<sup>101</sup> Touko. Piiparinen, "A Clash of Mindsets?" *International Peacekeeping*, (no.1,14: 2007), 150.

working in a combat environment.”<sup>102</sup> While team building occurs when a PRT spends any amount of time in the field during its training, specific stressors need to be emplaced to test the acceptable standards of language, preparedness, and completeness and these then need to be addressed in after-action reviews to reduce possible points of friction when deployed.

The collection and dissemination of “best practices” continually needs research and more importantly, consolidated for dissemination. One example is indicative. During Colonel McCaffrey’s tour with four US PRTs, he had elements from International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF), West Point, the Senate Research Service, the Fort Bragg Training Support Brigade that trained PRTs and various authors gathering “best practices” and “lessons learned.” Yet ISAF and the US Army’s Center for Lessons Learned (CALL) have not issued an updated PRT Handbook since 2007.<sup>103</sup> The result is that each of the entities involved with preparing personnel to deploy on PRTs rely upon their own collection of best practices and few lessons learned are shared amongst US Agencies and Departments. Encouragingly, the Department of State did co-host a workshop on Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Lessons Learned, March 11-12, 2008 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The workshop brought together more than eighty practitioners, trainers, policy-makers, and lessons-learned experts from across the USG to examine experiences in both Iraq and Afghanistan PRTs and was co-chaired by representatives from S/CRS, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Stability Operations), and USAID.<sup>104</sup> Interestingly, financial and logistical support was provided by elements of the Department of Defense at the U.S. Army’s Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) and the

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<sup>102</sup> COL Sean W. McCaffrey, *PRTs in Regional Command-East (OEF-VIII)*. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College Strategy Research Project, 2009), 31.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>104</sup> Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). *Lessons Learned*. March 13, 2008. <http://www.crs.state.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.display&shortcut=4Q4Y> (accessed March 12, 2010).

Consortium for Complex Operations.<sup>105</sup> Unfortunately, this grand effort to collect best practices and lessons learned has not translated into the availability of current or relevant information that is readily accessible for those that will deploy on, or work with, PRTs.

Another aspect of the PRT mission that requires training and understanding is the system used to track PRT projects. A component of the tracking system was the placement of a USAID liaison at the senior military headquarters, Combined Joint Task Force -101<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division (CJTF-101), whose task was to coordinate projects costing more than \$200,000. To further the unity of coordinated planning and execution, the Integrated Civilian Military Action Group was founded in November 2008 with representatives from the Department of State, USAID, and United States military forces.<sup>106</sup> The goal of the group was to “empower teams... pool financial resources, manpower, and expertise in hopes of cutting down on wasteful projects.”<sup>107</sup> While this Action Group, scheduled to meet every three weeks, has unquestionably improved information sharing, not all parties involved can track development projects in Afghanistan in a single database that is accessible to all.<sup>108</sup> The military uses the classified Combined Information Data Network Exchange (CIDNE) to track Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) and other development projects, while the USAID uses the unclassified GEOBASE to track

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<sup>105</sup> The Center for Complex Operations (CCO) is a growing network of civilian and military educators, trainers and lessons learned practitioners dedicated to improving education and training for counterinsurgency, stability operations, and irregular warfare (“complex operations”). Their website is supported by the United States Department of Defense, the United States Department of State, United States Agency for International Development, and several other contributing agencies and organizations. It allows for the free exchange of ideas on or about the subject of complex operations but does not endorse any opinions expressed as United States government policy. This site was created in collaboration with the United States Institute of Peace. <http://ccoportal.org/> (accessed 17 March 2010).

<sup>106</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Military Operations: Actions needed to Improve Oversight and Interagency Coordination for CERP in Afghanistan*, Report to Congressional Committees, (Washington: 2009), 13.

<sup>107</sup> Jessica Weinstein, "Civilians surge to Afghanistan amid violence," *Washington Times*, October 8, 2009, B.1.

<sup>108</sup> Government Accountability Office. *Military Operations: Actions needed to Improve Oversight and Interagency Coordination for CERP in Afghanistan*, 13.

development projects.<sup>109</sup> According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) findings, patches are being installed so these two different networks can share information. The above challenges highlight but a few of the different programs, systems, and databases that members of the PRTs must use and require training on appropriate usage.

In addition to being able to share information on projects, PRT members need to ensure they are fully trained on the different funding sources and channels for their projects such as CERP money and other channels through the USAID, United States Department of Agriculture, and Department of States. USAID uses Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD), “Quick Impact Program”(QIP) and Afghan Civilian Assistance Program (ACAP) fund sources for the majority of its projects.<sup>110</sup> The Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) Program “is a medium-term development program designed to set the stage for long term efforts.”<sup>111</sup> “Quick Impact Projects” (QIPs) are the civilian version of CERP used to fund smaller projects such as a clinic and “provide the ability to implement small projects (over 90 percent cost less than \$350,000 per project) that further the core objectives of stability, reconstruction, and building support for the central government of Afghanistan.”<sup>112</sup>

Afghanistan Civilian Assistance Program (ACAP) funds are just as important to show the US commitment to the Afghan people but for different reasons. While CERP, LGCD and QIP program funds are proactive and development focused, ACAP funds attempt to repair damages caused to the Afghan people by coalition forces. The funds are specifically for “Afghan families

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<sup>109</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Military Operations: Actions needed to Improve Oversight and Interagency Coordination for CERP in Afghanistan*, Report to Congressional Committees, (Washington: 2009), 14.

<sup>110</sup> House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. *Agency Stovepipes vs Strategic Agility*. Committee Hearing Report, (Washington: 2008), 22.

<sup>111</sup> USAID, "PRT Quick Impact Projects," January 20, 2010, <http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/Activity.91.aspx> (accessed January 30, 2010).

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. and Mark Ward, "Quick impact projects slow progress in Afghanistan," *The Boston Globe*, October 15, 2009, Op-Ed.

and communities that have suffered losses from U.S. and Coalition military operations.”<sup>113</sup>

Significant in the training process is understanding the amount of time required to receive these funds based on the types of projects and approval process of the different funding sources. A further challenge to be taken into account is when US PRTs are assigned to a NATO member area of operations wherein the lead nation is required to access funds through NATO or home channels. The next section of this paper describes how our approach to reconstruction and stabilization has evolved since 2001 and lessons learned from the use of PRTs.

## **Lessons Learned**

The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) have proven to be a very effective instrument in the conduct of stability operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, yet there is no set government standard to ensure that the personnel from other US Government agencies are properly trained or prepared before they arrive at a mobilization post for pre-deployment training. The United States Government approach to Afghanistan benefitted from lessons learned in the CORDS program which was used as an historical reference in an attempt to achieve unity of effort. Establishment of the Best Practices Working Group (BPWG) in Washington and Integrated Civilian Military Action Group in Afghanistan serve to “empower teams, pool financial resources, manpower, and expertise.”<sup>114</sup> As the Provincial Reconstruction Teams continued to improve their interagency communication and nesting of efforts, the administration of President George W. Bush expanded the presence of civilian government aid workers through the addition of 1000 more civilians to work with the Integrated Civilian Military Plan for

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<sup>113</sup> USAID, "PRT Quick Impact Projects," (accessed January 30, 2010).

<sup>114</sup> Jessica Weinstein, "Civilians surge to Afghanistan amid violence," *Washington Times*, October 8, 2009, B.1.

Afghanistan in 2008.<sup>115</sup> There is a balance of how many civilians the US Government can afford to deploy overseas and a tipping point of conflicting agendas that has not been reached yet but has the potential to exist.

Joint Publication 3-08, *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination during Joint Operations*, Volume I, March 2006, the doctrinal reference on interagency coordination, states:” interagency coordination forges the vital link between the military instrument of power and economic, political and/or diplomatic and informational entities of the US Government.”<sup>116</sup> While this manual was written after the formation of PRTs, it provides the doctrinal reference for military cooperation between government agencies in current and future contingencies. Use of this manual as a reference by military personnel will better prepare the US Government to work together

Negative examples of lessons learned include when a team ensures a school is constructed, but the local populace does not have access to funding for the teacher or books, so they end up with an empty building. Shared information amongst US Government agencies in Afghanistan on which types of projects are occurring in what locations also lessens cases of redundancy. Levels of experience for the personnel from other agencies can be addressed through the recall of retired Foreign Service officers or members that are more experienced that can better communicate with the PRT Commander that averages sixteen-twenty years of military service.<sup>117</sup> While the differences in tour length do add a degree of continuity for the teams, the challenge of building team cohesion and combining established work procedures during combat operations can be avoided through tour synchronization of the civilian and military members. Collection of

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<sup>115</sup> Jessica Weinstein, "Civilians surge to Afghanistan amid violence," *Washington Times*, October 8, 2009, B.1.

<sup>116</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Publication 3-08: Interagency Coordination during Joint Operations, Volume 1*. (Washington: 1996), vii.

<sup>117</sup> USAID, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan*, Interagency Assessment (Washington: 2006), 15.

best practices and lessons learned has not translated into the availability of current or relevant information that is readily accessible for those that will deploy on, or work with, PRTs and needs to be improved. Assessment of the PRT capabilities and effectiveness continually need monitoring in order to improve the team's efficiency.

The training has evolved into two tracts: those that deploy to Fort Bragg and train with a full PRT or those that attend the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and join a PRT already in country. Sending everyone to Fort Bragg to train with a team is the ideal choice but the training offered at FSI allows replacements similar training on PRT fundamentals. Training at FSI is primarily for individuals to deploy as replacements for those with different tour lengths or as the result of injuries. Assessment of PRT training, metrics used to measure their effectiveness in country and vetting of projects all need to occur under an organization that has visibility on the PRTs from organization through execution.

## **Conclusion**

The key challenges continuing to face the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are a lack of national strategy for their employment, changing reporting channels, variations of training standards, lack of doctrine, and uncertain chain of command. The Department of State's creation of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization in 2004 with a charter "to lead, coordinate, and institutionalize US Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations" is a step in the right direction.<sup>118</sup> Overall, as stated in the House Armed

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<sup>118</sup> Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/s/crs/>, July 04, 2004, (accessed October 18, 2009). Of note, current Department of State Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) plans place post-conflict authority on the Department of State with support from the Department of Defense. Reference: Coordinator for Reconstruction & Stabilization (S/CRS), About Us tab, <http://www.state.gov/s/crs/about/index.htm>, (accessed 18 Oct 2009).



Services Committee report on PRTs, support of the PRT program “(by the US government) has not gone far enough or fast enough to support the (PRT members) in the field to accomplish the nation’s mission.”<sup>119</sup> As the United States learned in Vietnam with the CORDS program, “PRTs illustrate the need for effective, integrated action to achieve government-wide “unity of effort” in complex contingency operations.”<sup>120</sup> Without proper funding for projects, the PRT loses its *raison d’etre* and merely becomes another military force.<sup>121</sup> Humanitarian assistance and improving governance will remain fixtures of future contingencies as well as an opportunity for civilian and military relations to improve. While unity of command for the Provincial Reconstruction Teams is often construed as “elusive, if not impractical,” making administrative changes within the authority of the civilian and military leadership can create the more important unity of effort.<sup>122</sup> Streamlining the PRT reporting channels, incorporation of lessons learned from the PRT Working Group in Washington, and coordination of PRT priorities through the Integrated Civilian Military Action Group in Afghanistan can improve PRT effectiveness. Institutionalizing lessons learned in this conflict by building upon the successes of the CORDS and PRTs will better prepare the US Government for future contingencies or conflicts.

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<sup>119</sup> House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, *Agency Stovepipes vs Strategic Agilit.*, Committee Hearing Report, (Washington: 2008), 13.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>121</sup> Touko Piiparinen, "A Clash of Mindsets?" *International Peacekeeping*, (no.1,14: 2007), 154.

<sup>122</sup> US Army. *FM 3-0, Operation*. (Washington: 2008), 6-13.

## **Appendix**

### **Appendix A: Findings from House Armed Services Committee, Agency**

#### **Stovepipes vs. Strategic Agility, April 2008**

Provincial Reconstruction Team Strategies and Effective, Measurable Plans and Milestones

##### **Findings:**

- (1) Section 1230 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110-181) requires the President, acting through the Secretary of Defense, to report, among other things, on the long term strategy, mission, and objectives for each United States-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan; the first report is due at the end of April 2008. However, neither the Department of Defense nor the Department of State has yet established a PRT strategy in Afghanistan or Iraq.
- (2) Neither the Department of Defense nor the Department of State adopted an “ends, ways, and means” approach to determine and measure Provincial Reconstruction Teams’ progress and their alignment with operational and strategic goals; nor have they adopted a performance monitoring system that measures the PRTs’ effectiveness, and progress in meeting clearly defined objectives.
- (3) Provincial Reconstruction Team tactical and operational objectives should be aligned with coalition operational and strategic goals and host nation development plans to ensure unity of effort.
- (4) Neither the Department of Defense nor the Department of State can provide basic information about what each Provincial Reconstruction Team is attempting to do or what progress PRTs are making individually or collectively.
- (5) The Department of Defense and the Department of State have not established clearly defined Provincial Reconstruction Team goals and milestones for achieving set objectives.

(6) Neither the Department of Defense nor the Department of State set measures of effectiveness or measures of performance to assess the immediate, short-term, or longer-term impacts of Provincial Reconstruction Team activities.

(7) The Department of Defense and the Department of State have only recently begun, and have yet to complete, plans to transition the Provincial Reconstruction Team mission in Iraq to more traditional diplomatic and development efforts.

**Recommendation:**

The Departments of Defense and State should adopt a Provincial Reconstruction Team strategy (using an “ends, ways, and means”) approach to determine and measure PRTs’ progress, and to determine whether the PRT activities align with overall operational and strategic goals. The Departments of Defense and State should also adopt a performance monitoring system that measures the PRTs’ effectiveness and performance and their progress in meeting milestones for clearly defined objectives, including milestones for the eventual transition of the PRT mission to more traditional diplomatic and development efforts.

## Acronyms

ACT	Advance Civilian Team
A/S	Department of State Assistant Secretary
COM	Chief of Mission
CODELs	Congressional Delegation
CRSG	Country Reconstruction and Stabilization Group
DAS	Department of State Deputy Assistant Secretary
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
DS	Department of State Diplomatic Security
FACT	Field Advance Civilian Team
GCC	Geographic Combatant Command
HQ	Headquarters
IA	Inter Agency (United States Government Agencies other than the DoD)
INL	State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement
IPC	Integration Planning Cell
JFC	Joint Forces Command or Commander
JIACG	Joint Interagency Coordination Group
JTF	Joint Task Force
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization

NSC	National Security Council
PCC	Policy Coordinating Committee
PM	State Department Office of Political-Military Affairs
POLAD	State Department Political Advisor
PRT(s)	Provincial Reconstruction Team(s)
R&S	Reconstruction and Stabilization
RSO	State Department Regional Security Officer
S/CRS	Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization
STAFFDELS	Staff Delegations
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USG	United States Government

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