



## **The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and their Contribution to the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Process in Afghanistan**

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## **Abstract**

In the post-Taliban Afghanistan, it was considered to be imperative that powerful regional warlords (Afghan National Forces: ANF) should be disarmed and demobilized in order to press forward the peacebuilding process. Hence, the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of ANF was envisaged in Afghanistan. Unlike DDR processes in Africa where a UN peacekeeping force was deployed to carry out disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants, the DDR process in Afghanistan has been conducted without a robust presence of such a force. Instead, the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) that were invented to promote governance, security and reconstruction played a key role in supporting the DDR process in Afghanistan by fulfilling the following seven functions: (1) security assurance, (2) virtual sanction, (3) deterrence, (4) visible incentives, (5) information dissemination, (6) operational service, and (7) mediation. This paper seeks to examine how these lubricating functions fulfilled by PRTs were conducive to promoting the DDR process in Afghanistan by analyzing interaction between PRTs and the DDR process. The paper argues that while the presence and efforts of PRTs might have not been indispensable to the development of the DDR process, they have served as one of the contributing factors to the DDR process in Afghanistan.

## 1. Introduction

The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are small, inter-agency organizations that were invented to promote governance, security and reconstruction in a non-permissive environment in Afghanistan. Since their first introduction in the scene in November 2002, the United States and other troop-contributing countries went through a number of trials and errors and modified some forms and activities of PRTs.

Among a long list of activities required to foster peacebuilding in Afghanistan, security sector reform (SSR) was given the top priority by the international community.<sup>1</sup> In the context of peacebuilding in fragile states, SSR can be defined as a transformation of a security system so that it is managed and operated in a manner that is more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, and thus contributes to a well-functioning security framework.<sup>2</sup> At an initial stage of the peacebuilding process in the post-Taliban Afghanistan, the security environment remained volatile due to two intersecting sources of insecurity: the remnants of the Taliban, Al Qaeda and their sympathizers remained a threat in the south and east, while other military factions within the Bonn process continued to compete for power and resources throughout Afghanistan.<sup>3</sup>

Although the Bonn Agreement of December 2001 established an interim authority—the Afghan Interim Government—to run the country and set out the basis for security and governance arrangements in the post-Taliban Afghanistan, the security situation was portrayed as a rivalry of powerful regional warlords with no centralized security system effective in the country.<sup>4</sup> Under such a circumstance, it was considered to be imperative that those powerful warlords and their armed forces should be disarmed and

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<sup>1</sup> G8 countries met in April 2002 and agreed on the five pillars of SSR: DDR (Japan), creation of new Army (US), Police reform (Germany), Counter-narcotics (UK), and Judicial reform (Italy).

<sup>2</sup> OECD, *The DAC Guidelines Helping Prevent Violent Conflict* (OECD, 2001), p. 38. According to *the DAC Guidelines*, the security system includes security forces and the relevant civilian bodies and processes needed to manage them and encompasses state institutions which have a formal mandate to ensure the safety of the state and its citizens against acts of violence and coercion, e.g., the armed forces, the police and paramilitary forces, the intelligence services and similar bodies; judicial and penal institutions; and the elected and duly appointed civil authorities responsible for control and oversight, e.g., Parliament, the Executive, the Defense Ministry, etc. For SSR, see also, USAID, *Promoting Security Sector Reform in Fragile States*, PPC Issue Paper No. 11, April 2005.

<sup>3</sup> J. Alexander Thier, “The Politics of Peace-building Year One: From Bonn to Kabul” in Antonio Donini, et al. (eds.), *Nation-building Unraveled? Aid, Peace and Justice in Afghanistan* (Bloomfield: Kumarian Press, 2004) p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> When the Afghan Transitional Authority (ATA) was established in June 2002 as a result of the emergency Loya Jirga, these regional warlords were included in the Afghan National Forces (ANF) as Corps commanders and supposed to come under the command and control of the central government. Nonetheless, these ANF commanders and regional warlords remained not loyal to ATA.

demobilized in order to press forward the Afghan peace process and reconstruction. Hence, the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants was initiated as an integral part of SSR in Afghanistan together with the other four pillars: creation of a new and professional Afghan National Army (ANA); reform of the Afghan National Police (ANP) and other law enforcement agencies; counter-narcotics; and judicial reform. In order to reduce the power of warlords whilst increasing the credibility and strength of ANA, DDR was considered to be an important first step.<sup>5</sup>

The presence of a credible security guarantor is always an advantage to any DDR process as it can provide measures to encourage confidence building among adversaries and to fill a “security gap” that might be created as a result of disarmament and demobilization of existing armed forces. Unlike DDR processes in Africa and elsewhere, the DDR process in Afghanistan has been conducted without a robust presence of impartial peacekeepers, which could have served as a credible security guarantor, in all parts of the country. The United Nations adopted what Lakhdar Brahimi called a “light footprint” approach and set up a civilian political mission: the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).<sup>6</sup> Although UNAMA did not include military component in its organization, two distinct international military forces were operating in Afghanistan, one the U.S.-led multinational Coalition Forces under *Operation Enduring Freedom*, and the other the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) under UN mandate. Nonetheless, neither was mandated or equipped to undertake the difficult mission of DDR. The Coalition forces were still engaging in war-fighting with the Taliban and the Al-Qaeda in the south and east of the country. ISAF had five thousand troops on the ground from 19 countries and served as a peacekeeping force, but its responsibility was limited to providing security in Kabul.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, it was the Afghan government—in particular, the Ministry of Defense

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<sup>5</sup> Dylan Hendrickson, Michael Bhatia, Mark Knight and Annabel Taylor, *A Review of DFID Involvement in Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan*, Department for International Development (DFID), London, 8 July 2005, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> House of Committee on International Relations, *Testimony of Secretary of State Colin Powell before the Committee on International Relations United States House of Representatives*, 24 October 2001; and James Rupert, “UN Rejects U.S. Postwar Plan”, *Newsday*, 18 October 2001, p. A33, cited in Peter Viggo Jakobsen, *PRTs in Afghanistan: Successful but not Sufficient*, DIID Report 2005:6, p. 8. UNAMA’s mandate includes promoting national reconciliation; fulfilling the tasks and responsibilities entrusted to the United Nations in the Bonn Agreement, including those related to human rights, the rule of law and gender issues, and managing all UN humanitarian, relief, recovery and reconstruction activities in Afghanistan <<http://unama-afg.org/about/overview.htm>>.

<sup>7</sup> NATO took on the command of ISAF in August 2003, and with the UN Security Council Resolution 1510 (13 October 2003) ISAF began to assume a wider role in support of the Afghan government beyond Kabul. In December 2005, ISAF numbers about 9,200 troops from 35 countries (*NATO in Afghanistan —Press factsheet* <<http://nato.int/issue/afghanistan/050816-factsheet.htm>>

together with the Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme (ANBP)—that was given an authority to implement the program for DDR against a backdrop of military presence of the Coalition forces and ISAF.

Supporting DDR outside Kabul, nevertheless, required additional international troops on the ground, which the international community was reluctant to provide at that time.<sup>8</sup> U.S. officials were not interested in the expansion of ISAF's operations to the provinces, believing that a traditional peacekeeping approach would be ineffective in Afghanistan based on their past experiences with insurgencies; instead, they developed the concept of PRT to spread the "ISAF effect" without actually expanding ISAF itself.<sup>9</sup>

Hence, PRTs were designed to provide a vehicle for international military engagement outside Kabul in support of SSR, particularly the DDR process, in order to reduce the power of warlords whilst increasing the credibility and strength of the new ANA.<sup>10</sup> Both the Coalition forces and ISAF had their PRTs deployed to major provinces in Afghanistan by the time DDR became fully operational in late 2004. In fact, the number of disarmed combatants increased rapidly towards the end of the disarmament phase as soon as the majority of PRTs completed their nation-wide deployment just in time for the presidential election in October 2004. Actually, during the implementation phase of the disarmament and demobilization, which lasted for 21 months, more than two-thirds of disarmament took place in the last eight months.

This seems to suggest that PRTs played a key role in supporting the DDR process by meeting some security requirements that were necessary to run the process. In his recent review of PRTs, Robert Perito argued that PRTs played a key role in supporting the program for DDR, monitored heavy weapons cantonment (HWC), and reported on troops strength and the movement of armed groups.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, other commentators claimed otherwise, pointing out that SSR was not a dominant focus of PRTs' activity.<sup>12</sup> In fact, existing literature on PRTs failed to elaborate on how PRTs helped or not helped the DDR process. Barbara Stapleton, for example, echoed this point by saying that outcomes of SSR have been poorly analyzed in Afghanistan.<sup>13</sup> This paper seeks, therefore, to examine the relationship between PRTs and the DDR process by focusing on functions fulfilled by

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<sup>8</sup> Hendrickson, et al., p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Michael J. McNerney, "Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?", *Parameters*, Winter 2005-06, p. 32.

<sup>10</sup> Hendrickson, et al, p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> Robert M. Perito, "The U.S. Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan, Lessons Identified," *United States Institute of Peace Special Report 152* (October 2005), p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Hendrickson, et al., p. 15.

<sup>13</sup> Barbara J. Stapleton, *NATO: New Tasks and Responsibilities*, a paper submitted to NATO—WIIS Conference on 11 July 2005, p. 2.

PRTs to find out the impact of PRTs upon the DDR process. It purports to identify under what circumstances and by performing which critical functions PRTs were able to contribute to the DDR process in Afghanistan.

This introduction will be followed by a brief description of PRTs and the DDR process in Afghanistan. Important characteristics of both PRTs and the DDR process in Afghanistan will be identified. Then, interaction between PRTs and the DDR process will be explored by examining functions fulfilled by PRTs that have been conducive to the advancement of the DDR process. Finally, the paper will summarize the effect of PRTs upon the DDR process, and recapitulate the PRT functions that were conducive to the development of the DDR process in Afghanistan.

## **2. Brief Description of PRTs**

There are variety of views and approaches with regard to peace and reconstruction of Afghanistan. Nonetheless, it was within the framework, which was defined by the Bonn Agreement and its subsequent peace process, that the PRTs were mandated to operate. Through supporting SSR and reconstruction efforts, PRTs sought to contribute to the peace process in Afghanistan. According to the *Terms of Reference for CFC and ISAF PRTs in Afghanistan* adopted by the PRT Executive Steering Committee in 27 January 2005, in which the roles and missions of PRTs operating under the Coalition forces and ISAF were stipulated, PRTs were formed to assist the Afghan government to extend its authority, in order to facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment in the identified area of operations, and enable SSR and reconstruction efforts.<sup>14</sup> PRTs were not mandated to operate proactively in creating secure environment, but they were expected to play supportive roles through assisting the Afghan government's security sector to fulfill such a task.

As of December 2005, 22 PRTs were functioning, 13 of which were operated by the U.S.-led Coalition forces, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)/ISAF led the remaining nine PRTs.<sup>15</sup> The Coalition PRTs were deployed mainly in the south and east,

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<sup>14</sup> The TORs can be found in Appendix I of Barnett R. Rubin, Humayun Hamidzada and Abby Stoddard, *Afghanistan 2005 and Beyond: Prospect for Improved Stability Reference Document*, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, April 2005.

<sup>15</sup> As for the Coalition PRTs, there was no specific legal foundation or international authorization for such endeavors; whereas, those could be found for the NATO/ISAF PRTs. The UN Security Council Resolution 1510 (2003) authorized, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the UN, expansion of the mandate of ISAF to support the Afghan Transitional Authority in the maintenance of security

while NATO/ISAF PRTs were located in the north and west of Afghanistan. The major contributors to the Coalition PRTs are the United States, Canada, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom.<sup>16</sup> Germany, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom are leading NATO/ISAF PRTs, but other NATO members such as Nordic countries have been contributing to NATO/ISAF PRTs in one way or another. Recent expansion and development of NATO/ISAF PRTs in the southern provinces is a result of the transition of responsibility from the U.S.-led multinational Coalition forces to NATO leadership. This handover process will be completed in early 2006. By allowing NATO to take over the security mandate, PRTs have served as an exit strategy for the U.S. forces to reduce their footprints from Afghanistan.

The concept of PRT was introduced by the United States in November 2002, as coalition commanders began to prepare the transition of *Operation Enduring Freedom* from its war-fighting phase to its stabilization and reconstruction phases.<sup>17</sup> The concept was conceived to meet the contradictory requirements. There was an urgent need to expand the legitimacy of a newly installed central government to the provinces and enhance the security situation outside of Kabul so that reconstruction could take place in all parts of Afghanistan and the Afghan people could appreciate peace dividend. It was recognized that a secure environment would offer opportunities for greater development and in turn increased development could improve the security environment. At the same time, however, the United States could not afford to deploy a robust peacekeeping force throughout the country as its forces were bogged into the operation in Iraq. In addition, U.S. officials convinced that a large presence of foreign military troops would be counter-effective in achieving public security and support in Afghanistan.<sup>18</sup>

Under such circumstances, the concept of PRT was developed essentially as a tool for transition assistance. It was intended to be a “hand-off” strategy through which the capacity of the new Afghan government to govern themselves, the Afghan security sector to provide and maintain stability and security in the country, and the Afghan institutions to lead long-term sustainable development will be enhanced so that the involvement of the

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in areas of Afghanistan outside of Kabul. In other words, NATO or ISAF-led PRTs, which are part of ISAF, are indeed UN-authorized Chapter VII operations.

<sup>16</sup> Michael J. Dziedzic and Michael K. Seidl, “Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Military Relations with International and Nongovernmental Organizations in Afghanistan,” *United States Institute of Peace Special Report 147* (September 2005), p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Jakobsen, p. 11. According to a U.S. military planner, the PRTs were established to show the local Afghans that the United States was fighting with terrorists (the Al Qaeda and the Taliban regime), not with ordinary Afghan people. By carrying out humanitarian assistance and quick impact projects, PRTs were expected to prove that harming local people was not the U.S. force’s intent (personal email correspondence on 1 March 2006).

<sup>18</sup> McNerney, p. 32 and p. 43.

United States could become no longer necessary. In short, PRTs were sought to address concurrently the three key dimensions of peacebuilding, i.e., governance, security and development. PRTs were designed to generate synergistic effects of three important agencies on the ground, i.e., Diplomacy, Defense and Development (often called as “3D”). PRTs adopt an inter-agency 3D approach to tackle with three-dimensional challenges of peacebuilding.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the concept of PRTs provided a way to facilitate the integration of three essential agencies for peacebuilding and presented a model to institutionalize such an inter-agency 3D approach.

These essential components reflected upon the basic structure of PRTs, which is illustrated in the Figure 1. Also, a typical structure of U.S. PRTs is shown in the Figure 2. The U.S. PRTs were primarily a military endeavor and more than 80% of their personnel were military with a limited number of civilian representatives from the Department of State, the Agency of International Development (USAID) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) serving as advisors to their military counterpart or the commander in political and reconstruction aspects. According to the model, an Army Lt. Colonel commands the U.S. PRTs, which have a complement of 82 American military and civilian personnel with a representative from the Afghan Ministry of Interior serving as a liaison and three to four local interpreters.<sup>20</sup> Although the force protection element was included in the military component of PRTs, their capacity was limited to provide security for PRT units and their base camps. In other words, PRTs were not equipped to provide “area security” or take proactive security measures for the local people and international assistance community in provinces of Afghanistan.

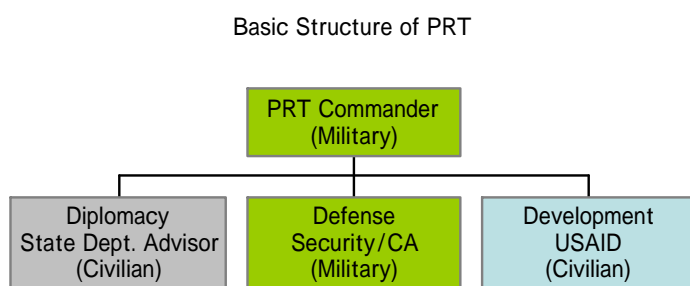


Figure 1. Basic Structure of PRT (created by the author)

<sup>19</sup> By the way, this 3D approach of PRTs would match accidentally with the Japanese government’s strategy for reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan—the three pillars of “Consolidation of Peace” approach: Peace Process (Diplomacy), National Security (Defense), and Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (Development).

<sup>20</sup> Perito, p. 4.

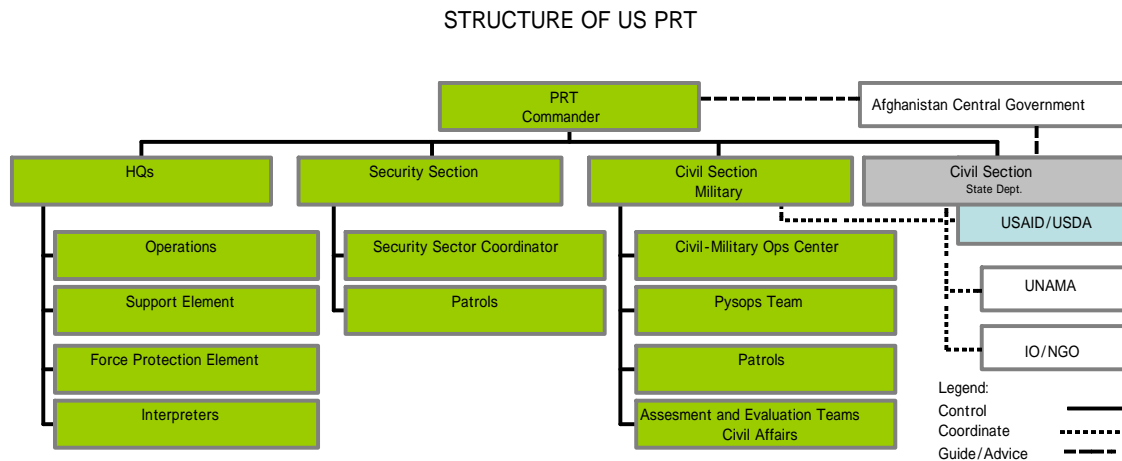


Figure 2. Structure of U.S. PRTs (created by the author based on Save the Children, p. 18)

The structure, operations and security apparatus of each PRT, however, varied depending on their location and national leadership.<sup>21</sup> In fact, the concept of PRT has evolved considerably since its first appearance and numerous modifications have been made to its organization and activity as a result of lessons learned carried out by the United States and other contributing countries.<sup>22</sup> The similar path was taken when the concept of UN peacekeeping was at its early stage of development. One of the major characteristics of PRTs and UN peacekeeping was their flexibility and/or their ability to improvise new approaches to adjust local needs, and these features were a key to their effectiveness. The initial PRTs developed distinct personalities, creating what came to be called as American, British and German examples of PRTs.<sup>23</sup> Each example will not be elaborated further in this paper, but the essential features of each example can be recapitulated in the table 1 below.

<sup>21</sup> The security role of the PRTs depends on the country of origin. For example, the United States restricted the use of force for only self-defense, while the United Kingdom and New Zealand allowed more robust use for force by their PRTs.

<sup>22</sup> Jakobsen, p. 18.

<sup>23</sup> Perito, p. 3. For a comparative study of the three examples of PRTs, see Jakobsen, pp. 17-28.

Table 1. The three examples compared

	US-led PRT	UK-led PRT	German-led PRT
Principal focus	Quick impact reconstruction, winning hearts and minds	Security sector reform, active patrolling	Force protection, enabling civilian reconstruction
Military involvement in reconstruction	Considerable involvement	Limited involvement	Limited involvement
Degree of civil-military integration	Integration, civilian personnel embedded in military teams	Joint leadership, operational autonomy, separate reporting mechanisms	Separate leaderships; weekly coordination meetings
Responsiveness to UN and NGO suggestions	Limited	High	High

(Source: created by the author based on Jakobsen, p. 28)

### 3. Characteristics of the DDR Process in Afghanistan

In the context of considering the interaction between the activities of PRTs and the DDR process, there are few important features of the DDR process in Afghanistan that need to be addressed. First, the DDR process was a highly political one and it was demanded to serve as confidence-building measures among the competing commanders and warlords who were well armed with little loyalty to the central government. Although the central government assumed the responsibility for leading the DDR process, it did not have sufficient political clout and military might to force the powerful regional commanders of

the Afghan National Forces (ANF) to be disarmed.<sup>24</sup> Because DDR aimed at dissolving a basis of powerful regional commanders, it could have undermined a fragile foundation of the Afghan Interim Government, which was established on a delicate balance of power among the regional commanders and factional warlords. Hence, it was a major challenge for the central government to proceed with disarmament and demobilization without giving the commanders and warlords the impression that they were treated unfairly. In short, the DDR process was needed to provide confidence-building measures.

Such measures were provided or facilitated by the presence of UN or other impartial peacekeepers in DDR processes such as in Mozambique, Angola, Liberia and so forth. In the case of Afghanistan, however, neither the Coalition forces nor ISAF—an UN mandated peacekeeping force—was tasked to undertake the program for DDR although they have agreed to provide support for the DDR process. In fact, it was the Afghan Ministry of Defense that led the DDR process, and the new Afghan security forces (ANA and ANP) were sought to replace the existing balance of power among the regional commanders and warlords. In the beginning, the DDR process was linked clearly with other SSR activities and incorporated in the overall SSR framework. Nonetheless, it required considerable amount of time and energy to create professional Afghan security forces, and they were not fully functional when the DDR process started. Thus, the situation was clearly in need of an intermediary that could fill the “security gap” created by disarmament and offer the confidence-building measures.

The DDR process in Afghanistan has three distinct phases: preparation, pilot, and main phases. The preparation phase started when Japan together with the United Nations assumed the role of lead nation of DDR in the Afghan SSR process in May 2002. In this phase, the overall framework of the DDR process was designed in which it was articulated that the Afghan Ministry of Defense would be in charge of DDR. In addition, the Afghanistan’s New Beginnings Programme (ANBP) was established to oversee the implementation of DDR. In September 2003, the reform of the Afghan Ministry of Defense, which was dominated heavily by the Pahjshir Valley faction of ethnic Tajik, was undertaken as a part of preparation for DDR because it was considered to be a prerequisite to create the “neutral” Ministry of Defense in order to begin a credible and fair DDR

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<sup>24</sup> The main targets of DDR were the commanders and their armed forces of the former “Northern Alliance” which swept out the Taliban regime and formed the Afghan Transitional Government in June 2002 after the emergency *Loya Jiruga*. These armed forces of each commander were included in the Afghan National Forces (ANF) that fell under the control of the Ministry of Defense in the Afghan Transitional Government. In Afghanistan, however, there were other armed elements and warlords that were not included in ANF. These armed groups were not the target of the DDR process.

process. The pilot phase began in October 2003 in selected sites such as Kunduz, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kabul and Kandahar, and 6,271 men were disarmed and demobilized in the pilot phase. The main phase of DDR started in May 2004, and in June 2005 the Disarmament and Demobilization phases were completed, disarming 63,380 ex-combatants. The Reintegration phase is expected to finish in June 2006.

The presidential election of 9 October 2004 was one of the climaxes of the Bonn political process. In order to create an environment that would be conducive to a free and democratic election, DDR was expected to complete before the presidential election in the initial design of the DDR process. Nevertheless, out of 100,000 target ex-combatants, only about 20,000 men were disarmed before the presidential election of October 2004. As mentioned above, 63,380 ex-combatants were disarmed at the end of the Disarmament phase (end of June 2005) and two-thirds of which was disarmed after the presidential election as shown in the Figure 3 below.

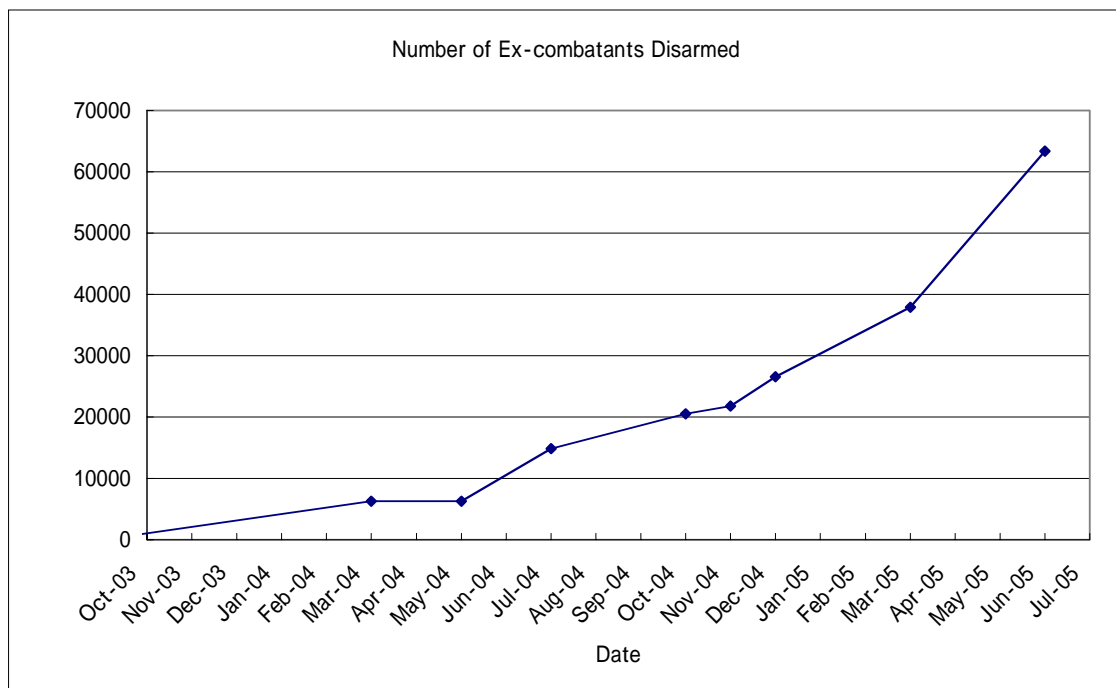


Figure 3. Number of Ex-combatants Disarmed (created by the author)

The Coalition forces and ISAF were tasked to improve security situation outside of Kabul so that the presidential election could be conducted throughout the country. By October 2004, just in time for the presidential election, the Coalition PRTs completed their nation-wide deployment in 14 different locations (Gardez, Herat, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Asadabad, Ghazni, Khowst, Qalat, Sharana, Farah, Lashkar Gah, Tarin Kowt, Charikar and

Bamiyan) and NATO/ISAF PRTs were deployed to five different sites (Marzar-e-Sharif, Maimana, Kunduz, Feyzabad and Pul-Khumri). On the other hand, to oversee the implementation of DDR in provinces, ANBP established eight regional offices in Gardez, Herat, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kunduz, Bamiyan and Kabul/Parwan. All the ANBP regional offices except for the one in Kabul/Parwan were co-located with the PRTs in each province.

Although maintaining the presence of PRTs outside of Kabul was indented primarily to assist the presidential election, their presence in key provinces of Afghanistan helped to accelerate the DDR process. It can be said at least that the positive correlation existed between the number of disarmed ex-combatants and the expansion of PRTs. In the following, therefore, the paper will examine the performance of PRTs and point up what functions fulfilled by the PRTs have been helpful in fostering the DDR process, and in what way.

## **5. Interaction between the PRTs and the DDR Process**

PRTs were designed to spread a peacekeeping effect without creating a large peacekeeping force. SSR and DDR processes in Africa and elsewhere were often conducted with a robust presence of impartial peacekeeping force, serving as a credible “security guarantor” to fill the “security gap”. In Afghanistan, on the other hand, PRTs were designed originally to support SSR, and in particular, they were expected to fulfill certain roles in the DDR process. Broad consensus also existed within the international community that PRTs could best contribute to peacebuilding in Afghanistan by focusing their operations more directly on SSR and on training, monitoring and providing technical and logistical support for the Afghan security forces during their first deployments in the provinces.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the crying need for SSR existed in Afghanistan, however, the Coalition PRTs were not employed to fulfill such a role proactively. The Coalition forces admitted freely that their units received no specific guidance on how DDR or SSR were to be supported.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, NATO/ISAF expressed their support to the DDR process and their willingness to help with security and transportation where possible,<sup>27</sup> but its PRTs did not receive specific

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<sup>25</sup> *CIMIC in NATO Transformation: Civil-Military Collaboration in Afghanistan* (December 28, 2005), para. 19.

<sup>26</sup> Hendrickson, et al., pp. 14-15.

<sup>27</sup> ANBP, *ANBP Weekly Summary Report*, 1 November 2003.

directions on how to support DDR, either.

While the military component of PRTs represented a credible interlocutor for supporting the disarmament of the Afghan National Forces (ANF), PRTs did not play a proactive role in this area except for few occasions. Because of the small size of its military component, the PRT commanders must have made pragmatic decisions regarding the extent to which they could push local warlords to disarm, which the cooperation (or at least non-interference) of the same warlords was central to the overall political and military objectives of the Coalition and NATO partners.<sup>28</sup> Under such a circumstance, the PRT commanders interpreted the role of PRTs in SSR in a limited manner, and most of support provided by various PRTs to SSR remained most basic form, such as support for ANA deployments; monitoring and mentoring of ANP; and support for DDR and heavy weapons cantonment.<sup>29</sup> Likewise, PRTs involvement in the DDR process was primarily limited to conducting surveys and providing reports of unit strengths of each militia factions and their heavy weapons, logistical support to movement of weapons and ANBP's units, and dissemination of public information for DDR.

Accordingly, the article eight of the *Terms of Reference for CFC and ISAF PRTs in Afghanistan* stated that “PRTs will observe, assess and report to their respective chains of command on factors affecting DDR in their AO (area of operation) and take a proactive role in supporting and influencing ... Afghanistan's efforts (including through ANBP) to carry out the DDR process.”<sup>30</sup> In other words, PRTs were not supposed to take a proactive role in leading SSR, but they were expected to support proactively the Afghan authority to carry out SSR effectively. They were the grease, not the wheel, for enabling local government and its security forces to function within accepted norms; supporting the program for DDR; expanding policing beyond Kabul; and supporting the national government's counter-narcotics policies and efforts.<sup>31</sup> By doing so, it was expected that PRTs should help to fill the “security gap” that could emerge as a result of disarmament and demobilization of ANF.

A UN official who was overseeing the political process in Afghanistan claimed that it was the electoral process that speeded up the DDR process, and that the influence of PRTs over the DDR process was minor.<sup>32</sup> Kinichi Komano, then the Japanese Ambassador to Afghanistan, argued that dramatic developments in political and military spheres of the

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<sup>28</sup> Save the Children, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Humanitarian-Military Relations in Afghanistan*, 2004, p. 32.

<sup>29</sup> Hendrickson, et al., p. 27.

<sup>30</sup> Rubin, et al., Appendix I, p. 77.

<sup>31</sup> Dziedzic and Seidl, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> Personal interview conducted on 9 December 2005.

Afghan peace process urged the recalcitrant commanders to comply with the terms of DDR.<sup>33</sup> On the contrary, a U.S. State Department official who served in a PRT in Bamiyan argued otherwise that the Bamiyan PRT was instrumental in advancing the DDR process as it was involved in various aspects of DDR very actively.<sup>34</sup> Other commentators also indicated that the UK-led PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif were particularly effective on many occasions, and it contributed to the DDR process there.<sup>35</sup> For example, at the earlier stage of the DDR process when ANBP's regional office in Mazar-e-Sharif was not fully operational, the Mazar PRT working with UNAMA identified units (and heavy weapons) that should be included in the program for DDR so that a Mobile Disarmament Unit of ANBP could verify them later.<sup>36</sup>

As argued above, the structure and activities of each PRT varied depending on the environment of the area of operation and the national leadership. Thus, it is difficult to generalize the functions of PRTs that might have contributed to the DDR process. Nevertheless, it can be argued that PRTs played a positive role in providing a security presence and in helping to fill the security gap, despite the restrictive mandate and practical limitations.<sup>37</sup> Through performing such a role, PRTs have certainly had a positive impact upon the DDR process, which required a secure environment to be operative. A close analysis of the interaction between PRTs and the DDR process indicated that specific functions of a PRT have been particularly effective in fostering the DDR process in a certain location. A set of those PRT functions that have interacted with the DDR process positively can be recapitulated as follows: (1) security assurance, (2) virtual sanction, (3) deterrence, (4) visible incentives, (5) information dissemination, (6) operational service, and (7) mediation. Each lubricating function will be explored briefly in the following.

### ***Security Assurance (Physical Effects)***

The DDR process was carried out in eight regions in Afghanistan including Kabul

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<sup>33</sup> For example, the sacking of Fahim Khan who was then the Defense Minister and the leading figure in the Pahjshir Valley faction of ethnic Tajik by the President Hamid Karzai, and the military defeat of the army of Ismile Khan who was then the Governor of Herat and considered to be the most powerful recalcitrant faction (Kinichi Komano, *Watashino Afghanistan—Chu Afghanistan Taishi no Fukko Shien Funtouki* [My Afghanistan—A Report of Reconstruction Assistance by an Ambassador to Afghanistan] (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 2005), pp. 132-135.

<sup>34</sup> Personal interview conducted on 2 November 2005.

<sup>35</sup> Jakobsen, pp. 20-23; Hendrickson, et al., pp. 23-24; Barbara J. Stapleton, *The Provincial Reconstruction Team Plan in Afghanistan: A New Direction?*, Bonn, May 2003, p. 8; and Stapleton, *Presentation on Afghanistan*, Copenhagen Seminar on Concerted Planning and Action of Civil and Military Activities in International Operations (20-21 June 2005), p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> ANBP, *ANBP Weekly Summary Report*, 6 December 2003.

<sup>37</sup> Perito, p. 8.

where ANF (the Central Corps and from 1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> Corps) had their bases. ISAF could have been employed to assist the program for DDR, but its mandate was limited to the maintenance of security within Kabul. Although the refusal of the international community to expand ISAF to areas outside Kabul left the rest of the country considerably less secure in physical and psychological terms,<sup>38</sup> the Coalition and NATO/ISAF created PRTs in key provinces to spread the ISAF effect outside of Kabul. With limited number of soldiers (80-150 strength) scattered across provinces, it was clear that PRTs did not have sufficient combat capacity to overcome the challenges of extremists. Nonetheless, PRTs were able to mount regular patrols in high-risk areas, and to respond quickly to incidents when they occur.<sup>39</sup> In Bamiyan, for example, the PRT had three forward operating bases (FOB) in its area of operation, and two mobile patrols were provided out of the main PRT base camp, and three additional patrols operated out of three FOBs.<sup>40</sup> The PRT not only provided patrol teams and guards for DDR sites, but also it escorted ANBP staff to various DDR sites in the province.<sup>41</sup> Hence, in provinces such as Jalalabad (1<sup>st</sup> Corps), Kandahar (2<sup>nd</sup> Corps), Gardez (3<sup>rd</sup> Corps), Herat (4<sup>th</sup> Corps), Parwan (5<sup>th</sup> Corps), Kunduz (6<sup>th</sup> Corps), Mazar-e-Sharif (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Corps), and Bamiyan (9<sup>th</sup> Corps), the physical presence of PRTs alone helped to maintain security in these regions, and patrols conducted by PRTs reinforced security efforts during the disarmament of ANF. In short, PRTs played a positive role in providing a *security assurance* and in helping to improve the security environment in remote provinces.

### ***Virtual Sanction (Psychological Effects)***

PRTs were often equipped with light arms only and they were not able to counter physically the aggression of powerful warlords by themselves. The force protection units of the military component of PRTs were allowed to use force only for self-defense.<sup>42</sup> Hence, the presence of PRTs alone could not have fulfilled the role of a security guarantor, as PRTs did not have real capacity to enforce sanction upon recalcitrant commanders and warlords. It was the U.S. forces in Afghanistan that played an ambiguous but important role in keeping factional fighting in check as its presence clearly represented a threat to

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<sup>38</sup> Their, p. 48.

<sup>39</sup> Save the Children, p. 26.

<sup>40</sup> Personal interview conducted on 2 November 2005.

<sup>41</sup> Personal interview conducted on 2 November 2005.

<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, some PRTs were equipped for and their rules of engagement (ROEs) required to defending other persons and property beyond the perimeter of the PRT. The Bamiyan PRT, for example, participated in operations in support of Afghan security forces attempting to deal with recalcitrant warlords (Personal interview conducted on 2 November 2005).

commanders should they cross an unclear line.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, PRTs were able to utilize the presence of U.S. forces—an “ultimate stick”—to strengthen their credibility as a security guarantor by associating themselves with the U.S. forces. PRTs were conceived as a trigger for the deployment of stronger U.S. forces in conjunction with the Afghan security forces in the event of emergencies, or to challenge the authority of the warlords.<sup>44</sup> The Afghans believed that PRTs could “reach back” to forward support bases of the U.S. forces for immediate, massive, and overwhelming firepower from the air, including deep strike aircraft (B-52) based at Bagram airfield.<sup>45</sup> This “B-52 factor” or *virtual sanction* capability of PRTs was helping not only to avert clashes between rival factions, but also it contributed to efforts of seeking compliance from recalcitrant commanders and warlords with the DDR process. Indeed, what kept the warlords in the DDR process was partially the fear that pulling out would incur the wrath of the U.S. military.<sup>46</sup>

### ***Deterrence***

Some PRTs excelled at providing a security presence and performing duties related to DDR.<sup>47</sup> Through fulfilling such key functions as *security assurance* and *virtual sanction* identified above, PRTs have been able to provide *deterrence* against potential challenges of regional warlords to the central government and helped to prevent speculative aggressions by warlords and Corps commanders to take advantage of power vacuum created by the disarmament and demobilization of existing Corps in ANF. For example, the Mazar PRT traveled extensively through its area of operations, and when tensions arose, PRT members stepped into the middle of the action, sometimes physically placing themselves between armed groups. Their efforts prevented factional fighting from breaking out or escalating on a number of occasions.<sup>48</sup>

While not related to the DDR process directly, the *deterrence* function of PRTs was also instrumental in other aspects of the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan, namely provincial politics. President Hamid Karzai was not shy about firing ineffective or corrupt governors and police chiefs although he did not have a strong National Army and Police at hand to counter the resistance of those sucked officials.<sup>49</sup> Karzai used the presence of

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<sup>43</sup> Their, pp. 51-52.

<sup>44</sup> Hendrickson, et al., pp. 14-15.

<sup>45</sup> Perito, p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> Their, pp. 51-52.

<sup>47</sup> Perito, p. 12.

<sup>48</sup> McNerney, p. 40.

<sup>49</sup> McNerney, p. 41.

PRTs to reinforce his decision, when necessary.<sup>50</sup> In this sense, the deterrence function of PRTs was instrumental in supporting leadership changes and consolidation of the central government's influence over the provinces. This, in return, accelerated the DDR process. Hence, PRTs served as *deterrence* against potential challenges from warlords to the central government as well as preventing minor clashes among regional factions from becoming a major threat to the DDR process.

### ***Visible Incentives (Stop-Gap Measures)***

PRTs offered opportunities immediately after demobilization, bridging a gap between registration and commencement of reintegration programs, and between completion of vocational training and successful job placement. PRTs provided various temporary “stop-gap” measures, e.g., cash-for-work wage labor employment, while the tailored solutions were being developed. Reconstruction element of PRTs was not strong, its budget was limited, and the quality of work being done through PRTs was sometimes accused of not satisfying the minimum standard. PRTs focused on short-term measures, but such an emphasis contributed to visualize incentives to combatants to lay down their weapons. For example, one of the goals of the Bamiyan PRT was to promote job creation and training in support of DDR.<sup>51</sup> A U.S. State Department representative has been almost exclusively responsible for developing the PRT's stop-gap measures related to the DDR process in Bamiyan.<sup>52</sup> The Bamiyan PRTs, on behalf of 400 ex-combatants who were disqualified to receive official reintegration packages due to their invalid IDs, negotiated with ANBP in Kabul, and obtained a food-package for those disqualified ex-combatants to deal with their dissatisfaction and resentment.<sup>53</sup>

During the pilot phase in Mazar-e-Sharif where the civilian agencies were not yet fully deployed to conduct the reintegration program, the Mazar PRT played an important role in filling the gap between demobilization and reintegration programs. Obviously, ex-combatants needed some provisional measures to sustain their lives and their families even in the pilot phase, and ANBP planned initially to distribute cash benefit to demobilized ex-combatants. However, their former commanders collected forcefully the cash benefits distributed to demobilized soldiers, and this was proven to be a problem. Since ANP was

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<sup>50</sup> For example, the PRT in Gardez helped the governor, a trusted appointee of President Karzai, to transfer the corrupt provincial police chief to Kabul. When the new police chief arrived with a well-trained police unit to assist in the transfer process, the presence of PRTs demonstrated U.S. support for the central government and helped prevent a firefight between the newcomers and the departing police chief's private militia (McNerney, p. 41).

<sup>51</sup> Hendrickson, et al., pp. 29-30.

<sup>52</sup> Hendrickson, et al., p. 25 and personal interview conducted on 2 November 2005.

<sup>53</sup> Personal interview conducted on 2 November 2005.

not operational in Mazar-e-Sharif, the Mazar PRT was tasked to undertake investigations of offending commanders.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, as an alternative to cash benefits, wage labor projects were initiated for the demobilized soldiers with funds provided by the Mazar PRT.<sup>55</sup> By providing stop-gap measures, PRTs were able to show targeting combatants *visible incentives* for taking part in the DDR process.

### ***Information Dissemination***

Information dissemination is a critical component of the DDR process, as access to timely, accurate and unbiased information by targeting individuals would help to reduce excessive expectation on reintegration programs and modify their false assumption on goals of a DDR process being carried out. In Bamiyan, for example, some commanders were telling their soldiers that they would receive a variety of benefits, including \$200, rations, clothes, etc., when they turned over arms to ANBP.<sup>56</sup> These commanders were intentionally bringing a small number of soldiers to the program for DDR so that those soldiers would return to their villages and tell others that no such benefits were being provided upon disarmament, and thus created feeling of being betrayed by the central government and the DDR process among targeting combatants.<sup>57</sup>

PRTs helped to avoid such a trouble of miscommunication to occur by providing various mediums for conveying messages regarding the DDR process in remote provinces. In Kunduz, for example, the overall picture of the DDR process and changes in the reintegration program were broadcasted regularly through PRT's radio service.<sup>58</sup> In Kandahar, as part of public information campaign, the PRT and the UNAMA field office worked closely with the Corps Commander and Governor to prepare the groundwork for DDR and selected candidates for the DDR process.<sup>59</sup> In Jalalabard, a gathering was organized by the PRT, in which ANBP's deputy regional office manager and program officer briefed about 70 mullahs with an explanation of the program for DDR and a comprehensive question and answer session.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> ANBP, *ANBP Weekly Summary Report*, 8 - 21 February 2004.

<sup>55</sup> ANBP, *ANBP Weekly Summary Report*, 29 February - 06 March 2004. The ex-combatants received their case benefits by submitting their weapons that were often provided by their commander. Hence, the commanders claimed that they were entitled to receive such benefits. In order to avert such a problem in the "cash-for-weapons" scheme, wage labor projects were envisaged, in which ex-combatants would receive the payment for their labor.

<sup>56</sup> ANBP, *ANBP Weekly Summary Report*, 11 - 17 July 2004.

<sup>57</sup> ANBP, *ANBP Weekly Summary Report*, 11 - 17 July 2004.

<sup>58</sup> ANBP, *ANBP Weekly Summary Report*, 30 May - 5 June 2004.

<sup>59</sup> ANBP, *ANBP Weekly Summary Report*, 8 - 21 February 2004.

<sup>60</sup> ANBP, *ANBP Weekly Summary Report*, 6 - 12 June 2004.

### ***Operational Service (logistics, intelligence and other service support)***

PRTs provided various *operational services* to ANBP and other Afghan authorities in charge of the DDR process so that they could undertake the program for DDR. In particular, PRTs supported logistics for the disarmament process. PRTs also served as eyes and ears for ANBP and the Afghan security sector by identifying and reporting the units and their weapons to take part in the DDR process and the HWC program. The Mazar PRT, for example, established two cantonment sites, under the guard of ANA, which were used to hold artillery of the two groups. The PRT cantoned 374 heavy weapons in the area of Mazar-e-Sharif,<sup>61</sup> and the presence of the PRT also helped to ensure that these weapons were destroyed or not redistributed.<sup>62</sup> They were also monitoring the disarmament and demobilization processes. They also involved in the collection and maintenance of collected caches of weapons in some occasions. PRTs provided transportation and escort service to ANBP personnel, local government officials and demobilized ex-combatants. PRTs also made welcome contributions to other elements of SSR through training and support for ANP and ANA operations.<sup>63</sup> PRTs performed a catalytic function by enabling local government authorities to operate and by supporting deployments of ANA and ANP.<sup>64</sup>

### ***Mediation (with an ultimate stick)***

It was anticipated that PRTs, especially their military components, would need to interact locally with government representatives and non-state power holders to proceed with disarmament.<sup>65</sup> Some PRTs undertook, together with UNAMA and ANBP, a series of negotiation with recalcitrant commanders and warlords to persuade or encourage their men to join the DDR process. PRT commanders were often present in facilitating disarmament agreements,<sup>66</sup> offering *mediation* service to local stakeholders. In Bamiyan, for example, the Provincial Joint Security Group was formed between the Afghan security

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<sup>61</sup> ANBP, *ANBP Weekly Summary Report*, 22 - 29 August 2004.

<sup>62</sup> *CIMIC in NATO Transformation: Civil-Military Collaboration in Afghanistan* (December 28, 2005), <[www.unjlc.org](http://www.unjlc.org)>, accessed on 24 January 2006, para. 19.

<sup>63</sup> Perito, p. 12.

<sup>64</sup> Dziedic and Seidl, p. 8.

<sup>65</sup> Hendrickson, et al., pp. 14-15.

<sup>66</sup> Joseph Collins, "US Department of Defense, NATO and the Challenges of Afghan Security", presented at the National Defense University, 28 January 2004, cited in Hoshmand, p. 21. Furthermore, PRT commanders not only facilitated communications with local stakeholders but also they functioned as a convener of a forum among their counterparts in the international military forces present in the scene, namely the Coalition and ISAF commanders. Such a role of PRT commanders was an informal one, but it was critical in coordinating and de-conflicting their operations (Perito, p. 8).

sector and the PRT, and this group assumed negotiation with warlords and commanders over their participation in the DDR process.

Through their day-to-day contact with local stakeholders, PRTs also offered *mediation* between adversaries. Such intermediary functions helped to defuse factional fighting among warlords. For example, the Mazar PRT was instrumental in brokering cease-fire agreements and encouraging peaceful talks between warring groups.<sup>67</sup> The PRT commander together with UNAMA successfully brokered a ceasefire following factional fighting between Jamiat and Junish in October 2003.<sup>68</sup> In November 2003, the Mazar PRT hosted negotiation talks between General Atta and General Dostum in the barrack of the Mazar PRT base.<sup>69</sup> The Mazar PRT was also reported to have facilitated HWC, the removal of illegal checkpoints in Mazar city, and community disarmament in troubled areas in Sholgara valley through careful negotiation and interaction with local security actors and the provincial authorities.<sup>70</sup>

Through *mediation* PRTs played a critical role in making recalcitrant commanders to participate in the DDR process and defusing factional fighting among warlords. Nonetheless, it can be argued that PRTs were able to perform such a function because they were considered to be able to employ an “ultimate stick” from the U.S. forces should warlords refuse to cooperate. In short, such a function delivered by PRTs should be categorized as mediation with virtual sanction capability.

## **6. Conclusion**

The effort by PRTs certainly served as one of the contributing factors to the DDR process in Afghanistan, and in fact their presence and activities accelerated the disarmament of combatants and the cantonment of heavy weapons. At the same time, however, other factors such as the emergence of a new political-military reality in Afghanistan and the shift of power balance among the major stakeholders and warlords also played a considerable role in facilitating the DDR process. This paper did not intend to argue that the impact of PRTs upon the DDR process was more significant than other factors. Nor, did it purport to present a comprehensive analysis of the impact of PRTs upon the DDR process in Afghanistan. The findings of this paper were based on the analysis of the short-term

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<sup>67</sup> Hoshmand, p. 15.

<sup>68</sup> Save the Children, p. 26.

<sup>69</sup> Hoshmond, p. 22.

<sup>70</sup> Hendrickson, et al., p 23.

impact of PRTs upon the DDR process. It failed to explore PRTs' long-term impact upon the Afghan peacebuilding process as well as their possible negative impacts upon the DDR process and beyond. In short, the paper sought to fill a gap in the existing literature on PRTs, which failed to elaborate on how PRTs helped or not helped the DDR process by analyzing the interaction between functions fulfilled by PRTs and the DDR process in Afghanistan.

As argued above, PRTs were originally designed to assist the DDR process, but they did not received specific directions on how to assist it on the ground. Despite the lack of complete strategy in supporting DDR and their restricted mandate and capacity, each PRTs tried to group for their contribution to the DDR process. This paper illuminated a set of PRT functions that have facilitated the DDR process on the ground, and categorized them into seven lubricating functions: (1) security assurance, (2) virtual sanction, (3) deterrence, (4) visible incentives, (5) information dissemination, (6) operational service, and (7) mediation.

Nevertheless, the performance and possibilities of PRTs as a security guarantor in a DDR process should be analyzed further with a more systematic framework for measuring their effectiveness including their efficiency, cost-performance, sustainability, spill-over effects and others. While PRTs played an important role in supporting the program for DDR, their contribution to the DDR process in Afghanistan can best be characterized as an ad hoc based, "where-possible" approach. A more sophisticated approach needs to be envisaged if PRTs are to be involved in peacebuilding in the future as a substitute for a robust presence of impartial peacekeeping force.

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