



### LESSONS LEARNED RECORD OF INTERVIEW

<b>Project Title and Code:</b>
LL-07 - Stabilization in Afghanistan: Strategy and Interventions of the U.S. Government
<b>Interview Title:</b>
(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)
<b>Interview Code:</b>
LL-07
<b>Date/Time:</b>
11 July 2016
<b>Location:</b>
Washington, DC
<b>Purpose:</b>
To identify CERP measures of effect either considered or utilized
<b>Interviewees:</b> (Either list interviewees below, attach sign-in sheet to this document or hyperlink to a file)
<b>SIGAR Attendees:</b>
David Young (Project Lead)
<b>Sourcing Conditions (On the Record/On Background/etc.):</b> Not for attribution
<b>Recorded:</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Recording File Record Number (if recorded):</b>
<b>Prepared By: (Name, title and date)</b>
David Young, Project Lead
<b>Reviewed By: (Name, title and date)</b>
<b>Key Topics:</b>
CERP

I took the lead in trying to develop metrics for progress, but it was complicated. CERP had never been tied to COIN, even several years into the surge, long after MAAWS-A came out, so we made a concerted effort to do that. At the time, most CERP managers were financial professionals, money managers.

I initially took a heat map of attacks and overlaid it with CERP projects and found that our most expensive projects in RC-East were in the most kinetic areas, which didn't make sense. CERP was supposed to be short term and had gotten out of control. The whole point of COIN and stabilization was to develop kinetic areas a little bit as soon as the fighting died down so that real development could take place, but that wasn't happening. These projects had nothing to do with COIN. One brigade promised to build 50 schools in their AO, even though there weren't enough teachers to fill them, so buildings languished and some of them even became bomb making factories.

We were also worried about metrics manipulation. Brigade staff would often make their security situation look awful when they arrived and raise it dramatically as they were leaving to show improvement during their



---

## LESSONS LEARNED RECORD OF INTERVIEW

---

deployment. As assessments were being passed up to USFOR-A, even some of our division staff members would ask, "Can we find a little more green in there?"

Yet even as districts went from red to amber, CERP spending didn't decrease. If we're going to embrace clear-hold-build, the military should be doing small things and leave GIROA and USAID to take over. Huge projects shouldn't be taking place in kinetic areas to begin with.

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) were more pessimistic than projections being fed to us by the brigades.

We implemented a policy that would require CERP spending to decrease whenever a district's security level went from red to amber. We put a \$50,000 ceiling on each project in those districts. Specific attributes of the FRAGO: If an area was rated as yellow by the BDE, no project could be more than 50K, with exceptions granted by the Division (namely, BG Richardson, DCG-S). Projects open from certain FYs in certain areas had to close by certain dates (generally 6 - 12 mos from the policy) based on transition Tranche. The FRAGO also created a review meeting among S-9s which displayed a very simple report on things like number of projects, number with funds obligated. Essentially, it was an effort to create accountability in the process.

This also put a check on their metrics manipulation; if they inflate security assessments (red to amber), they'll lose CERP money.

RC-S recognized we were making headway getting CERP spending under control and asked how we were doing it.

I wanted to develop metrics for measuring impact for each project, but it was so hard to know what was causing security in any particular area to improve or worsen, and we could only get about 10% of the data we wanted to evaluate anything. So we decided it was too hard to focus on impact at the project level. The only metrics we ever developed were anchored in financial management: making sure people got paid, making sure things were built, etc.

The policy change impacted CERP spending significantly, and it helped create a cultural shift where we forced projects to close or end because they were irrelevant to the COIN mission.

Our DIV staff would regularly tell COMISAF, "CERP is a terrible development tool, but it's a great stabilization tool", but we never knew if it was true.

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C), kept asking about the COIN effects of these projects, especially as the approval threshold kept rising, but nothing changed.

When I would ask RC-E CERP managers to explain the impact of a specific project being considered, I was often told, "It might work" as its justification. None of them had development backgrounds; they were only concerned with preventing waste, fraud and abuse at the most simple level.

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