

Exhibit K



SIGAR | Office of the Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

LESSONS LEARNED RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Project Title and Code:	
LL-07 – Stabilization in Afghanistan: Strategy and Interventions of the U.S. Government	
Interview Title:	
(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)	
Interview Code:	
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Purpose:	
Interviewees: (Either list interviewees below, attach sign-in sheet to this document or hyperlink to a file)	
SIGAR Attendees:	
David Young (Project Lead)	
Sourcing Conditions (On the Record/On Background/etc.): (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)	
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Prepared By: (Name, title and date)	
David Young, Project Lead	
Reviewed By: (Name, title and date)	
Key Topics:	
SRAP's efforts to influence stabilization strategy	

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

Holbrooke had political goals and spent most of his time promoting himself

He put a lot of effort into civilian surge, especially in rural Afghanistan... H looked like he believed in stab when he was doing it but would express doubts at night. He mainly pushed stab as a way of establishing his bone fides with mil and president...but he knew stabilization wouldn't work because of Vietnam...he once told me that the only thing that's the same is that the policies still don't work

He wanted to promote a political settlement (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)...but we had no political space for doing that

Reidel believed that the TB are part of al Qaeda. He said that fully resourced COIN was better, and in that context, "reconciliation" meant: "we'll be nice to people who surrender"



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Clinton spoke to CFR in summer of 09, and around that time, H's attention was on afghan pres elections...H said we can't do anything until after election...after election came policy review

H got copy of McC report (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was a trap to blame civilians when stabilization doesn't work...it said, we must prioritize governance, which is utterly devoid of meaning...and it turned into stabilization...the people who conceived this plan have no idea what an institution is...they think if you train people to do what you want them to do, you'll have the institution you want...they ignore that there are people with power with ideas about what they want to happen, and how they interact with other people with power...but we just wanted to ignore that...we built organizations, not institutions...the idea being, we're giving them money and not thinking about how we're not going to be giving them money forever, but Afghans know it won't last and they want to make the best of the windfall without endangering themselves...and that's why it's not an institution because it can't be relied on because Afghans can pay for it...the mosque is an institution...if they can't pay for it, it's not an institution unless you rule them...COIN works when the government is in charge of COIN, so they didn't have to hand it over to anyone...but we were doing COIN as colonial power

Afghans knew this influx of funds wouldn't last, and they wanted to make the best of the windfall without endangering themselves.

It was a fantasy that we could do that...

He didn't believe in COIN, but he knew he would get in trouble if he said that

President had no way of standing up to the military...among the people he trusted, there were none that believed what pres believed...so he wouldn't make use of us

There were no briefings during strategy review of civilian components—like civil service, AFG gov capacity, etc.

Jim jones chaired the strategy review...

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

No political constituency for supporting negs with the Taliban, nor even for the war (much less negs)

WH wanted us to convince DoD on reconciliation, but if that's what pres wants, he should say it and tell us how to implement it

Wood was sent to afg to replicate Columbia in AFG

"we're not succeeding because AFG wasn't properly resourced b/c of Iraq" was the mantra

We were out-powerpointed by the military.

In briefings from military, I noticed that they never talked about tribes...there are politics at play here.

The Afghan mentality was: get the most money possible while foreigners are here...they're not going to make permanent changes in their lives because we're giving them money...they want to



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benefit until we leave...it was invisible to us that we're temporary...saying you have a strong commitment doesn't work...even if it were true, no one would believe it...

H had a dim view of bureaucracy, so that's why he wanted to sign everything himself.....he thought he would be judged by how much civilian assistance he could get into the country...mil was always bad mouthing us saying we didn't have enough civilians and resources, so he was trying to answer those charges...

President gave short deadline, but there was a mismatch between deadline and strategy...with that deadline, you can't use that strategy, but strategy not going to work no matter what...better with 10 or 15 or 20 years...but we should have acknowledged that AFG wasn't that important to us. So, strategy didn't match timeline, and would have been better if it had been longer. But even if longer, it still likely wouldn't have worked.

Pres said I'm not going to spend more on afg than we spend on Israel and Egypt combined...we have other priorities too

Basic assumption of Reidel report is that TB is part of combine of terrorists, so COIN has to build gov to keep TB and terrorists away from key territory...keep them out, build governance and the country stabilizes...there's no such thing as a political settlement in that view...Reidel thought that if TB has to be defeated just like al Qaeda, then only a transformation in governance can do that. But that was impossible on that timeline. All we needed to do was not block the settlement that they almost had in 2001 and 4. We weren't interested in afg, we were interested in showing that if you harbor terrorists we would make you suffer. Our policy in AFG was not peace or stabilization—it was preventing safe haven.

Afg is not an agricultural country; that's an optical illusion...largest industry is war, then drugs, then services...ag is down in 4th or 5th place...most are living on remittances, not ag

Flavors of the month was broader...no one knew what to do so they tried stuff...might not be Holbrooke

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

We were stupefied by Dec 1 2009 speech where he announced timeline for drawdown for surge...everyone in region will interpret this to mean the americans are leaving...we were never consulted about that timeline

If you only get out when you've accomplished everything, you'll never get out.

The hope was that if you tell them when we're leaving, it's the only way to force them to act. We were paying people billions each year so they can keep asking us for billions of dollars each year, and there will never be an end to it.

Regarding pushing all ministries instead of providing security and justice: We didn't do the things the Taliban did because we're not the Taliban. We did what we know how to do, not what needs to be done. Going in with just security and justice can't be done because that's not what we do. We build bureaucracies so that's what we did. Trying to compete with the Taliban's successful dispute resolution would have meant allowing Sharia, and that's not something that we could politically do. We tried to have sharia excluded from the constitution, and we ultimately failed, but even trying in



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a country like that shows the mismatch between what we wanted to do and what suited the environment.