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## Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan

By Markus Gauster



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# Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan\*

An innovative instrument of  
international crisis management  
being put to the test.

By Markus Gauster\*\*

Editorial Date: November 2007

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## **Preface**

There is no doubt that measures of international crisis and conflict management have gained considerably in importance since the end of the Cold War in 1989. Whether Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan, East Timor, or the Democratic Republic of Congo - more and more soldiers serve in more and more operations world-wide together with civilian forces to guarantee security, to speed up economic development and, increasingly, to facilitate the setting up of functioning state structures.

The apparent extra demand—often addressed by the Secretary General of the United Nations, as in the summer of 2006 on the occasion of the deployment of further peacekeeping forces to Lebanon—is, however, checked by the limited resources of the nations contributing troops, which already groan under the weight of the operations [or missions]. It is therefore logical to look for innovative methods in international crisis and conflict management (ICM) that save resources, in order to close the growing gap between the demands and the available resources.

Since 2003, the so-called Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) have attempted to combine relatively small civilian and military components on the ground in Afghanistan, to achieve comprehensive results by focusing on provincial and district centers and to support the political leadership as well as the Afghan society extensively, without, however, releasing them from their responsibilities, or dominating them. Up to now, experience with the PRTs (the number of which increased from seven to twenty-five between 2003 and 2007) point towards their considerable potential as an instrument in comprehensive conflict management and nation building.

Markus Gauster of the Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management of the National Defense Academy in Vienna focus on the question of the PRTs' concept and functionality—among other things during two trips to Afghanistan. Two workshops with experts organized by the Institute, and discussing this question, provided additional impetus. To provide a provisional appraisal, the results of his research are made available in this study.

On the one hand this volume gives general information on the PRT model, and, on the other, compares the US, British and German realization of this model. It is to be seen as an intermediary step in the scientific analysis of a topic, which, without doubt—will also become increasingly important not only for contributing nations, but also for Security Organizations like NATO.

That is why I appreciate the opportunity to present this comparative study in close collaboration with the George C. Marshall Center, famous for its intellectual contribution to the spreading of new knowledge.

Dr. Walter Feichtinger  
Brigadier General  
Head, Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management  
National Defense Academy  
Vienna, November 2007

## **Provincial Reconstruction Teams at a Glance**<sup>1</sup>

### **A. The PRTs as an Instrument**

Since the beginning of the US-led intervention in Afghanistan and the fall of the Taliban-regime in Kabul, the international community has focused on the implementation of security, the political transformation and the economic (re-)construction of the country. Through resolutions of the UN Security Council, civil and military Stability/Reconstruction (S/R) operations have been set up to provide assistance to the weak Afghan government.<sup>2</sup> The efforts of ICM in Afghanistan have led to a surge in civilian activities provided by the armed forces and have caused an increased debate on the legitimacy, principles, range and rules of civil-military interaction.

The international engagement in Afghanistan is shaped by the UN *light footprint* strategy developed by Lakhdar Brahim. To avoid the international soldiers being regarded as an occupying force by the Afghan population, as happened during the Soviet occupation; only a small number of lightly armed troops are employed. PRTs are a result of this new strategy and have contributed to the further development of Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC). Away from the lynchpin Kabul, the PRT mission is to support the Afghan government in its efforts to increase its power and influence in the remote regions of the country. Considering the lack of resources characterizing the troop engagement of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), S/R activities using minimal troop contributions and managed by PRTs have increased their respective numbers amazingly fast. PRTs usually consist of 50 to 500 military personnel and civilian experts each and are in charge of provinces, like Badakhshan or Herat, which often encompass more than 40,000 square kilometers. For western democracies, PRTs have developed into an attractive instrument of state building and are considered an *instrument* for ICM to develop a nationwide administration and to help accelerate Afghanistan's transition to self-reliance.

PRTs are civil-military units that act in a more or less self-sustained manner, controlled by the respective lead nation, with the Ministry of Defense (MoD) generally responsible for security issues. Representatives of civil ministries (Interior, Development and Foreign) with various degrees of authorization are embedded in the PRTs (this adds a new, positive dimension to the PRTs) and provide additional expertise. PRTs follow a three-dimensional approach: (1) The implementation of security, (2) institution building and (3) the enabling and facilitating of reconstruction. It will probably take generations to accomplish these objectives, a fact which often runs counter to the politically motivated short-term goals of the respective PRT-lead nations. Their self-marketing efforts—especially obvious when executing Quick Impact Projects (QIP) to show off a good (political) performance at home—require resources which could be better employed for supervising long-term, sustainable projects under Afghan responsibility and

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<sup>1</sup> The study's focus is on the German and former UK PRTs including the provinces of Kunduz, Sar-e Pol and Balkh. The author managed to gain local, first-hand experience in these three provinces. This study covers the British performance in the northern post-conflict-provinces before UK turned over the PRT Mazar-e Sharif command to Sweden and switched from a post-conflict zone to the southern war zone respectively Helmand province in 2006. The glaring lack of sound statistical data on Afghanistan makes an analysis of the PRTs' achievements a real challenge. As far as was possible, indicators were identified and the PRTs' effects on these provinces analyzed. In doing this, it was very difficult to limit quantitative and qualitative statements to one region or province. Unless the study does not expressly address a certain region or a certain PRT or PRT concept, the statements, statistics and figures apply to the whole of Afghanistan or PRTs in general. Depending on the availability of data, regional-specific tendencies and consequences of PRT work on the respective region are demonstrated.

<sup>2</sup> "S/R Operations" is the NATO-term for stabilization and reconstruction operations.



leadership. Nevertheless, progress has been made in all three areas despite some shortcomings. The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program (DDR), the enabling of (relatively) free elections connected to the foundation of a new Afghan parliament or the development of infrastructure, to which PRTs have directly or indirectly contributed, are some examples.

From a western perspective, PRTs can be perceived as an “international offer of support for a limited period of time”. After five years of experience with PRTs, it has become obvious, however, that they will need to hold their position for at least another 10 to 20 years, if not generations. The Afghan population confirms this view by regarding PRTs as permanently installed international charities, i.e. quasi-job centers. In the long run, the objective of PRTs is to contribute to a credible and self-sustaining Government of Afghanistan (GoA) until the Afghan authorities themselves can replace the teams.

## **B. The Capacities of PRTs**

The implementation of the S/R concept by ISAF-PRTs is generally executed through patrolling (“showing the flag”) and should produce quick results by managing and supervising QIPs. In this, the capacities of PRTs are limited ...a standard phrase in PRT-operations. PRTs depend on the cooperation and goodwill of the local decision makers who, however, also include so-called *Power Brokers*. When it comes to dealing with local uprisings or outbreaks of violence, PRTs depend on reinforcements and rapid reaction forces since their own military capacities are limited. This support comes from the well-equipped US-led Coalition Forces (CF) with their headquarters in Kabul who are engaged in counter-insurgency operations to a high extent. ISAF itself, as an S/R operation, has still very limited capacities to assist the PRTs in emergencies.

PRT tasks include patrolling, mediation, setting up networks [to the local Population], running reconstruction projects, training and supervising armed forces and police personnel, demobilization and disarming, as well as intelligence. In this, they have been quite successful. British PRTs (this study covers their performance in the northern post-conflict-provinces before they turned over the PRT Mazar-e Sharif command to Sweden and switched to Helmand province in 2006) were exemplary in their intensive patrolling of their theatre of operations. Due to the permanent change of loyalties in their areas of responsibility (AOR), PRTs especially depend on high quality intelligence in order to be able to reach or maintain a consensus, or to mediate between local stakeholders. A more positive attitude towards the creation of networks and the enforcement of government authority has been achieved by embedding a GoA representative in each PRT. With this cooperation, PRTs can, reward positive attitudes shown by local decision makers, but is hardly able to punish a negative one. PRTs have also supported President Hamid Karzai’s strategic decision to replace non-loyal provincial administrations and have successfully mediated during power struggles between old and new police chiefs.

The US-led PRTs operating under ISAF command operate in high-risk areas such as in the south and east. They provide suitable bases for Afghan National Army (ANA) training and for combined counter-insurgency operations. In this context, PRTs have turned out to be important strongholds for the US “War against Terror” and have contributed to reinforcing the weak capacities of the ANA in remote provinces.

The deployment of European troops in “hot spots” as far away as Afghanistan generally requires

a waterproof political justification vis-à-vis the public at home and is often based on very restrictive resolutions. Using PRTs can make the justification of deployments easier for politicians: the inter-ministerial approach, which has been realized in PRTs, makes it possible to achieve a goal at a much lower cost than would have been possible if every single ministry had taken the initiative by itself. Every improvement in the coordination between the PRT-contributing ministries will improve the PRTs' cost-benefit calculation. Compared to a substantial deployment of troops in all remote areas of Afghanistan (which, however, would have been out of the question from the outset due to the *light footprint* strategy) it can be stated that PRTs provide an obvious cost-benefit in ICM.

### C. The Inadequacies of PRTs

PRTs are not suitable to fight the dominant drug economy in a direct way. This means they cannot and are not meant to destroy poppy fields, or fight a war against [those that pull the strings or drug lords] the wirepullers and their private armies. Instead, this is to be managed in a subtle and indirect way, such as contributing to the setup of a loyal police force, which, in turn, should help establish the rule of law. This also touches upon two further essential areas of the reform of the Afghan security sector in which PRTs have so far been unable to point a way to the future—not because PRTs are inherently unsuitable, but because of a lack of resources. Within the framework of establishing the rule of law by setting up the Afghan National Police (ANP), the PRTs are given too small a role to play, as the setting up of the police force has focused too much on Kabul and because PRTs lack enough qualified personnel[to train police. The EU Police Mission in Afghanistan using PRTs as operational basis since summer 2007 can be seen as a first step in a more sustainable capacity building of security forces.

The fact that ISAF deployments often last only three to six months—even for key personnel—leads directly in the sustainability dilemma of the PRTs. This particularly harms the confidence building measures of British and German PRTs and makes it more difficult to continuously pass on intelligence from rotation to rotation, e.g. on the local power structures. Concerning the activities in their area of operation, German PRTs are subject to severer restrictions than others, particularly the British PRTs. This has been as much criticized as the PRTs' self-marketing activities, which are come at the expense of sustainable development. The PRTs have yet to find a balance between give and take in the sense of *carrots and sticks* (e.g. PRTs providing incentives, or setting up local initiatives in state building). There is no doubt that the combined international (civilian and military) pressure towards the implementation of self-sustaining structures has to be increased.

PRTs executing a S/R concept can operate maximally up to the seventh—out of ten—level defined by the instability scale in this study.<sup>3</sup> S/R operations executed in southern provinces like Helmand (UK PRT) and Kandahar (Canadian PRT), which can be categorized in 2007 as level nine provinces—and therefore war zones—do not fit the PRT concept developed for post-conflict-regions (ranging up to level seven) to be found in northern or western Afghanistan. PRTs in the south or east need the constant support of combat troops, a fact which clearly runs counter to the original plan, namely to implement security and to execute reconstruction projects

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<sup>3</sup> Compare the instability scale for PRTs in Chapter 3.1.3. Level seven stands for a transition between a post-conflict and war zone, level nine stands for daily guerrilla attacks on local civilians, police and internationals.

through small, autonomously acting entities like PRTs. In this context, it may be noted that often-stressed inter-blocking situations between PRTs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) decrease with increasing conflict intensity. In hostile environments, civilian agencies such as NGOs are forced to cooperate with international troops in order to ensure their security, or have to withdraw completely.

PRTs are a suitable device to add stabilization where post-conflict conditions dominate. A PRT-deployment in war zones (level eight upwards) reduces this innovative concept and the meaning of “reconstruction team” to absurdity.

#### **D. Various PRT Concepts**

PRTs in Afghanistan have a multi-national, civil-military and multi-functional nature and have to deal with the highly oscillating threat levels in the various regions of a country, which boast a highly fragmented structure. Therefore, PRTs will always depend heavily on the framework conditions on the ground. Because of their structural differences, flexible PRT-concepts are to be given preference over rigid and standardized rules. Furthermore, standardization would decrease the PRTs greatest strength: the flexibility to adapt to quickly changing and varying circumstances that are typical of post-conflict-regions. The PRT-concepts of the lead nations are (necessarily) different, but all PRTs have one thing in common: they represent a hope for a better future for the war-torn Afghan population.

The US-concept has to be assessed under the premise of the simultaneous execution of combat and S/R-operations. This highlights the fundamental problem of the US-PRTs in Afghanistan. The main objectives of the US are to succeed in Afghanistan as part of the global “war on terror” and to maintain permanent bases in the country in support of their geo-strategic interests in the region. Given the efforts of supporting the Afghan transformation process, this has led to counter-productive results—for instance the empowering of local Power Brokers and therefore to the weakening of the Afghan government. On the positive side, the *Commanders Emergency Response Projects* (CERP) managed by the US-PRTs represent interactive, local, flexible and condition-based projects on behalf of the provincial governments. It appears that (despite their bad reputation) the self-marketing interests of the US-PRTs are put at the bottom of the US-list of interests in the region.

The PRTs of the UK are focused on security issues and on enabling and facilitating reconstruction projects and institution building. To avoid duplicating the efforts of civilian organizations, PRT-action as concrete “reconstruction unit” was very limited what responds to the Afghan Ownership principle. Through a system of *discreet presence*, the UK PRTs were able to gain high acceptance from the local population, as well as from the NGOs in the region. In this UK PRTs displayed less edginess than their German counterparts did. The PRT Mazar-e Sharif mediated successfully during clashes between rival groups. This was accomplished in collaboration with the (civilian) United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Assessing the efficiency of the UK-PRTs, it may be pointed out that the influence of the (Kabul-centered) GoA is higher in Kunduz than in Mazar-e Sharif. The poppy fields clearly expanded in the UK-Sector from 2005 to 2006 and this reflected badly on UK-managed efforts in counter-narcotics.

One of the German PRTs’ specialties is the equal integration of the civilian and military elements

under one political mission. This forward-looking approach appears to be very complex and will take more time than others to make a full impact. In 2005, the poppy fields decreased in size in the area of German responsibility. The German PRTs' presence certainly had an influence on this; it should, however, not be overestimated. A success to a certain extent of both the British and the German PRTs is that the regions in the north have not experienced this heavy deterioration in security unlike the regions in the south. The disarmament programs with PRT-support have been running—at least according to UNAMA—smoothly in both the German and British AOR, as scheduled. As a matter of fact, Afghanistan is still jam-packed with illegal weapons, which makes it difficult or even impossible for the Afghan government to gain substantial influence.

Despite different concepts, doctrines, armament, rules of engagement and levels of acceptance, the German and UK PRTs achieved a similar and predominantly positive effect between 2003 and 2006. The increase in the production of opium since 2002 did not negatively impact on the security situation until the beginning of 2006, a fact that is especially attributable to a—self-imposed—passiveness on the part of PRTs concerning this issue. In 2007, the strategic international efforts in state building around a centrally organized government in Afghanistan appear to have led towards a dead end, but this cannot be blamed on the PRTs working at an operational/tactical level. A new regional (bottom up) approach seems to be—if at all—the only way out for ICM: PRTs have the potential to combine *global thinking and local acting*, but are only one of a variety of components that have to fit together to—from a western perspective—rescue Afghanistan from falling back into fundamentalism and to a safe heaven for terrorists operating beyond the Pashtun Belt.

## **1. The Framework Conditions for the Deployment of PRTs**

### **1.1 New Challenges in Crisis Management**

International crisis management (ICM) measures are in the focus of many security policies. The struggle for the provision of resources represents a critical planning factor for any national involvement. There are three main challenges: (1) The demands and the political pressure to act rise to such an extent that previous approaches, such as in the Balkans, which entailed a massive use of force, are made politically and financially prohibitive. Innovative models that save resources and meet high quality demands increasingly gain importance. (2) It is not enough simply to stop war. Like it or not, ICM increasingly leads to comprehensive state building measures –. This means that human and financial resources are tied up permanently and to an extent hitherto unknown. (3) European states' willingness and capabilities to mobilize resources before war breaks out seems to be decisive for the settlement of conflicts. A preventive engagement incorporating military and civilian *leverage* can very possibly prevent conflict escalation. State building will therefore determine the task profile of western foreign and security policy not only in the shape of Post-Conflict Peace Building, but also in the shape of conflict prevention for the foreseeable future.<sup>4</sup>

A country's efficient contribution to ICM demands that the required military and civilian resources in material and personnel are decided upon from a comprehensive national viewpoint and by means of a previously set objective. To achieve an adequate national competence to act in ICM, inter-ministerial and therefore new structural measures are necessary. In this context, it is the core task of European states to optimize civilian and military interaction in S/R operations following armed conflicts. To achieve this, it is necessary to define the (new) type of cooperation and to especially include the intentions and guidelines set down by the UN and the EU. Especially within the framework of the *European Security and Defense Policy* (ESDP) the creation and development of efficient crisis management is seen as an essential factor in strengthening the EU's role as a global crisis manager.

The EU and NATO-members states' hesitation to deploy forces to crisis regions springs from a change in mentality: after the Cold War, the mistaken belief had taken hold that the time of military operations was over—governments therefore reduced their military spending consequently. However, new dangers appeared on the periphery of Europe and in the Third World, against which there is neither sufficient civil nor military defense.<sup>5</sup>

The PRT represents a promising instrument to add to stabilization of conflict regions within the framework of civil-military interaction. Innovative approaches to stabilization and conflict solution mechanisms are applied which can be able to meet the challenges described previously. Being new foreign- and security-policy instruments, PRTs are under close scrutiny both nationally and internationally. The application of various PRT concepts also means testing the efficiency of the civil-military concepts of the individual troop contributing nations. Beyond this, the use of PRTs also tests the (future) capabilities of NATO and the EU: In 2007, two thirds of the troop-contributing nations of NATO/ISAF in Afghanistan are EU member states. NATO's attempts at channeling the divergent (political) concepts of the states involved in Afghanistan

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Schmunk during the *Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management* (IFK) workshop "PRTs as innovative instruments of ICM" at the National Defense Academy, Vienna, 19/20 October 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Urs Gehringer: Entscheidung in Afghanistan. In: Weltwoche, 24 May 2006.

must be regarded as unrealistic as long as equitable burden sharing within the troop contributing nations does not exist.

## 1.2 Positioning of PRTs within International Operations

There are two military components operating in Afghanistan. *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF) led by the US Central Command and commanded on the ground by the *Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan* (CFC-A) in Kabul. In April 2007, 8,000 Coalition Forces from 21 nations took part in OEF. Despite extensive counter-terrorism operations against militant oppositional forces (MOF) including Taliban and Al-Qaeda, OEF has not managed to lower conflict intensity since 2001. ISAF as S/R Operation is the second operation consisting of approximately 40,000 troops from 37 nations (including eleven non-NATO states). The largest NATO/ISAF contributors are the United States (15,000), the UK (5,200), Germany (3,000), Canada (2,500), the Netherlands (2,200) and Italy (1,950).<sup>6</sup> ISAF has a mandate based on Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Operational basis is the NATO OPLAN 10302 ISAF (*Revision 1*) that dates from May 2006.<sup>7</sup>

ISAF troops are deployed in five regional commands (capital, north, east, south and west), with 25 PRTs throughout the country. Each PRT is composed of 50–500 military and civilian personnel (representing governmental and international agencies), and is responsible for a wide range of tasks, including providing security for international agencies, assisting in the reconstruction effort and disarming Afghanistan's militias. ISAF works closely with the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which was set up to help develop the country's new democratic institutions and to manage the UN's humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in the country, undertaken by some 17 agencies. Forward Support Bases (FSBs) provide logistic support to the PRTs.

A significant feature of the concept of the military (ISAF) and the civilian (UNAMA) component of the peace operation is that the transitional government is merely assisted, and is to be supported in its own efforts at pacifying and reconstructing the country. This is also stressed by the use of the term *assistance* in the names of both operations. The two terms *light footprint* and *Afghan ownership* also point towards this aim. From the beginning, the GoA was more or less involved in the reconstruction plans and should be fully responsible for the reconstruction process, even if international experts—especially from the US—exert substantial influence.

ISAF's mission is to assist the Afghan government in security issues, support the reconstruction of the country and establish of the rule of law. In October 2006, ISAF took on responsibility for the stabilization of the whole of Afghanistan. Until 2006, ISAF was not directly involved in active fighting against MOF, as it was, at best, only capable of exerting a de-escalating influence due to its relative strength and its peace enforcement mandate. In the meantime, the force strength has shifted in favor of NATO/ISAF, which now also commands US forces. The available assets, however, have not increased much, due to the limited rules of engagement of the troop contributing nations. The extension of the ISAF mandate to the whole of Afghanistan has

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<sup>6</sup> Compare graphics and detailed statistics concerning the ISAF operation in the online document: [http://www.nato.int/ISAF/media/pdf/placemat\\_isaf.pdf](http://www.nato.int/ISAF/media/pdf/placemat_isaf.pdf) (downloaded 18 April 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Compare version of NATO OPLAN 1302 in the online document: <http://www.folketinget.dk/samling/20051/UM-del/Bilag/44/242709.PDF>, p. 3 (downloaded 7 April 2007).

indirectly led to ISAF—and with it also the PRTs—being drawn into combat operations as defined in the Petersberg Tasks, a development welcomed and supported by the US. With this, the mandates of both operations increasingly fuse.

Together with the Afghan security forces and OEF, ISAF is now active in combat operations. This means that NATO is in the middle of the toughest deployment of ground forces in its history. In this, the PRTs play an important role in which they have felt, from the beginning, the central dilemmas of ISAF: (1) a shortage of resources limits the commitment of troop contributing nations and (2) every deployment of soldiers or of operationally important equipment comes about only after lengthy negotiations between European capital cities and NATO Headquarters. This has a direct influence on the working conditions of PRTs. (3) Many governments are not prepared to take on a leading role, which goes beyond force protection measures.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.3 Positioning of PRTs within Afghan Structures

In 2007, Afghanistan is still far away from overall stability (see instability scale). Especially in the south and east, MOF are carrying out more attacks than ever. It is therefore their strategy to increase the number of casualties at national (e.g. local police personnel) as well as international (e.g. PRT-personnel) levels and thus to increase the pressure on the troop contributing nations and the Afghan population, which has direct consequences for the work of PRTs. MOF have no doubt been encouraged by their successful psychological warfare to carry out even more attacks to expel foreign troops from Afghanistan to re-establish an “Islamic Emirate”.

The underdeveloped Afghan provinces, with their civil war economy based on growing raw materials for the production of drugs, represents one of the biggest challenges to state building.<sup>9</sup> For the most part, regional players can exploit available resources such as poppy (nearly in every province) or oil (such as in the provinces Sar-e Pol and Jowzjan) without government control. Further manifestations of the Afghan black-market economy are drug, weapon and human trafficking. Those that pull the strings—among them many Power Brokers—often amassed riches in a very short time. At the same time, and over many decades, civilian abilities were devalued. Farmers, employees, workmen and intellectuals were marginalized. The role of violence in the Afghan drug economy was and is immense. The mafia-like structures that have developed over the years and the shortage of military strength mean that PRTs depend on certain arrangements with the local stakeholders, so as to be, at best, tolerated. This dilemma supports the already flourishing drug economy, which in turn makes lasting stabilization of the whole country impossible.

The NATO/ISAF Operations Plan sets out in detail, which role ISAF forces should play in support of Afghanistan’s counter-narcotic measures. Among them are logistic support, the exchange of information and intelligence, as well as supporting the training of the Afghan Armed Forces and police units in the fight against drugs. ISAF has to comply with these duties, but at the same time, PRTs must not become so deeply involved in this issue that it affects their ability to safeguard their main tasks. Success, however, depends on the Afghan government pursuing the goal of putting an end to this problem, and it falls on Kabul to take charge and to let

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<sup>8</sup> This term covers all measures designed to secure a military operation.

<sup>9</sup> Compare Conrad Schetter: *Kriegsfürstentum und Bürgerkriegsökonomien in Afghanistan. Arbeitspapiere zur Internationalen Politik und Außenpolitik*. 3/2004. Universität Köln 2004, Abstract. Compare: online document <http://www.politik.uni-koeln.de/jaeger/downloads/aipa0304.pdf> (downloaded 30 August 2006).

Afghan authorities take responsibility of an ever-wider spectrum of tasks in the fight against drugs. The Afghan government therefore must continue to set up national and regional administrative structures in this field and thereby prove that it is increasing its efforts in counter-narcotics.<sup>10</sup>

#### 1.4 ISAF Regional Commands and PRTs in Afghanistan<sup>11</sup>

<b>Regional Command Capital</b> (France)	RC (C) at Kabul is assisting the GoA to provide security for the capital. It comprises about 5,000 troops headed by the 2,000-strong Kabul Multi-National Brigade led by France and supported by Italy and Turkey. Kabul International Airport is secured by Bulgaria.
<b>Regional Command North</b> (Germany)	<p>RC (N) at Mazar-e Sharif is led by Germany.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRT Kunduz (Kunduz province) led by Germany.</li> <li>• PRT Feyzabad (Badakhshan) led by Germany, supported by Czech, Danish and Swiss troops.</li> <li>• PRT Mazar-e Sharif (Balkh) led by Sweden and also composed of troops from Finland, France, Denmark, Romania and the US.</li> <li>• PRT Meymaneh (Faryab) led by Norway and supported by Finnish troops.</li> <li>• PRT Pol-e Khomri (Baghlan) led by Hungary.</li> <li>• FSB Mazar-e Sharif led by Germany.</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Command West</b> (Italy)	<p>RC (W) at Herat is led by Italy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRT Chaghcharan (Ghor) led by Lithuania and supported by Icelandic personnel.</li> <li>• PRT Farah (Farah) led by the United States.</li> <li>• PRT Herat (Herat) led by Italy and supported by troops from France and Hungary.</li> <li>• PRT Qal'eh-ye Now (Badghis) and FSB Herat led by Spain.</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Command South</b> (The Netherlands)	<p>RC (S) at Kandahar is composed of approx. 11,500 troops and is led by The Netherlands, supported by British and Canadian troops. RC (S) is composed of four PRTs and one FSB. Additionally, the Netherlands has led the 6,000-strong Multinational Brigade (South) at Kandahar since November 2006, which is composed of British, Canadian, Danish, Australian, Estonian, US and Romanian troops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRT Kandahar (Kandahar) led by Canada.</li> <li>• PRT Lashkar Gah (Helmand) led by the UK supported by troops from Denmark and Estonia.</li> <li>• PRT Qalat (Zabul) led by US with support by Romania.</li> <li>• PRT Tarin Kowt (Uruzgan) led by The Netherlands and supported by Australia.</li> <li>• FSB Kandahar led by Canada.</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> Compare online document: <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2006/issue1/german/analysis.html> (downloaded 20 March 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Compare online document: <http://www.european-defence.co.uk/afghanistan.html> (downloaded 2 May 2007).



<b>Regional Command East (USA)</b>	RC (E) at Bagram was established in October 2006 with ISAF taking formal control of US PRTs. It is composed of twelve PRTs and one FSB. RC (E) comprises some 13,500 troops and is led by the US with New Zealand leading PRT Bamyan and Turkey leading PRT Wardak. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PRT Asadabad (Kunar)</li><li>• PRT Bagram (Parwan)</li><li>• PRT Bamyan (Bamyan)</li><li>• PRT Gardez (Paktia)</li><li>• PRT Ghazni (Ghazni)</li><li>• PRT Jalalabad (Nangarhar)</li><li>• PRT Khowst (Khowst)</li><li>• PRT Mihtarlam (Laghman)</li><li>• PRT Nuristan (Nuristan)</li><li>• PRT Panjsher (Panjsher)</li><li>• PRT Sharan (Paktika)</li><li>• PRT Wardak (Wardak)</li><li>• FSB Bagram (Parwan)</li></ul>
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## **2. PRT Concepts**

### **2.1 PRT Characteristics**

Widening the international commitment to the Afghan provinces through the installation of PRTs took some time. After the end of the Taliban regime in Kabul, creating institutional structures in the provinces was hardly possible, as the implementation of security, as the basis for a national reconciliation is a very complex process. At the end of 2003, Spain along with a number of smaller European countries increasingly observed the developments of the established PRT nations USA, Great Britain and Germany. Countries such as Sweden, Norway and Lithuania perceived the establishment or takeover of PRTs as a chance to improve their international reputation or were 'invited' to contribute to ICM. The necessity of creating a reasonably secure environment in the run-up to the 2004 presidential elections and the 2005 parliamentary and provincial council elections ensured that there was additional political interest in new PRT locations in remote regions. In the provinces, forces supporting these elections—such as the Austrian contingent in 2005—and Quick Reaction Forces were employed, which could use the PRT infrastructure as bases. In 2007, the small state of The Netherlands had 2,200 soldiers deployed around the PRT Tarin Kowt in the province of Uruzgan. In the meantime, all EU countries—with the exception of Cyprus—contribute to ISAF. By 2007, the number of PRTs increased to 25.

Despite serving one command (ISAF), PRTs generally aim to preserve distinct structural and national concepts. Michael Schmunk, German PRT planner, regards an attempt at classifying PRTs according to type only as an academic challenge. He makes a distinction between two types, namely the German and the US PRT model, although there has never been a real distinction between the two. According to Schmunk, further PRT types only came into being because of over-classification in publications. This point of view, however, does raise the objection that a country such as Great Britain, due to its colonial experience in Afghanistan and its specific military doctrine, has developed a PRT concept that may have a similar aim as the US and German concepts, but follows a different strategy and manages to implement it relatively successfully. Apart from the question of classification, certain fundamental principles, which dominate every PRT, can be identified:

- In PRTs, civilian and military aspects are intertwined.
- They regard themselves as a stabilizing force.
- They have a multinational, multifunctional and multi-institutional character.
- PRTs act on the premise of the *light footprint* approach and provide assistance at the invitation of the Afghan government.
- Their mission is the strengthening of the Afghan government's authority and influence, and they support the state building process in the shape of a 'time-limited support offer'.<sup>12</sup>
- They operate in the provinces away from the linchpin Kabul.
- Their command and control follows the *lead nation principle*.
- PRTs are subject to considerable limitations in resources, personnel, conduct of operations, Rules of engagement and armament.
- They depend on consensus and cooperation with local Power Brokers.
- They depend on logistic support provided by ISAF and a robust force (OEF) in the background ("*B-52 factor*").
- The Afghan population mainly regards PRTs as permanently installed international charities—quasi-job centers or reconstruction offices, which seem to carry no time limit.<sup>13</sup>
- PRT lead nations often pursue a proliferation of their own model, with an *ad-hoc approach* in the areas of security and development.<sup>14</sup>
- The PRTs' long-term aim and success criterion is to enable the Afghan government to establish itself as a credible and legitimate leadership in the eyes of the population.

## 2.2 The US PRT Concept

Shedding light on this concept seems to be important insofar as ISAF has formally taken on US-PRTs. As a consequence, certain ISAF and OEF structures will fuse consequently, which means that the US concept and the experience gathered by US-PRTs especially in terms of civil-military interaction will have an impact on S/R Operations.

### 2.2.1 Development

US-PRTs developed without a uniform concept and coherent planning out of a deficit situation. It was clear to the international forces involved that after the fall of the Taliban Afghanistan would be more dependent on drug trafficking than any other nation in the world and that only the presence of international armed forces could prevent a return to (nation-wide) civil war or Islamist rule. At the end of 2002, however, neither the US nor the other troop contributing nations were able to mobilize appropriate military capacities to guarantee a sufficient level of

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<sup>12</sup> Michael Schmunk in the respective workshop.

<sup>13</sup> Author's observations in the Kunduz and Mazar-e Sharif regions in 2004 and 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Perito: *The US Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan*. Washington 2005, p. 1. Compare online document: [www.usiporg/pubs/specialreports/sr152.html](http://www.usiporg/pubs/specialreports/sr152.html) (downloaded 30 January 2006).

security in the whole country.<sup>15</sup> The US military command convinced the government in Washington of the necessity of a stronger commitment to the reconstruction of Afghanistan, to protect the country and especially the government in Kabul from breaking apart. This change of strategy came about due to the limited success of OEF that was (and is) increasingly facing a bad reputation in the eyes of the Afghan population.<sup>16</sup> This development necessitated an increased need for force protection. It was clear to the US military that resorting exclusively to conventional forms of combat and stabilization measures would not spell success for OEF. The war in Iraq since 2003 set a quick end to providing resources for US-reconstruction efforts to Afghanistan.

Faced with this military deficit situation, the US developed a strategy of selective isolated solutions, which was based on the use of forward outposts, so-called Coalition Humanitarian Liaison Cells. These consisted of officers responsible for civilian affairs in *Civil Affairs Teams* (CATs), who identified humanitarian problems, carried out minor reconstruction projects and set up cooperation with UNAMA and the NGOs in the field. This was also designed to help to win the *hearts and minds* of the population. In the first phase after the fall of the Taliban, the driving factor behind these activities was the gathering of information in the provinces. Subsequently, these cells were given a robust force protection element, and representatives of civilian US institutions were integrated into the provinces in so-called Joint Regional Teams. At the insistence of President Karzai, the teams were converted into PRTs. The program began at the beginning of 2003 with a pilot scheme in the city of Gardez; during the same year further PRTs of the CF followed in Bamyan, Kunduz, Mazar-e Sharif, Kandahar, Parwan and Herat.<sup>17</sup>

### 2.2.2 Approach, Mandate and Aim

The US-PRTs' mandate was not clear during the introductory phase. There were differing statements from the US armed forces on whether PRTs should be used as coordination agencies for humanitarian help and reconstruction in the provinces. Plans to use PRTs as coordinators for the entire reconstruction effort were shelved in spring 2003 following protests by international NGOs. Furthermore, the statement that the primary purpose of PRTs is to hunt Taliban or al-Qaida elements was withdrawn early on by the US. The US military, however, stresses that PRTs do not consist of *peacekeeping troops*.<sup>18</sup> The US counter insurgency strategy in Afghanistan comprises a wide spectrum of measures against the insurgents' asymmetric warfare. This not only means combat operations, but also humanitarian operations and reconstruction efforts. These are designed to contribute to the weakening of anti-government forces such as the Taliban, various Power Brokers or the drug mafia. PRTs under US-command are actively employed in this strategy.

US PRTs have the following guidelines:

- The first PRTs were the result of a change of heart of the administration of George W. Bush, who during the 2000 election campaign had vociferously argued against US involvement in state building.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Julia Hett: *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan. Das amerikanische, britische und deutsche Modell.* ZIF-Analyse 04/05. Berlin, April 2005, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman: *The Ongoing Lessons of Afghanistan: Warfighting, Intelligence, Force Transformation and State Building.* Washington D.C. 2004, p. 142.

<sup>17</sup> Hett, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> Hett, p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> Dominique Vidal: *Reconstructing States – A guide to nation-building.* In: *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 12/2003. Online Document: <http://www.mondediplo.com/2003/12/10rand> (downloaded 18 May 2005).

- PRTs are employed to ensure a permanent presence in key Afghan regions via so-called *permanent bases*.
- PRTs are employed to provide logistic support to the war against terror in the widest sense.
- PRTs are employed to counteract the main reasons for instability: unemployment, poverty, terrorism and local Power Brokers.<sup>20</sup>

### 2.2.3 Structure and Mode of Operation

An average US-PRT (the PRT Farah is presented here as an example) is conceived for approx. 100 personnel stationed in an area the size of a soccer field. This tally is the strength of a standard US PRT with 97 soldiers and three representatives of civilian ministries or departments.<sup>21</sup>

The US-PRTs have three key elements:

- A Civil-Military Operations Centre (CMOC) as the core element of civil-military interaction,
- embedded Tactical Trainers, these are US soldiers who train the ANA in the region, and
- a force protection Element, which ensures the safety of the actors during realization of projects.

The HQ squad controls the PRT logistics and coordinates the following elements:

- medical element,
- catering element,
- translators,
- engineers,
- refueling element,
- intelligence element and
- MP element.

Within the structures of PRT Farah, force protection is referred to as “the blood which courses through the PRT”.<sup>22</sup> More than half of the PRT personnel are involved in this field in accordance with the US guideline that defines security as paramount of the mission. In PRT Farah, the following division of tasks can be identified:

- One mortar platoon, as well as security teams guard the PRT and are on standby for escorts and patrols.
- Observation teams explore the current mood among the local population and gather information.
- The CMOC in the PRT correlates the villages’ requests with the PRT’s capacities and the welfare of the entire province, so as to define as precisely as possible the focus of the support.

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<sup>20</sup> Perito, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Perito, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Compare online document on PRT Farah: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/afghanistan/farah.htm> (downloaded 3 March 2006).

- Civil Affairs Teams (six personnel) follow up the villages' requests, identify projects, carry out an on-the-spot evaluation and draw up a list of priorities. The force protection Element accompanies these teams into the villages.

By embedding civilians in military units, the US established a fundamental characteristic of PRTs. The *inter-ministerial* PRT approach (*multi-agency principle*) is not only a characteristic feature of German PRTs, but is more or less prominent in all PRTs, and which was developed by the US. In reality, there are different approaches between the various countries concerning the scope for action a 'civilian' ministry has within a PRT. In this, civilian components such as representatives of the *Agency for International Development* (USAID), the *Department of State* (DoS), or the *Department for Agriculture* (USDA) are clearly subordinate to the military.

US-PRTs are designed for Afghan regions that can hardly be described as post-conflict, but are an attempt to implement reconstruction in zones of instability (level six upwards). This is why PRT-regions with lower conflict intensity such as Bamyán or Kunduz (level four respectively five) were handed over from OEF to ISAF quite early in 2003. At the same time, heavily fortified 'forts' such as the PRT Jalalabad have more of the characteristics of a forward support base and serve as bases for counter-terrorism operations. In fact, the OEF combat units are protecting the PRT. Despite this, the US stresses the role of PRTs as an instrument for stabilization. The priorities of US-PRTs are listed as *good governance*, *force protection* and *reconstruction*:

- Good governance primarily stands for supporting the respective provincial governor in the opening up of alternative forms of income (*alternative livelihood programs* such as in the province Nangarhar), in the renovation of mosques (such as in the city of Jalalabad), or in relevant information campaigns.
- In security issues, US-PRTs are basically focused on force protection, providing escorts as well as supporting the Afghan armed forces and police. The restoration of order after dangerous incidents is left to the Afghan security forces and CF combat units. The most important factors in the field of security are training, technical assistance and material support for the ANP and ANA. The strengthening of the Afghan security forces through PRTs also represents a critical factor in the establishment of the rule of law and the creation of police and armed forces, both long-term ICM goals.
- Concerning the US approach in the field of reconstruction, it is decisive that the institutions set up by PRTs reflect local interests.<sup>23</sup>

Based on these priorities the US-PRTs' military command employs the following methods:

- CERP (Commanders Emergency Response Program)<sup>24</sup>: This deals with projects of the military PRT component, which are carried out on behalf of the respective provincial governor or with the provincial governor in charge, using the PRT commanders material and financial means made available at short notice. For projects that increase the PRT's flexibility, the commander is supplied with funds, which he can dispose of at his discretion. Public events, as well as the construction of schools, roads and hospitals are designed to win over the population's hearts and minds. CERP should help to meet two criteria that are regarded as prerequisites for security and stability: the authorities

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<sup>23</sup> Montgomery McFate. In: Joint Force Quarterly, issue 38, third quarter 2005, p. 45.

<sup>24</sup> In Iraq CERP has been applied by US forces already since 2003. Compare online document: [http://www.dod.mil/comptroller/fmr/12/12\\_27.pdf](http://www.dod.mil/comptroller/fmr/12/12_27.pdf) (downloaded 24 July 2006).

must have a monopoly on the use of force (government effectiveness) and the population must regard these authorities as legitimate (government legitimacy).

- Quick Impact Projects: USAID uses its field program officers to carry out specific development projects in the provinces, designed to show quick results. These projects are controlled and supervised in consultation with the military PRT component and under the local guidance of USAID. Such projects include, for instance, the construction of roads, the digging of wells, as well as the construction of public buildings.<sup>25</sup> Road construction certainly was a success factor for US-PRTs, with the simultaneous presence of combat troops in all PRT regions providing projects with increased effectiveness. It has to be said that US-PRTs are more dedicated to the question of reconstruction than the German and British PRTs. US-PRTs have, by far, (re)constructed the most kilometers of roads, a fact which provides PRTs with direct operational advantages, as the supply routes become shorter. Since their formation in 2005, the Spanish and Italian PRT have also been involved in road construction.

#### 2.2.4 Counter-narcotics

At the Berlin donor conference in April 2004 President Karzai declared a “jihad on the cultivation of drugs”. Since then he has repeatedly referred to the drug economy as the greatest obstacle to Afghanistan’s development. This problem is (of course) at the top of the list of US priorities: altogether, in 2005, \$ 780,000,000 was set aside for the fight against drugs; of this, \$ 300,000,000 was allocated for eradication measures in Afghanistan. The US demands a more radical approach and thereby means Great Britain, which is responsible for counter-narcotics within the framework of the *Security Sector Reform* (SSR). The US government propagates—against Karzai’s will—large-scale destruction of poppy fields through the use of pesticides. The Afghan and European side, however, advocates a policy of *carrot and sticks*: draconian measures should only be taken if compensation payments, information campaigns and the cultivation of alternative crops do not induce the farmers to rethink. Due to their relatively weak military capacities, the regular staffs of US-PRTs do not seem to be suitable for such an approach. US-PRTs, however, should be capable of providing infrastructure for combat units at any time, if these are not already a fixed part of the PRT (such as in Jalalabad), so that they can take more robust action against the drug mafia in the provinces.

#### 2.2.5 Criticism

Civilian organizations criticize US-PRTs more than other PRTs. Paul Barker, Head of the aid organization CARE in Kabul mentioned that the US-PRT in Ghazni shows good will and a willingness to cooperate. Barker, an American, however, is speaking for the civilian aid community when he says that the US-PRTs’ projects are bad development policy, as the military has neglected to examine the local requirements in any great detail and to involve the population.<sup>26</sup> Criticism is also leveled at the simultaneous conduct of combat and stabilization operations, a fundamental problem of the US-PRT model.

The US’ aims in Afghanistan—to wage a successful war against terror and to maintain permanent

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<sup>25</sup> Provincial Reconstruction Team Overview. In: USAID Afghanistan, January 2006. Compare online document [http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia\\_near\\_east/countries/afghanistan/pdfs/prt\\_jan-06.pdf#search=%22USAID%20Overview%20PRT%22](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia_near_east/countries/afghanistan/pdfs/prt_jan-06.pdf#search=%22USAID%20Overview%20PRT%22) (downloaded 28 July 2006).

<sup>26</sup> Compare Constanze Stelzenmüller: Afghanistan: Hebammen in Uniform. In: Die Zeit, 16 September 2004.

bases—could, in view of the attempts to support the Afghan transformation process, lead to counter-productive results such as the strengthening of local Power Brokers and the weakening of the government in Kabul: CF again and again form an alliance with local militias and supply them with weapons and money. In difficult operations, Afghan fighters and international mercenaries often form the vanguard, which further encourages the privatization of war and the weakening of the state's monopoly on the use of force.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, however, such marriages of convenience weaken the central government in Kabul and work against the aims of ISAF and those of the disarmament programs. This shows up the dilemma of the geopolitical focus of the US and the S/R focus of UNAMA, ISAF and the EU.

## **2.3 The German PRT Concept**

### 2.3.1 Development

After the 9/11 attacks the then German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder stressed the issues of “unlimited solidarity with the US” and of “Germany’s new responsibility in world-wide military operations”. His Defense Minister Peter Struck also coined the phrase that “Germany is defended at the Hindu Kush”.

In 2007, Germany is the third-largest troop-contributing nation (up to 3,500 soldiers) of ISAF and is responsible for Regional Command North. Beyond Afghanistan, the deployment of military forces has proved to be an essential instrument for Germany to counter international terrorism. The German side stressed from the beginning that for political, legal and practical considerations, stabilization tasks and the active fight against terrorism should continue to be kept separate. Germany does not regard military operations in Afghanistan as the first option: Before soldiers are tasked, it is up to diplomats, development aid workers of governmental and non-governmental organizations, human rights organizations, the World Bank and other international institutions to take action against the root causes of terrorism. However, there remain problems that can only be solved through military measures. In this context Germany and its PRTs place their hopes in the employment of integrated civil-military instruments in the Afghan provinces.

### 2.3.2 Approach, Mandate and Aim

The PRT-approach of the US showed that a concept of decentralized operations of smaller military-civilian support forces could be realized. This was also Germany’s conclusion when, after close scrutiny, it took over the position of the former US-PRT in Kunduz in September 2003 and carried on with its own concept. Subsequently, Germany put the emphasis on expansion: in autumn 2004, the second German PRT started work in Feyzabad. Mid-2006 the German involvement increased even more with the takeover of ISAF Regional Command North. The northern area of responsibility covers nine provinces, seven to ten million people and 150,000 square kilometers.

Germany still regards the situation in Afghanistan as a threat to international security and world peace. The German parliament especially stresses the necessity to extend the central government’s authority to all parts of Afghanistan, to respect democratic values, to complete the process of disarming, demobilization and reintegration, as well as to make headway in the fields of security sector reform and the fight against both the drug trade and drug production.

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<sup>27</sup> Frank Ilse: Das Milliarden-Geschäft der privaten Krieger. In: Abendblatt, 6.10.2004. Compare online document: [www.abendblatt.de/daten/2004/10/06/349171.html](http://www.abendblatt.de/daten/2004/10/06/349171.html) (downloaded 19 May 2005).

Following a proposal by the German government, the regional boundaries of the operational areas were lifted. This means that if it is found to be essential to the accomplishment of the overall ISAF mission, German armed forces can now not only be employed in Kabul and in the north, but also in other regions for support measures limited both in time and scope. This means that Germany is entitled to send its troops to the war zones of the south.<sup>28</sup>

### 2.3.3 Structure and Mode of Operation

Contrary to the US-PRTs, the German PRT approach is not characterized by a counter-insurgency strategy, but by the notion of a comprehensive stabilization and reconstruction plan with short, medium and long-term effectiveness. Accordingly, the PRT Kunduz is structured and employed as a 'civilian reconstruction team with a military protection element', with the civilian and military elements working together on the same level, following a comprehensive political mission. Every component implements this mission according to its ideas. Ideally, the various key ministries coordinate their plans symbiotically in an inter-ministerial steering committee so as to produce the highest effect on the ground. This means that, in principle, Germany follows the US-PRT model, even if the individual ministries have different powers. Representatives of the Foreign, Defense and Interior Ministries, as well as the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development meet on a weekly basis at working level, and also talk to corresponding representatives on the ground. This means that the PRT Kunduz is regarded as 'a part of German foreign policy'.<sup>29</sup>

The PRT Kunduz has a civil-military double command, with the Foreign Ministry selecting the civilian head. The military commander is not only subordinate to the Defense Ministry, but also to the ISAF Command and therefore to NATO. The double command is also provided with a representative of the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development to coordinate the activities concerning development aid policy, as well as a representative of the Ministry of the Interior to help in the setting up of the Afghan National Police. The civilians in the German PRT are therefore only subordinate to the military command in questions of security, not, however, in diplomatic questions and questions concerning development aid policy. Three strategic pillars form the heart of the PRT:

- (1) Diplomacy: making contacts, efforts at persuasion, lobbying and diplomacy, as well as strengthening the civil society in cooperation with UNAMA.
- (2) Security: Supporting Security Sector Reform by cooperating in the setting up of the Afghan National Police and in the disarming of the militias and of private persons.
- (3) Development: Realization of projects in development cooperation, as well as their coordination with other international and national partners or NGOs.<sup>30</sup>

These foci also reflect the opinion of reconstruction experts, who state that PRTs in the north and west of the country should primarily train the local police and that the PRTs in the south and east should primarily take care of security.<sup>31</sup> According to the will of the government in Berlin, Germany's military presence in the provinces should 'basically' remain 'as small as possible', a

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<sup>28</sup> Michael Schmunk: Die deutschen Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Ein neues Instrument zum Nation-Building. SWP-Studie S33. Berlin, November 2005, p. 16.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Walter Feichtinger and Markus Gauster by Rüdiger Lotz, German Embassy in Kabul. Kabul, 22 October 2004.

<sup>30</sup> Hett, pp. 15 f.

<sup>31</sup> Conversation of Walter Feichtinger and Markus Gauster with Diego Osorio, UNAMA Kabul, 26 October 2004.



guideline, which was followed until 2007:<sup>32</sup> The PRT Kunduz comprises around 470 soldiers. Of these (only) around 90 are operational soldiers (infantry) who are responsible for an area of approx. 20,000 square kilometers (!).<sup>33</sup>

The German Armed Forces Operational Command in Berlin directs the PRT. The main components are the operational command staff, security, signals, logistics, construction and combat engineers and a medical company.<sup>34</sup> Further elements of the military part are psychological operations (PSYOPS), military police, explosive ordnance disposal, infrastructure, planning, administration, military geology, as well as a press and information centre. The German government directs the civilian part. It comprises around 15 civilians and is made up of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Head), the Ministry of the Interior (specializing in the training of the Afghan police—*German Police Project*), the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (specializing in reconstruction projects), as well as civilian diplomats from partner governments.

The unequal numerical ratio between military and political-civilian personnel is irrelevant for the decision-making processes—the Foreign and Defense Ministries carry the same weight. The significantly higher number of soldiers in German PRTs, when compared to US and British PRTs, is justified by the pronounced care and logistic concept laid down in the doctrine of the German Armed Forces.

Apart from the PRT Kunduz, a further German PRT was set up in September 2004 in Feyzabad, the capital of the province of Badakhshan. In organizational and logistic matters, it relies on the PRT Kunduz. The remote region of Badakhshan in the far northeast of Afghanistan is especially underdeveloped structurally. Even before the Soviet invasion and the subsequent civil war, its population did not form an ethnically or culturally unified whole, although there were frequent inter-ethnic relationships. This region became famous due to its mineral wealth.

At the end of 2006, the PRT Feyzabad comprised 250 German, 80 further international soldiers, as well as ten diplomats, police trainers and development experts. In Feyzabad the personnel also covers a comprehensive field of activity, which comprises staff, logistics, protection and medical elements, information gathering, military police, explosive ordnance disposal component, military geology, as well as force administration.

The task of the PRT Feyzabad is to strengthen the influence of the Kabul government in the province of Badakhshan. The representatives of the ministries involved are faced with a division of labor. While the representative of the Foreign Ministry, the civil head of the PRT, coordinates the work of the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and of the Interior Ministry, the military component, together with local security forces, is responsible for a secure environment. In German eyes, this forms the basis for the work of the governmental and non-governmental aid organizations. To keep in touch, representatives of the PRT Feyzabad regularly meet with regional and local officials, dignitaries and decision-makers. The agenda comprises items such as the foci of the cooperation, ideas for the region and possibilities of supporting concrete measures.

It is the task of the German presence and especially of German patrols to explore the highly

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<sup>32</sup> The Afghanistan concept of the German government of 1 September 2003, p. 6. Compare online document: [http://www.spdfraktion.de/rs/rs\\_datei/0,,2635,00.pdf](http://www.spdfraktion.de/rs/rs_datei/0,,2635,00.pdf) (downloaded 17 May 2005).

<sup>33</sup> Compare Winfried Nachtwei: Afghanistan-Besuch im Oktober 2006: Zwischen Anschlagsgefahren und Aufbau-schritten, p. 9. Online document: <http://www.nachtwei.de/index.php/articles/440> (downloaded 3 April 2007).

<sup>34</sup> Schmunk, p. 16.

complex structures of Afghan society. On the working level, there are frequent meetings between specialists of the PRTs and the corresponding partners in local administration. The primary aim of these meetings between German soldiers and regional military forces, the intelligence services and the police is the stabilization of the security situation.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, there are combined patrols of German military police personnel and Afghan policemen. Within the framework of CIMIC, Quick Impact Projects, such as the construction of police stations at the city gates, or the digging of wells serve to create trust and are expected to have a stabilizing effect.

#### 2.3.4 Counter-narcotics

The cultivation of drugs has brought certain prosperity not only to the population in the sphere of influence of the German PRTs, a fact that is reflected in the number of new houses, four-by-fours and mobile phones. Furthermore, even tenant farmers profit from the opium trade. The population experiences the effects of growing opium in the region as mostly positive.<sup>36</sup> The question of how German PRTs should behave vis-à-vis the drug trade in their provinces has occupied German politics since the beginning of the Afghanistan engagement. The German approach seems to be ambivalent. On the one hand, the German government gives assurances that the fight against drugs is not a part of the mandate of the operation of the German Armed Forces.<sup>37</sup> This philosophy was formulated in autumn 2003 by the then defense minister and has remained unchanged until today. Despite the fact that there is no mission, Germany, on the other hand, makes an “independent civil contribution” to stemming the drug problem. This follows the assumption that only a mix of strategies of economic and penal measures can bring about success. Especially within the *German Police Project* Germany has provided equipment and training for the Afghan counter-narcotics units.

In reality, the German PRTs monitor the proceedings in connection with the cultivation of the poppy fields, so as to provide official Afghan and international actors with relevant information from the [area of responsibility]. Interfering in this traditional cycle would, very probably, result in an escalation of violence that would be directed against the PRTs. The German PRTs’ mandate is not robust enough for an environment in which drug crime is omnipresent. By expanding the German Armed Forces’ field of activity the likelihood has increased that German soldiers will discover drug laboratories while searching for arms caches. If, however, the fight against drugs were carried out in earnest, it would—in the opinion of the secret services—make counter-measures by the drug barons likely.<sup>38</sup>

The attempts so far to gain control over the growing of drugs through individual actions, such as the destruction of poppy fields, must be regarded as failures, according to the Minister for counter-narcotics, Habibullah Qaderi. He calls for “respectable people” in the government and points towards problems with regional commanders.<sup>39</sup> The PRTs in the North do not seem to have been involved in these individual actions. However, the GoA intends to dismiss provincial

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<sup>35</sup> Compare online document concerning the aims of German PRTs: <http://www.einsatz.bundeswehr.de/C1256F1D0022A5C2/vwContentByKey/W26BUJR5821INFODE> (downloaded 3 May 2006).

<sup>36</sup> Compare Conrad Schetter: Das Dilemma der Drogenbekämpfung. In: E+Z Zeitschrift für Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit 2/2005, p. 66.

<sup>37</sup> Schmunk p. 32.

<sup>38</sup> Anti-Drogen-Kampf gefährdet Soldaten in Afghanistan. In: Financial Times Deutschland, 16 June 2005.

<sup>39</sup> Fighting drugs in Afghanistan. Video interview of Habibullah Qaderi, Afghan Minister for Counter-narcotics, 18 January 2006. Compare online document: <http://www.nato.int/multi/video/2005/050120-qaderi/v050120e.htm> (downloaded 1 July 2006).

governors who do not cooperate in the fight against drugs.

Without access to alternative forms of income, the farmers will not forego the income from drugs. In the medium term, moderate and restrained repressive measures, such as the destruction of laboratories or the seizure of drug shipments seem conceivable as a military mission for ISAF. Up to now, Germany has not participated in such measures, and has concentrated instead on setting up the ANP, in which the PRTs have increasingly become involved. This means that in future the PRTs will be faced with another key role: supporting regional police training. Loyal Afghan police personnel, who, even in 2007 were still a minority due to their modest pay, could, in future, take on the delicate task of carrying out counter-narcotics measures.<sup>40</sup>

### 2.3.5 Criticism

Some politicians and NGOs criticize that due to many self-imposed restraints the German PRTs cannot develop their full efficiency and thus cannot fulfill their actual core task, i.e. strengthening the authority of the Afghan government. Massive bureaucracy is seen to lead to indecisiveness on the part of German PRTs, and they furthermore seem to exercise such caution that they do not manage to patrol their three provinces. The camps seem to be home to regular state visits, which also keep the PRTs from their work. Another point of criticism is that PRTs do not intervene in acts of violence perpetrated by the local population, such as stoning. As defined by their mandate and by the concept of Local Ownership, such police tasks are not carried out by the German PRTs. In the opinion of critics, the PRTs operate in these cases the same way the Afghan police personnel do—they often look the other way when acts of violence are perpetrated. There is no discernible commitment of the PRTs concerning the establishment of the rule of law. The German PRTs are said to have accepted this situation for the purposes of peaceful coexistence with the Power Brokers.

Some criticism against the PRTs has to be carefully analyzed; some is grist for the mill of skeptics who, as a matter of principle, would like to withdraw the German Armed Forces from all international operations.

## **2.4 The UK PRT Concept**

### 2.4.1 Development

The UK was the second nation after the US to set up a PRT. From July 2003 to the beginning of 2006, they operated PRTs in Mazar-e Sharif and Meymaneh before they switched to the south of Afghanistan. Until the middle of 2005, the north was no target for attacks on foreign soldiers and aid workers by militant Islamists. The region is the home of ethnic Uzbeks and Tajiks, which, from the start, made actions by the Pashtu-dominated Taliban more difficult. During the implementation phase of the British PRT in 2003, the region witnessed fighting between Power Brokers, with the British PRTs acting as mediators from the very beginning.

### 2.4.2 Approach, Mandate and Aim

The UK regards its PRT approach in Region North as a *Peace Support Operation*.<sup>41</sup> For Britain,

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<sup>40</sup> Compare Stelzenmüller.

<sup>41</sup> Compare Jon Brittain: *Civil Military Interaction: Practical Experiences of a PRT Commander*. In: Walter Feichtinger/Markus Gauster (Eds.): *Zivil-Militärische Zusammenarbeit am Beispiel Afghanistan. Civil-Military*

a PRT is a civil-military instrument which is employed in the Afghan provinces to strengthen the Afghan government and which helps to support development and reconstruction. This mission is to be accomplished primarily through the improvement of the general security situation and implemented through the support of the five SSR-pillars. In 2006, the Scandinavian countries largely adopted the UK's quite successful PRT approach in the post-conflict Region, which meant that this proven concept continues to remain up-to-date in 2007.

Despite several guidelines from the US, ISAF and the UN, the British PRT did not fit any mold—it was tailored to the Mazar-e Sharif region. The UK had a *Joint Leadership* with the civilian element integrated to a high degree. The Ministry of Defense (MoD) worked closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for International Development (DfID). Operationally, the military and civilian elements work separately and also have a separate method of submitting reports. For the British PRT, the critical factor for the success of the operation is improving the respect for, and increasing the importance of the Afghan National Police as the legitimate instrument for the protection of the population.

The British priorities connected with this are: consolidating the institutional structures and comprehensively increasing the SSR through the PRTs by strengthening the customs and justice system, the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Police, as well as by supporting the disarming programs and counter-narcotics. Stable institutions and increased security should further help the region's development. British PRTs do not (as opposed to their German counterparts) carry out any reconstruction projects themselves. They regard themselves as initiators of civilian reconstruction projects without being involved in them operationally, which had a positive effect on state building.

#### 2.4.3 Structure and Mode of Operation

The British PRTs are structured in a multinational and multi-institutional way. In August 2005, the PRT Mazar-e Sharif had a strength of 140, the PRT Meymaneh consisted of 50 personnel. To establish security, Mobile Observation Teams (MOT) carried out patrols in the entire region and connected this with information campaigns and confidence-building measures. At the same time, every PRT-movement is used to carry out non-military-intelligence. MOT teams consist of six to eight personnel and have high operational flexibility; they can spend days outside of the PRT camp if this is necessary to accomplish the mission. In order to support the Afghan National Police, a civilian international adviser on police training is part of the PRTs.

A British PRT commander characterized the PRT approach as doing '*business in a very low-key manner*'.<sup>42</sup> This means that the PRT presents itself in public lightly armed and through its 'discrete presence' interprets the *light footprint* principle very narrowly. The aim is to achieve a maximum of effect with a minimum of effort. The PRT commander also speaks of 'robust military diplomacy'. In 2003 and 2004, for example, General Rashid Dostum, an ethnic Uzbek, engaged in tank battles with his Tajik rival General Nur Ata Mohammed. The British PRT, in cooperation with UNAMA, acted as a mediator and helped to end the battles between the hostile groups. Dostum and Ata finally agreed to participate in state building. It did not escape their notice that a certain kind of peace is excellent news for their interests: customs, construction and

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*Interaction – Challenges and Chances*. Schriftenreihe der Landesverteidigungsakademie 15/2007, Wien 2007, pp. 113–121.

<sup>42</sup> Conversation between the author and Jon Brittain, Commander of PRT Mazar-e Sharif. Mazar-e Sharif, 1 October 2005.

transport thrive. The high crime rate (which, however, is not only characteristic of northern Afghanistan) has not changed much over the past years.

The PRT Mazar-e Sharif was not primarily interested in implementing the rule of law according to Western principles. This seemed unrealistic, also and especially because of Britain's negative experience with three wars in Afghanistan between 1839 and 1919. The British were aware that lasting and sustainable development in this direction will take decades. This is why they were more interested in promoting stability in the region than in establishing western values. Military presence, support and the setting up of networks are the essential elements of the British approach. In this, the British are also very clever at self-marketing in the provinces, so as to preserve the goodwill of every actor in their region, including the NGOs, and thereby to produce a secure environment. The contribution of the British PRTs contributed that the northern region is still far away from transforming to a war zone. In 2007, however, the situation deteriorated to 'not calm and not stable' (level five), but still can be defined as 'post-conflict'.

#### 2.4.4 Counter-narcotics

In 2002, before the establishment of the British PRT in Mazar-e Sharif, the anti-drug program within the framework of SSR was started, with Britain in charge. This program placed the emphasis on compensation payments and offered every farmer \$ 350 for the destruction of one hectare of poppy field. The farmers, however, demanded \$ 3,000—allegedly because they had run up large debts in the expectation of huge profits. The result was another increase in the cultivation of poppy. Many farmers pocketed the compensation payments, only to start new poppy fields in remote areas—not least because of their commitments vis-à-vis the traders.

Another counterproductive measure was the importing of grain by the UN's World Food Program (WFP) to Mazar-e Sharif for the deprived population. This led to the collapse of domestic grain prices and to farmers changing to poppy cultivation. This was described as a complete failure on the part of the UN's drug policy, which leaves also UK's efforts in a bad light.

#### 2.4.5 Criticism

So as to be able to work under relatively normal conditions, the PRTs are urged to come to an arrangement with local actors (the 'goodies' as well as the 'baddies'). This has allowed influential Power Brokers to strengthen their position even more—especially also through a seat in the Afghan government. It cannot be stated with any certainty whether this strategy is the reason for the growing radicalization in the country as some stakeholders such as Rashid Dostum (in the British PRT AoR) or Ismail Khan (in the Italian PRT AoR) do ensure stability for the population in their area of influence. After a number of elections, the Power Brokers have come to understand, of course, that it is expedient to have both a military arm and a political representation in parliament at their disposal, so as to be able to exchange the rifle for a tie, as the moment requires. This provides the military arm with legitimacy insofar as certain militias of the Power Brokers have become part of the Afghan National Army. Power Brokers have cleverly exploited the new circumstances and have grasped that an involvement in the political dialogue can be beneficial.

Through their role as mediators between hostile groups, the British PRTs have also made a contribution to Power Brokers becoming legitimate. In this the PRTs stood between all fronts: on the one hand, measures must be taken to stop PRTs letting themselves be taken in by local actors, on the other hand any confrontational approach raises the possibility of the PRT being threatened. Keeping a 'diplomatic distance' to the stakeholders is a problem of PRTs in general, which is

especially prevalent with the British PRTs and is at the centre of the criticism led at these PRTs.

## **2.5 On the Problem of Coordinating the Individual PRT**

In principle—and following the idea of local ownership—the creation of security is the responsibility of the leadership in Kabul. Given its weak authority in the provinces, however, it is especially UNAMA, which is tasked to lobby and set up communication platforms to get ISAF, OEF, PRTs, and ambassadors of the lead nations and Afghan ministries to sit down at one table. The Kabul government tried to create a more robust state authority in the provinces by appointing loyal governors who are not from the respective province and are therefore also not involved in the regional power play of the Power Brokers. This strategy seems to work only sporadically and very slowly (such as in the Province Sar-e Pol). The aim is clear: to fill the power vacuum between Kabul and the provinces, a vacuum which exists not only in the area of security, but also in development cooperation.

The PRT *Executive Steering Committee*, founded in 2005, regularly assembles representatives of the actors listed above for consultations on a strategic level. It is headed by the Afghan Minister of the Interior and its task is to provide perspectives and guidelines for all current and future stabilization measures in the PRT context. Furthermore, this platform aims at adapting the PRT agenda to the *National Development Strategy* (NDS).<sup>43</sup> However, developments so far show that the committee lacks authority and powers of self-assertion. This shows up a fundamental problem of the international engagement in Afghanistan: It is in the nature of the lead-nation principle that a PRT operation primarily pursues the aims of the PRT lead nation. A steering and coordination attempt by an Afghan authority—in this case the Minister of the Interior—has so far not been met with any enthusiasm by the international actors.

## **3. Analysis of the PRTs' Efficiency**

### **3.1 General Points on the PRTs' Efficiency**

#### **3.1.1 Notes on the Analysis**

Afghanistan is fragmented into innumerable zones of influence whose players have very different perceptions on the international forces. The number of attacks, incidents, as well as demonstrations against international organizations such as PRTs, is an important indicator of the security situation in the PRT regions, and allows certain conclusions to be drawn on the extent to which the population accepts the PRTs. It has, however, to be taken into account that, for example, demonstrations are often rent-a-mob affairs and/or are instrumentalized by Power Brokers and/or fundamentalists. It is very difficult to define the mood of the entire country since there is a lack of serious empirical data on the 34 provinces, let alone about 350 districts. Pertinent media reports, surveys, figures and percentages can only—if at all—be used as indicators for certain specified regions (or parts thereof).

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<sup>43</sup> ISAF Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). In: Eurocorps Homepage, 17 January 2005. Compare online document: [www.isaf6.eurocorps.org/article.php?article\\_id=37](http://www.isaf6.eurocorps.org/article.php?article_id=37) (downloaded 20 January 2006).

Each PRT employs distinct strategies based not only upon local conditions, but also upon their particular approaches to military affairs, their philosophy of insurgency and their tolerance of risk. Without a doubt, the insurgency is multifaceted, but the efforts to fight it seem to be even more diverse. Each PRT has a different set of goals and caveats and different perceptions of success. Far from the US' early and heavy-handed approach, military forces in Afghanistan today find themselves in a laboratory of ideas, of innovation led by local commanders responding to the conditions around them.

The problem is that each nation and each Command has incentives to proclaim that its approach is uniquely effective, and that there is very little in the way of objective evaluation of results. Moreover, the right strategy can often only be ascertained months or years in retrospect, since today's success may become tomorrow's model of failure, or vice versa.<sup>44</sup>

### 3.1.2 Acceptance of PRTs

There are different approaches a PRT can take to gain acceptance from the local as well as international actors in its sphere of influence. Italy for example used an innovative method to ensure that its PRT in Herat gained a good reputation: One year in advance of the installation of the PRT in 2005, cooperation with (mostly Italian) NGOs and other actors in the region were agreed upon and generous subsidies were paid.<sup>45</sup> Other nations put less stress on local acceptance, a fact that is reflected in their soldiers' conduct on the ground.

### 3.1.3 PRTs and the Security Situation

In 2004, 850 people died in attacks.<sup>46</sup> In 2005, the number of dead increased to 1,600 including 81 US Armed Forces personnel.<sup>47</sup> The crime rate also significantly increased across the country. The PRTs, the number of which had increased to 22 by 2005, were not able to counter this trend. The security situation became especially bad in the period from December 2005 to May 2006, which was documented by the FAST early warning system.<sup>48</sup> What is especially striking is the increase in suicide attacks in 2006. While there were only two in 2003, six in 2004 and 20 in 2005, 2006 witnessed 136.<sup>49</sup> This development can be seen as a consequence of the worsening situation especially in the south and east of the country. The following *instability scale* for PRTs shows the different conflict intensities in various provinces.

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<sup>44</sup> The Dutch model, revisited. Compare online document [http://thecenturyfoundation.typepad.com/aw/2007/04/the\\_dutch\\_model.html](http://thecenturyfoundation.typepad.com/aw/2007/04/the_dutch_model.html) (downloaded 20 April 2007).

<sup>45</sup> Author's interview with William Baang, International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Mazar-e Sharif, 20 August 2005.

<sup>46</sup> "Six Taliban Killed in US-Afghan Raid on Bomb Factory: Official". Agence France Press, 24 August 2005.

<sup>47</sup> Four US Troops killed in Afghanistan. In: CBS News, 13 February 2006. Compare online document: <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/02/13/terror/main1312194.shtml> (downloaded 10 July 2006).

<sup>48</sup> FAST Update Afghanistan, May 2006, p. 3. Compare online document: [http://www.swisspeace.org/uploads/FAST/updates/FAST%20Afghanistan%201\\_2006%20final.pdf](http://www.swisspeace.org/uploads/FAST/updates/FAST%20Afghanistan%201_2006%20final.pdf) (downloaded 22 June 2006).

<sup>49</sup> Der Standard, 16 April 2007.

Instability scale for PRTs (as of autumn 2007)<sup>50</sup>

<u>Level</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Province</u>
<b>10</b>	<b>‘Open War’</b> — Evacuation of PRT personnel	
<b>9</b>	<b>‘War Zone’ (A)</b> — Situation similar to civil war; daily guerrilla attacks on local civilians, police and internationals; combat operations of OEF/ISAF against MOF on a daily basis; provision of humanitarian aid impossible	Helmand, Kandahar
<b>8</b>	<b>‘War Zone’ (B)</b> — Civil war tendencies; systematic attacks on local civilians, local police and internationals; increased combat operations of ISAF and OEF against MOF; political motivated violence; massive alienation between local population and GoA; security in the PRT complex only guaranteed by outside support; ordinary PRT-patrolling not possible; population in rural areas depends on the opium crop; PRT or NGO induced development cooperation not feasible	Uruzgan, Zabul, Khowst
<b>7</b>	<b>‘Transition from Post-Conflict into War Zone’</b> — Areas of high risk; increased attacks on local officials, police stations, international forces including PRTs; population consult Taliban Shuras for legal advice; reconstruction projects cannot be carried out without protection element; very few NGOs operating; ordinary PRT-patrols (“showing the flag”) with light armament very restricted	Kunar, Paktya, Paktika, Ghazni, Nuristan
<b>6</b>	<b>‘Instability’</b> — Targeted violence and threats of violence against civilians and members of the military; illegal road blocks; danger of hijackings; cross-country trips without a convoy very dangerous; some NGOs operating; realization of aid projects very difficult; attacks on PRTs e.g. during violent demonstrations	Nangarhar, Laghman, Farah, Faryab, Ghor, Badghis, Wardak
<b>5</b>	<b>‘Not Calm and Not Stable’</b> — Scattered attacks and threats of violence against government representatives and international forces; attacks on election candidates; increase of violent crimes; organized anti-government demonstrations can turn violent; movement only advisable in convoy; Roadside Bombs and suicide attacks possible	Parwan, Kunduz, Takhar, Badakhshan, Herat, Balkh
<b>4</b>	<b>‘Calm, but Not Stable’</b> — Hidden threats against, and intimidation of, local population; anti-GoA and anti-Western propaganda; cultivation of opium regarded as a generally tolerated source of income for the population; massive corruption	Bamyan, Jowzjan, Sar-e Pol, Samangan, Baghlan, Takhar

<sup>50</sup> Compare also: Table of conflict intensities. In: Helmand at War. The Senlis Council Security and Development Policy Group London, June 2006, p. 55. Helmand province was classified there as level eight (2006). The selected provinces above were classified by the author in 2007.



<b>3</b>	<b>'Calm'</b> — Insufficient border control leads to increasing tendency towards violent crimes in connection with illegal trade (drugs, weapons, human trafficking)	Nimruz
<b>2</b>	<b>'Calm and Stable'</b> — Minor violent crime; government controls most of the borders and key areas; civilian administration works; development projects can be realized without security problems	
<b>1</b>	<b>'Overall Stability'</b> — Governmental control of the whole area; increase of legal activities	

### 3.1.4 PRTs and Development Cooperation

In 2001, the *Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response* (SCHR) drew up directives for civil-military relations, which serve as rules for the interaction between humanitarian organizations and armed forces.<sup>51</sup> There are four SCHR main points:<sup>52</sup>

1. The implementation of direct humanitarian aid (which the SCHR defines as reconstruction measures) should, under ordinary circumstances<sup>53</sup>, be reserved for civilian aid organizations. PRTs should therefore not become active in this field.
2. Direct humanitarian aid provided by the armed forces is welcome under exceptional circumstances; e.g. in case of a deterioration of the security situation.
3. Humanitarian actors should only make use of military assistance/protection in high-risk areas (level seven upwards).
4. Only special information (e.g. concerning the security situation) can and should be exchanged between civilian and military actors.

Some NGOs, however, find that applying these guidelines to the interaction with complex civil-military teams such as the PRTs is not possible. The SCHR seemed to be aware of this in their 2001 position and therefore specified and adapted its guidelines to Afghanistan (2004 version). The following main points were laid down:

1. NGOs should independently assess the measures to be taken in crisis regions (without exchanging views with PRTs).
2. In accordance with the guidelines laid down by NGOs, the ICRC and the Red Crescent, humanitarian organizations should maintain a principled neutralist position.
3. The infrastructure of international armed forces should not be used by humanitarian organizations.
4. Sharing of information should be limited to the necessary minimum to avoid NGOs being driven into a puppet of a military strategy.

In an asymmetric conflict, or in a post-conflict region such as Afghanistan, there can be no solution based solely on either civilian or military engagements. The SCHR's efforts at a strict separation of civilian components and the armed forces can, in reality, only be broad guidelines for NGOs. Furthermore, the current positions of the SCHR do not really acknowledge the realities on the ground e.g. the various conflict intensities (see instability scale) which both the armed forces and the NGOs are exposed to. The SCHR guidelines seem to be important and necessary, but are interpreted very broadly by the civilian actors in the field.

NGOs such as *Médecins Sans Frontiers* criticize PRTs because they think that they jeopardize the independence of humanitarian aid and turn development workers into magnets for attacks. What seems clear is that although civil-military cooperation is necessary, the independence of humanitarian aid is also very important and must be respected. At the same time, cooperation

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<sup>51</sup> The SCHR, founded in 1972, is a committee of nine independent humanitarian organisations: WCC, CARE, Caritas, IFRC, ICRC, LWF, MSF, Oxfam International und SC Alliance.

<sup>52</sup> ACT International: SCHR Position Paper on Humanitarian-Military Relations in the Provision of Humanitarian Assistance (2004 version). Geneva, 18 October 2004. Compare online document: <http://www.act-intl.org/resources/manual/SCHRpositionpaper.doc> (downloaded 16 August 2006).

<sup>53</sup> According to the author, "ordinary" circumstances can be defined up to level five of the instability scale; a higher level is "exceptional" for NGOs.

and coordination are of the essence. Many of the 2,400 NGOs are also subject to growing criticism. Ramazan Bachardoust, the former Minister for Planning, argued that the NGOs absorb a large part of the subsidies and take away jobs from the local population. His plan to expel a large number of NGOs, however, cost him his job.

One of the reasons given by Germany to justify its presence as the only PRT nation in the north of Afghanistan is the necessity to protect development aid workers. Fact is that many NGOs installed themselves in the region after the installation of the PRT Kunduz. Some of these civil organizations, however, have reduced their contacts to the German PRTs to a minimum. Their arguments, highlighting a principled neutralist position, are that PRTs take away potential jobs for NGOs and create inter-blocking parallel structures in state building. Increasing violence perpetrated by MOF, local Power Brokers, or criminals additionally compounds NGO-projects. In May 2006, for example, a member of the NGO 'St John's International' was murdered in Badghis Province in the northwest of the country.

Attacks such as this give NGOs cause to criticize the PRT engagement. A connection between such incidents and the work of PRTs cannot, however, be ascertained. Since 2006, NGOs have faced a slowly, but steadily deteriorating environment also in the north of Afghanistan (up to level five and six). As the war zones outside of the major (southern) cities represent no-go areas for NGOs, they have also leveled more criticism at PRT operations in the north than in the south. The insurgency in the respective war zones had forced out most of the NGOs where even PRTs are hardly able to provide a minimum of assistance in humanitarian aid.

### 3.1.5 PRTs and Reconstruction

Contrary to widespread expectations, the population of the northern regions does not consider drug trafficking to be a major problem up to now. Many see drugs merely as a promising option—and that even more so as the country does not really offer any other economic perspectives. As a matter of course, the growing of drugs in Afghanistan has a negative impact on its neighboring countries, where the number of drug addicts is increasing. According to UNODC, there are 500,000 heroine addicts in Pakistan and 3.7 million opium consumers in Iran. Both nations are, however, primarily transit countries, since the 'real money' can obviously be made in Europe and the US. The amount of money that the Afghan peasants get is less than 1 percent of what the end user pays, but this apparently is a sufficient incentive for peasants to turn to growing drugs.

The views on how (if at all) effectively counter drug cultivation diverges considerably. One approach is to reduce demand in the industrialized countries prior the sustained fight against drug cultivation in Afghanistan. Advocates of this approach argue that the fight against opium cultivation is dangerous not only for PRTs but also for the Afghan government, jeopardizing the reconciliation and the halting reconstruction process. Resentment in the population could quickly grow and turn against all foreigners, including development aid workers and PRT personnel, since PRTs are perceived to be "agents" in counter-narcotics. The relentless fight against drug trafficking would cause more drug cartels to be formed—cartels which in turn might force farmers to grow poppy. Even if the effort to curb the production succeeded, prices would skyrocket due to the reduced supply, making the cultivation of opium even more lucrative. The result is an economic dilemma.

All these arguments are, without doubt, subject to discussion. In any event, the indecision of ICM about which strategy should be applied in counter-narcotics makes the whole issue much more difficult.

## **3.2 The Efficiency of US PRTs**

### 3.2.1 Acceptance of the PRTs in the Region

Since the beginning of OEF, the Afghan population has shown a considerably lower acceptance of the US than of the European troops. In 2007, even many of those Afghans who had suffered most under the Taliban seem to be skeptical of all international troops. In fact, from the very beginning the US invested a lot of effort into trying to win the hearts and minds of the population, but have not achieved significant breakthroughs so far.

Bad supply conditions, missing infrastructure and instability (level six) in Farah province close to the Iranian border were reasons amongst others why USA established a PRT in Farah City in September 2004. The objective was to add to a secure environment and to (re-) construct wells, schools, hospitals and government facilities. This support is designed to benefit entire villages and not just individuals as carrying out isolated reconstruction projects would only result in jealousy and conflicts.

Since May 2005, the US-led PRT of Farah has been operating under ISAF command and is perceived as being a showpiece PRT and a model for future ISAF operations.<sup>54</sup> In fact, the PRT Farah as ISAF-PRT still follows the US concept suitable for regions endangered to transit from post-conflict to a war zone (level seven). This represents the (final) level of security where PRT-induced development cooperation can provide realistically a positive impact. With ISAF and the ANA patrolling together, this PRT has also taken over various training activities for Afghan security forces. Since the governor of Farah has been put in charge of handling some development activities independently, he enjoys the benefit of CERP that had enabled the construction of three girls' schools for 1,500 students in 2005.

### 3.2.2 PRTs and the Security Situation

In the period from 2004 to 2005, in the south of Afghanistan the number of attacks increased by 20 percent, the number of suicide attacks quadrupled, and the number of remote-controlled attacks e.g. with roadside bombs—following the example of Iraq—doubled.<sup>55</sup> Until the beginning of 2006 the attacks in the southern region again increased considerably and transformed this region to a war zone (level eight upwards). It is obvious that neither ISAF nor OEF combat troops were able so far to improve security there.

### 3.2.3 PRTs and Institution Building

When US PRTs in the South were handed over to UK, Canada and Netherlands in 2006, parallel authorities have already been established under the influence of the Taliban, which even include courts of justice: The locals often turn to Taliban-dominated Shuras in order to solve conflicts.<sup>56</sup> The US PRTs in the south were neither successful in fighting corruption nor in strengthening the

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<sup>54</sup> Farah A Model for Future Operations – ISAF Commander. ISAF Public Information Office, Release 2006-048, 3 July 2006. Compare online document: [http://www.afnorth.nato.int/ISAF/Update/Press\\_Releases/newsrelease/2006/Release\\_03July06\\_048.htm](http://www.afnorth.nato.int/ISAF/Update/Press_Releases/newsrelease/2006/Release_03July06_048.htm) (downloaded 17 July 2006).

<sup>55</sup> Walter Pincus: Growing Threat Seen in Afghan Insurgency. In: Washington Post, 1 March 2006. Compare online document: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/28/AR2006022800874.html> (downloaded 1 April 2006).

<sup>56</sup> James Rupert: Corruption and Coalition Failures Spur Taliban Resurgence in Afghanistan. In: Newsday, 17 June 2006.

population's trust in state (Kabul-centered) institutions. On the other hand, it is not realistic to expect to be able to "shape" a province like Kandahar in a few years—this is a matter of generations. PRTs in war zones will not work out, no matter if they consist of US-, European or other troops.

### 3.2.4 PRTs and their Cooperation with NGOs

Due to the war zones in the south of Afghanistan, civil-military interaction seems—on a low level—to work out better than in the north. In 2006, NGOs were not able to operate in this region without military protection or even had to withdraw from the respective areas. U.N. offices that in 2003 and 2004 were still able to operate in 60 to 70 percent of Region South managed to work only in six out of 50 districts in mid 2006.<sup>57</sup>

### 3.2.5 PRTs and Reconstruction

In eastern Afghanistan and especially in Ghazni province, US PRTs increasingly pushed road construction. In this high-risk area (level seven) the effects of US reconstruction efforts can be directly felt: The 600-km-long road between Kabul and Kandahar, which was repaired for \$ 270,000,000 cut travelling time to a third. Heavy traffic and lively construction activities along the new highway indicate a certain upswing of the country. It is interesting to note that, until 2006 and particularly thanks to US PRT initiatives, more road construction was carried out in regions with higher conflict intensities in the south and the east than in post-conflict regions in the north and west.

This indicator, however, is quite misleading. Road construction is easier to carry out than strengthening the fragile authority of a weak government. Secondly, the security situation in the area made accessible through the highway has deteriorated subsequently since foreign intervention in 2001. For example, more than ten internationals were killed on the road from Kabul to Kandahar in 2005 and even local NGO workers are in danger.

Nevertheless, US PRTs like Ghazni represent important outposts, carrying out reconstruction in a region with high conflict intensity. However, the reconstruction of the Kabul-Kandahar highway is not only to be perceived in the context of state building, but also has a certain political weight referring to the US government's promotion of their "war against terror".

## **3.3 The Efficiency of German PRTs**

2007, Germany's responsibility within the framework of ISAF above all comprised being in charge of the Regional Area Command North in Mazar-e Sharif, operating PRTs in the provinces of Kunduz (PRT Kunduz) and Badakhshan (PRT Feyzabad), as well as running a field office of the PRT Kunduz in Taloqan in the province of Takhar.

### 3.3.1 Acceptance of the PRTs in the Region

According to Rangin Dadfar Spanta, Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs, German troops—especially PRTs—continued to be welcome in Afghanistan. The German PRTs, however, ought not to become involved in the fight against drugs, since this is the ANA's mission. Spanta, who had lived in Germany for decades, referred to the German troops as a liberation army. 86 percent of all Afghans still welcome the Germans troops in the country what should, according to him,

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<sup>57</sup> James Rupert, *ibidem*.

be proof enough for the quality of the German PRTs.<sup>58</sup>

Notwithstanding this, caution regarding statements of Afghan government representatives is advisable. Critics often regard the officials as having been ‘brainwashed’ by the US. It is an open secret that, since the beginning of the intervention, the US as the largest donor nation in Afghanistan has been putting pressure on Karzai’s government in order to further its own geopolitical interests. This also includes glossing over the situation on the ground and the impact of ICM in Afghanistan, so as to present both in a better light. This makes Spanta’s positive evaluation of the German commitment appear in a rather different light.

Another study points out the critical attitude of the Afghan population towards ISAF. According to a May 2006 BBC survey only 25 percent of all Afghans rate the French influence in Afghanistan positively and a mere 21 percent trust the Germans. The US alone enjoys a soaring approval rating of 72 percent.<sup>59</sup> The positive rating of the US is clearly inconsistent with reality in Afghanistan, which casts strong doubt on the quality of the British BBC survey. This huge spectrum of percentages indicates that such reports do not provide reliable information on the effectiveness of PRTs.

With regard to the growing frustration with the broken promises of Karzai’s government, which many Afghans perceive as a ‘US puppet’, it may safely be assumed that the German PRTs’ acceptance rating has decreased since the presidential elections of October 2004. The longer the population does not profit from the state building process, the more the acceptance of international institutions will diminish. The German PRTs, which operate on the provincial level, lack the possibilities to counter this development. Nonetheless, their acceptance rating is higher than that of the government in Kabul. The decisive impulses for the improvement of the government’s reputation with the population, however, must emanate from Kabul itself. At best, PRTs can only channel and/or intensify these impulses for successful state building, but they cannot create them themselves.

From the very beginning, the PRTs Kunduz and Feyzabad resorted to diplomacy in order to be accepted by local Power Brokers. This is why they were often referred to as “hostages of the Power Brokers”.<sup>60</sup> Some of them tolerate PRTs only as long as the latter do not interfere with their making profits from e.g. the cultivation of drugs. So far, there has been no way out of this ‘acceptance trap’. Civil-military instruments, such as the German PRTs, have very limited military forces and rely on local willingness to cooperate to be able to operate at all.

### 3.3.2 PRTs and the Security Situation

#### *3.3.2.1 Conflict Intensity*

Power Brokers can determine the local populations’ attitude towards PRTs with the help of their militia fighters. PRTs, due to their structure, are very limited in their ability to take military action and also increasingly take on the role of foreign diplomatic representations. On the whole, the Taliban as well as the militia forces of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Dschalaluddin Haqqani are constant elements of interference that can rely on an immense pool of potential sympathizers—a

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<sup>58</sup> Helmut Böger: Die Bundeswehr ist für uns eine Befreiungsarmee. Interview mit Afghanistans Außenminister. In: Bild am Sonntag, 14 May 2006. Compare online document: <http://www.bild.tonline.de/BTO/news/aktuell/2006/05/14/ausenminister-gruene-afghanistan/hg-interview.html> (downloaded 16 May 2006).

<sup>59</sup> Compare Urs Gehrig: Entscheidung in Afghanistan. In: Weltwoche, 24 May 2006.

<sup>60</sup> Conversation between the author and Michael Pohly. Berlin, 12 October 2004.

fact that increasingly threatens PRTs and internationals in the area of Kunduz. Al-Qaida, however, has so far only played a minor role in the north—only isolated suicide attacks can be attributed to this network. Since the autumn of 2005, suicide attacks and attempted attacks on international representatives have noticeably increased in the north. Four such attacks occurred between 2001 and 2003, ten were registered in 2004 and more than 20 were counted in 2005<sup>61</sup>, culminating in a total of 30 suicide attacks in January 2006 alone.<sup>62</sup> In this context, it must be stated that as a matter of principle such attacks do not correspond to the mindset of the Pashtuns (making up some 40 percent of the Afghan population). This gives rise to the assumption that foreign insurgents are still infiltrating the country.

There have been no major conflicts in the areas of Kunduz and Badakhshan since the end of the Taliban regime in Kabul, but especially the high number of small arms and light weapons made the region not calm and not stable (level five). Unlike the British PRT Mazar-e Sharif, the German PRTs did not have to mediate between the various competing Power Brokers. The violent demonstrations following a *Newsweek* article relating to the alleged defilement of the Koran in the US detention camp of Guantanamo also proved detrimental to PRT work. In Feyzabad, the German PRT could contribute towards de-escalation of such a demonstration.

### *3.3.2.2 Efficiency of Disarmament Programs*

The handing over of heavy weapons by Power Brokers such as Rashid Dostum and Mohammad Ata also had a positive effect on the Kunduz region. The Power Brokers adjusted to the new situation and understand very well how to play the political card. According to UN, disarmament programs in Kunduz were quite successful quantitatively. From November 2003 to the end of August 2005 a total of 63,380 members of legal militia and army units belonging to the Afghan Militia Forces were disarmed in the course of the DDR process, which was primarily financed by Japan and completed in 2006. UNDP and UNAMA were in charge. The majority of the disarmed individuals could be demobilized and assigned to reintegration programs. 98 percent of all known heavy weapons were seized. In June 2005, the follow-on program known as the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) was initiated. Its aim was to disarm some 100,000 militia fighters by 2007—fighters who came from nearly 700 illegal militia groups. Until April 2007 more than 26,000 light weapons were collected through DIAG.<sup>63</sup> It can safely be assumed that the number of illegal weapons still in circulation far exceeds the number of weapons handed over. This plays into the hands of ordinary criminals. Jobless Afghans exact road tolls or become involved in non-politically motivated hostage-taking. Criminals benefit from the fact that in reality, the disarmament programs are still only in their initial stages.

Although exact figures are not available for the Region North-East, it must be established that German PRTs played a decisive role in supporting the disarmament process merely by being present and providing their know-how to UNAMA and UNDP. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that the whole of Afghanistan is still bristling with illegal weapons.

### *3.3.2.3 Extent of Poppy Cultivation*

From 2003 to 2004, according to U.N. figures, poppy field acreage in Afghanistan rose by 64 percent to 131,000 hectares.<sup>64</sup> In March 2005, however, the US published a far higher figure:

<sup>61</sup> Emil Hsu and Beth deGrasse: Afghanistan Insurgency still a potent Force. USIP Briefing, February 2006.

<sup>62</sup> Florian Rötzer: Islamischer Staat in Waziristan? In: Telepolis, 1 March 2006.

<sup>63</sup> Compare online document: <http://www.undpanbp.org> (downloaded 22 April 2007).

<sup>64</sup> UNODC/GoA (Ministry for Counter-narcotics): Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005, November 2005, p. 4.

poppy field acreage had more than tripled from 61,000 to 206,700 hectares between 2003 and 2004.<sup>65</sup> At the same time, opium production almost doubled from 2,865 to 4,950 tons. With this, the record production of 2000 during the Taliban regime was exceeded by almost 1,300 tons. From 2001 to 2004 opium cultivation spread, despite counter-narcotic programs and increased PRT commitment, from 10 provinces to 30 provinces (out of a total of 34).<sup>66</sup>

From 2001 to 2004 opium production in the province of Badakhshan rose from 3 percent to 18 percent of the overall cultivation within the entire province.<sup>67</sup> In 2005, the U.N. ascertained that in 2004/2005 the cultivated areas had been significantly reduced by 53 percent to 7,380 hectares, down from 15,607 hectares.<sup>68</sup> Although the cultivated areas in Takhar province had increased by almost 80 percent from 762 to 1,364 hectares and in Kunduz by over 22 percent from 224 to 275 hectares, the cultivated areas of these two provinces are significantly smaller than those of Badakhshan. This means that in 2005 poppy field acreage in the German PRTs' areas of influence was significantly reduced. The figures and percentages mentioned above suggest that the German PRT presence had a positive impact to the containment of drug cultivation areas in the province of Badakhshan. However, the PRT was not directly involved in this process.

#### *3.3.2.4 Crime Rate*

In the Region North-East, the assassination of 11 Chinese road construction workers in June 2004 caused particular concern. In 2005, numerous murders were committed in this area, although reliable figures do not exist. The report issued by FAST mentions that in the German PRTs area of influence, between December 2005 and May 2006 only two actions were directed against internationals, namely the murder of three members of USAID and a demonstration in Kunduz. This indicates that the number of attacks and the amount of fighting in the German area of influence have not increased considerably since 2004, which speaks for the quality of the German presence. Even so, every week more than a dozen people are killed in the province of Kunduz due to violent crime.

#### *3.3.2.5 Degree of the Population's Awareness of the rule of law*

Up to now, Power Brokers and drug barons do not appear to force the farmers to cultivate drugs. Obviously many farmers take the decision themselves in order to ensure that their families can survive. Moreover, the drug economy is not based on individual marginalized or criminalized players, but is part of society. In the same way as businessmen simultaneously deal with drugs, wheat, car tires and electrical equipment, many small farmers cultivate poppy in addition to wheat and barley, as a means of survival. But state actors also benefit from the drug economy. Even members of the government are time and again suspected of being involved in this type of business.

The majority of the Afghan population perceives the government in Kabul, which in January 2002 enacted a general ban on drug cultivation, as an alien—if not outright hostile—element. In Kunduz, the government is not considered to be an authoritative body and is, in the eyes of the population and many decision-makers, not entitled to decide what is legal and what is illegal.

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<sup>65</sup> Compare US State Department: Cultivation of opium in Afghanistan more than trebled in 2004. Online document: <http://de.news.yahoo.com/050305/286/4g02a.html> (downloaded 26 March 2005).

<sup>66</sup> Islamic State of Afghanistan: Selected Issues and Statistical Appendix. International Monetary Fund, February 2005. IMF Country Nr. 05/34. Compare online document: [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/cr0534.pdf](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/cr0534.pdf) (downloaded 20 February 2006).

<sup>67</sup> Compare Stelzenmüller.

<sup>68</sup> UNODC Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005, p. 4.



Religious dignitaries or village elders are most likely to instill an awareness of wrongdoing by referring to Islam and tribal traditions. Since the expulsion of the Taliban, however, it is particularly these local elites who have called for the cultivation of drugs in order to make money for themselves. The German PRTs have had little success in influencing the population's awareness of wrongdoing (or lack of it) with regard to drug trafficking and the possession of firearms.

#### Changes to the Region's Stability through PRTs?

Little reliable data exists on the improvement of the security situation in the area of influence of PRT Kunduz. In 2004, the situation there was characterized by the military as 'calm but not stable'.<sup>69</sup> In 2006, the security situation in the region of Kunduz was defined as being 'not calm and not stable' (level five). The fact that German special operations forces are to be deployed into the region of Kunduz also gives an additional clue that the situation has deteriorated.<sup>70</sup> Vice versa, one could argue that even though the German PRTs have not improved the situation in the past three years they have still played an important role in not letting the situation get out of hand since 2003. Since the establishment of the German PRTs no NGOs or enterprises have withdrawn for security reasons—with the exception of Doctors without Borders, which left Afghanistan altogether after four team members were killed in the UK PRT areas of influence in June 2004. All in all, the number of enterprises and NGOs has risen steadily since 2003, which clearly speaks in favor of the German PRTs.

The function of PRTs as bridgeheads of state authority in the provinces illustrates the necessity to establish professional lobbying capacities within PRTs. According to a statement by the governor of the province of Kunduz, Mohammad Omar, "without German and the other national forces of ISAF the chaos of the eighties and nineties would still dominate in Afghanistan". Omar pointed out that the German PRTs' activities in Kunduz were absolutely essential. No fighting was going on between Power Brokers in his area, in contrast to other parts of northern Afghanistan. Even so, the people, officially and unofficially, were still governed by the Mujahedeen, as the example of the former Minister of Defense, Marshal Muhammad Fahim illustrates.<sup>71</sup> Omar considers communicating with Kabul to be the critical factor for the central government to gain authority in the provinces—this is where the diplomatic PRT component comes into its own.

As a whole, by the beginning of 2007, the stability situation in Afghanistan became significantly worse—poppy field acreage remained unchanged and the slow, but continuous disarmament process was countered by the considerable increase in security-relevant incidents. Nevertheless, this region still contrasts positively with the overall security situation in Afghanistan, a fact which points towards the tight rein kept by local actors, working "in harmony" with the German PRTs.

A long-term commitment of German PRTs to this region still makes sense, and is essential, in order for the PRTs' capabilities to produce results. The German PRT contribution to stability and reconstruction is recognized and often honored at provincial level, but this does not imply an automatic protection from attacks.

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<sup>69</sup> Fact Finding Mission of the Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management in Kunduz province, October 2004.

<sup>70</sup> *Berliner Morgenpost* newspaper, 25 May 2005.

<sup>71</sup> Author's interview of the governor of the province of Kunduz, Mohammad Omar. Kunduz, 25 October 2004.

### 3.3.3 PRTs and Institution Building

#### 3.3.3.1 *Increased Influence of the Central Government in the Provinces?*

The main goals of the Bonn Agreement and the Afghanistan Compact<sup>72</sup> are the restoration of national unity, Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the reconciliation of the various ethnic groups, the implementation of democratic structures and functioning institutions, as well as an economic upswing. All these are classic goals of institution building.

The German PRTs were able to assist the Afghan government in putting the objectives into practice insofar as specialists of the PRTs had regular talks with the respective administrative authorities. It is difficult to assess, however, in how far this actually improved the quality and loyalty of regional administrations towards Kabul. This awareness-building process is a central aspect with regard to the durability of PRT efforts that, however, are difficult to measure. Yet, it is possible that the German PRTs—contrary to the principle of *local ownership*—did “too much” for institution building: Since their establishment, the PRTs themselves developed into a significant economic and political factor for the entire region. In doing so, they increasingly replaced the weak government structures in the provinces. The reconstruction and functioning of Afghan institutions might even have been negatively affected. Therefore, a limitation of PRT activities has to be considered.<sup>73</sup>

2007, a two or three year time limit is no longer an option, as a minimum of ten year extension of the PRT presence is realistic. Independent of any time limitation, it seems a good idea, after certain preconditions have been met, to transform PRTs into purely Afghan institutions. This might increase the pressure to eventually create self-supporting national institutions in the provinces. The integration of influential stakeholders from Kunduz, such as, for instance, Mohammad Daud, into the government seems to have at least intensified the political axis Kabul-Kunduz. In order to make this possible, the PRT Kunduz was active on the diplomatic level. As long as Karzai succeeds in keeping Daud in the government, state influence is expected to grow in this region “by the grace” of Daud.

#### 3.3.3.2 *Significance of PRTs in the Elections of 2004 and 2005*

The German PRT activities of 2004 and 2005 were centered on preparing and supporting the presidential, parliamentary and provincial elections in Afghanistan. The election process was supported by controlling the registration offices and by operational information measures, such as TV spots, radio programs, posters, leaflets and newspapers, as well as through cooperation with UNAMA. Moreover, ISAF also provided reinforcements for the provinces until the conclusion of the elections. In the province of Badakhshan alone by the end of July 2004, some 175,000 women and 180,000 men had registered for the presidential election. In 2004 almost 1.4 million (out of 1.5 million) voters registered<sup>74</sup> in the four northeastern provinces that belong to the PRTs Kunduz and Feyzabad areas of responsibility—a huge achievement in view of the repeated attacks on registration offices. In this manner, the PRT presence in the provinces was an essential factor that made it possible for the elections to be held.

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<sup>72</sup> This framework is the result of the London Conference on Afghanistan from 31 January to 1 February 2006 and includes a roadmap to coordinate and consolidate the Afghan state building process until 2010.

<sup>73</sup> Author's interview with Diego Osorio, CIMIC Coordinator of UNAMA. Kabul, 26 October 2004.

<sup>74</sup> Bundeswehr im Einsatz: Das ISAF Provincial Reconstruction Team Feyzabad. Berlin, 13 June 2006. Compare online document: <http://www.einsatz.bundeswehr.de/C1256F1D0022A5C2/vwContentByKey/W26BUJR5821INFODE> (downloaded 19 July 2006).

### 3.3.4 PRTs and Development Cooperation

#### *3.3.4.1 Aspects of Development Aid Policy*

The objective of the German PRTs is, as the German Parliament's mandate puts it, "by way of civilian means to strengthen the bases for economic development, regional cooperation and the exercise of state authority required for stable development."<sup>75</sup> The deployment of armed units is aimed at creating a secure environment suitable for reconstruction and the stabilization of the region. The efforts of the Germans emphasize political, economic and social reconstruction. Given this aim, the political component of development aid plays a central role, which is reflected in the manifold measures linked to development aid policy, which are taken in coordination with the Afghan partners, UNAMA and the other international donors.

It is the task of the German Armed Forces to provide security while German and local development aid organizations carry out reconstruction work independently. The Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (MECD), being in charge of the development aid policy pillar, coordinates reconstruction measures and awards projects to executive implementation partners such as the *Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ), the *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau* (KfW) or the *Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst* (DED). The Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development's fundamental principle is the separation of responsibilities while simultaneously sharing regional responsibility regarding the cooperation with German and Afghan partners. By contrast, civilian personnel of US PRTs are under military command. Such a situation is not acceptable for the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development as a matter of principle, as it considers development aid cooperation as an independent component: the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development would not have sent a single civilian reconstruction aid worker to Kunduz if the US PRT concept had prevailed.<sup>76</sup>

The civilian pillar of PRT commitment has the task of

- strengthening the influence of the central government,
- establishing and strengthening politico-administrative as well as constitutional structures,
- strengthening the civilian society and
- being in charge of setting up the Afghan police.

The development aid involvement of the German Ministry for Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development in the areas of Kunduz and Feyzabad comprises

- promoting the administration and the rule of law,
- promoting the participation of women in all areas of reconstruction,
- programs of development-oriented emergency aid,
- long-term investments into the economic and social infrastructure (road construction and drinking water projects in Kunduz),
- the creation of jobs,

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<sup>75</sup> Compare German Bundestag decision on the extension of the operation in Afghanistan, September 2005, online document: <http://www.uni-kassel.de/fb5/frieden/regionen/Afghanistan/bt-mandat2005.pdf> (downloaded 13 February 2006).

<sup>76</sup> Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul in: Berliner Zeitung, 15 May 2004. Compare online document: <http://www.bmz.de/de/presse/reden/ministerin/rede20040515.html> (downloaded 8 March 2006).

- promoting private investments, and
- projects for demobilized soldiers and returning refugees to establish a livelihood.

The guiding principle is the inclusion of all measures of the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development in the NDS, which was agreed upon between the Afghan government and international donors. The importance of development-political activities within the framework of German PRTs is reflected in the number of German executive organizations and NGOs present on the ground. NGOs that are actively involved in development aid cooperation with PRTs in the area of Kunduz are in particular the *Arbeitsgruppe Entwicklung und Fachkräfte* (AGEF), the *German Agro Action* (GAA) and the aid organization *Katachel*.

#### 3.3.4.2 On the Problem of Humanitarian Aid Provided by the Armed Forces

In September 2005, the GAA demanded a new PRT concept that clearly delimits the role of the armed forces from that of civilian reconstruction aid. In 2005, the GAA, together with 15 international and some 500 Afghan collaborators, carried out projects amounting to some € 6,000,000 in the north and east of Afghanistan. Within the framework of the National Solidarity Program, it supports the installation of local councils and the construction of essential infrastructure (such as bridges and wells) in the countryside. Moreover, within the framework of the DDR program it helps former fighters who are willing to establish for themselves a new livelihood in the field of agriculture. Basically, the GAA welcomes the German Armed Forces' employment in Afghanistan. Whilst the British PRT is held in high esteem by the GAA in Mazar-e Sharif, the German PRTs are harshly criticized, especially by the GAA.<sup>77</sup> The points addressed by its Secretary General can be seen as representative of the NGOs' criticism of PRTs:

- The lines separating the armed forces and civilian helpers are becoming increasingly blurred. This is due to the fact that, for instance, soldiers of the German Armed Forces and of other international armed forces in Afghanistan use the same civilian off-road vehicles as are used by international aid organizations. The security of NGO's, however, depends on their being distinguishable from the armed forces. As the distinction between civilian and military actors is becoming increasingly difficult, NGOs are becoming potential targets for those forces, which want to destabilize the country.
- Another problem is that the key personnel of the German PRTs rotates every four to six months—not even CIMIC officers serve much longer. The result is that there is not enough continuity for long-term aid. “The German Armed Forces should therefore concentrate on their core tasks and leave development aid to development aid workers. What Afghanistan really needs is protection and security, not Samaritans in uniform“, as the GAA brought it to the point.<sup>78</sup>
- The Afghanistan expert of *Caritas International*, Thorsten Hinz, regards (military driven) CIMIC “very, very critically”. According to him, the German PRT integrates civilian aid organizations into “military occupation measures”. This mingling of humanitarian and military aid is the reason that the Afghan population differentiates less and less between international armed forces and international aid organizations. This has already resulted in

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<sup>77</sup> Author's interview of Nick Boenisch, project coordinator of *German Agro Action*, in the province Sar-e Pol. Sar-e Pol City, 24 August 2005.

<sup>78</sup> Secretary General of GAA, Hans-Joachim Preuß, in a press release, 27 September 2005. Compare online document: <http://www.presseportal.de/print.htm?nr=729861> (downloaded 20 March 2006).

an appeal by the Taliban directed against international personnel. The direct exploitation of humanitarian concerns by the armed forces continues to rile aid organizations.

Some of these arguments fail to grasp as PRTs are concerned. It is not simply a question of improving the working conditions of NGOs, much rather government authority must be promoted, privatized violence curbed, institutions established, militia fighters disarmed and drugs combated. In a society accustomed to violence, these goals cannot be achieved without the backing of international forces.

### 3.3.5 PRTs and Reconstruction

#### *3.3.5.1 The Economic Dimension of PRTs*

Germany's strong military presence must also be rated in the context of economic interests. In the past years, the German government pushed through privileged investment conditions for German enterprises. The passing of an Afghan Investment Act initiated by the GTZ was followed in 2004 by the signing of a German-Afghan Investment Promotion Treaty, which grants German investors in the reconstruction of Afghanistan "preferential treatment as citizens". Berlin again offers export credit guarantees (known as Hermes Loans) and, beyond this, provides technical help to Kabul for the purpose of establishing private enterprise structures. Since July 2002, a Special Envoy for Economic Affairs represents the German government to the Afghan government. Afghanistan's Minister for Reconstruction, Amin Farhang, spent several decades in Germany and was temporarily supported by the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst. Most of the German-Afghan economic co-operation became operational only after the beginning of the German PRT involvement; therefore, it appears that the PRTs also paved the way for reconstruction.

#### *3.3.5.2 Strengthening Regional Infrastructure*

Since the installation of the PRT in Kunduz in 2003 dozens of aid organizations and enterprises have settled in the region. A large barracks, which for the time being houses the PRT and is intended for later use by the ANA, was built in the proximity of Kunduz airport under the guidance of the PRT. Among others, the following projects have been carried out in the region since the PRT Kunduz was set up:

Projects of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA):<sup>79</sup>

- By 2005 a total of 13 school wells were built and two schools renovated, financed by the MoFA's small-scale project plan
- In the city of Taloqan a school for 1,800 pupils was opened, which had been completely refurbished by *Katachel* using MoFA funds. Shortly before, the PRT opened a school for 2,000 children near Taloqan, which had been built with the help of the Aga Khan Foundation and funds provided by the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. Within four weeks, school space for a total of 8,000 students was created. There were plans to create enough school space to accommodate 25,000 students by winter 2004/05. In the MoFA's opinion, these measures were to have a large impact on the population.

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<sup>79</sup> Winfried Nachtwei: Auf verlorenem Posten in Kunduz und Feyzabad? Press release, Berlin, 23 September 2004.

Projects of the Ministry of Defense (MoD):<sup>80</sup>

- By November 2005, a total of €3,700,000 was spent on 331 CIMIC projects initiated by German PRTs in order to build police headquarters, schools, kindergartens and outpatients' departments.

Projects of the Ministry of the Interior (MoI):<sup>81</sup>

- The MoI has, through its operational elements and with the help of the *Bundesanstalt Technisches Hilfswerk* (THW), rendered humanitarian emergency and reconstruction aid. Since 2002, the THW has spent more than €19,000,000 on humanitarian aid in Afghanistan, thereby carrying out a total of 42 projects on behalf of Germany, The Netherlands, UK and Norway. The projects were primarily conversions of old and construction of new facilities.
- In continuation of the long-standing tradition of German-Afghan cooperation in the field of law enforcement, the majority of the projects were centered on the Afghan Ministry of the Interior as well as the police and the Police Academy in Kabul. Since 2003, the THW has been running a timber yard there, along with a training centre. The end of 2004 saw a number of police stations and a malaria stations in the Kunduz area completed.

Projects of the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (MECD):

- Since 2003, the GTZ together with the *Aga Khan Development Network* in Badakhshan has been running a project to improve the food situation and to promote regional cooperation and stability. The development of alternative ways of income is considered as a strategic contribution to the fight against drugs.
- The PRT cooperates in setting up a drinking water network in Kunduz, which is intended to supply 90 percent of all households.
- On behalf of the MECD, the GTZ supports an alternative development project in five districts of the province of Badakhshan (road construction, irrigation, energy supply, medical facilities, schools and improvement of legal agricultural and non-agricultural ways of income.)
- The MECD provided €2,000,000 for the reconstruction of a sugar factory in the province of Baghlan, creating dozens of jobs.

NGO projects:<sup>82</sup>

- By the beginning of March 2004, NGOs carried out a total of 2,262 individual projects in the region of Kunduz, 557 of which were related to health and the improvement of living conditions, 286 to education and 315 to agriculture. 705 of the individual projects were conducted in the province of Badakhshan and 434 in the province of Kunduz.

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<sup>80</sup> Andreas Heinemann-Grüder and Diana Burghardt: Zivil-militärische Zusammenarbeit. Der Wiederaufbau von Nachkriegsgesellschaften. In: Reader Sicherheitspolitik, Ergänzungslieferung 02/06, pp. 111 f.

<sup>81</sup> International and Multi-lateral Activities of the Ministry of the Interior. In: MoI web page as of 16 February 2005. Compare online document: [http://www.bmi.bund.de/nn\\_163598/Internet/Content/Themen/EuropaInternationales/DatenundFakten/Internationales\\_und\\_Multinationales\\_Engagement\\_des\\_BMI.html](http://www.bmi.bund.de/nn_163598/Internet/Content/Themen/EuropaInternationales/DatenundFakten/Internationales_und_Multinationales_Engagement_des_BMI.html) (downloaded 16 May 2006).

<sup>82</sup> Nachtwei, 23 September 2004 ibidem.

Projects to reconstruct the Afghan traffic system:

- Above all in the east and south of Afghanistan US PRTs have been much more active in road construction than other PRT nations. From the German side, e.g. the Frankfurt-based company *H.P. Gauff* was contracted to carry out and supervise the road construction measures in Kunduz in 2004. In Kabul, Gauff had already been awarded a similar contract in 2002. Today, the most important streets in and roads around Kunduz are paved and the structural work of 2004 is finished. A Chinese enterprise was contracted to pave the main road from Kunduz to the province of Baghlan.
- The country's 44 airports and airfields were heavily damaged in the course of the US air strikes of 2001. The US, the EU and other donor nations financed Reconstruction of the most important airports. The PRTs in Herat and Farah served as logistic bases during the establishment of Shindand airbase in the province of Herat in 2004/05. PRT Kunduz supported the reconstruction of the Kunduz airport.

These projects cannot be traced back entirely and directly to the PRT presence in Kunduz. The fact, however, is that the number of projects in the respective provinces rose sharply when the US installed the PRT in Kunduz, which was subsequently taken over by Germany. The infrastructure projects described can also not be seen in direct connection with the PRTs. Nevertheless, the expansion of projects by civilian organizations and enterprises strikingly occurred at the same time as the expansion of the German PRTs. In the areas of Kunduz and Feyzabad, the German PRTs can be considered as having paved the way for enterprises and NGOs, thereby facilitating numerous projects that would otherwise not have been carried out. In this manner, the German PRTs facilitated or even enabled the establishment of capacities in the region.

### *3.3.5.3 Providing Alternatives to the Drug Economy?*

The German PRTs are, personnel-wise as well as material-wise, unable to fight the drug economy directly. Nor do they have the mandate to do so. Indirectly, however, the drug economy is to be curbed by establishing a loyal and well-trained police force—a gigantic enterprise in which Germany plays an essential part. Running information campaigns to create a sense of wrongdoing in the population is the other option to get people out of the drug dilemma. In this regard, PRTs act as provincial bases and are, therefore, involved in achieving both objectives.

Reality in Afghanistan in 2007 shows that German efforts to create alternatives to the drug economy have, so far, borne little fruit: even if such projects have had their effects here and there—for the majority of the farmers, who have been growing poppy forever, cultivating drugs remains the only means to, more or less, ensure their families' survival. The German PRTs should be given more time and be pressured less so that their concept is able to develop full effect within the complex Afghan structures.

## **3.4 The Efficiency of UK PRTs**

Until the beginning of 2006, the British area of responsibility encompassed the Region North with the provinces Balkh (PRT Mazar-e Sharif), Faryab (PRT Meymaneh), Jowzjan (PRT-Safehouse Shebergan), Sar-e Pol (PRT-Safehouse Sar-e Pol) and Samangan (PRT-Safehouse Aybak).

### 3.4.1 Acceptance of PRTs in the Region

In the field, the British PRTs showed an openly relaxed attitude. Drinking tea on a regular basis with the provincial governors seems essential for creating trust and acceptance among the population. In front of the 2005 elections, British Ghurkhas patrolled casually through the streets of Mazar-e Sharif in midday temperatures of 40° Celsius, wearing berets and carrying pistols.<sup>83</sup> The British approach—proceeding with “Afghan time”, self-confident manner, active patrols even in the most remote regions, diplomatic skill vis-à-vis the Power Brokers, less bureaucracy and the readiness to call for deterrents (such as close air support) in critical situations—ensured a positive reputation with the population. Especially the population of Mazar-e Sharif views the PRTs positively, while the population in the countryside perceives the PRTs partly as “invaders” (according to an Afghan NGO representative).<sup>84</sup>

The PRTs were instructed not to take measures against the drug economy, as all attempts at using force would have resulted in instability. This non-intervention may have helped the PRTs’ acceptance; it is, however, a questionable method of winning the hearts of Power Brokers and poppy farmers, especially as Great Britain is responsible for counter-narcotics within the framework of SSR. British PRTs have therefore become dependent to a certain extent on local Power Brokers.

The governor of Sar-e Pol, Said Iqbal Muneeb, was the only interviewee (out of around 100 the author interviewed in the region in summer 2005) to name two informal Power Brokers of the province, Kamal Khan and Alhaj Pajenda. The fear these two commanders instilled in people was palpable in the conversations with local interviewees in the region. The installation of a governor new to the province, such as in Sar-e Pol, had a positive effect: up to now he does not seem to be involved in the power play of the provincial drug economy. The populations’ great fear of the Power Brokers has not changed, however. This is why PRTs are especially required to weaken the position of the Power Brokers on the long run.<sup>85</sup>

### 3.4.2 PRTs and the Security Situation

#### *3.4.2.1 Conflict Intensity*

In October 2003 the PRT Mazar-e Sharif, UNAMA and the British embassy managed to end the conflicts between the Power Brokers Dostum and Ata in the provinces Balkh and Jowzjan. However, fighting resumed a short time later, to be stopped again in April 2004—again with international help. The province Sar-e Pol witnessed the last clashes in spring 2004 (district of Kuhistanat), after the PRT increased its presence in this remote region and UNAMA had become active diplomatically. The number of skirmishes in the British area of responsibility has demonstrably decreased since the beginning of the PRT engagement in 2003. Since spring 2004, it has become obvious that the PRTs’ and UNAMA’s diplomatic skills managed to prevent major fighting from breaking out within the regional power system in northern Afghanistan. Conflict intensity in the region has also been reduced through combined patrols of ANA and UK PRTs.

In any case, PRTs must be prepared for attacks. This was proved by attacks carried out by

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<sup>83</sup> Observations by the author in the provinces Sar-e Pol and Balkh in August and September 2005.

<sup>84</sup> Author’s interview of Wahidullah Rahimi, representative of the NGO *Save the Children UK*. Mazar-e Sharif, 17 August 2005.

<sup>85</sup> Author’s interview of Said Iqbal Muneeb, governor of the province Sar-e Pol. Sar-e Pol City, 16 August and 21 September 2005.



demonstrators of unknown background on the Norwegian (formerly British) PRT in Meymaneh in Faryab province in February 2006.<sup>86</sup> In the course of demonstrations against the Mohammed caricatures in a Danish newspaper the PRT was attacked with stones and grenades, with ISAF and OEF support for the threatened PRT taking a long time to materialize. This means that quicker, more decisive and decentralized intervention forces which, in an emergency, can immediately help PRTs are of the essence. Currently ISAF depends on the goodwill of the US (“B-52 Factor”), which, up to now, has reliably supported ISAF and the PRTs in critical situations.

#### *3.4.2.2 Effectiveness of Disarmament Programs*

Some PRT representatives believed that the security situation in the north has improved during the UK PRT engagement especially because of DDR and DIAG.<sup>87</sup> The PRT Mazar-e Sharif can lay claim not only to having brought Power Brokers such as Dostum and Ata to cease fighting but also to join DDR and DIAG to a certain extent. At the same time there remains no doubt that many (new) weapons were retained by Power Brokers, tribes, and families. One reason therefore is the deteriorating security situation in the southern provinces: this appears to have an influence on to stockpile usable weapons in case of a return of the Taliban in the north like at the end of the 1990`s. Official Afghan representatives therefore encourage the PRTs to remain “until the last illegal weapon has been handed in”.<sup>88</sup>

Many Power Brokers are very good at exploiting the disarmament programs for their own purposes. For example, Ali Akbar Qasimi, a representative of the ethnic Hazara-party Hezb-i-Wahdat handed over some—fairly modern—weapons to the US-PRT Ghazni, and organized a public fête in the city to celebrate this “good deed”. Through this, he could improve his standing with the indigenous population. Of course, Qasimi had not fully disarmed, but the PRT played along. Dostum in the north chose a similar approach when it came to the official disarmament of his former commanders for the DIAG program in February 2006. He organized something akin to an “act of state” in his hometown of Shebergan (within the UK PRTs’ area of responsibility), furthering order to win over the population and to stress his informal leading role as a ruler of northern Afghanistan.<sup>89</sup> Government representatives and PRTs have to accept such actions. In fact, the PRTs fluctuate “once as supporters and protectors of a rudimentary state power, once swaying between disarmament and appeasement of the real powerbrokers such as Qasimi or Dostum”.<sup>90</sup>

Despite the efforts of Power Brokers to force the PRTs into a net of responsibilities and dependencies, the PRTs—no matter of which nation—seem competent points of contact for the international actors tasked with disarmament. They are closer to the regions which are to be disarmed and also profit from the DIAG program: the PRT Mazar-e Sharif is happy “if there is something to do” to justify its existence.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, the delicate task of DIAG teams to disarm remote villages without protection and compensation payments in coordination with the

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<sup>86</sup> NZZ, 8 February 2006, p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> Author’s interview of a Swedish PRT officer. Sar-e Pol, 7 September 2005.

<sup>88</sup> Author’s interview with Abdul Rab, Deputy Chief of Justice of the province Sar-e Pol. Sar-e Pol City, 8 September 2005.

<sup>89</sup> General Dostum supports Disbandment of illegal armed groups. UNAMA, 21 February 2006. Compare online document: <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/c7ca0eaf6c79faae852567af003c69ca/a692e4e27c571136c125711c004d5a23?OpenDocument> (downloaded 28 July 2006).

<sup>90</sup> Compare Stelzenmüller.

<sup>91</sup> Author’s interview with Adam Behm, DIAG Team Leader in the region north. Mazar-e Sharif, 18 August 2005.

local commanders requires PRTs support. These therefore represent important bases to focus the efforts of UNAMA and of *Afghanistan's New Beginnings Program* in the disarmament of the provinces.

#### *3.4.2.3 Extent of Poppy Field Acreage*

In 2004 and 2005, the province Sar-e Pol was one focus of afghan drug cultivation. One of the reasons was the province's remoteness, with the district Gusfandi, Sangcharak and Sayyad especially affected.<sup>92</sup> PRT-MOT teams are able to patrol these remote areas only at irregular intervals. In 2004, poppy field acreage in Sar-e Pol was between 1,000 and 2,500 hectares.<sup>93</sup> Sar-e Pol is therefore one of the five provinces where poppy field acreage has increased since 2004.<sup>94</sup> The UNODC data that primarily rely on satellite pictures support the statements on increased cultivation in the previously mentioned districts of Sar-e Pol. Drug cultivation also significantly increased in the province Balkh in 2005.<sup>95</sup> Between 2005 and 2006, the British PRTs were not capable of limiting drug cultivation in their area of influence.

#### *3.4.2.4 Crime Rate*

The security situation for internationals has consequently been improved in the area of the UK PRTs from 2003 until the end of 2005. Since then, the situation deteriorated slowly. A Hazara parliamentarian, two Swedish and a British soldier were murdered. During the Sar-e Pol electoral counting procedure 2005, the UK PRT including the Swedish MOT teams could not prevent an (illegal) demonstration of power by Alhaj Pajenda (meanwhile elected to parliament) and ten bodyguards who managed to gain access to the Sar-e Pol counting hall without being checked. The PRT, however, was not directly responsible for guarding the vote counting process. The local police, responsible for guarding the count, seemed powerless vis-à-vis the Sar-e Pol Power Brokers or collaborated with them. In reality, without reinforcements from Kabul, the PRT, which had 20 personnel in the province Sar-e Pol, could not have done anything either.

In the province Sar-e Pol Kamal Khan still produces oil illegally—therefore without paying taxes. The PRTs did not intervene and could not change the individual (and unlegislated) sphere of action of various provincial Power Brokers.

#### *3.4.2.5 Degree of the Population's Awareness of the Rule of Law*

In the provinces with a British area of influence, the attitude of the population and of local decision makers towards the cultivation of poppy is similar—both the small farmer and the police commanders profit from it. Comparatively speaking, Sar-e Pol belongs to the provinces with the largest increase in drug cultivation. District governors officially know nothing of this, and the PRTs can only do monitoring. The district governor of Sangcharak, a Mullah, declared that he wanted to hack off both his hands if drugs were cultivated in his region.<sup>96</sup> It has to be strongly assumed that the Mullah is part of a thriving civil war economy, from which the

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<sup>92</sup> Author's interview with Colonel Mohammad Nader Fahimi, Chief of Police of Sar-e Pol. Sar-e Pol City, 8 September 2005.

<sup>93</sup> UNODC Kabul and Vienna/ Government of Afghanistan – Counter Narcotics Directorate (CDN), Kabul: Afghanistan Opium Survey 2004, November 2004, p. 13.

<sup>94</sup> UNODC Kabul and Vienna/ Government of Afghanistan – Counter Narcotics Directorate (CDN), Kabul: Afghanistan Opium Survey, March 2005, p. 10.

<sup>95</sup> UNODC Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005, p. 4.

<sup>96</sup> Conversation between the author and Mullah Mohammad Latif, District Governor of Sangcharak, Province Sar-e Pol, 10 September 2005.

population also profits. The farmers regard the cultivation of drugs as a “normal” and legitimate business, which is tolerated by the regional political system—it even represents a factor of stability for the province. In the short time, there is no way for PRTs to expel the drug economy.

#### *3.4.2.6 Changes to the Region’s Stability through PRTs?*

In Sar-e Pol province, the population regards the local police as an “enemy of stability”. The reason for this is especially that the police are regarded as the henchmen of the Power Brokers.<sup>97</sup> The PRT strives for close cooperation with the police and tries to fathom the complex networks of the Power Brokers and to shed some light on them. The police, however, do not do their job as requested and are regarded by the population of Sar-e Pol rather as an enemy than as an ally. Without an increase in the salary, as well as the quality of police training, rampant corruption will continue.<sup>98</sup>

Since 2004, there has been a gradual improvement of security in Sar-e Pol (level four). Some regional Power Brokers joined DDR to a certain extent.<sup>99</sup> One reason for the improvement of the political climate is also that provincial Power Brokers such as Kamal Khan and Alhaj Pajenda had less power in 2005 than in the previous years.<sup>100</sup> The Sar-e Pol chief of police even declared (albeit not very believably) that 80 percent of Power Brokers had become cooperative since 2004.<sup>101</sup> Until 2004, especially remote areas such as the districts Balkhab and Gusfandi still witnessed regular battles between Dostum and Ata supporters. The security situation in the district Gusfandi—a newly district created in 2004 expressly to curb the conflict between the two arch enemies—improved considerably in 2005—as it did in the rest of the province.<sup>102</sup>

Between 2003 and 2005 the efforts by UNAMA and the PRTs—especially the mediation between Dostum and Ata—also markedly improved the security situation in the entire Region North. 2006, however, the north also witnessed the negative influence of increased attacks by Taliban and other groups in south Afghanistan. The situation in the north in mid-2007 can be classified as level five—‘not calm and not stable’ (2005 it was level four, ‘calm, but not stable’).

### 3.4.3 PRTs and Institution Building

#### *3.4.3.1 Increased Influence of the Central Government in the Provinces?*

The efforts by OEF, ISAF and the Afghan government focus on the strategy of including northern Power Brokers such as Dostum, Ata, Rabbani or “moderate” Taliban in the political dialogue—since the beginning of 2006 these actors have met in the new parliament. It must, however, be doubted, whether this increases the actors’ sense of responsibility vis-à-vis state building. Many were and still are involved in criminal activities, which the ICM will find very difficult to counteract.

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<sup>97</sup> Wahidullah Rahimi.

<sup>98</sup> Author’s interview with Abdul Rab, Deputy Chief of Justice Department of the province Sar-e Pol, Sar-e Pol City, 8 September 2005.

<sup>99</sup> Author’s interview with Said Ikramuddin, District Governor of Sayyad, province Sar-e Pol, Sayyad City, 7 September 2005.

<sup>100</sup> Author’s interview with Said Iqbal Muneeb, Governor of the Province Sar-e Pol. Sar-e Pol City, 16 August and 21 September 2005.

<sup>101</sup> Author’s interview with Colonel Mohammad Nader Fahimi, Chief of Police of the Province Sar-e Pol, Sar-e Pol City, 7 September 2005.

<sup>102</sup> Observation of the author in the district Gusfandi and assessment of the security situation by the Swedish MOT of the PRT Mazar-e Sharif in the province Sar-e Pol in August 2005.

Kabul regularly appoints new government representatives who often “do not fit the local powerbrokers’ plans”. Such changes often lead to unrest. Here the PRT fulfils an important mediation function in its diplomatic role to strengthen the authority of the government - a role in which the British PRT proved itself. When a police commander from Kandahar was appointed to Mazar-e Sharif and accused Power Broker Ata Mohammad of drug smuggling, the latter had the chief of police’s house surrounded. The PRT acted as a mediator and was able to reach a solution, which managed to safeguard the interests of Kabul, as well as of the other parties involved: The new chief of police remained on duty and stayed for a year, Ata was made governor of the province Balkh and no longer laid claim to the role of provincial military commander.

In September 2005, a representative of the Hazara who had already been elected to parliament was murdered in Mazar-e Sharif. This led to a massive demonstration and a complete blockade of the city, as the Hazara regarded the Tadjik governor Ata as being responsible for the murder. The PRT showed presence, but did not actively intervene in the conflict. As a reserve, the British PRT could have fallen back on military capacities of OEF, which, however, turned out to be unnecessary. The blockade was broken off after a week, without violent clashes.

As a whole, a certain strengthening of governmental structures can be stated in the British area of influence. As an example, Said Iqbal Muneeb, the governor of Sar-e Pol who was appointed at the beginning of 2005, does not seem to be part of the regional “powerplay” and cooperates with the PRT. With the arrival of Muneeb, the political interaction between Kabul and this province, as well as between the province and the districts, increased. For him, the PRT represents an important factor in the achievement of progress in public administration.<sup>103</sup> The new circumstances could in future help the reconstruction of Sar-e Pol—under the previous governor, the PRT could not initiate any public reconstruction projects.

#### 3.4.3.2 Relevance of the PRTs during the 2004 and 2005 Elections

On 17 September 2005, a day before the parliamentary and provincial elections a violent demonstration, which had been paid for by Kamal Khan (who had previously been barred from the elections) took place in Sar-e Pol City in front of the building of the *United Nations Office for Project Services* (UNOPS). The Swedish PRT, with a MOT-team consisting of seven members, had been augmented by a group of British Gurkhas and watched from the sidelines.<sup>104</sup> Active intervention by the PRT in the demonstration was not necessary. It was dispersed by the ANA and low-level overflights by F-16 fighter jets.<sup>105</sup> The PRT acted as the “force [behind the scenes] in the back” and seemed to have the situation under control. It consciously acted in the sense of *Afghan Ownership* and let the ANA disperse the demonstration and which did not result in casualties.

Despite the low PRT-strength in Sar-e Pol with at the maximum twenty international soldiers in the entire province (!), the Swedish team, as a “satellite” of the British PRT-Mazar-e Sharif, managed to show enough presence in the region in summer 2005 to be accepted by the

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<sup>103</sup> Author’s interview with Said Iqbal Muneeb, Governor of the Province Sar-e Pol. Sar-e Pol City, 16 August and 21 September 2005.

<sup>104</sup> The PRT-Safehouse Sar-e Pol is an inconspicuous house in the centre of Sar-e Pol City, which, in accordance with the *light footprint*, cannot be recognised at first sight as an international military installation. In 2005 the Swedish MOT team regularly used it as a base and the local population regarded it as an independent PRT, although formally it was a *satellite* of the PRT Mazar-e Sharif.

<sup>105</sup> The author lived in the UNOPs building in question in Sar-e Pol.

population. Without the PRT in the region, the parliamentary and provincial council elections in Sar-e Pol and various changes of leadership in the police force and the provincial government could not have been carried out without clashes.<sup>106</sup>

### 3.4.4 PRTs and Development Cooperation

#### *3.3.4.1 Aspects of Development Aid Policy*

The Department for International Development (DfID) has at least one representative stationed in every British PRT, works with operational autonomy and focuses on the following three core areas:

1. creation of alternative livelihoods,
2. economic and qualitative management in the field of development cooperation, and
3. state building

For the DfID, four topics touch upon these three areas:

1. Support of *Afghan Ownership* and Afghan leadership: more than 70 percent of the support is channeled via the GoA budget as a pre-condition for cooperation with implementation partners.
2. Creation of *Government Capacity*.
3. Cooperation with other donor nations and organizations.
4. Counter-narcotics: development of alternative farming livelihoods.

The British PRTs employ selected Afghan NGOs, which are responsible to the PRT for carrying out the projects. The lines between military and civilian development activities seem to have been preserved for the most part, in contrast to the US and German PRTs: The DfID only supports a project suggested by the PRT, if it assesses that an NGO could not carry out the project in a better way.<sup>107</sup> A general restraint in the carrying out of aid projects by PRTs can be ascertained to avoid a duplication of NGO efforts. NGOs honor this aim by positively assessing the role of British PRTs.

A British PRT commander spoke out in favor of greater financial means that should be earmarked and at the disposal of the PRTs, in order to increase the flexibility and scope for special PRT projects.<sup>108</sup> This would correspond to the US-PRTs' *Commanders Emergency Response Program* that gives the commanders greater project flexibility.

#### *3.4.4.2 On the Problem of Humanitarian Aid Provided by the Armed Forces*

Civilian vehicles used by PRTs are in the centre of criticism of NGOs, because this is blurring the lines between civilian and military actors. Due to the inclusion of certain NGOs in DfID programs the international NGOs have voiced less criticism of British PRTs, although the latter also use civilian vehicles (as did the NGOs) for their operations. The reputation of British PRTs was especially good with the representatives of GAA, whereas the German PRTs were criticized by this NGO.<sup>109</sup> The Dutch, however, used military vehicles in their patrols through Sar-e Pol;

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<sup>106</sup> Compare Craig T. Cobane: Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Security Assistance: Comments on an Evolving Concept. In: The DISAM Journal of International Security Assistance Management, Summer 2005, Washington DC.

<sup>107</sup> Compare Gerard McHugh/Lola Gostelow: Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Humanitarian-Military Relations in Afghanistan. London 2004, p. 26.

<sup>108</sup> Author's interview with the Commander of the PRT Mazar-e Sharif, Jon Brittain. Mazar-e Sharif, 1 October 2005.

<sup>109</sup> Nick Bönisch.

the Swedish PRT Safe House in Sar-e Pol used civilian four-by-fours.<sup>110</sup>

It is difficult, if not impossible, to find a correlation between the selection of vehicles on the one hand, and the security of the PRT on the other. The criticism of GAA seems ambivalent: both German and British armed forces personnel used civilian and military vehicles. The British PRTs could save their good reputation, despite using civilian vehicles. The Afghan population realizes in any case that they are confronted with Internationals. The population does not seem to regard a vehicle's color as a decisive factor in state building.

The fact that UK PRT used civilian vehicles does not necessarily have a negative influence on the way PRTs are regarded by NGOs, for which humanitarian aid should be left exclusively to civilian actors. For the NGOs, however, it is an act of interference in an area that should be left exclusively to civilian actors. By mixing civil-military structures the NGOs increasingly find themselves as targets of militant Islamists, a fact which is, however, very difficult to prove. But it is also a fact that humanitarian aid must sometimes also be provided by PRTs, especially if there is no relief available through NGOs.

### 3.4.5 PRTs and Reconstruction

#### *3.4.5.1 Economic Dimension of PRTs*

The PRT as a military actor does, in general, not carry out any reconstruction work. Reconstruction work is to be the sole preserve of NGOs and companies, which may cooperate with the DfID representative in his function as financial backer. The PRT therefore does not carry out any direct humanitarian assistance and does neither control nor coordinate any development work—this is done by the DfID). Rather, reconstruction is to be made easier by the PRT liaising with all regional actors. British PRTs have so far only participated in the construction of public buildings to add to the rule of law. In Mazar-e Sharif, the British PRT has built several police and justice buildings and a public library. Especially important was capacity building within public institutions. In Sar-e Pol province, no public buildings were erected by the PRT in 2005: it is quite simply too remote.

#### *3.4.5.2 Strengthening of Regional Infrastructure*

The DfID's homepage does not list any concrete statistics on the department's infrastructure projects. This confirms the British PRTs' approach not to carry out construction work in the name of the PRT, but to hand the projects over to the NGOs. These are then supervised and looked after by the DfID.

The mobile phone network has been massively expanded since 2004 and represents one of the few businesses in Afghanistan that is both legal and lucrative. In winter 2004/05 there was no mobile phone network in the province Sar-e Pol, but since spring 2005, the network operator *Roshan* has offered a GSM network in the provincial capital. The majority of families who live in the town now own a mobile phone.

In the province Sar-e Pol, NGOs such as GAA and the Japanese *Peacewings* have constructed bridges and irrigation plants. A Turkish company is carrying out the largest construction project in the region, terracing the road between Shebergan and Sar-e Pol. Large parts of the population regard General Dostum as the initiator of the project who successfully managed to win the hearts of the people in this region. However, the quality of the new road is bad. The region's police

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<sup>110</sup> Observation by the author in the province of Sar-e Pol in August and September 2005.

supervised the construction progress along the entire road (around 100 kilometers). The British PRTs were not involved in these procedures.

## **4. Conclusion**

### **4.1 PRT Lessons Learned**

*PRTs are becoming more attractive to western states.*

Afghanistan will never see international forces deployed in such numbers as in Bosnia and Herzegovina or Kosovo. PRTs are able to focus limited international resources, and have the potential to put them to maximum use and represent thus attractive instruments in ICM. They can focus limited international resources and potentially exert maximum effect and have the potential to diminish conflict intensity in collaboration with other actors in state building. Due to their limited size, they do without considerable forces. Another added value is that large areas can be covered in a flexible manner. PRTs have increased the quality of civil-military interaction, which has been rapidly promoted by the PRTs.

*PRTs cannot and should not replace institutions.*

The performance of PRTs cannot sensibly be assessed by the discharge of functions that are essentially those of the state, such as job creation, which would especially run counter to the principle of Afghan ownership. PRTs can only successfully contribute to institution building if they manage to enable Afghan decision makers to act loyally and responsibly for the benefit of the population. Not all PRTs give equal support to local ownership. By ensuring effective development cooperation, PRTs can employ Afghan workers and local NGOs on the forefront of reconstruction.

*Expectations weigh heavy on PRTs.*

There structures of Afghanistan that have so far been transformed are in no way durable yet. As a consequence, sustainable state building requires much more than the five years of assistance from the PRTs as indicated by experts in 2003. The short intervals of the political decision making processes in troop contributing nations lead to a pressure of expectations, which PRTs can hardly live up to. Some PRT nations put too much energy into reaching a quick, presentable political success than into long-term state building in Afghanistan. A reduction in international commitment would potentially lead to a relapse into societal chaos. Hence, the long-term provision of symbiotic civil and military expertise executed through PRTs appears indispensable.

*Civilian actors inside and outside the PRT are to be encouraged.*

The PRTs' military area of operations should essentially be concentrated on the issue of security, i.e. SSR and intensified intelligence and force protection. Reconstruction, as accomplished by military personnel, should be strictly limited, on the British pattern, to the construction of selected public institutions as well as reconstruction within high-risk areas. The creation of police capacities by civilian PRT-components has been neglected by all PRTs—not only could an important impulse thereby be given to inter-ministerial cooperation, but also the rule of law could thus be promoted. The fear of friendly fire and/or civilian casualties appears to be a critical factor with all ISAF PRTs, bearing on civilian and military personnel in their actions in the field.

Irrespective of security issues, PRT expertise is in demand when NGOs cannot cope and engineer equipment is needed. PRTs thus need to identify such projects and initiate their accomplishment.

*Concept and Efficiency of the PRTs' Command Structure evolves.*

It is true that, on paper, a clear division of tasks exists between all German Ministries sharing in the PRTs. However, the integrated implementation of the PRT concept in Afghanistan still appears problematic. Although the four Ministries had initially agreed on a coherent strategy, ideas and internal directives concerning the implementation of the concept then started to vary between the Ministries, which runs counter to the unity of command in the PRTs. The British seem to be further advanced in the symbiotic proceeding of their Ministries than the Germans have, as they put less emphasis on selling their model and more on local ownership. However, the four Ministries working together in the German PRTs do tread the right path towards better coordination in the field. PRTs should therefore critically evaluate and further develop their own actions on a permanent basis in order to render themselves dispensable eventually and give way to Afghan PRT-administration.

## 4.2 Evaluation of Individual PRT Concepts

### 4.2.1 Comparison of PRT Concepts

	<b>USA</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>
<b>Focus</b>	Geo-strategic Interests; Maintaining of permanent bases; Counter-insurgency; Security; Reconstruction; Hearts and Minds;	Peace Support Operation; Local Population as Centre of Gravity; Obtaining a consensus between local stakeholders; Facilitating and enabling of projects in terms of reconstruction	Time-limited support offer; Creating a secure environment for civil reconstruction; Force Protection; Afghan Ownership
<b>Command and Control</b>	Command role clearly rests with the DoD	<i>Multi-Agency-Approach</i> (MoD, DfID, FCO); Military component decides in security issues	<i>Inter-ministerial approach</i> ; Civil-military double headed command (MoD and MoFA)
<b>Method</b>	CERP (DoD); QIP (USAID); Force Protection; PRTs as FSBs; Combat Operations; <i>Good Governance</i> ; Intelligence; SSR: Training/Setting up of ANA, ANP	<i>Robust military diplomacy</i> ; Discrete and demonstrative presence through MOTs; <i>doing business in a low-key manner</i> ; Networking; Mediation; institution building; Intelligence; SSR: DDR, Counter-narcotics	Formula: Stability = Security x Reconstruction; Implementing security through patrolling; QIP; CIMIC; Institution Building; Intelligence; SSR: Setting up of ANP, DDR
<b>Military Role in Reconstruction</b>	High; direct military involvement with Highway Kabul-Kandahar as state of the art project in reconstruction	Low as DfID rules civilian efforts; identifying projects; involvement in the setting up of state institutions; proceeding with "Afghan time"	Medium; identifying projects; reconstruction through (military driven) CIMIC-Projects; coordination with civil PRT implementation



			partners
	<b>USA</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>
<b>Status and Role of Civilians</b>	Specialists of DoS, USAID, USDA etc. are integrated and subordinate to DoD (“embedded” civilians)	Joint command; operational autonomy of FCO and DfID (e.g. separate reporting system); DfID verifies and finances projects (project filter)	Civil-military double hated leadership through Foreign and Defense Ministries; MECD and MoI are subordinate to MoFA; implementation partners for in charge for civilian ministries
<b>Cooperation with UN</b>	Limited	Active coordination with UNAMA; limited bureaucracy	Active coordination with UNAMA

#### 4.2.2 PRTs’ Acceptance in the Region

German PRTs are accepted by the population, as are the British. Both models present themselves as shining beacons for a better future. Still, the Germans are less popular with international NGOs in Kunduz than the British PRT (respectively the Swedish) is in Mazar-e Sharif, especially due to the fact that the British, in a comparable security situation, do not directly take part in reconstruction. As the British PRTs restrict themselves to military core competences, they appear better coordinated. The US PRTs’ reputation is very poor with local and international actors. Over the mid-term, it appears almost impossible to improve their acceptance. With their high focus on militarily led reconstruction, they have so far tried unsuccessfully to improve their own acceptance. This is a heavy burden on ISAF as it had taken over the US PRTs.

#### 4.2.3 PRTs and the Security Situation

Unlike the British PRTs at Mazar-e Sharif, Germany did not have to mediate in local fighting in its area of responsibility. British mediation proved a success, to which also UNAMA had made a substantial contribution. The German PRTs can point to the fact that the security situation in the German area of responsibility has not substantially deteriorated since 2003. The disarmament programs were pursued as planned in both regions and they continue with the support of the PRTs. Poppy field acreage was considerably reduced in the German area until the end of 2005 according to a UN report, whereas it became much larger at Mazar-e Sharif. German influence should not be overestimated here, however: the Afghan Minister for Counter Narcotics who comes from that region played the key role in halving acreage in the area of the Feyzabad PRT.

In the British area [of responsibility], it became clear again that the Kabul government still has little influence on the northern region: poppy cultivation increased drastically leading to a higher income for local Power Brokers than ever before. Kabul and the British PRTs were impotent. The increased poppy cultivation did not have negative consequences for the security situation in these areas. Especially in Sar-e Pol province a substantial weakening of the local Power Brokers was much talked about in 2005, to which also the British PRT’s presence in Mazar-e Sharif had contributed. Proceeds from the crops replace jobs. The PRTs could not do very much for the rule of law—they had simply not been there long enough. In spite of different concepts, doctrines, weapons, limitations and starting positions, German and British PRTs reached comparable degrees of efficiency in the area of security between 2003 and 2006. The British PRTs’ approach

to force protection was visibly more casual than the German PRTs’.

As the US PRTs operate in regions where OEF combat forces ensure security, they cannot be compared to German and British PRTs in terms of security. However, in most of the US PRTs’ areas the security situation deteriorated considerably between 2003 and 2006 (one or two levels up).

#### 4.2.4 PRTs and Institution Building

The PRTs contributed considerably to the successful conduct of elections in Afghanistan in 2004 and 2005. Both in the British and in the German areas of responsibility political interaction increased considerably between the provinces and Kabul, which led to increased capacities flowing into the provinces. The various districts of the provinces of the British PRTs moved closer to their provincial capitals between 2003 and 2006, which was mainly due to the installation of loyal provincial governors by President Karzai and the networking accomplished by the PRTs. They were thus contributing towards institution building. Generally, however, this area is still in its infancy in Afghanistan.

#### 4.2.5 PRTs Development Cooperation and Reconstruction

The German PRTs accomplished a considerable number of projects together with their implementation partners. Deficiencies in their orientation to Afghan self-responsibility, as well as competition led to frictions with NGOs and private enterprises in many a case. The British PRTs do not conduct any reconstruction in their own name. The DfID has the task to coordinate and finance projects in coordination with UNAMA and gives funds to local NGOs following close scrutiny. They are geared to the promotion of local ownership, which met with positive resonance with international NGOs.

The militarily led CIMIC projects led to certain parallel structures between the Ministries in the German PRTs. In view of the number of projects pursued, the German PRTs appear more transparent and numerically more successful than the British PRTs. The British PRTs with the DfID are not as exposed with their projects as the German PRTs, however. Germany, with its PRTs, exerted a certain magnetic effect, attracting more NGOs and enterprises into the provinces than UK. The impression is thus created that economic interests and cooperation are more important to Germany than Britain. Generally, both regions have seen quite some improvement due to the presence of the PRTs. The transformation of the conflict was very much slower, though, than UNAMA and ISAF had estimated.

In the US PRT model, civilian components are under military command and control due to high-risk operation areas. The military personnel of the US PRTs are the most involved in direct reconstruction (especially in road construction). Managing projects on behalf of the local government as shown by the US PRTs with their CERP-programs appears to be a future-orientated method in local capacity building.

#### 4.2.6 Recommendations

In general, PRTs are on the right path, although their contributions to effective state building still require many improvements. The following improvements and adjustments could shape the PRTs and thereby increase their effectiveness and relevance as a model for future S/R Operations outside of Afghanistan:

- installation of more PRTs including outposts (“PRT satellites”) to ensure country-wide presence,
- clearly defined command and control competencies,
- special focus on Afghan autonomy and responsibility (Local Ownership) after installation phase,
- more authority and resources for civilian experts to assume command functions,
- increased civilian key expertise to train local administration and security forces in order to effectively strengthen state authority,
- more expertise in the fields of development, agriculture and rule of law,
- trust-building between civilian and military experts,
- improvement of the network between all relevant forces,
- improvement of the communication and transportation facilities in the provinces,
- improvement of intelligence for the evaluation of local structures and power structures,
- constant internal reflection on PRT activities to increase effectiveness,
- external evaluation of the concepts, efficiency and effectiveness of PRTs
- strengthening of capacities at provincial and district level to tighten the connection between the provinces and Kabul, as well as
- increased combat effectiveness in order to support PRTs in critical situations.

#### **4.3 General Assessment**

As PRTs were established in Afghanistan 2003, a civil-military instrument was created that combined, in an institutionalized form, elements of foreign, development and security policy within itself. This was in line, appropriately, with the comprehensive approach to state building, comprising both civil and military action, as it was especially demanded in the Brahimi Report. Five years into the effectiveness of the teams, some areas show positive results of the PRT’s work. However, the problems of Afghanistan remain immense.

The international support given towards the building of the nation has led to an ambivalent situation. Both on its surface, i.e. regarding the increasing number of attacks and hostilities, and below the surface, i.e. regarding the consolidated structures in the drug economy, Afghanistan is still a far cry from general stability. The security situation in the north and west of the country is still far better than in the south and east, where it continued to deteriorate sharply since 2006. Neither ISAF nor OEF could do anything about that.

The general socio-economic situation of the population has partially improved starting from a very low level, which, however, leaves unaltered the fact that Afghanistan’s state building process is still embryonic. For instance, the leadership in Kabul is still isolated from large parts of the country. In many provinces, Power Brokers and tribal and clan chiefs still exert control with the help of their private armies. Many of them draw on the cultivation of poppy and legitimacy enhanced through their good relationship with PRTs. Several Power Brokers hold official posts as provincial governors, or as ministers or lawmakers in Kabul. The time factor plays into the hands of the government’s militant enemies, putting enormous pressure on the ICM to be successful. International politics does often not pay enough attention to the fact that

state building requires to think in terms of generations.

In a very short time and despite inadequacies, the PRTs have proved a capable model for ICM, which can support area-wide stability with a small amount of resources. In this function, the PRTs have become part of a comprehensive civil-military strategy in Afghanistan that includes the “War against Terror”, the full-scale expansion of ISAF, the completion of the Bonn Agreement, the Afghan Compact and the SSR, as well as engagements in the fields of development and diplomacy. The big challenge is to achieve a smooth interplay of all these elements. This, however, cannot be expected after only six years of ICM—this appears to be a task for generations. At first glance, the PRTs’ non-standardized structure and command and control seems to stand in the way of an overall strategy. But it is especially this that provides room to maneuver and opportunities for western democracies to contribute to ICM in a fast, flexible and sustainable manner.

The number of worldwide S/R-Operations will continue to increase. We will, however, not see a universally applicable model for each hot spot. PRTs can contribute to the political, economic and military success of future operations. As a consequence, they have become more and more attractive for the west, but at the same time, they are under high political pressure to succeed. Nevertheless, a success of ICM in post-conflict reconstruction cannot be obtained without the engagement, support and assumption of responsibility of local (Afghan) players in the running of their own affairs. In this context, PRTs provide the opportunity to reduce international force deployment in peacekeeping and peace consolidation, engage and manage local ownership and represent vital state building tools.

**List of Abbreviations**

ANP	Afghan National Police
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CAT	Civil Affairs Team
CERP	Commanders Emergency Response Program
CF	Coalition Forces
CFC-A	Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
CMCO	Civil-Military Coordination
CMOC	Civil-Military Operations Centre
CRS	Congressional Research Service
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
DIAG	Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups
DoD	Department of Defense (USA)
DoS	Department of State (USA)
ESC	Executive Steering Committee
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FSB	Forward Support Base
GAA	German Agro Action (Deutsche Welthungerhilfe)
GTZ	Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit
HQ	Headquarters
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ICM	International Crisis Management
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
LWF	Lutheran World Foundation
MECD	Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany)
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOF	Militant Oppositional Forces
MoI	Ministry of the Interior
MOT	Mobile Observation Team

MP	Military Police
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NZZ	Neue Zürcher Zeitung
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OPLAN	Operations Plan
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSYOPS	Psychological Operations
QIP	Quick Impact Project
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
S/R	Stability/Reconstruction
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SWP	Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
TCN	Troop Contributing Nations
UK	United Kingdom
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USIP	United States Institute for Peace
WCC	World Council of Churches
WFP	World Food Program

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