

Programming Development Funds to Support a Counterinsurgency:

A Case Study of Nangarhar, Afghanistan in 2006

Case Studies in National Security Transformation
Number 10
Michelle Parker



Sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
Forces Transformation and Resources

Prepared by the Center for Technology and National Security Policy



Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 2007		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2007 to 00-00-2007	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Programming Development Funds to Support a Counterinsurgency: A Case Study of Nangarhar, Afghanistan in 2006				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) National Defense University, Center for Technology and National Security Policy, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC, 20319				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 24	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not reflect the official policy or position of the National Defense University, the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. All information and sources for this paper were drawn from unclassified materials.

Michelle Parker is an International Affairs Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. She spent two and one-half years in Afghanistan as the first development advisor to NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). She was responsible for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Afghanistan portfolio, strategizing and operationalizing development in a counterinsurgency, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), and providing an overall view of the development sector in Afghanistan (2006). She also managed the USAID Jalalabad Field Office, where she served as the USAID representative in Nangarhar and Laghman provinces, and as the development lead in the Jalalabad PRT (2004-06). Ms. Parker has consulted with the International Republican Institute in Wuhan, China (2004); the National Taurida Vernadsky University in Crimea, Ukraine (2002-03); and USAID in Kathmandu, Nepal (2002). She has also spent a number of years as a management analyst with the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Maryland (2001-04). Ms Parker has a B.A. International Relations from Georgia State University and a M.S. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University.

Introduction

This case study describes one method of programming development funds at a sub-national level to positively affect a counterinsurgency in Eastern Afghanistan. It is presented as a practical model for both students in the classroom and operators in the field to understand the complexity involved with a type of mission that the United States has not attempted since Vietnam. The case study explores the process through which the Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) developed and implemented a strategy for increasing stability in its area of operations through maximizing resources each agency brought to the table and creating a “unity of effort.”¹

It is important to note that in 2006, when the activities described in this study took place, no process or doctrine of any kind existed to aid PRTs in programming funds to influence an active insurgency, and to the author’s knowledge, none exists as of the writing of this case study. The aim of this study is to provide readers with an eight-step process of strategic program development, culminating in the execution of a series of projects, highlighting lessons learned throughout the experience. The eight steps were developed by the command group (CG) of the PRT, which consisted of a representative from USAID, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Army Civil Affairs.

The CG decided to create this process because of the limited funding of the PRT. There was no way to fund every project brought to the PRT by the local government, the people, or other actors in the area, and because the PRT was the largest source of accessible funds in the province, it was often pulled in multiple directions. The CG feared losing focus on the primary and critical task of establishing stability by getting caught up in basic development projects that were outside its mandate. The tipping point of holding the meeting that established this process occurred when USAID allocated \$1 million to its Jalalabad Field Office at the PRT for stability projects.²

The eight steps of strategic program development are as follows:

1. Understanding the Strategic Framework
2. Operationalizing the Strategy
3. Determining Geographic Focus through Tribal Analysis
4. Defining Project Parameters
5. Conducting the Project Identification Process
6. Gaining Government Approval
7. Holding the PRT Project Nomination Board
8. Implementation

¹ Nick Marinacci, “Provincial Reconstruction Teams –Towards Unity of Effort,” May 2004. USAID Discussion Paper.

² Having a clear understanding of budgets is helpful, but not necessary until further into the process when the team goes into the community to talk to potential stakeholders. It is useful to have everything in place so when money does become available it easily fits into the strategic framework the PRT set up for its province.

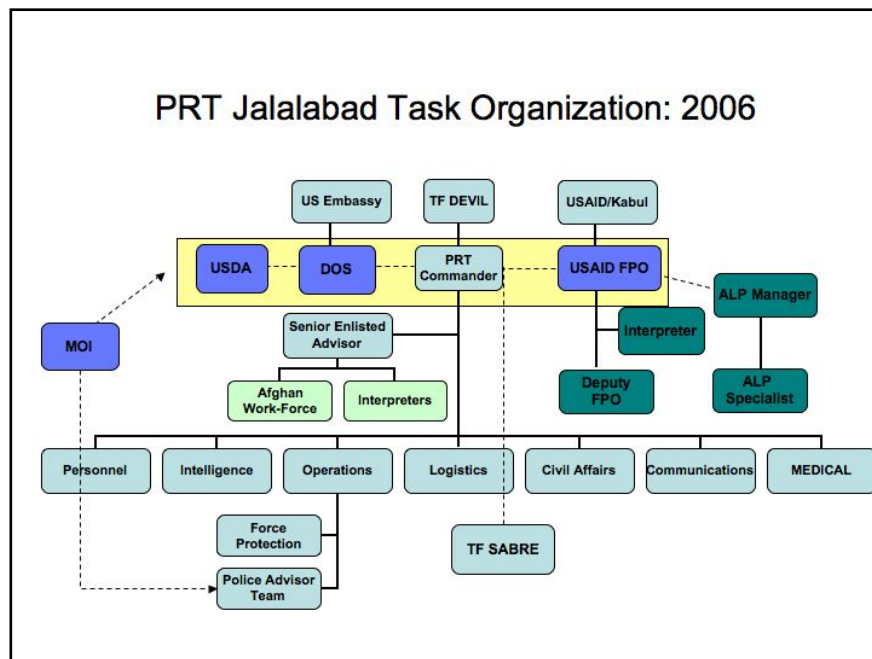
The target audience for this case study is the CG of a PRT operating in Afghanistan, but the lessons can be extrapolated to other civil-military models working around the world through teaching it in the classroom as a training tool.

Background

Provincial Reconstruction Teams

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were created in late 2002 by the U.S. military to expand its civil-military operations in the provinces of Afghanistan with the goal of creating stability.³ A PRT is a team of interagency partners with representatives from each of the “3Ds”: Defense, Development, and Diplomacy.⁴ When the U.S. military designed the concept, it was also important for the PRTs to be international. Over the last five years 14 different countries established or took over existing PRTs with many more countries augmenting the mission.⁵ Figure 1 outlines the task organization chart of the Jalalabad PRT in 2006:

Figure 1



³ This case study is about one PRT in Afghanistan and any general references to PRTs are meant to represent only PRTs in Afghanistan.

⁴ The “3D” concept came out of the 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy, which stated that the United States needed to maximize each component of its foreign services to achieve national security.

⁵ Australia/Netherlands (joint PRT), Canada, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.

The teams are led by the CG (highlighted in yellow), with each agency having its own responsibilities outside the team. The military commander manages all military functions including the provision of basic life support (food, shelter, health, communications, transportation) as well as specific skills that are utilized by the team (planning, intelligence collection and analysis, reporting, patrolling, cordon and search, combat operations, and others). The development officer manages, monitors, and develops projects and programs for her/his country in addition to working with the military to develop sound projects to affect stability in the area. The diplomat analyzes the political situation in the area and reports back to both her/his home country's embassy and NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) headquarters in Kabul in addition to shaping the strategy of the PRT.⁶

Every PRT is different based on a number of factors including the needs of the province, the PRT host country requirements, national and international development programs in the area, and security to name a few.

According to the ISAF PRT Handbook:⁷

The PRT should not act as an alternative to the Government of Afghanistan (GoA), but rather seek to improve the capacity of the GoA to govern itself. PRTs perform a vital role in occupying the vacuum caused by a weak government presence and are hence deterring agents of instability. PRTs seek to establish an environment that is stable enough for international agencies, the local authorities and civil society to engage in reconstruction, political transition and social and economic development.

The PRT's mandate is to: extend the reach of the central government, develop security sector reform, and conduct reconstruction and development activities. Together, these three objectives are designed to bring stability to the provinces in which they operate.⁸

PRT Mission: Stability

Stability is defined as the government having a monopoly of the use of force over its people.⁹ Stability can be measured along two axis: legitimacy of government and effectiveness of government. Increasing the effectiveness and legitimacy of government are considered "friendly" lines of operation (LOO) in military terms, and figure 2 shows the myriad of ways in which a PRT can support these LOOs.¹⁰ The PRT also can focus on mitigating the enemy's LOO, which includes decreasing government effectiveness and legitimacy. When programming development funds, it is best to focus on the former because the nature of development is to improve the government's ability to monopolize

⁶ This is true of PRTs in Afghanistan and may not be applicable to PRTs in other engagements.

⁷ "ISAF PRT Handbook," Edition 3, February 3, 2007.

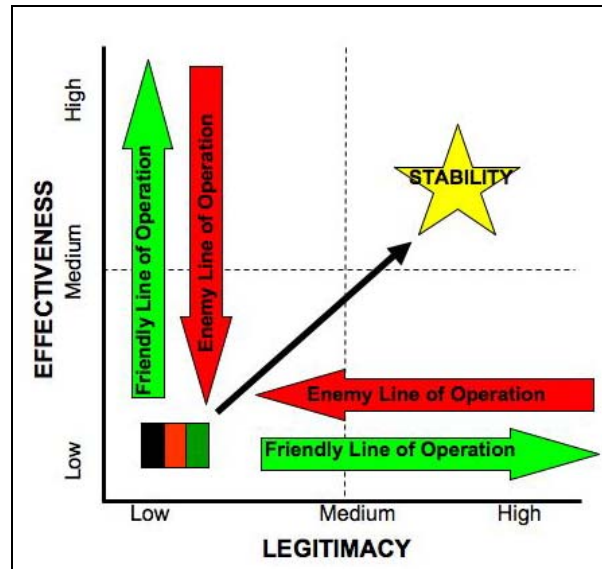
⁸ Taken from the Terms of Reference for CFC and ISAF PRTs in Afghanistan, which were adopted by the Executive Steering Committee on 27 Jan 05.

⁹ "ISAF PRT Handbook," Edition 2, August 21, 2006.

¹⁰ This concept and the associated graphics were created in 2006 by Nick Marinacci and John Schweiger, the Director and Deputy Director respectively of USAID/Kabul's Civil-Military Program from 2003–2006.

the use of force and deliver benefits derived from that force, such as public works, education, and public health.

Figure 2. Stability Lines of Operation (USAID/Kabul Civil-Military Program, 2006)



Nangarhar Province

Nangarhar is an extremely important province in Afghanistan economically because it provides the primary licit trade route with Pakistan at the Torkem border crossing. It is the economic center of the east for business and development, produces 15-20 percent of the world's heroin on an annual basis,¹¹ has one of the most educated populations in the country, and is considered one of the “breadbaskets” of the country due to the land's fertility.¹² On the other side of its notoriety, Nangarhar has a history of supporting insurgents, including: welcoming Osama Bin Laden when he was forced to leave Sudan in 1996;¹³ providing sanctuary for Al Qaida's training camps; hosting some of the most serious fighting early on in Operation *Enduring Freedom* in the Tora Bora section of the Spin Ghar Mountains; providing the location for the first Stinger missile fired in battle by the mujahedin against the Soviets;¹⁴ and as of 2006, serving as a staging ground for the insurgency raging in the eastern part of the country.

The province plays host to two large tribes: Pashtun and Pashai. Of the Pashtun tribes, there are four sub-tribes (Khogiani, Shinwari, Mohmend, and Ghulzai), and each sub-tribe has additional sub-sub tribes. For the purposes of this case study, the most important

¹¹ This was not the case in 2005 and 2006 due to counter-narcotics programming by the GoA and the international community (UNODC 2005 and 2006).

¹² USAID focused on 5 areas of the country for its Rehabilitating Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP), one of which is Nangarhar due to its production potential (RAMP quarterly reports).

¹³ Cole, Steve, *Ghost Wars* (New York: Penguin, 2001).

¹⁴ Crile, George, *Charlie Wilson's War* (New York: Grove Press, 2003).

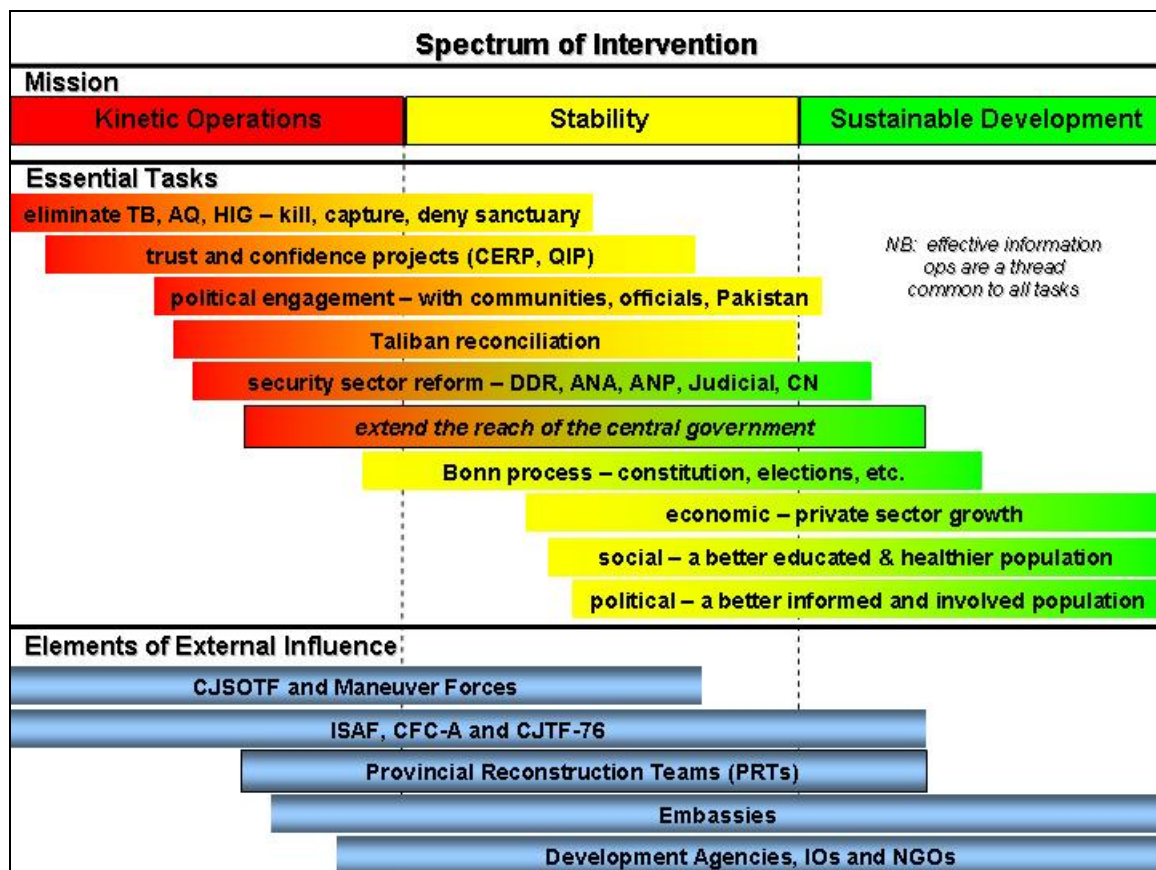
to distinguish is the Khogiani sub-tribe, which has three sub-sub tribes: Waziri, Sherzad, and Kharbone. The tribal, economic, and historic context is offered simply to provide a peek into the various factors playing into the situation. The CG of the PRT had to learn about the province, its power brokers, its history, and its future goals before the team could complete the following process. Situational awareness is a prerequisite to developing a program, so the first step helps the team develop that awareness.

The next sections will discuss an eight-step process of strategic program development, highlighting lessons learned throughout the experience. The eight steps were developed by the CG of the Jalalabad PRT in Afghanistan in 2006.

Step 1: Understanding the Strategic Framework

PRTs are one component of a full-spectrum operation. Using the guide illustrated in figure 3, the PRT CG discussed how to align project support to fulfill the role of non-kinetic operations, keeping in mind the goal of establishing stability for the province.

Figure 3. Spectrum of Intervention (USAID/Kabul Civil-Military Program, 2005)



The purpose of a PRT is to enhance stability in the provinces of Afghanistan. Stability is achieved through an increase in the capacity of the government to provide basic services, and a willingness of the population to be governed. PRTs can support this in many ways,

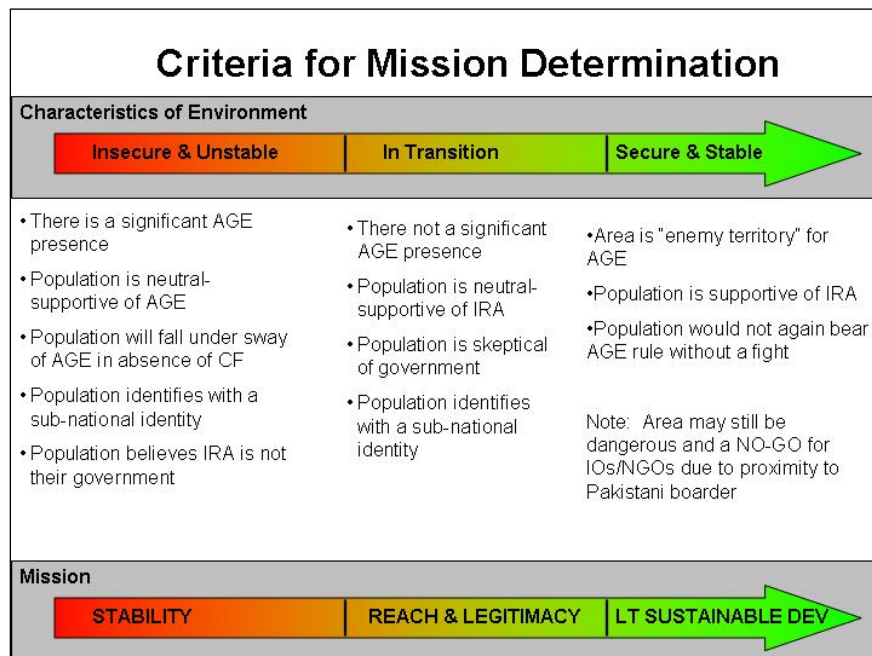
ranging from training and mentoring the government, to constructing government facilities such as district centers, courthouses, and schools that provide a clear platform from which government can operate. The construction of basic public works such as bridges, roads, and micro power that serve the population the government needs to affect is another option for PRT support.¹⁵

The PRT is but one component of the full spectrum operation shown above, therefore, the CG met every week with other stakeholders (maneuver units, other foreign governmental actors and the GoA) in the area to deconflict the PRT strategic planning with ongoing combat operations. At the same time, the development and political officers also met with their development agencies and embassies in Kabul to ensure the strategic plan of the PRT was in line with the current policies.

Step 2: Operationalizing the Strategy

Figure 4 is a graph developed by the USAID/Kabul Civil-Military Program to better assist the Field Officers responsible for programming millions of dollars in determining how to pare down the infinite needs of their provinces, and stay focused on the primary task of stability.

Figure 4. Criteria for Mission Determination (USAID/Kabul Civil-Military Program, 2005)



¹⁵ Baltazar, Thomas and Kvitashvili, Elizabeth, "The Role of USAID and Development Assistance in Combating Terrorism," *Military Review*, Vol. 87, Issue 2, March 2007.

In Nangarhar, the CG used this graph to discuss where they thought the five main tribes in the province fell on the spectrum of intervention. In a Counterinsurgency (COIN) the people are the center of gravity, which means analysis must be done at the community level. The CG, therefore, chose to use sub-tribes as a point of analysis rather than an arbitrary district or provincial boundary, and was thus better able to target communities the CG thought were having a negative impact on stability in the province.¹⁶

The CG looked at indicators including: NGO activity, violent acts against the military coalition, violent acts against the GoA, poppy growth, the numbers of schools and clinics (government service in action), and population centers. The CG did not develop a complex methodology for measuring each of these criteria, they simply sat around the table and discussed the tribes and indicators using personal knowledge and instincts. The CG determined that most of the province was either “In Transition” or “Secure and Stable.” The sub-tribes that the CG felt created an insecure and unstable environment also had one primary geographic commonality: they were all along the border with Pakistan.

As a team, the CG had to decide where to focus along the spectrum. The tribes considered “green” were off-limits because those areas were stable and outside of the PRT mandate. The question the CG explored was “how far into the red should the PRT go?” The CG quickly realized that was not a question that could be answered with simple instinct, it needed more complex analysis.

Box 1: Lessons Learned

1. The PRT’s command group needed to analyze their environment, or in military terms “define the battlespace” immediately upon arriving in theatre. Keeping in mind the three mandates of the PRT and nesting the discussion in the strategic framework outlined above, the interagency representatives should work together to determine how to best achieve their mission in the next 6-9 months. It is important to keep the timeframe short in more insecure environments because the PRT strategy will often have to be revisited based on the realities on the ground.

2. It is important to note that the PRT developed the mission determination, tribal analysis, and the project parameters without GoA involvement. They did this because they wanted to get their national agenda lined up clearly before going to the GoA. They debated bringing in key provincial leaders early in the process but decided against it due to this priority. In retrospect, it could be argued that this was a mistake. The sooner a PRT can bring the GoA into the process at the provincial level, the better. It has many benefits including building the capacity of the GoA to think strategically, to bring an Afghan “reality check” to their assumptions, and will create the sense of ownership of these projects that is needed to achieve the stated goals.

Regardless of what a team decides, this should be a discussion point within the PRT in the early stages so they can decide at what point GoA involvement is needed. It is possible that the governor and line directors are corrupt and may impede the process, so a team will want to avoid them as long as possible. The team may discover that the GoA stakeholders needed are rarely in the province, and the projects need to be nominated quickly so time restricts involvement. It must be decided if the benefits outweigh the negatives so the CG can move forward with a clear understanding of when GoA involvement is needed and why *at that point*.

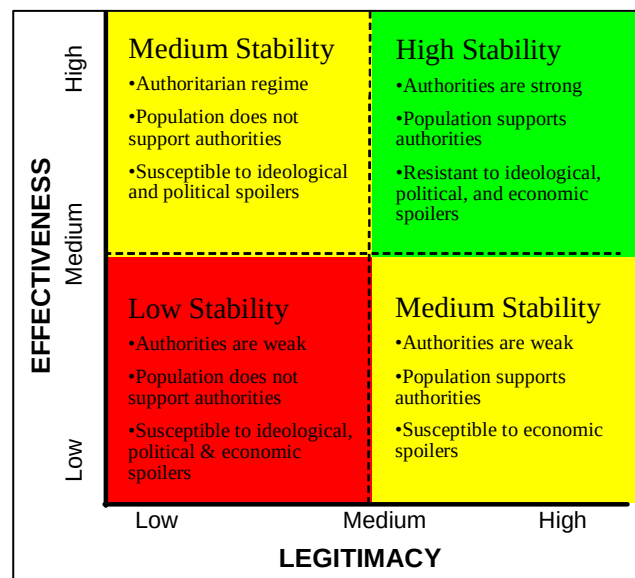
¹⁶ It is important to distinguish the decision to use sub-tribes as a point of analysis rather than district lines because in Nangarhar sub-tribes are a homogeneous group in regards to decision making and execution. The sub-tribe as a whole would decide if they would give sanctuary to the enemy; therefore, district boundaries held little interest for our analysis because many sub-tribes crossed multiple districts.

Step 3: Determining the Geographic Focus through Tribal Analysis

After determining generally which communities created or allowed an insecure and unstable environment to develop, the CG had to narrow the targeted areas even more because USAID’s budget was only \$1 million and every community in need would not be reached. At this point, the USAID Field Program Officer (FPO) asked the commander of the military component of the PRT, LTC Lynda Granfield, to provide the USAID office with a soldier to research the tribes and conduct a conflict analysis. A senior Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO), who had shown great interest in this subject, was assigned to the project.¹⁷

The NCO, Sgt Steve Kling, was tasked with mapping each sub tribe, and sub-sub tribe and placing them in the stability matrix illustrated in figure 5, based on the geographic area the CG agreed upon in the Operationalizing meeting. Sgt Kling developed a picture of tribal instability in the province, but argued that although certain sub-sub tribes were quite stable, the CG had to target those villages with projects or it would cause a source of conflict between the sub-sub tribes.

Figure 5. The Stability Matrix (USAID/Kabul Civil-Military Program, 2006)



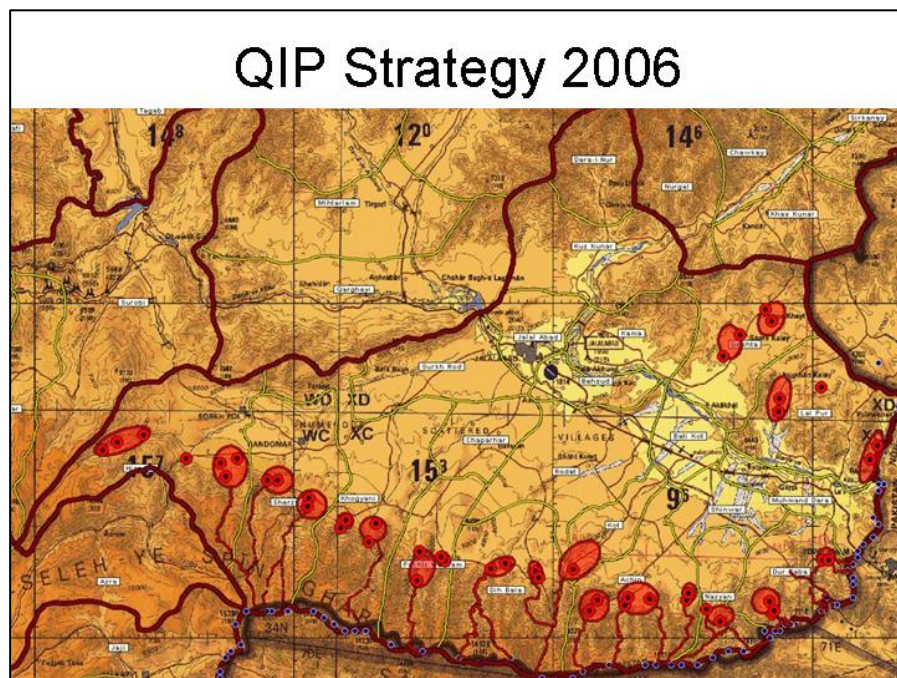
¹⁷ This is a prime example of the “Unity of Effort” that can happen at a PRT. Due to managing a \$19 million Alternative Livelihood Program at the time, the author was far too busy to spend the time needed to analyze the tribal situation well. The NCO who helped with this project was being underutilized by his team, and was able to support USAID in designing the intervention for the PRT. In the end, everyone benefited because of this unconventional approach to program development.

Once the communities were analyzed down to the smallest tribal division possible, the NCO began to target specific villages. The CG criteria included:

1. Communities that were politically fence-setting and generally located near “problem village clusters.”¹⁸ The populations were not in support of the GoA, but they did not support Anti-Government Elements (AGE) either.¹⁹
2. The communities had to lie along key smuggling routes, a primary cause of insecurity in these districts.
3. Little or no international or GoA involvement via projects in the community.

Over the next month, Sgt Kling researched possible village candidates using military intelligence databases, GoA, local DOD maneuver units, Special Forces, Other Coalition Forces, USAID implementing partners, and PRT interpreters. After collecting and analyzing the data, he developed a map (figure 6) of the village cluster areas that were to be the focus.

Figure 6. Map of target villages for USAID’s Quick Impact Projects (QIP) program in Nangarhar, Afghanistan (USAID/Jalalabad PRT, 2006)²⁰



¹⁸ The term “village clusters” was coined by a USAID implementing partner that discovered the sub-sub tribes in Nangarhar existed on a hub and spoke model, where the hub is a village headed by a male elder, and nearby villages (the spokes) are headed by the children of that male elder. The “village clusters” were the entire hub and spoke model for a family, or sub-sub tribe.

¹⁹ The CG's rationale for targeting legitime-setting villages was that it was still possible to win these villages to the GoA through increasing the legitimacy or effectiveness of the government. The CG figured that the villages supporting the insurgency were already decided and would be harder to win over.

²⁰ The red lines are key smuggling routes. The black dots are specific villages. The red circles show a village cluster area for targeting purposes.

Box 2: Lessons Learned

The author could not have programmed the funds with such complexity without the help of the military. The access the military has to intelligence about various anti-government elements is incomparable to the information a USAID employee can access. By tapping into core capabilities of the military (intelligence and planning), the money the author was responsible for programming had a greater impact than anything that could have been done alone.

The author vetted the information collected by SGT Kling with the Provincial Governor, PC, appropriate GoA line ministry representatives, NGOs working in the area, PRT interpreters and USAID IPs to better triangulate the information. The military is an excellent source for information, but cannot be the only source.

Step 4: Defining Project Parameters

In the beginning stages of program design, as in all normal development programs, it is fundamental to establish clear project parameters or the program can quickly loose focus. In the case of Nangarhar, the first parameter set was *infrastructure projects only* for two main reasons: The CG wanted to create physical reminders of the GoA in these areas, and because of the limitations of USAID's implementing partner (IP).²¹ In this case, the IP was a construction organization with no capacity to manage "soft development" projects.²² Although this limitation was frustrating, it was the tool USAID had available so the planning tried to maximize the benefits it could offer.²³

The next component was to establish exclusion criteria so everyone involved understood what could or could not be funded. It is difficult for USAID to fund religious or security related infrastructure due to policy and legal restrictions, so structures such as mosques and police stations were excluded. The CG added the additional exclusion of clinics due to the fact that the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) hires NGOs to operate clinics around the country; therefore, clinics sit empty if there are no donor funds for operating expenses. It was possible for the CG to meet with local healthcare providers and try to coordinate a joint project, but that is time consuming and none of the CG had the extra time to dedicate to that coordination.

It is important to note that Nangarhar is a European Community (EC) funded area for health, and there was no local EC representative in Jalalabad with whom to coordinate. If this was a USAID area for health, the CG may have not included this exclusion. The last point is not meant as a criticism of the EC, but rather as an example of the importance of understanding the area or "battlespace" so the design can maximize the money's effectiveness. If a donor does not have provincial representation, it is incredibly difficult

²¹ USAID does not directly implement projects it designs. It outsources project implementation to a partner organization. The degree to which USAID is involved with managing the partner is determined by the type of aid provided (grant, cooperative agreement, or contract).

²² Hard development projects are tangible structures, whereas soft development projects build skills and improve human capacity.

²³ As of 2006, USAID changed the program managed from the PRT Office from QIP to Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD), which expanded the scope of work to include capacity building and conflict mitigation in addition to construction.

to coordinate operations at the local level, and therefore, partnerships such as this are missed opportunities.

The next parameter the CG set was to limit projects to 3–6 months in duration from groundbreaking to ribbon-cutting. This was decided firstly because the goal of these structures is to shift the population’s sentiment towards the GoA. The CG feared that if a project took years, the goal would not be achieved. Further, it invites the enemy’s strength to grow while the project moved along. Second, the projects should be small in scope, such as a school or a micro-power system. Limiting the duration of the project also limits the cost and scope to roughly \$150K or less. QIPs should not be multi-million dollar development projects in war-fighting areas due to the challenge of an ever-changing battlespace. Additionally, the purpose of a QIP is to positively affect stability, not to conduct long-term development.

Another aspect of enhancing the population’s sentiment towards the GoA was to give jobs to the beneficiaries. The next parameter, therefore, was to insist on local employment opportunities. Jalalabad is home to a USAID/DOD-funded vocational construction trades training school, so the CG included a provision for the communities involved with the project to nominate 6–12 people to attend the month-long course and learn vocational trade skills. If the village was interested in this option, the CG then required the contractor to allow the local villagers to serve as interns on the project in their area, so they could work with the contractor’s staff and practically apply the skills they learned in the school.

The final parameter was that the projects must serve multiple villages and have a sub-tribal area-impact. The rationale was first to reinforce the idea of “*community*” destroyed after 25 years of war, and second to foster the idea of development rather than a laundry list of projects. Too often communities in high-risk areas are caught in survival mode, and one goal of these projects is to lay the groundwork for the population to think above a sub-sub-tribal level and identify with those from nearby areas to build a larger community mindset.

The limitation of Afghan contractors was another factor considered at this time. Due to 25 years of nearly continuous fighting, Afghanistan had an extremely limited capacity to absorb the quantities of aid that began flowing in 2001. The CG discussed the number of locally owned construction companies that were available in the area, what other projects those companies were working, and what level of construction they could handle (i.e., could they construct a small 8-room school house, or a 3-story district center with power and water). The CG knew the challenges could be worked around, but it was important to discuss these realities in order to manage the expectations of the villagers in the target areas.²⁴

²⁴ If there is only one viable construction company for foot bridges in the area, and that company is working on two other projects then the villagers may need to accept a company from another part of the country to get their bridge constructed in the near future or agree to wait the 6–8 months it will take for the local company to complete the other projects. It is important to be aware of this in the program design phase, so when projects are identified, the people who meet with the communities can be aware of the limitations and manage expectations.

The CG decided to develop a short list of the types of acceptable projects for this program based on the limitations described above. The list was not exhaustive by any means, but the CG used it as a baseline to ensure the team could all speak consistently and coherently to those outside the PRT. Three primary sectors were agreed upon:

1. Water/Sanitation/Sewage
 - Piped Water Systems, Gutters
2. Agriculture
 - Irrigation, Canals
3. Basic Infrastructure
 - Bridges, Schools, Micro-Hydro, Flood Protection

Step 5: Conducting the Project Identification Process²⁵

After the team developed a clear idea of the tribal area and the parameters of the projects, the CG then discussed the project identification process. Ideally, the FPO planned to first meet with the Provincial Council (PC), the only democratically elected body in the province, and the directors of the key line ministries (Rural Reconstruction and Development (RRD), Agriculture (AAHG) and Public Works (DoPW)), explaining the concept of QIP, its parameters, and its geographic focus. The goal was first to vet their programmatic concept with the provincial government and deal with any issues at that time.

The next step in the process was to push the project identification process to the government and let them decide how best to do it. The FPO explained the preferred geographic focus, acceptable project types, and implementing limitations with the hope that the GoA would sort out the actual projects. The CG anticipated that the GoA would develop small teams to go to the areas of interest and hold *shuras*²⁶ with the community leaders to discuss project options. A representative from USAID's primary IP in the area, and the USAID Afghan program manager would participate, representing the interests of USAID.

In reality, USAID was pushed for time and only had a few weeks to meet with villagers, design the project, gain GoA approval, nominate the project through the USAID chain of command, have it sent to the IP for a Bill of Quantity (BOQ) and have the BOQ approved (USAID's internal process to have a QIP project funded).²⁷ Based on the author's prior

²⁵ At this point in the process, the USAID FPO moved from the consultative process of the CG meetings to the individual responsibility of programming funds as a development expert. The FPO continued to seek advice from her colleagues, but the ultimate legal responsibility for representing USAID-funded projects and programs to the population and the GoA rested with the FPO.

²⁶ Shurah is an Arabic word for "consultation" or "council". In Afghanistan, it is a method for decision-making where the leaders of a community discuss a topic and make a decision for the whole of the community.

²⁷ The situation of having to nominate projects in a minimal timeframe is common in combat zones because of ever shifting money cycles at higher levels. That is all the more reason to develop a sound strategic plan at the provincial level, so the minute money becomes available the team can program it into an existing framework rather than starting from scratch every time the HQ wants the PRT to spend money.

experience of working with the provincial GoA, they would not have been able to do this in a timeframe that met USAID's needs. All too often, time limitations were explained to the government, but as time is considered differently in Afghanistan, the deadlines were passed without a second thought and some projects never happened or were delayed by months waiting for the government to decide if they supported or disagreed with it.

Due to the time restrictions, the CG chose instead to use existing USAID partners working in the area, and asked them to hold community shuras and develop project nominations. The author met with USAID's IPs and explained the concept of QIP and its parameters. They agreed to conduct the process and transfer the information to USAID electronically. USAID also used information that the U.S. Army civil affairs team collected that fit within the scope of the program. In each instance, the communities were asked to nominate their top four project priorities.

A key factor in project success is local ownership. Initially the CG thought of requiring a 30 percent community contribution to any project, but realized there were other ways to gain community buy-in, such as requiring security for the project and ensuring local workers have jobs on the project site. Additionally, the contractors could hire local women to cook food for the work crews. They could hire the head of the local shura to coordinate the labor force rather than having the outside contractor find people. These are some of the ways the community was included in the projects.

Box 3: Lessons Learned

1. If you want to utilize the GoA in project identification, then it will require a significant amount of time and mentoring for the PRT. The PRT will most likely have to fund the transportation and per diem costs of the GoA to visit the communities because they have limited operating expenses of their own. The parameters of the projects must be clear and the PRT must have Afghan representatives present at these meetings to manage community expectations. It is possible that the GoA may promise projects that are beyond the PRT's capacity, which would undermine the entire project. It is much more difficult and time consuming to have the GoA fulfill this role, but it is a key factor in the development of the country and the PRT must have a serious discussion about the cost-benefit analysis of by-passing the GoA to meet a time imposed deadline.

The Jalalabad PRT chose to follow the time deadline instead of building the capacity of the GoA, and it was probably a mistake. Nangarhar has a comparatively competent and active provincial government, which is ideal for this kind of program. Further, programming funds to affect an insurgency must have GoA ownership to provide the greatest impact, and by choosing to bring in the government at a later stage, you might remove the government even further from feeling ownership of the program.

2. If there are any doubts about the ability to fund at least one project in the area, then the GoA, the PRT or its proxy *must not go* to the area. Only after a budget is secured should anyone meet with the communities. The PRT, its proxy or the GoA, will explain the number of projects that can be completed based on the budget. The project nomination process should be explained in simple terms, so the community can know when to expect a project to begin. They should be given contact information for the GoA and the primary IP so they know that they can follow up directly. Explain that they will be responsible for security in the area for the contractor, and will be held accountable. Explain that the community will have the chance to work on the project, and if a trade school option or other training options exist, inform them. These discussions may need to be held in multiple meetings to ensure everyone understands the project.

3. It is important to manage expectations of the beneficiaries during the project identification stage. In most cases, the PRT will not know their exact budgets or how many projects they can complete. Once a meeting like this is held, the community will expect some kind of results. Considering the strategic objectives of affecting the insurgency, if the community's expectations are raised and nothing occurs, the result could cause more harm than good. The people's frustration with their government not delivering what they thought was promised will be used by the enemy to further decrease the legitimacy of the GoA. Therefore, it is *fundamental* that this part of the exercise be handled delicately.

4. There *must be* community contribution of some kind for a project to have the desired effects. If the community is not willing to contribute anything to the project, then the importance of the village should be reassessed. The PRT could meet with the district sub-governor or the provincial governor to address this issue and get greater government involvement to understand why the community refused to contribute. Or, if it is a particularly hostile area with nearby villages that are good secondary targets moving focus areas should be considered.

Step 6: Gaining Government Approval

In each province of Afghanistan, there are formal and informal governance institutions. Because the goal of the PRT was to increase the government's effectiveness and legitimacy, the FPO decided to gain project concurrence through the formal mechanisms, namely the PC and the appropriate technical line directors representing their ministries: Rural Reconstruction & Development, Agriculture and Public Works. It is important to note that USAID did not seek approval for the projects, only concurrence. The QIP

programming cycle includes a final approval at the ministerial level in Kabul, so the provincial directors do not have the authority to approve projects.²⁸

Once projects were identified, USAID staff wrote project nomination forms and translated the forms into Pashto for GoA distribution. USAID first met with the PC, which had been together for about a month. This was the first formal meeting between USAID and the council, so the FPO spent the morning explaining USAID and the strategy behind QIP. The PC was asked to review the projects nominated by the communities to see if there were any issues or concerns that were not addressed. They agreed to have their comments back within the week, and were very appreciative at being included in the process. They also requested to be involved in future programming, especially in the project identification portion. USAID agreed that it would be a good idea.

USAID next met with the appropriate line directors to ensure the projects were nested in the larger national programs of their technical ministries. The government was asked to verify and concur with the projects within one week, but most of them signed their concurrence on the internal PRT project nomination form (Annex 1) during the initial meeting. USAID worked with each of the line directors in other project programming, so they were familiar with the process and this was merely routine business.

Once the PC and the technical directors signed their concurrence with the projects, USAID sent a final copy of the project form to the Governor's office for notification.

Box 4: Lessons Learned

This is the time to conduct capacity assessments of the GoA. Find out what they can contribute to the project. For example, the Jalalabad PRT in 2006 often had Department of Public Works engineers work on their projects to ensure the contractors met GoA specifications. Additionally, the provincial council agreed to meet with the beneficiary communities on a monthly basis to ensure the project was meeting the communities' expectations. It is not only the community that must feel ownership of these projects, it is also the government.

Step 7: Holding the PRT Project Nomination Board

The next step in the process was the Jalalabad PRT's internal project nomination board, a coordinating mechanism in which each agency voluntarily agreed to participate to better coordinate efforts.²⁹ The PRT established this meeting within three months of its creation because it was clear the local community expected each team member to have the ability to discuss any project managed by someone in the team. The locals did not care about

²⁸ The GoA was just forming, so it chose not to delegate real decision-making authority to the provinces, which made the job of the PRT much more difficult. The CG was tasked with increasing GoA effectiveness and legitimacy, but often at the provincial level the leaders did not have much of either. Fortunately in Nangarhar, there was a strong government at the provincial level that would make decisions and gain the proper support inside each ministry.

²⁹ The PRT concept has no policy directives that require the leadership of each agency to meet, coordinate or operate together in any way. The Jalalabad PRT developed the nomination board to ensure that each agency knew what the others were doing and could support each other. This was a personality-based solution to a major coordination problem that worked beautifully.

agency distinctions, only that someone could explain what was happening in their village. Although frustrating at times, each agency found this meeting instrumental in ensuring: the PRT's various projects fit within the strategic focus each agency agreed to honor, there was no duplication of efforts, and the team had visibility on what everyone was funding.

Anyone in the PRT can bring a project idea to the board, which consists of DOD Civil Affairs, USAID, USDA and DOS as voting members, and the PRT officer as an advisor or for situational awareness. Although every agency was on the board, only USAID and DOD had money available to fund projects, so if a project was suggested by someone on the team without funds and everyone agreed that it supported the mission, DOD and USAID would discuss which funding mechanism was more appropriate. The meetings were held only when necessary—either when someone wanted feedback or guidance on projects they were planning, when they needed funds, or when the projects went through the cycle listed above and were ready to be sent to higher headquarters. The board served as a brainstorming session, a sounding board, a reality check, and a final check before elevating the projects to the next level.

The process is as follows:

1. A representative from the agency proposing the project provides a brief verbal summary of the concept.
2. S/he explains the project nomination and approval process that occurred for the project.
3. S/he asks for feedback/input and possibly funding.
4. Usually questions ensue and are either addressed to everyone's satisfaction at the time, or the agency representative is requested to provide more information and complete what is unsatisfactory. For example, if someone wants to build a school, and they have not coordinated with the director of education, s/he must get that coordination piece in place prior to the board concurring with the project.
5. If everyone agrees that the project is a good idea, fits within the strategic focus of the PRT, has the necessary government and community approvals, then everyone signs the form noting their concurrence. (*Note: Only the agency representative has the authority to request or deny projects, so if someone is against a project they can note their concern on the form, but the project may be nominated anyway*).

Once the project was approved, each agency had its own internal project approval processes, which will not be discussed in this document. Generally, the project nominations were sent to higher headquarters for final approval. Once approved, the next step was implementation.

Box 5: Lessons Learned

The Project Nomination Board is an excellent tool to allow everyone at the PRT to have visibility on each other's projects. Even if your PRT does not embrace endorsing each agency's projects, it is recommended that persons meet regularly to discuss the status of ongoing projects, thus ensuring the PRT is speaking with one voice externally.

There is some debate regarding who from the military should participate. Ideally it would be the head of the military component, usually a LTC or COL, because they are the final decision maker for project funding for DOD. In Jalalabad, the Civil Affairs commanders participated because they had *de facto* authority from the military commander to make decisions in the meetings. In the future, both the military commander and whomever s/he delegates as project management could both participate because the military commander also needs visibility on the other agency's projects. Additionally, in some PRTs there is a feeling of disparity between the civilian and military components so the more the leaders of each agency work as a team the stronger that team will become.

Step 8: Implementation

Planning is essential, but plans are of little value without good implementation. Due to the very collaborative nature of this project, and the desired end state of creating a more stable environment, it is fundamental that the project's implementer works with complete community and GoA involvement.

The best way to ensure cooperation is to write any such requirements into the scope of work for the contractor. During the bidding conference, it is important to inform the potential contractors that these requirements are non-negotiable and will be terms for termination if not followed.

Box 6: Lessons Learned

Based on experience, it is not enough to do all of this hard work in the beginning, the PRT also must follow up as the project develops. Extensive pre-planning, as laid out above, will greatly help with the amount of follow up. If the PC agrees to meet with the community and the line ministry has a worker on the project, it should considerably ease the burden of management from the project funder. Further, it is the responsibility of the donor agency to constantly monitor and evaluate these projects and ensure they are being done well. A monitoring schedule and form should be developed for each project.

Conclusion

It is not easy to measure the effects of stability operations such as funding projects. A project in one area could be the reassurance that a community needed to believe in their government. A project in another area could have little effect outside of the immediate community it serves. But the people at the tip of the spear in the field have to start somewhere. Once the CG starts to understand what "wins" or "loses" in a specific area, the people doing this type of work for a living will become even smarter in programming.

The CG must keep in mind that the goal is not to "buy" the community. It is to give the community faith in their government so they will take the initiative to deny sanctuary to

the people trying to destroy the government. The communities must take their future into their own hands by standing up to the forces who want to undermine the new government, and no amount of kinetic operations alone will convince the community to take such a risk.

This case study was a first step in developing a process through which the government and its citizens are brought closer together in very difficult areas. The framework involves a lot of leg work up front, and PRTs need to be honest with themselves based on their timelines and competing interests, as well as the amount of time they will have to spend doing this.

Part of defining the battlespace is setting up a good timeline of project cycles. In areas of greater instability, the cycle of determining mission criteria, tribal analysis, and project parameters will be more frequent than in areas with greater stability due to the changing realities of the insurgency. This is fundamental to the success of the PRT's mission due to the ever fluctuating staffing patterns of the various agencies and personnel. The military may rotate on 9 month cycles, whereas the development officer may stay for 36 months and the political officer for 12. Programming must not be personality-dependent. The timelines for the PRT to analyze the battlespace and adjust programming accordingly should be driven by the realities of the insurgency, the Afghan people, and institutions in the area instead of the PRT personnel.

Annex 1
Project Board Approval

Project Title _____

Project Number _____ Est Cost \$_____

Date of PNB Approval _____ Funding Source: _____

GoA Concurrence:

_____ Technical Directorate	_____ Signature of Director	_____ Date
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	---------------

_____ Technical Directorate	_____ Signature of Director	_____ Date
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	---------------

_____ PC Committee	_____ Signature of Member	_____ Date
-----------------------	------------------------------	---------------

Board Concurrence: (comments on back)

Concur / Do not concur (circle one)	_____ DOS Signature	_____ Date
--	------------------------	---------------

Concur / Do not concur (circle one)	_____ USAID Signature	_____ Date
--	--------------------------	---------------

Concur / Do not concur (circle one)	_____ USDA Signature	_____ Date
--	-------------------------	---------------

Concur / Do not concur (circle one)	_____ DOD CA Signature	_____ Date
--	---------------------------	---------------

Instructor's Guide to Programming Development Funds Case Study

Introduction

A counterinsurgency being conducted in Afghanistan can understandably be influenced by various dynamics posed by the local population. Different geographic areas house different tribes, sub tribes, and sub-sub tribes, therefore necessitating the development of various tactics to conduct a counterinsurgency in a given area. This case study described one method of programming development funds at a sub-national level to positively affect a counterinsurgency in Eastern Afghanistan. In particular, the study explores an 8-step process through which the Jalalabad PRT developed and implemented a strategy for increasing stability in its area of operations (AO) through maximizing resources each agency brought to the table and creating a “unity of effort.”

Learning Objectives

At the completion of the case study, students should have the following knowledge:

- Understanding of the concept and application of “unity of effort” among the different agencies working in a PRT
- Understanding of why a long-term program is critical to increase stability
- Understanding of the steps involved with designing a good program to affect stability operations
- Understanding the goal of stability operations

Questions for the Students

1. *What are the benefits of having a comprehensive strategic plan for the stability of the province?*

A strategic plan ensures that all funding sources within the PRT are working towards a common goal agreed upon by all members of the CG. It also allows the sections of the PRT with funding to nominate individual projects up separate chains of command that add up to create a specific, targeted momentum in the AO. This is especially critical given the ebbs and flows of budget allocation from higher headquarters, because a strategic plan allows teams to have communities targeted and goals clearly articulated so that when funding is released the PRT is ready to program the money in a sound and helpful manner. Finally, having a strategic plan will help eliminate the challenge of personnel turnover, because as new individuals or teams come and go, they can use the existing strategic plan to gain familiarity with the province and when it comes time for the six month review, adjust it accordingly.

2. *With counterinsurgency in mind, what types of projects should a PRT coordinate and fund to best make use of limited resources?*

Given that funding is limited (with an unlimited array of factors that can negatively affect project completion and counterinsurgency measures), it must be used wisely. Projects should not be too large in nature—two reasons being limited funding and a longer completion date means a higher possibility of insurgency build-up. Development funds directed towards projects that the local tribes truly feel are necessities, making the GoA visible to the local people, and the use of local labor will all work well in positively influencing their sentiments toward the government and PRTs, and lessen the possibility of insurgency build-up. And of course, projects must fit into a larger strategic plan created by the PRT CG.

3. *With representatives of each of the “3Ds” as discussed in the case study, there are various players within a PRT. There are also various external players that can affect how a PRT operates. Discuss what variables can affect the work of a PRT, and how the various players can work together to overcome any difficulties.*

External factors that can affect a PRT’s success in carrying out its objectives are numerous and can be opened up to class discussion. Factors will include time limitations and missed deadlines, sudden funding constraints lifted or created to affect funding flows, new political objectives determined from DC or Kabul, corruption of local elders and government officials, attacks on facilities and projects by insurgents, and misidentification of project requirements.

Internally, PRTs have a fairly complex task organization hierarchy, based largely on necessity. The “3Ds”: Defense, Development, and Diplomacy, based on the United States needing to maximize each component of its foreign services to achieve national security, must work to fulfill the PRTs’ mission of bringing stability to their AO. A “Unity of Effort” mentality should be present to ensure objectives are reached, even if it means borrowing personnel from other areas of responsibility.

3. *What are the benefits of including the government, for example the GoA, in a project?*

The goal of the PRT is to establish stability, and the first way listed to achieve that goal is by increasing the reach of the central government. By including the GoA in the project development process, you will build the capacity of the government staff to design projects in the future in addition to ensuring they are bought into the project at hand. In Stability Operations the process is as important as the product. If the PRT helps government officials visit parts of the province that have never seen government representation, and then helps the government deliver a project, it doesn’t matter what the project is so long as it works and the government gets the credit for bringing it to the people.

Locals are less likely to “bite the hand that feeds them” by providing sanctuary to people trying to weaken the GoA. Also, the GoA may have the local expertise and networking

capabilities (such as a rapport with tribal elders) that PRTs may not have from the outset of a new project. Government involvement in projects from the beginning is also important such that when the GoA grows in capacity, project responsibilities will be easier to transfer over permanently and on a more sustainable basis.