



## LESSONS LEARNED RECORD OF INTERVIEW

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LL-01 -- Strategy and Planning
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Interview Ambassador Richard Boucher, former Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs.
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To elicit his officials from his time serving as Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs.
<b>Interviewees:(Either list interviewees below, attach sign-in sheet to this document or hyperlink to a file)</b>
<b>SIGAR Attendees:</b>
Matthew Sternenberger, Candace Rondeaux
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<b>Key Topics:</b>

- General Observations
- The State and DOD Struggle
- Building Security Forces
- Governance Expectations and Karzai
- Capable Actors
- Regional Economics and Cooperation
- General Comments on Syria & Iraq
- Lessons Learned

### General Observations

Let me approach this from two directions. The first question of did we know what we were doing? The second is what was wrong with how we did it? The first question of did we know what we were doing - I think the answer is no. First, we went in to get al-Qaeda, and to get al-Qaeda out of Afghanistan, and even without killing Bin Laden we did that. The Taliban was shooting back at us so we started shooting at them and they became the enemy. Ultimately, we kept expanding the mission. George W. [Bush], when he was running for president, said that the military should not be involved in nation building. In the end, I think he was right. If there was ever a notion of mission creep it is Afghanistan. We went from saying we will get rid of al-Qaeda so they can't threaten us



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anymore to saying we are going to end the Taliban. [Then we said] that we will get all of the groups the Taliban works with. [Then further to having] our exit strategy be a stable government in Afghanistan. Once you start saying that and you start getting into stable government, democratic elections, making sure the Supreme Court functions properly, anti-corruption authority, and a women's ministry that looks at women's rights, new educational curriculum, transitional justice (which means you will go after all the people the president relies upon for political support). You are trying to build systematic government à la Washington, DC, which is not the best example but that is the one we have in our hands, in a country that doesn't operate that way. If we think our exit strategy is to either beat the Taliban, which can't be done given the local, regional, and cross-border circumstances, or to establish an Afghan government that is capable of delivering good government to its citizens using American tools and methods, then we have no exit strategy because both of those are impossible. If we defined our exit strategy as leaving a more or less functional Afghanistan, that wouldn't be a harbor for al-Qaeda, maybe we could have got at that properly. Train up an army, let Karzai have money to distribut (b)(1) - 1.4(D)

We did not know what we were doing. First, maybe everybody may should have had to read a little more history besides just Ghost Wars to operate in Afghanistan. The only time this country [Afghanistan] has worked properly was when it was a floating pool of tribes and warlords presided over by someone who had a certain eminence who was able to centralize them to the extent that they didn't fight each other too much. I think this idea that we went in with that this was going to become a state government like a U.S. state or something like that was just wrong and is what condemned us to 15 years of war instead of 2 or 3.

The other big problem is me, you and Jessie Helms. Jessie Helms because when the Soviet Union fell apart, we had to cut a deal with Jessie Helms to continue our aid programs. The deal with Jessie Helms was that we would spend the money in the United States. We would buy American products, American grain, American consultants, American Security experts, and they would implement our aid programs. Those billions of dollars you guys were trying to track down, I mean you must be able to find this number. The Afghans used to tell me that somewhere between 10-20% actually shows up in Afghanistan, and less than 10% ever gets to a village. So you tell us [the Afghans] that you just spent a billion dollars as we see \$50 million worth of roads. You [the U.S.] hire a big contractor and inside the beltway consultant, who then hires 15 subcontractors. The first guy takes 20%, then next level takes 20% who would go hire a bunch of expensive American experts to do what Afghan diaspora refugees or Indian experts could do for ten times the price. [These Americans we hire] travel to Afghanistan first class or at least business class with five security guys each. Then you come and maybe you do training for the same group of people that have been trained 12 times by different countries or you go out to the village to build a school and that is very nice. The money you spend doesn't get to the village, doesn't really help the Afghan government.

We were sort of aware of this. We took the Afghans seriously on this. Bill Wood and I pushed to push more money through the Afghan government gradually. This is 7 or 8 years after we first arrived in Afghanistan. We started putting some money through certain ministries that had been able to qualify for the accountability of U.S. assistance. I am afraid that is the second problem – the fact that there is an institution that is trying to account for every dollar we spend in Afghanistan. You can't do that. You can't spend money and track money at the same time in Afghanistan. Larry Summers used to talk about dropping money from a helicopter in order to stimulate the economy, sometimes you have to do that. Sometimes you just have to spend money and hope that it is useful or assume that some of it will disappear – that a large chunk will disappear in Afghanistan. You can do somethings to account for it better like get receipts and ask the governors and ministers you give it to, to submit an accounting of how they spend it. If you think you can go and audit every gun, box of nails, and bag of cement, you are just fooling yourself. Congress unfortunately thinks that we can.



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That is where part of the problem is me. **People like me that didn't go up to Congress and say "40% of this money will disappear – I guarantee it. I will do my best to make sure we know where it goes. I will make sure it is spent as usefully as possible given the circumstance. But 40% is going to disappear and I just want you to know that upfront. I want it to disappear in Afghanistan, rather than in the beltway. So, give me less money and let me spend it in Afghanistan through the government and then ask the government what they do with it." Not only that, but probably in the end it is going to make sure that more of the money gets to some villager, maybe through five layers of corrupt officials, but still gets to some villager. It also will build a capability, an allegiance, and a dependency on the government.** Because we don't trust the [Afghan] government we go out and spend the money through American contractors, American NGOs, and the American military.

The CERP program the military has is a great program. They go out there, sit down with villagers and talk about what they need – schools? Roads? Trainings? How can we help you get competitive bidding, local contractors? You would talk to the majors and they have all these great programs that will now leave when the major leaves, or when the U.S. military leaves. That doesn't build any Afghan government capability. That actually undercuts the government. (b)(1) - 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

Yeah, the major would bring a local official along for the ride, but everybody knew who had the checkbook.

We shouldn't fool ourselves about where the money goes, it is more important about how we spend the money. The political affect with having the [Afghan] government deliver something to the people, even if it is the chance to pull 20% more off their cut in Afghanistan. It means we are establishing the government as the course of benefits. We ought to work hard to make sure the government distributes the benefits fairly, but we ought to not try to distribute that stuff ourselves which is essentially what we did...because of me, you and Jessie Helms.

So we ran a parallel system of aid and development in Afghanistan and then we left. Now that we are going to have fewer troops even at the levels the president is announcing today, Army contractors aren't going to be out there. Maybe, we will have to deliver assistance through the Afghan government. There are a few Afghan programs that were good, the solidarity program was good. We tried to make sure they kept getting money from us, but never as much as others. Health ministry was doing pretty well. **As far as I know, we didn't build roads through the Ministry of Public Works. We didn't just turn over money to the Ministry of Education to run the schools. I think, in the end, we did them a disservice by not doing that.**

Now there is another problem and it goes back the structure of government. We want a government to be setup according to an org chart with all kinds of democratic elections. Jelani Popal, had an office of local governance in Karzai's office. We tried, with him, to set up a fund. Trying to get him \$50 million that he could use to put money into districts that he trusted, that they trusted, that the palace thought was responsive to them. His relations with Karzai did not work out. **I think that because in the end, Karzai's governing instincts (b)(1) - 1.4(D) were to rely on his friends. That is how Afghanistan works – relying on his friends, supporters, and local potentates; powers that be, not just powers that the American's created.** (b)(1) - 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

So getting him to use that governing structure that we put in place, that we told him he had to have, was really hard. So getting money into the provinces and districts, and having the central government and Karzai use that chain, was hard. He relied on his friends in provinces for information for what was really going on. He relied on them for his political support and favors. They relied on him for the same. We didn't accept that that was the way things work in Afghanistan. **We said, you have to work through this democratic, bureaucratic system just like what have in America.** We were consistently a quarter turn off from Karzai that eventually produced some blow ups and dust ups that we had with him.

### The State and DOD Struggle



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**There are two reasons that [Congress is obsessed with the war fighting aspect of the intervention]. First, boys with toys. The Pentagon has all this cool stuff.** I used to argue with my counterpart at Defense, Pete Williams when he was spokesman there and I was spokesman at State. [I would say to him that] you [Pete Williams] go up in your briefing and somebody asks about the Battleship Iowa lobbing shells into Lebanon. You tell where it was made, the names of the workers, the locations of the workers, and the congressional districts of everybody that made the shell, the gun, the metal. [You also tell them] where the commander was from, how many rounds, and how many that...all the boys with toys stuff. Then someone raises their hand asks why they are throwing shells into the side of Lebanon and he would refer them to the State Department, and that is my question. Congress is a bit like that too. They are fascinated by all this stuff that is built in their districts and they love the mechanical stuff.

**The other problem, which is a problem Americans have, but especially the American military is the can-do attitude. It gets us into trouble. We think we are Mr. Fixit.** The president goes around the table and says, "we have problem here." The first guy to raise his hand is the Special Forces guy who says they can take care of it. [The president might also ask why] our aid is not getting down to the district level – the military steps up and says, sir we have \$100 million in CERP programs and we can increase that to \$200 million. We have majors, people all over the country that can take care of that for you. That is the wrong way to do it. **It is better to do it badly through an Afghan civilian government structure perhaps with some civilian advisors, than to do it ourselves well, through the military.** Something everybody in Afghanistan knows, except the U.S. military is that eventually the U.S. military leaves and all of these capabilities, all these toys, all these programs, leave with them. I am not surprised, but it takes a bit of a mindset change.

**One thing I complain about all the time now is the sort of militarization of foreign policy. That is where the money is, the military has the money and the can-do attitude. Ask the State Department guy to do it and he says, "that is really complicated."** It doesn't sound like the right answer when you are trying to get something done, but it is unfortunately frequently the truth...it is really complicated. You can just go play whack-a-mole with the Taliban or drop drones on people and think you are solving the problem. [You can't also] just throw more military advisors into an army that is not capable of doing anything like in Iraq. "I can take care of that for you Mr. President" is probably the worst answer, but it is often the one that gets the applause and it usually gets applause on the hill too.

### **Building Security Forces**

The thinking wasn't in Afghanistan, it was in State Department, it was Rumsfeld [on our decision to go light footprint]. It was that we should get rid of the government, then throw some money in there. **There were the Friends of Don [Rumsfeld].** He had one guy who knew electricity, one guy that knew water, one guy that knew health. They had a formal name and stationed in the embassy – the [Afghan] Reach Back Group. They were just on their way out when I was getting in around 2006. What did they know about Afghanistan? You know? **What were they doing in an Embassy with more money and responsibility, at least in the sector, than the Ambassador?** This was his way of saying, we got rid of al-Qaeda, you now reconstruct Afghanistan – I am going to Iraq. So the money and the troops went to Iraq. By the time I got there in 2006 to 2007, we hadn't hardly trained any Afghan police. There was no structure or capability to send police into localities and districts. So we ramped up that program. Got in a bureaucratic fight over who was going to run it and frankly I didn't care that much. So we started training policemen and setting up the kind of electronic payment system for their paychecks that we set up for the military four years before. General Cohen, at one point, was doing that training. He said, **"I know that we trained 70,000 policeman. I know we are paying 70,000 policeman. I just don't know if we are paying the 70,000 policemen we trained."** But that was Afghanistan, and you had to accept that type of situation if you were going to work there.



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There was another part of that we, State Department, did wrong. **We started out in Afghanistan with this attitude that we will do the military, the Germans, will do the police, and the Italians will do the justice system. Everybody was going to take a sector. Then of course, nobody had the resources. Nobody had the capabilities. Nobody had the determination in the other sectors or at least not to our liking.** The Germans were training police hierarchy officers, but not placemen, thinking that somehow good officers would filter down. They didn't understand that the central officers had very little control over the behavior of local policemen. That was true place after place. If you look at it after 15 years, we could have taken a thousand school children in first grade, well not quite first but fifth grade, and taken them to get educated and trained in Indian schools and colleges. Then we could have brought them back on an airplane by now and said ok you guys run Afghanistan. I am not sure that would have worked any better. Better than having a bunch of Americans going in and saying we can build it for you, with you, meaning you can come to my meetings and listen to me go on and on. I think part of it was Defense wanting to skedaddle, and this idea that you can have different sectors run by different countries. **Part of it was that we trained people to be Americans, the Germans trained people to be Germans, and the Italians trained people to be Italians.** Some of the Afghans remained Afghans.

### Governance Expectations and Karzai

One of the things I am going to give a speech on soon is [expectations of governance]. One of our global problems is that now people care about the quality of governance and the fairness of governance. The fact that you have explosions in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq and elsewhere, is because they are not getting fair and decent government. You had the Arab Spring because the middle class was demanding fairness from their government. When you look around the world and where have we done a good job helping people develop better governments, government institutions and fair systematic governance for their people? There is a lot of stuff now in the development scheme and that is why countries develop and that's why they prosper. It is not money or investment, but it is a stable government institution. So where have we done that well? We have done it pretty well helping out in Taiwan, Korea and Singapore, but they were all dictatorships or autocracies for a long time and that is not exactly a model we want to propose you use elsewhere. We did it pretty well in Eastern Europe when they got out of the Soviet Bloc but they just woke up in the morning and said "I want to do that" and pointed at Europe. They said "how do Europeans brush their teeth? That is how I am going to brush my teeth." They said "how do they control their currencies? That is how I am going to control my currency." They all this body of EU law that they could go and apply. The ones that did it more thoroughly are doing better now but that was fairly straightforward for them.

The only other places we have done a good job bringing good governance is where they decided that they were going to finally try to reform and do it right. Chile unfortunately a dictatorship model and we most contributed by training their people in Chicago. Columbia. Plan Columbia worked because it was a Columbian plan that we helped with once the Columbians decided they were going to take their problems on a fix them. Georgia is starting to look that way now. Philippines will look that way. But who knows how much money we have thrown into the Philippines over the years. Yes, the rice thing in the 1960s was great, but in terms of stable prosperity governance, they are getting their act together now and we want to help. So we don't really have that many good models and we certainly don't have many good models for countries as destitute as Afghanistan was.

When we first went there with Secretary Powell, Ryan Crocker and the Embassy were already there. They were living in something called the bunker. It had been built in the Najib period or early Soviet period. It had two wings - the boys wing and the girls wing. That is where they slept. They had a little place to cook. They worked in the embassy, but it was missing certain amenities like plumbing so they couldn't really live there. Actually the day the Powell visited, they got the toilets to work. In terms of the lives of the people on the compound, that was probably a bigger deal than the Secretary of State coming to visit. We went to a cabinet meeting with Karzai and he had 30 people around the table. He had his Minister for Women's Affairs, just like we told him he had to. He had all the ministers for justice and it was just like the American cabinet. They were sitting around but they had nothing. The central bank governor was telling us how he went and opened the vaults and there was nothing inside. There was



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no money, no currency, no foreign reserves, no gold and none of what you would expect. Most of the ministries didn't have a telephone, I forget how many fax machines. Somehow the Afghans managed to put on this amazing lunch. This huge banquet with piles of rice and dead goats. **They were capable people but they didn't want anything to run a government with so it really was from scratch both organizationally and materially. I think we never let them take the lead and maybe that is just a result of the fact that we found Karzai and flown him in and told everybody that he was their leader. We never even waited for the Afghans to organize themselves.** If it had been a table of Karzai and Ismail Khan, he might have been there since he was energy minister for a while and Dostum Even Hekmatyar and other nasty warlord guys from different tribes and half of Karzai's Pashtun friends from the south, we would have found it distasteful, but it might have worked out better.

When I first got the job in 2006, on one of my first trips out to Kabul, the DEA Administrator was there. He was going up to Jalalabad, so I went with him to Jalalabad and Sherzai was governor. (b)(1) - 1.4(D)

I asked him what he needs in terms of construction here. He said, "I need 5 schools, 5 colleges, 5 dams, and 5 highways." I said well how come? He said "well I need to the highways so the farmers can deliver their food, the schools so kids gets educated here and don't go to Pakistan madrassas, dams for irrigation and electricity." I said, well okay, but why 5? He said "I got this tribe, this tribe, this tribe, this tribe, and one for everybody else." I thought that was the funniest thing I ever heard and now I think it is now one of the smartest thing I ever heard but we weren't prepared to work through that system. We weren't prepared to build up governors and people who weren't behold to the central government and people who would probably take 20% for personal use or for their extended families and friends.

It was more and more frustrating [for Karzai], and I don't know if you talked with Bill Wood or the CIA folks or some general who knew him. (b)(1) - 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

[REDACTED]

We didn't intentionally go and say, here is bullet, please shoot an American, but the fact that some of our stuff go to the Taliban through fairly direct means was probably true. I probably should have taken him more seriously.

(b)(1) - 1.4(D)

hate corruption and have worked anti-corruption all over the world but there are different kinds of corruption. There is corruption that spreads the wealth and takes care of everybody, gets to the orphans and widows. Then there is corruption that goes to my house on the Riviera. I think Afghanistan has a lot more of the orphans and widows, with a few warlords in between, and a lot less of the house on the Riviera type of corruption.

### Capable Actors



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The other thing is that there were all type of capable Afghans in the diaspora and rather than bringing in people from Washington or Rumsfeld cronies, why didn't we do a better job recruiting from the Afghan diaspora? Probably because they didn't want to go back. The ministers I worked with were [from the diaspora]. Spanta was a German university professor and Rassoul was a doctor. Also, why weren't we hiring Pakistanis and Indians? Each one of them has a political problem associated within, but still as U.S. government contractors, they could have done stuff in certain sectors. I think that if we could have figured a way to get the Indian Election Commission in there to run elections instead of Americans that would have been good. (b)(1) - 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

### Regional Economics and Cooperation

[a focus on the regional aspects] was in Bonn. It should have been in Bonn. That was the moment that you could go to all the regional players and ask what type of Afghanistan do we want? What kind of government do we want in Afghanistan? How do we support it? I didn't do that. I had people like (b)(1) - 1.4(D) telling me that there needs to be a regional conference to decide the future of Afghanistan. I would say no. There is a government in Afghanistan and they will have to decide the future of Afghanistan and we can help you have a good relationship with them. We can help do other regional things like electricity lines, exchanges and all that stuff. We can't have people from the outside deciding the fate of Afghanistan – they have to do that themselves. I was pretty strong on that. I know Holbrooke, when he came in, he started organizing regional meetings and having everyone appointed as special envoy for Afghanistan and having big meetings. I hope he enjoyed it but, you're not going to fix Afghanistan from the outside in, you're going to fix it from the ground up inside Afghanistan.

I used to talk about ground-up security. If you could start to establish decent government and include locals, you can build the nation from there. That is why police were so important to me. That is why roads were so important to me. I am not sure it worked, but it at least occasionally showed some promise. I had a different model for elections – maybe starting with local and district level elections. Sort of an Indian rotational system. Just the way the U.S. started – having the districts elect the provincial leaders and have the provincial leaders getting together to elect the central leader; do an adaption of Karzai's tribal coalition approach. That is the way the [U.S.] Senate is not directly elected and the president is still not directly elected. Something like that, which builds the nation from the ground up and provide a place for everybody. Yes, in some places, the village leader will say everyone has to vote for my son, that's fine. His son and everybody else's son will get together and select provincial leaders and so on. That kind of system is more adapted to a place with that local thing. I resisted the idea of fixing Afghanistan from the outside.

I tried to get neighbors to cooperate and support. It was much easier with Central Asia as Afghanistan was their route to the sea. Even with Turkmenistan, (b)(1) - 1.4(D)

We had a big energy conference that is when Ismail Khan was in Istanbul. We actually had some Columbians come and brief how they maintain gas pipelines during an insurgency. It turns out it is not that hard to do. You just have be able to fix things quickly. They can blow it up at any point, but you have to be able to get out there and fix it pretty quick as people are relying on the gas supply. Also you get locals to buy in to the work and repairs and sometimes the gas. Then we talked a lot about powerlines coming down from Kazahkstan, Kyrgystan, and Tajikistan. Bob Deutch, who is now living in Florida, was my guy who would do regional stuff in that regard. So the idea was to knit the region together with gas, electricity and trade.



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There were these periodic economic meetings – first one of which I went to was in Kabul. Then we had one in India in about 2008 or 2007. The **Indians**, being very protocol conscious, didn't care I was the American, I was only an Assistant Secretary. So after all the others spoke who were allotted ten minutes each, I got three minutes. My speech was about fruit. I basically said there are Indian and Pakistani oranges in the markets in Osh, we need to make sure melons from Osh can make it to the breakfast tables in New Delhi. The fact is that they couldn't. They couldn't because of corruption. They couldn't because of borders, the Indian-Pakistan dispute, and trucking. You had to offload and then on load at the India-Pakistan border and all types of other rules. But the best melons in the world are from the Fergana Valley and yet they had no way of getting to the breakfast tables of New Delhi. We tried to work on it, but I am afraid a lot of things that made it impossible like the India-Pakistan dispute, which I guess was off my vague radar although I tried. In the end, the Pakistanis didn't want us to solve their problems for the sake of melons from Fergana Valley. They would pay lip service to us then go back to their usual spats. Or because the border problems were not hard, but soft – bribes, corruptions, licenses delays. We build a bridge across the river Panj. I went with Secretary Gutierrez and Karzai. We flew up to Tajikistan and then flew down to the bridge by helicopter with President Rahmon to open the bridge. The band played and the dancers danced. I doubt if even more than two trucks a week go across that bridge, but it is a wonderful bridge. So we tried and kept trying. Eventually, it made sense political problems and corruption were very hard to overcome. **I guess, if we knew how to get over the political problems and the corruption problems, it wouldn't take a bridge to get the melons across...the melons would role from the Fergana Valley to the breakfast tables in New Delhi.**

In terms of regional security issues, we didn't too much with guys in the north. We did do counter drug operations. Russians turned out to be very good partners in that. I was just sort of the one pouring holy water on it and then the DEA guys were doing stuff with their **Russian** counterparts. Controlled delivers [for example] and some of the **Central Asians** were good on that too – to follow a package all the way across and figure out who was in the supply chain and how it was getting to Europe. We did that better and more than the Europeans. The French has a big counternarcotic conference at the Intercontinental [he believes] in Paris. Secretary Powell and made a speech. The French and others made speeches about how this is an awful problem and that we have to do something about it. We said, "excuse us, we have been doing something about it for seven years." These drugs are not coming to U.S., they are coming to Amsterdam. They are coming to Europe. We are actually surprised that you guys just discovered there is a problem. Then the French had their conference and said that they have to do something. Then they went back to their usual habits. The Russians and some of the Central Asians turned out to be pretty good. Afghan DEA guys turned out to be pretty good. Our DEA guys always wanted more money and more capability because they were just THAT close to catching the big fish. I have been fishing too and had my bait in the water a long time and never caught the big fish.

Eradication was complicated. (b)(1) - 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

[REDACTED] Then you had the Washington Post stories and U.S. troops walking through fields of poppy while on patrol and not doing anything about it. I sympathize with the troops if I was in my flak jacket and there was poppy – I would just say they were pretty flowers. They were not there to start chopping flowers and then have someone start shooting at you.

The security part to the north – the **Uzbeks** often recognized the fact that we were working to get Uzbek militants and radicals in Afghanistan. We were sort of taking care of one of their problems. (b)(1) - 1.4(D)

We used to have regular consultations with the **Chinese** because there were some Uighurs in Afghanistan, the Taliban and al-Qaeda. (b)(1) - 1.4(D)





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(b)(1) - 1.4(D)



People say you [Boucher] should write your memoirs. I would say I don't know what my book is about and if I could write the **Pakistan** chapter – the rest would be easy. I am still not as clear on Pakistan as I should be but I will get there someday. The best book I ever read on Pakistan was given to me by (b)(1) - 1.4(D)

He gave me the book called "Report on Waziristan and its Tribes." It is a collection of British dispatches from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and how they tried to subdue Pashtuns. It goes through a series of steps they took. One was that they tried to beat the military which they could do. Two, they tried to turn the tribes against themselves – that didn't work. Three, they tried to invite the leaders and chiefs for education, basically hold them hostage. The tribal leaders were smart enough to know what was going on so they sent the sons of their slaves or their underlings so that didn't work very well. It goes through a whole series of measures. What they finally did was put the tribal chiefs on their payroll and when the tribe was acting up or someone in the tribe committed a murder was to be turned over, they cut off the paycheck. I presume the guy's wife would start complaining and his underlings would start complaining that they weren't getting their money that month and they would come to the Brits and cut a deal. Then they would start the payroll again.

That was what the Pakistanis took over – that system of tribal allegiance and payoffs. Pakistan treated the tribal areas separate and still had that system nominally in place into 2006 and 2007. They finally passed some laws to change it but not enough. That was the nominal system, but what happened was that during the 1980s we destroyed that system by funneling money and guns through the mullahs and the military and the militant groups. We created, in the tribal areas, a mullah-military-militant complex to fight the Soviets. They were very good at it. They got a lot of money. They got a lot of weapons. We destroyed the social fabric and governing structure. Both the Pakistani governing structure of tribal agents and the tribal governing structures. It was no longer the chief, the elders, the people who had been around, or the paterfamilias. The paterfamilias' of the families were no longer really the guys in charge. The people with money and capability were the preacher that had a madrasa, the military commander, and the head of the militant group. Those were the people, like Haqqani, who had the right name, but essentially he was able to govern because he had that authority from the war against the Soviets. **So we basically setup an ungoverned space. A very militant ungoverned space. That is what we had to deal with when we got back to Afghanistan.**

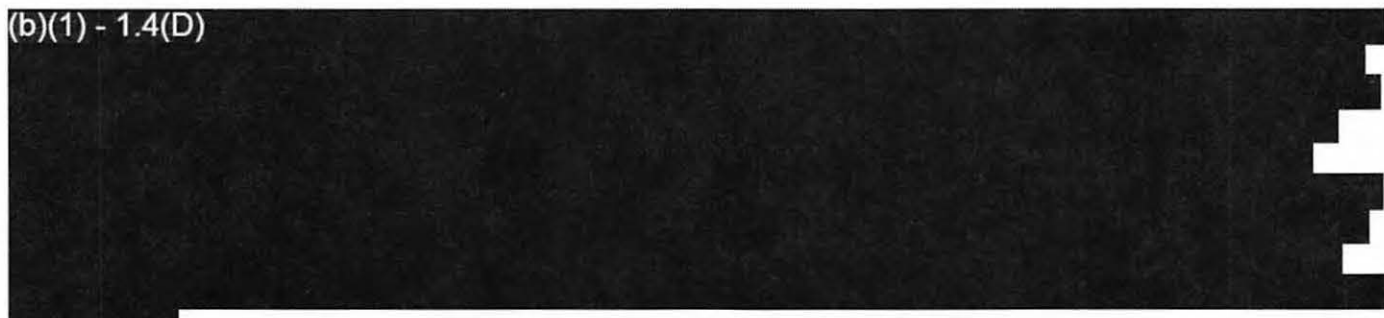
Countless times we had consultations across the border, we occasionally had coordination across the border where we would say to the Pakistan military that we need to move in this direction (Nuristan was one place) and as we moved into Nuristan, they did some stuff on the other side of the border that was pretty effective. That type of coordination worked for a while until some of our guys would shoot at the Pakistan border post, or the Special Forces got so envious of drone strikes that they had to say we can also do that on the ground too and come back with cell phones and information. So we let them go across the border once and that was a fiasco. I don't think it was unclassified, but it was reported in the media so I am basing this off press releases. Again, we thought the Pakistani military would take care of its problem for us. We went to countless meetings where the Pakistanis would stand up, since they were all educated at U.S. war colleges, and tell us about the reform of the Pakistani Army and that they were putting more people into counterinsurgency training and devoting less forces to the




## LESSONS LEARNED RECORD OF INTERVIEW

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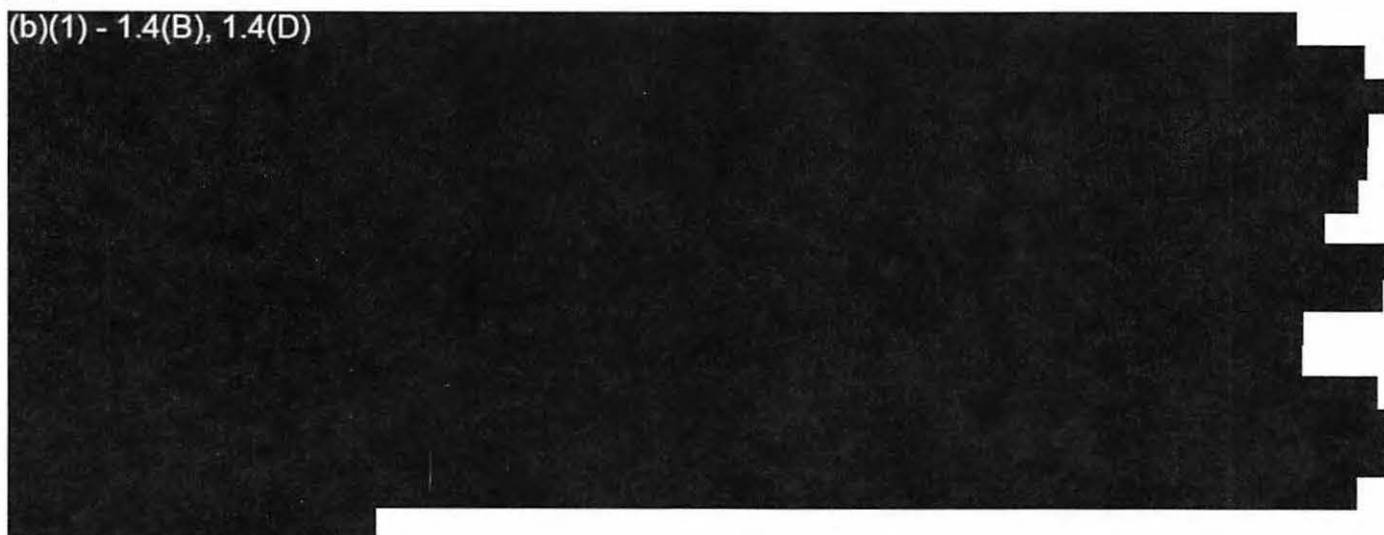
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(b)(1) - 1.4(B), 1.4(D)




(b)(1) - 1.4(B), 1.4(D)



I think the answer is yes, [that we can partner with a nation like Pakistan]. Many of us have thought the answer was yes and many of us were willing to spend money there even though a bunch of it would be wasted. I think the answer is yes for two reasons. First, fundamentally our interests are similar. Stability, trade, modernization. (b)

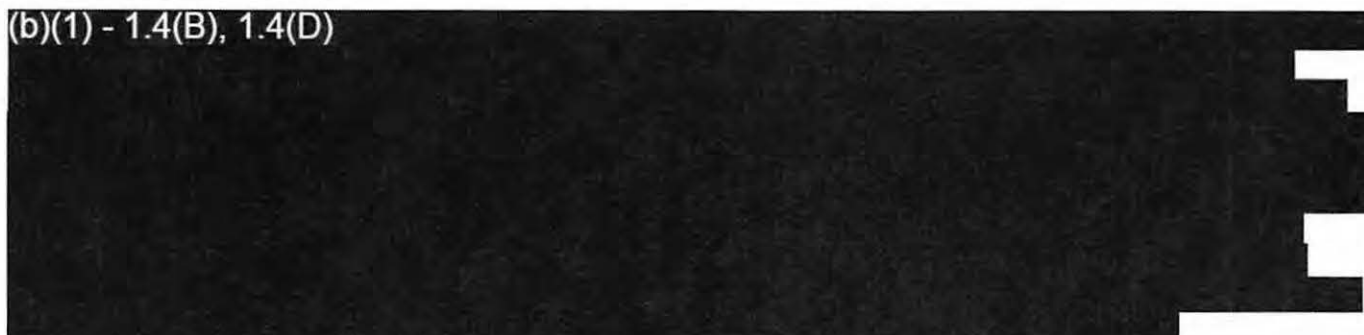
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## LESSONS LEARNED RECORD OF INTERVIEW

(b)(1) - 1.4(B), 1.4(D)



Iran is very interesting. Rahmon in Tajikistan, when we built them a bridge, then said to me soon after, "okay you have to build me a train to go across the bridge." I asked why? He said that "if I get a train across the bridge then you need to build a train across the north to Iraq and on into Iran. That way I can export through Iranian ports." I said, "I am sorry, the U.S. government is not in the business of creating new trade with Iran. We have sanctions and embargoes and not in the position to do that." But if you are sitting in Central Asia, we have blinders on. We say, "Look! Great gas lines through war-torn Iraq, through messed up Pakistan, and may even through India where they will cooperate. They would probably make you offload the gas on the Indian side just like they do the trucks.

(b)(1) - (1.4)(D)



So I think, in the end, it made sense in a strategic way, but in a political and practical way, no. This is what I am trying to teach my kids in class - that is may make sense in policy terms but you still have to deal with personalities in politics.

### General Comments on Syria & Iraq

There is a whole other set of lessons from Iraq that would apply more to Syria than Afghanistan does. That is de-Ba'athification. You can chop the head off the Mr. Potato Head but then the arms and legs continued to run the country. Afghanistan didn't have that core, they had some, but not like Iraq or Syria where they had people who could make the electricity go and water run.

5 months ago I wrote a blog post about the Sandinista solution for Syria. In the end Reagan could not defeat the Sandinistas with an insurgency so under pressure from Congress and the Central Americans, he negotiated and got them to agree to an election. Against most people's bets, they [the Sandinistas] lost the elections. Get the other side to agree to a U.N. supervised election in two years and say that we will cooperate with you. Just have to trust the people of Syria to make the right choice.

(b)(1) - 1.4(D)





## LESSONS LEARNED RECORD OF INTERVIEW

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sectorial problems. This is a problem we have had all over the world and haven't solved very well. Like in Bosnia. You take the lid of the secular dictator off. You get rid of Tito, and you get sectarian violence. You get rid of Saddam and you get sectarian violence in Iraq. You get rid of Kaddafi, you get sectarian violence in Libya. You get rid of Assad and you bet you will have the same thing.

In some ways sectarian dictatorships are pretty good. The Turkish model is hard to implement in some of these places, because they don't like the Turks and don't want to be seen as Turks. They didn't like the Ottoman Empire. We don't really have a strategy for dealing with this and again the problem is the military's can-do attitude. Everything in Washington is either a testosterone test or a job for Special Forces. It is about time someone said hold it! It should be about 1/3 military, 1/3 regional players, and 1/3 governance on the ground. There is 2/3rds we are not doing right now. Foreign policy is fun until you have to go somewhere with bullets flying in the air and you have to fix it.

### Lessons Learned

1. Lower your expectations.
2. Define your goals.
3. Don't forget why you went there.
4. Mission creep is inherent in our system.
5. We have to say good enough is good enough. That is why we are there 15 years later. We are trying to achieve the unachievable instead of achieving the achievable.
6. If governance is your exit strategy, as it almost always is when we go into these places, we have to get a lot better at building governance. Not great, not systematic, not accountable, just decent governance.