

Exhibit J

Project Title:				
LL-05: Private Sector Development				
Interview Code:				
LL-05-d5				
Date/Time:				
November 28, 2017				
Location:				
Phone				
Purpose:				
To learn about the activities of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Group in private sector development				
Interviewees:				
Jeff Raleigh, former communications officer, Afghanistan Reconstruction Group				
SIGAR Attendees:				
Paul Fishstein, LL05 Team Lead				
Non- attribution Basis:	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	X
Recorded:	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	X
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Prepared By: (Name, title and date)				
Paul Fishstein, LL05 Team Lead, November 29, 2017				
Reviewed By: (Name, title and date)				
Key Topics:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of the ARG in private sector development • Coordination between USG agencies • 				

Key takeaways:

- Motivation for forming the ARG was at least in part because of frustration with existing aid channels and institutions, which were seen as cumbersome and bureaucratic.
- The ARG had a difficult time because of competition between agencies and because it had no budget of its own.
- USG agencies resisted coordination, in part because of differences in institutional culture.
- It can be difficult to manage contractors, and hard to hold them accountable for non-performance.

Notes:

[Jeff Raleigh "Was responsible for strategic communications for the US Mission to Afghanistan in 2004/5. Served on Country Team and reported directly to the US Ambassador. Provided counsel and oversight to all US communications efforts in Afghanistan. Provided communications counsel to

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the Afghan Cabinet and a number of senior Afghan leaders. Worked closely with ISAf and the US Military during this period" (per his online bio).]

The ARG was a marvelous idea that was terribly executed. There was no way it was going to succeed, because it was DOD-initiated but part of state. There was not a chance in hell, because of internecine warfare. Also, we had no budget.

I was head of communications. My role was communication about what we were doing. We did a lot of work on CN [counter-narcotics] and trying to coordinate different organizations – the military, USAID, Special Forces, others -- to try to get some coordinated effort.

We had a woman named Jane something, an attorney. She tried to bring some western companies to Afghanistan, but without any success whatsoever. Lou [Hughes] and others were counselors to the cabinet ministers. One of the main tasks was trying to get the money counted before it was taken back to Dubai. One colleague worked for the USGS, he was Afghan.

It [investment] was a complete fiasco, because while there is gold in them thar hills, you need some infrastructure. International firms' employees can't be getting shot at.

Telecoms, cell phones, were a success.

There were vast amounts of money .

I also worked with Tolo, Saad Mohseni and his group.

I also worked for Hill and Knowlton. I worked on counter-narcotics. I had come from the private sector. I was under the assumption that I'd be able to manage some of the firms that won contracts, but it turns out that I had no influence on them whatsoever. I tried my best, I wrote numerous memos complaining. I said that they are way overpaid, that you don't need them.

I worked for USAID, State, DOD -- all of the above; they were at cross-purposes. I worked closely with reporter who wrote an article trying to get rid of them [non-performing contractors], but it fell on deaf ears.

Two things [about the ARAG]. Zal, Marin Strmecki, and Marty Hoffman, who was the chief bureaucrat. He was Rumsfeld's roommate. [?] The three of them put this together. The idea was to get private sector expertise, not so much to go around USAID as to be able to respond to needs more quickly. State and AID were so bureaucratic and they [the Embassy] needed to get something done. The problem was that it all came out of DOD -- but we were all State employees, FSOs. It made no sense. State hated us. They went so far as to screw up our travel arrangements.

For example, we needed to get something printed, so I did what I would normally do; I went to a print shop and gave them the job. It was about \$1,000. One of the management people said to me

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kindly that what you did was a felony: committing funds without budget authority. Fortunately, Patrick Fine [USAID chief of mission] helped me out with this.

Later, State gave us an admin assistant who did everything in her power to fuck us up. [not clear whether this was during time at ARG or in later position]

We couldn't even get a look at the invoices.

I worked closely with communications counterpart at USAID (Joan Ablett?), and we did pretty well. I had more problems with DOD and State. Much of it was cultural: business vs. development folks. We didn't have any idea what we were getting into as far as bureaucracy – it was beyond our experience.

As an example, we were sitting in a meeting about schools with the representative of the contractor who was building schools. One of the roofs had collapsed. USAID said that they had built it wrong, so we have to re-bid it. I said, wait, can't we get the money back? That's the way it would normally work.

I was with him [?] in Iraq. Again, a complete lack of coordination – astonishing.

Another shocking deal was that when I left, I was never debriefed. I never talked to anyone from State. I wrote a weekly memo saying that this is a complete failure because there is no coordination. It was a complete waste of money. It was a State program to provide support to CN, 2006-2007. We had about 25 people. PEP didn't want to work with us. State's contract manager was an admin assistant. We had to send weekly reports. We couldn't get anyone to do anything. There were also two competing ministries, MCN and MOI.

We had 15 Afghans on the team. They were serious people, but they were dicked around when it came to their special visas [SIVs]. I wrote 20 letters on their behalf.

Follow up:

None