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**Provincial Reconstruction Teams
in Afghanistan:
*Tactical Units with Strategic Impact***

A summary of observations
from PRTs in Afghanistan

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Prologue

The observations, analyses and assessments summarized in this document are based on the candid comments and reports of the men and women who fought the battles, supported the forces, and led our Marines.

The high level of professionalism and military aptitude demonstrated by individual and unit performances during OEF Afghanistan are a hallmark of this conflict and the current Reconstruction efforts. The Marine Corps has an enviable reputation for innovation and adaptation, and maintains the highest standards of excellence in the art of warfare. It is with a conscious intent to maintain this reputation that the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned offers the observations and commentary within this report.

Comments and feedback are welcome and encouraged. It is recognized that what works in one area of operations (AO) may not be effective in another AO or conflict. Just as the enemy changes their tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs), we too must quickly change and adapt to the fight at hand. Please take the information provided, build on it, and report back on its applicability. It is of the utmost importance that individuals and units continue to provide their lessons and observations so we can ensure the next unit to deploy has your documented hard earned experience prior to crossing the line of departure. Getting your observations and lessons into the Lesson Management System early enough to impact pre-deployment training is crucial to increasing the effectiveness of follow on units and saving the lives of our Marines.

This is one of many documents and briefings covering a wide variety of topics that have been put together by the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL). These collations of lessons and observations are not sole source or authoritative, but are intended as a means of informing the decision making process and effecting needed changes in our institution.



M. E. Dunard

Colonel, United States Marine Corps Reserve
Director, Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned

Executive Summary

A Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) is a civil-military organization, task-organized to a geographical province, whose purpose is to extend the reach and legitimacy of the Central Government of Afghanistan by developing a self-sustaining, peaceful, civil-society. It is a tactical organization with strategic impact.¹ The ratio of military to other governmental, United Nations (UN), and non-governmental organizations depends heavily on the degree to which the area is pacified. The success of a PRT is measured by its ability to increase Central Government capacity and good governance as well as to, “Seize the human terrain and defeat the enemy.”² One important element of this is to identify and mentor key Afghan personnel in democratic governance and leadership.

The observations and lessons in this report are based mainly on information from three PRTs, particularly PRT Sharana located in the Paktika Province in southeastern Afghanistan. All the PRT personnel interviewed described their assignment as one of the most rewarding missions of their careers, but at times one of the most frustrating.

Because a PRT is a civil-military organization, doctrinal relationships regarding chain of command and command and control are often less than perfectly clear. Moreover, even when strategic and operational level doctrine is clear, it is not always followed at the tactical level as personality, maturity, experience, and resources often drive the local situation. The issue is further complicated by the fact that different nations have different command and control arrangements for PRTs, and by the potential presence of UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other entities. Successful and efficient PRT efforts require full value from the participation and expertise of these organizations. Clarification of the relationships between U.S. departments and agencies, other government organizations, UN and other international organizations (IOs), and NGOs is needed, followed by training for leaders about these relationships.

Army Civil Affairs (CA) personnel received 14 weeks of training but said that they needed more preparation for the varied tasks needed to reconstruct and develop a foreign province. They stressed the need for detailed training in negotiating, contract development, evaluating and vetting contractors, and program budgeting and management.

The personnel assigned to a PRT are typically a mix of soldiers, Marines, airmen, and sailors of varying ranks, gender, MOSs, and active/reserve components, without regard to specific qualifications. The Sharana PRT Commander has an armor MOS and had no civil affairs experience or training prior to this assignment. A communications operator may be responsible for maintaining the vehicle fleet, while an infantry Marine may be responsible for the computer network and SATCOM equipment. Many of them are on their first deployment and have a non-combat MOS. Personnel assigned to PRTs need more pre-deployment civil affairs training and more force protection training, including the use of crew served weapons. The U.S. Army has recognized the need for specialized training of PRT personnel. U.S. Forces Command has issued specific guidance and established web-based training resources.

Cultural awareness at both the micro and macro level is critical to the success of a PRT. In at least one instance, a female US Army Civil Affairs (CA) officer filled a critical leadership

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position. In spite of her excellent credentials, she may be being set up for failure because of the cultural bias regarding women of the Afghani tribal leadership with whom she must negotiate.

There is no repair parts block to support corrective maintenance on equipment. Parts are often cannibalized from destroyed HMMWVs to repair the remaining rolling stock.

The PRT commander and his designated Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) manager need to be adequately trained in CERP processes and regulations prior to deploying. In addition, the use of contracting officers and standard procurement procedures is encouraged to maintain the fiscal integrity of their CERP programs, particularly for large high dollar projects.

Some PRT personnel, and other relief and assistance personnel, perceive that the principal measure of effectiveness (MOE) is based on spending money rather than achieving results. The local population, among whom corruption seems to be commonplace, readily exploits this. 'Skimming off the top' graft at all levels reduces the resources getting to the people who have the greatest needs. Political and economic corruption is an Afghan cultural problem that is systemic at all levels in the country.

Most of the best interpreters are local personnel who are fluent in English, Pashtun, Dari, and Urdu and they understand the local slang. Because they come from nearby communities, they understand the local customs and are a rich source of human intelligence.

Background

From 4-14 December 2005, LtCol Gregg L. Lyon, USMC and Maj Jon M. Lauder, USMC³ embedded with the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Sharana located in the Paktika Province, southeastern Afghanistan.⁴ During this visit the assessment team interviewed the PRT Commander, LtCol Gordon Obermueller, USMC and the military and civilian personnel assigned to his PRT. During the 10 day mission, the assessment team participated in two humanitarian/medical capability missions in the villages of Saltani and Moto Khan, visited a USAID airfield construction project, toured the local cobblestone road and solar light projects in Sharana, visited the provincial governor's compound, Afghan National Army (ANA) and Embedded Training Team (ETT) compound, conducted an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) operation with ETT/ANA personnel, and had dinner with Afghan interpreters assigned to the PRT.

They also spent time embedded with the Asadabad PRT in Kunar Province co-located with company F, 2d Battalion, 3d Marines at another forward operating base (FOB). In addition they visited the Jalalabad PRT where they conducted interviews. Much of the information in this report is taken from their trip report. It draws heavily on their experience with the Sharana PRT. Their observations at the other two PRTs reinforced and confirmed their findings and observations at Sharana.

Paktika Province is located in southeastern Afghanistan and is subdivided into 22 districts of which 19 are recognized by the Central Government in Kabul. The politically appointed provincial governor, Governor Magual, is a highly educated and articulate leader and is viewed by many as a potential successor to President Kharzai. The PRT commander conducts liaison with Gov. Magual, his provincial police chief, and associated ministers on a weekly basis. Paktika province contains approximately 800,000 residents mostly from Pashtun tribes with a nomadic tribe, the Kucchi, that travel in and out of the region via Pakistan. A cultural hierarchy dominates the province with tribal loyalty coming before national unity. There are five Pashtun Groups with nine subgroups consisting of over 20 different tribes who are in varying states of tolerance and acceptance with their neighbors. The Paktika district boundaries are essentially tribal boundaries, drawn to delineate borders between major tribal groups and clans. The majority of Paktika is occupied by tribes of the Ghilzai group, to which the nucleus of the Taliban and HiG [another insurgent group] belong, including virtually all senior Taliban leadership. Numerous older Afghan personnel, government leaders, and Taliban in the province were Mujahadeen during the Soviet-Afghan war of the 1980s.

The region is arid with limited agricultural capability; therefore, poppy growing for production of opium is not a concern.

The region is considered a "problem" province by the Kabul government due to the independent ideology and nature of the people and the long distance from the Central Government. The province is often compared to the "wild west" metaphor of the U.S. frontier of the 1870s. The province is considered a high threat region due to elevated IED activity and foreign fighter presence. IEDs in the region are commonly employed as triple stacked mines and pressure plated systems that are accompanied by ambushes. There is a significant amount of Soviet era weaponry in the region to include rocket propelled grenade launchers (RPGs), AK-47 rifles, anti-

tank mines, 82 mm mortars, etc. U.S. and Afghan National Army (ANA) forces have killed anti-coalition and foreign fighters linked to Al Qaeda and the Taliban in the region.

PRT Command and Control

Command and control of PRT operations has been an issue for U.S. military commanders. A PRT must interact with the local government representatives. It must also interact with the representatives of the U.S. Department of State and other U.S. agencies, with representatives of other national agencies and organizations, with United Nations agencies, with other international organizations (IOs), and with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The applicable command and control relationships are often less than perfectly clear. At the strategic level, the Department of State (DOS) outranks the Department of Defense (DoD). In a foreign nation, the DOS represented by the U.S. ambassador is senior to the senior military (DoD) commander in the country.

“The US diplomatic mission to a host nation (HN) includes representatives of all US departments and agencies physically present in the country. The President gives the chief of the diplomatic mission, normally an ambassador, full responsibility for the direction, coordination, and supervision of all United States Government (USG) executive branch employees in-country. However, this authority does not extend to personnel in other missions or those assigned to either an international agency or to a geographic or other supported combatant commander. Although the diplomatic mission is beyond the realm of the geographic combatant commander's responsibility, close coordination with each mission in the commander's area of responsibility (AOR) is essential in order to build an effective overlying regional foreign internal defense (FID) program.”

JCS Pub 3-07.1⁵

That this is not as straightforward as it at first appears, can be seen from the following Congressional testimony:

“As you are aware, our State Department Chiefs of Mission are responsible for the Antiterrorism force protection of DoD personnel and their families stationed in their respective countries (unless those individuals are “assigned” to the area geographic Commander in Chief (CINC)). However, we also recognize that there are situations where the CINC is best capable to provide protection for “non-CINC assigned” personnel and, conversely, situations where the Chief of Mission is better equipped to provide protection for “CINC-assigned” personnel. As a result, in 1997, Secretaries Cohen and Albright signed the “Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of state and the Department of Defense on Security of DoD Elements and Personnel in Foreign Areas.” This document allows the Chief of Mission and CINC to determine the best force protection provider and negotiate Antiterrorism Force Protection responsibilities accordingly. To date, the Chiefs of Mission and CINCs have signed seventeen country-specific agreements and we anticipate signing eighty additional agreements this year.”

Gen Joseph W. Ralston, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff⁶

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However, at the tactical level, command and control issues are often dominated by personality, maturity, experience, and resources. These issues are further complicated by the fact that different nations have different command and control arrangements.

“As the emphasis of coalition military forces in Afghanistan transitioned from combat operations to stabilization, the deployment of PRTs created a new context for civil-military interaction, but a persistent cluster of issues continued to cloud the relationship – specifically differing views on preserving ‘humanitarian space’, establishing a secure environment, providing assistance, and coordinating and sharing information.”⁷

Both the Danish Institute for International Studies and the Australian Centre For Army Lessons reported that there are three models used for PRTs - American, British and German.^{8,9} Both reports note the differences in command and control relationships and the potential for confusion within and between PRTs of different nations. Command and control appears to be an international issue. The following quotation from the Australian paper is particularly interesting because it documents their *perception* of the U.S. chain of command as well as their *perception* of the use of ball caps by U.S. soldiers, neither of which is a reality on the ground in all instances.

“The American model places the military in charge with the civilian components coming under military command. The civilian components appear to have less autonomy in the U.S. model than the British and German model and most PRT projects are financed by Defence [sic] money. The principal focus of the American PRTs is reconstruction and hearts and minds operations and the American PRTs appear to be the only ones to engage directly in reconstruction efforts. The military focus is strong and Americans are perceived as less responsive to UN and NGO demands than the British and the Germans. A hostile environment and U.S. military doctrine dictate a focus on force protection resulting in members of the U.S. PRTs being heavily armed. Members of the U.S. PRTs wear baseball caps instead of helmets to distinguish themselves from combat soldiers.”

The command relationship of the PRT military commander to the other U.S. and foreign government, IOs, and non-government organizations and agencies involved needs to be clarified. This needs to be followed by training leadership about these relationships. Clarification of command and control issues should help PRTs to realize full value from civilian participation and expertise of USAID, DOS, USDA, NGOs, and other organizations.

PRT Organization, Associated Units and Relationships

A PRT is a civil-military organization, task-organized and assigned to a province, whose purpose is to extend the reach and legitimacy of the Central Government of Afghanistan by developing a self-sustaining, peaceful, civil-society. It is a tactical organization with strategic impact. Other nations have PRTs as well as the U.S.. The ratio of military to other governmental, UN, and non-governmental organizations in an area depends heavily on the degree to which the area is pacified.

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The U.S. PRTs are not established in the traditional Marine Corps infantry battalion/company task organization, table of equipment (T/O,T/E) model. The Sharana PRT consists of a PRT Commander with a staff of 26 joint personnel. The staff consists of a varied mix of soldiers, Marines, airmen, and sailors of varying ranks, gender, MOSs, and active/reserve status. PRT personnel were not assigned based on specific MOS qualifications to fill comparable billet assignments in the PRT; they were assigned based on their availability to join the PRT.

U.S. Army Civil Affairs Detachment. A detachment of eight U.S. Army civil affairs (CA) personnel is attached to the Sharana PRT in a direct support role. These soldiers work with the PRT and share and combine resources to support local humanitarian missions and contracted projects throughout the province. They work directly for and report to a higher task force headquarters in Khowst and maintain adcon to the CA Brigade Commander in Bagram. The CA team and PRT each report directly to brigade headquarters (Task Force (TF) Devil) located 50 kilometers (km) east in the city of Khowst. It is the responsibility of the PRT commander and the CA team to initiate action in the province based upon mission guidance from the TF Devil commander.

Engineer Brigade. The PRT is located in a compound adjacent to the provincial capital, Sharana. A brigade of 600 engineers (TF Sword) is also located at this site. The brigade is a composite of active and reserve engineers from Washington and South Carolina. These soldiers have significantly improved the infrastructure of the compound and are supporting engineering missions in the region. They are separate from the PRT but share resources on occasion.

U.S. Army Maneuver Battalion. The PRT works directly with a U.S. Army active duty maneuver battalion, 1st Battalion/508th infantry (TF Fury), which is responsible for the battlespace in the Paktika province. The maneuver commander and the PRT commander have developed a strong working relationship and mutually support each other in the AO. The TF Fury commander has established a Headquarters and Headquarters Company minus (HHC(-)) to provide force protection and quick reaction force (QRF) mission support to the PRT and TF Sword at the PRT site. The company answers directly to the TF Fury commander who is located in Orgun E. The company is not under the control of the PRT commander. The soldiers of the 1st/508th are highly respected by the PRT commander, CA teams, and local population for their professionalism in the conduct of civil military operations (CMO) and their ability to quickly transition to kinetic operations when needed. The Battalion is credited with killing numerous foreign fighters and Taliban in the province. Additionally, TF Fury assigned a two man tactical human intelligence team (THT) to the compound. These soldiers assist the HHC(-) company commander and PRT commander in exploiting human intelligence in the local community.

Contractor Personnel. The PRT commander coordinated the addition of eight contractor personnel¹⁰ to support facilities maintenance on the compound. These civilians provide general construction, engineering, electrical, generator, and plumbing expertise for the PRT FOB. They have improved living conditions on the base and are a welcomed addition. These personnel were added on the initiative of the PRT commander.

U.S. Government Agencies. The PRT is task organized with embedded U.S. Government support personnel that usually include representatives from U.S. Aid and International Development (USAID), DOS, Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). The following specifically addresses the Sharana PRT but was observed to be representative of the other PRTs visited.

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- The USAID representative worked as a co-equal with the PRT commander and was responsible for providing oversight and expertise on reconstruction projects in the region. This representative was pulled after 90 days from PRT Sharana by USAID headquarters after her convoy was involved in an IED attack. USAID will not replace this representative until the security situation in the province improves. Currently, USAID has a subcontractor remaining at the PRT who is leading a USAID airfield project near the site.
- A benefit that the USAID representative brings to the PRT is the ability to bring large amounts of money for projects that is easily exploited by Quick Impact Program (QIP) funds. This process is more streamlined than the CERP process and allows for immediate action. As a TTP, PRT commanders and CA teams should not promise projects to the locals until there is 'buy in' by the government and funding is approved.
- Additionally, the PRT had a DOS representative who served as a political advisor and supported the PRT commander in liaison with the local Governor. This individual was an expert on the local Kucchi tribe. Aside from the aforementioned quality, this individual was unprepared to handle the physical and cultural challenges of serving with U.S. military personnel and did not work well with the PRT commander or his staff. The DOS representative departed for Kabul after 60 days with the PRT.
- Depending on the region, the PRT may be augmented with a government representative from the USDA and the DEA. Since the Paktika Province is located in a non-agricultural region with no poppy plants to support the opium trade, these agencies are not involved in this region. The PRT commander noted that there is some suspected drug smuggling coming over the border from Pakistan.

Other Organizations and Agencies. There were no NGOs, international organization (IOs)-, foreign government agencies, or United Nations personnel in the vicinity of the Sharana PRT. Their presence would have made command and control and coordination even more complex.¹¹ Their absence is believed to be a result of the relatively dangerous location of the Sharana PRT with a correspondingly high need for attention to security. The German and British PRTs were located in safer locations and had more interaction with these organizations and agencies. However, the Sharana PRT Commander welcomed the idea of opening the province to NGO and other humanitarian relief organizations because it would bring more resources to bear on the provincial needs. He expressed a need for a donor conference to initiate interest and hopefully alleviate concerns by the NGOs about operating in Paktika Province.

“As demonstrated during Operation enduring freedom in Afghanistan, when coalition forces are one of the combatants, considerable friction is introduced into the civil-military relationship. Military activities undertaken to defeat the Taliban and alQaeda forces in 2001 and 2002 created conflict with IO and NGO efforts to alleviate human suffering¹² .

Interpreters. There are two classifications of interpreters assigned to the PRT. CAT-1 interpreters are Afghans hired from the local population who speak English but are not authorized access to any sensitive material. CAT-2 interpreters are former foreign nationals who

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are now U.S. citizens, are vetted by a background check, and may have access to sensitive material. The CAT-2 individuals are hired by the Titan Corporation for salaries as high as \$150,000 a year. The PRT previously had three CAT-2 interpreters but they were transferred by the PRT commander due to numerous issues. The CAT-2s were incapable of supporting the multiple language requirements for the region (Pashto and Dari). One of the CAT-2s was a female and although she was competent at translating, she was not given access by the local population due to the cultural restraints. Additionally, the CAT-2 interpreters do not retain the same credibility as the CAT-1s, because the local population views them as Afghans who have not shared the same struggles and hardships as those who stayed in Afghanistan during the Soviet war and subsequent civil war. The PRT has eight CAT-1 interpreters who are highly regarded by the PRT commander and his soldiers. These individuals were hired by the PRT CA team and are paid \$600 to \$1,000 a month. In addition to being less costly than CAT 2s, they provided more effective support to the PRT as well. Most of the interpreters are fluent in English, Pashtun, Dari, and Urdu and they understand the local slang. Since they come from communities in or near the province they understand the local customs and are a rich source of human intelligence.

The interpreters share the same hardships and risks as the PRT and some have been wounded during previous operations in the province. Additionally, in some regions including Paktika, the interpreters are at great risk due to bounties placed on their heads by Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters and local informants. The PRT commander noted that it is vital that all commanders are properly trained in the techniques involved in vetting and utilizing an interpreter. The PRT commander brings at least two interpreters to every meeting with local Shourahs (village elders) and government officials to ensure that there is proper translation. It is optimal during large-scale meetings to utilize at least three interpreters if possible. One interpreter is utilized for translation, another interpreter assists in translation to cover gaps missed by the first, and the third interpreter listens to collateral conversations and chatter that may contain useful information. It is important for the PRT commander to identify trustworthy interpreters to ensure that he receives all information in a complete manner and that his intent is properly communicated to the local community and contractors.

Interpreters from the local region are preferred since they are culturally astute to the nuances of the specific tribes in rural areas. A good interpreter will inform the commander of potentially culturally insensitive comments prior to translation. Additionally, it is important for the PRT commander or CA team member to maintain control of the interpreters and not allow any freelancing on their part. The tribal elders need to see that the commander is the individual in control and not the interpreter.

Embedded Training Team (ETT). A 14 man ETT is assigned to the Afghan National Army (ANA) located near the governor's compound in Sharana. The ETT is commanded by an Army National Guard major and is augmented with U.S. Army active, reserve, and guard personnel of various ranks and MOSs. A separate MCCLL report addresses ETTs in Afghanistan.

PRT Personnel and Training Issues

The Marines, soldiers, airmen, and sailors of PRT Sharana understand the CJTF commander's intent and are making tremendous contributions in carrying out their assigned missions in the Paktika Province. However, their task is made difficult by several factors. As previously mentioned the US PRTs are not manned and equipped in the traditional Marine infantry

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battalion/company model. The staff consists of a varied mix of soldiers, Marines, airmen, and sailors of varying ranks, gender, MOSs, and active/reserve components.

PRT personnel were not assigned based on specific qualifications to fill comparable billet assignment in the PRT, but were assigned based upon availability for assignment to the PRT. Consequently, a communications operator is responsible for maintaining the vehicle fleet, and an infantry Marine is responsible for the computer network and SATCOM equipment. These individuals do a great job in learning on the job but are not MOS qualified for many of the responsibilities they have. A PRT needs MOS qualified communications technicians, motor transport mechanics, logisticians, and combat engineers.

In most cases they have little training or experience in the kind of operations required by a PRT. Many of them are on their first deployment and have a non-combat MOS. The rugged terrain requires excellent physical conditioning. Personnel assigned to PRTs need more pre-deployment force protection training including use of crew served weapons. There is also a need for increased cultural awareness training at both the micro and macro level for all personnel because they will be working in close contact with the Afghans. In at least one instance, a critical leadership position was filled by a female who is being set up for failure because of the cultural bias against women of the Afghani tribal leadership with whom she must negotiate. Cultural awareness is critical to the success of a PRT.

The Sharana PRT Commander, LtCol Obermueller, was selected as a Marine Corps Reserve, individual augment to be the PRT commander for the Paktika province. An armor officer by MOS, he had no CA experience or training prior to this assignment, though he had worked with U.S. and foreign officials on a 15 month joint assignment in Azerbaijan. The non-CA personnel assigned to his staff similarly were individual augments with no CA background or training. When conducting operations as a PRT it is imperative that the commander and his staff are trained to understand the complexities of Civil Military Operations (CMO) and how it supports the establishment of local governance. A CMO course that teaches how to liaise with foreign government officials and U.S. government agencies, vet and utilize interpreters, initiate and manage projects, understand and employ the CERP process, and understand the provincial counter insurgency threat, is recommended for all PRT personnel.¹³

The U.S. Army has recognized the need for specialized training for PRT personnel, and U.S. Forces Command (FORSCOM) issued specific guidance. There are also web-based training resources available. FORSCOM *Training Guidance for Provincial Reconstruction Teams* is contained in FORSCOM message AFOP-TRO 060157 March 2006, available on the MCCLL Website.¹⁴

There should be a skill designator established for PRT experience.

Logistics Support

Paktika is one of the most remote provinces in the country. They are reliant on Bagram for humanitarian assistance (HA) and sustainment. The supply line from Bagram traverses a great distance over extreme terrain. Consequently, the PRT faces numerous challenges on a daily basis to receive the logistics support from TF Devil necessary to sustain the FOB.

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There was no shortage of class I rations to sustain the messing facility, but many of the perishable boxes of tray rations arrive from Bagram with only a month to a few weeks remaining on the shelf life. When the PRT commander first arrived, the messing facility personnel were discarding hundreds of boxes of expired tray rations. The PRT commander now issues all expired U.S. tray rations to local Afghanis during humanitarian missions. The combat medics face a similar situation with resupply on medical supplies and drugs. The medics order all drugs through a web-based program called Tammis Customer Assistance Module (TCAM). This system has an online catalog that allows the medics to order the drugs over the internet and receive order confirmation. This system is efficient but is dependant upon internet connectivity which is sometimes erratic. The PRT commander or Physician's Assistant (PA) coordinates pickup of the drugs when they are traveling to Bagram air base.

In addition to personnel support, the PRT has a variety of vehicles and equipment. The PRT has 14 up armored HMMWVs, one armored Light Medium Tactical Vehicle (LMTV), one M-105 trailer, one M-149 waterbull, and two generators to assist in mobility and FOB operations. Ten of the vehicles are outfitted with various electronic countermeasures (ECM) systems to include Warlock, Acorn, and Mobile Multi Band Jammer (MMBJ). There are two heavy weapon systems for internal security (one MK 19grenade launcher, one M240B machine gun).

There is adequate class III petroleum, oils and lubricant supplies at the compound but there is no class IX repair parts block to support corrective maintenance. The PRT receives a great deal of support from TF Sword, but has significant shortages on Class IX sustainment parts for the HMMWVs, LMTV, supporting rolling stock, and weapons. Many times parts are cannibalized from destroyed HMMWVs to support the parts block requirements of the rolling stock. The Marines and soldiers working on the HMMWVs are disciplined about preventive and corrective maintenance and have extended the life of the vehicles based on their own initiative and expertise. The PRT commander will often fill a "wish list" of parts for the vehicle operators when he travels to Bagram air base.

The PRT has seven "ISO" containers to store all humanitarian supplies arriving to the camp.

The PRT needs a dedicated logistics SNCO/NCO to coordinate all internal logistics needs with higher headquarters in order to support the timely needs of the FOB and exercise the proper logistics processes with the higher headquarters S-4 section.

Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP)

The purpose of the CERP is to enable commanders to respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction requirements by carrying out programs that will immediately assist the Afghan people.¹⁵ As the Afghanistan Combined/Joint Operational Area (CJOA) continues to mature, CERP projects are shifting from basic needs to more complex reconstruction and development (R&D) projects tied together as systems synchronized with CJTF-76 campaign objectives to maximize program efficiency.

CERP funds are U.S. appropriated funds available for use during the Fiscal Year (FY) for which they were appropriated by Congress. CJTF-76 receives CERP funding from CFC-A (higher headquarters) in allotments at various times throughout the year (i.e. not all at once or at a set time) based on obligation rates. COMCJTF-76 approves all projects and the distribution of CERP funding to subordinate units in accordance with CJTF-76 campaign objectives and

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operational plans. Upon request at decision points throughout the FY, Regional Commands (RCs) and Task Forces (TFs) present/brief their CERP spend plans/requests for funds to COMCJTF for approval. CJTF-76 CJ8 distributes CERP funding to the RCs and TFs based on CG approval and guidance.

The CERP employs Project Purchasing Officers (PPOs) and Pay Agents (PAs) to purchase supplies and contract services. Although PPOs are not required to seek contracting officer advice, guidance or assistance, they are highly encouraged to do so. Use of contracting officers increases the fiscal integrity of the procurement process associated with larger, more technical CERP projects. While use of contracting officers will inherently extend the procurement timeline, commanders are encouraged to consider using contracting officers and standard procurement procedures for larger projects involving high dollar values to maintain the fiscal integrity of their CERP programs. The commander's CERP responsibilities are a long and detailed process that requires proper oversight and documentation on a continual basis.

The PRT commander and his designated CERP manager need to be adequately trained and informed of the CERP process prior to deploying to ensure the PRT is compliant with all regulations.

Corruption

Political and economic corruption is an Afghan cultural problem that is systemic at all levels in the country. This is a symptom of trying to survive from day-to-day during the past history of war. Many political, military, and police leaders within the province expect kickbacks from contractors who were hired to conduct USAID or PRT supported projects. Many contractors who do not provide kickbacks are arrested and placed in jail until they comply. Additionally, some interpreters were fired for receiving payoffs from local contractors to purposely misinterpret contracts in order to mislead CA personnel in awarding contracts to these individuals.

The PRT commander recommended that when a contractor is awarded a contract a picture of the individual is taken and added to a website established by higher headquarters. If the contractor were ever fired, other PRT commanders could identify the individual if he attempts to bid on future contracts. In an effort to support Central Government capacity and good governance the PRT initially provided the local mayor, a political leader, with humanitarian supplies (blankets, clothing, and radios) to disseminate to the needy people of his district. Often these items were not disseminated to the people but were "stolen" from the mayoral compound. Many of these items would later resurface in local bazaars and shops after they were resold or passed on to political cronies. On another occasion the PRT provided humanitarian supplies for dissemination to the population by the local Afghan National Army (ANA) commander and his troops. The following day the ANA troops went back to the village and took the goods and clothing from the villagers. Now the PRT goes directly to needy villages and disseminates humanitarian items directly to the people upon coordination and direction of the local Shourahs. Corruption continues to be a problem at all levels and is a significant roadblock to the establishment of a long-term stable functioning society and government. Supporting local honest politicians and contractors, while exposing the corrupt, is a continual challenge for the PRT.

Civil Affairs

The soldiers of the CA team support the PRT commander and TF maneuver commander by focusing on the mission center of gravity of building Afghan capacity and good governance. This is accomplished through engaging the local population by providing humanitarian assistance, limited medical support, establishing local projects, and incorporating general initiatives that stimulate governance.

The soldiers of the CA team are task organized from the U.S. Army's 492d CA Battalion/321st CA Brigade. They are a highly professional and experienced team with a great deal of operational and civilian experience. Their civilian backgrounds in law enforcement, finance, medicine, construction etc., bring experiences that are crucial to the civilian affairs mission in Paktika province. The civilian skills these individuals bring to the CA team are valued more than the rank these individuals hold. As such, many of the team members hold positions and responsibilities not necessarily aligned with the designated T/O rank to billet but rather with their CA and civilian skills they bring to the team.

The CA team went through a 14 week CA course at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina that focused on basic soldier and CA skills, but was inadequate in preparing the teams for the varied responsibilities and realities commensurate with the requirements to reconstruct and develop a foreign province. All the CA personnel stressed the need for detailed training in negotiating, contract development, evaluating contractors, program funding and management, budget development, vetting and incorporating interpreters, and project turnover. As an example, the CA team hired local Afghan contractors to construct a 170 km road from Sharana to Waza Khwah that will directly link to the main road network circumnavigating the country. This construction project will open up the Province with a direct route to Kabul, hopefully stimulating economic development in the region. The Afghan contractors subsequently hire local Afghans as laborers, pay the workers, and purchase the materials from businesses in the local community. The CA team oversees this process to ensure quality assurance and quality control and ensure all resources are properly utilized.

Summary and Way Ahead

The current mission of the PRTs is to enable the legitimacy of the Government of Afghanistan by facilitating provincial security, reconstruction and development as well as to convince the insurgents that their cause is hopeless and to give up the fight in order to create enduring security and stability.¹⁶ PRT operations will continue to be critical to success in counter-insurgency operations and are directly related to Marine Corps doctrine as defined by the Small Wars Manual and operational concept of Other Expeditionary Operations (OEO). This is a difficult mission and it needs to be executed effectively. There should be a skill designator established for PRT experience.

Perhaps most important, it is necessary to clarify the doctrinal relationship of the PRT military commander to U.S. and foreign government, international and non-government organizations and agencies. Success depends on getting full value from the civilian participation and expertise of USAID, DOS, USDA, the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and similar organizations. This issue has been debated in the context of Humanitarian Relief and Military Operations Other than War for several years without resolution.¹⁷ In the absence of resolution, the job gets done based on ad

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hoc working relationships and the dedication and good will of individual actors, but the degree to which efficiency and effectiveness are lost is unknown.

Cultural awareness at the macro and micro level are of equal importance and it is necessary to develop TTPs to accommodate cultural differences and avoid offensive and ineffective communication. Understanding the nuances of tribal leadership and inter-tribal relationships can be critical to successful interaction. Additional training is necessary at all levels and in some cases compromises that are uncomfortable to U.S. personnel may need to be made to ensure the successful accomplishment of the mission.

To be effective the PRT must be adequately staffed to support the PRT commander in his multiple responsibilities of engaging the local provincial government and Afghan population; supporting non-organic U.S. and nongovernmental agencies; while simultaneously organizing, running, and sustaining a forward operating base. A majority of the service members assigned to the PRT are filling billets as individual augments, and it is important that all personnel assigned to a PRT are trained and prepared to handle the varied complexities of civil military operations. It would be valuable for PRT Commanders to have had prior experience with a PRT. Although a PRT needs to be task organized for its specific mission and circumstances, a strawman table of organization model from which to build the PRT should be developed.

To “Seize the human terrain and defeat the enemy”¹⁸ is a critically important mission that provides an excellent command opportunity for a field grade officer. PRT Command may be an excellent opportunity for officers who have command screened as alternates. There are three Marine led PRTs of 22 currently operating in Afghanistan. The Marine Corps is planning to staff only one for the next rotation. Giving up the additional two Marine billets will limit future Marine Corps PRT operational involvement in the Afghanistan Theater. Developing an experienced officer and NCO corps in civil military operations will benefit the Marine Corps in the execution of future PRT responsibilities in Afghanistan, Iraq, and future areas of operation.

All the U.S. Army Civil Affairs personnel interviewed stressed the need to receive detailed training in negotiating, contract development, evaluating contractors, program funding and management, budget development, vetting and incorporating interpreters, and project turnover.

One important collateral activity is to identify and mentor key Afghan personnel in democratic governance and leadership. Qualified leadership will be necessary for an independent stable Afghanistan. This should include efforts to reduce corruption at all levels.

Effective measures of effectiveness (MOEs) need to be developed for reconstruction and humanitarian relief operations. These need to be consistent across as broad a range of organizations as possible - at least consistent U.S. Government wide. Good MOEs assess accomplishment, not effort or money or manpower expended.

Endnotes

¹ DoD *Fact Sheet-Provincial Reconstruction Teams*, September 27, 2004
<http://www.defenselink.mil/home/articles/2004-10/a100107b.html> accessed 10 March 2006

² CJTF 76 Command Guidance

³ These officers from the Ground Training Branch, Training and Education Command were deployed as a MCCLL collection team.

⁴ LtCol G. L. Lyon, USMC and Maj J. M. Lauder, *USMC After Action report for MCCLL Team Visit to Provincial Reconstruction Team Sharana, Paktika Province Afghanistan*, 14 December 2005

⁵ Publication: JP 3-07.1 Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense (FID), Chapter II, Paragraph 6a.

⁶ Gen Joseph W. Ralston, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Before the 106th Congress, Committee on Armed Services, US Senate, 9 March 1999

⁷ The RAND Corporation and the United States Institute for Peace, Special Report 147, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams*, September 2005.

⁸ Jakobsen, Peter Viggo, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: Successful but not Sufficient*, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) Report 2005:6.

⁹ [The Australian] Centre for Army Lessons, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams Desktop Analysis Report*, October 2005.

¹⁰ Contractors employed by Kellogg, Brown, and Root Corporation.

¹¹ The RAND Corporation and the United States Institute for Peace, Special Report 147, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams*, September 2005.

¹² Olga Oliker et al., *Aid During Conflict: Interaction Between Military and Civilian Assistance Providers in Afghanistan, September 2001-June 2002*, RAND Corporation, 2004

¹³ The U.S Air Force conducts a ten-week information operations (IO) planner's course that provides excellent training in IO to support this mission. Likewise, the U.S. Army offers an Army Knowledge Online (AKO) PSYOPS course for similar training preparation. Good publications for PRT training references are Army publications FM 31-20-2 (Foreign Internal Defense) and FM 31-20-3 (Unconventional Warfare).

¹⁴ U.S.Army FORSCOM *Training Guidance for Provincial Reconstruction Teams* is contained in FORSCOM AFOP-TRO/060157/MAR, available on the MCCLL Website. Active duty, Reserve, and DoD civilians may also view and download this message and additional implementation resources by logging onto the Center For Army Lessons Learned (CALL) website at <https://call2.army.mil/frontend/deers/DEERSLogin.asp>. An Army Knowledge Online (AKO) account is required to access some linked resources within CALL. Sponsorship for an AKO account is available through the CALL LnO at MCCLL. When logged onto CALL, open Training For War, and select All FORSCOM Training for War Requirements, and scroll to Training Guidance for PRT s under Operation Enduring Freedom.

¹⁵ The CERP is intended for small-scale, urgent, humanitarian relief and reconstruction projects for the benefit of the Iraqi and Afghan people. DoD Financial Management Regulation, DoD 7000.14-R, Commanders' Emergency Response Program Volume 12, Chapter 27, 27-5, September 2005.

¹⁶ DoD *Fact Sheet-Provincial Reconstruction Teams*, September 27, 2004
<http://www.defenselink.mil/home/articles/2004-10/a100107b.html> accessed 10 March 2006

¹⁷ The Institute for Defense Analysis has completed several recent projects on this issue.

¹⁸ CJTF 76 Command Guidance