



2nd Annual Baltic Conference on Defence



NATO in Afghanistan – Facing the Shortfalls and Measuring Success

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Baltic Defence College
Tartu, Estonia**

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Baltic Defence College

**2nd ANNUAL BALTIC CONFERENCE
ON DEFENCE (ABC/D)**

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Chairman's Introduction

Tomas Jermalavicius

Dean of the Baltic Defence College

Annual Baltic Conference on Defence is an event co-organised by the ministries of defence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and hosted by the Baltic Defence College. The project with this brilliant abbreviation, ABC/D, commenced in 2006 with great success. It was originally conceived as a replacement to the Baltic Security Assistance (BALTSEA) forum in order to maintain the network of relationships with the countries which supported the Baltic states in their NATO integration effort. However, it is quite obvious that the ABC/D is turning into something more than that. It is emerging as a channel for the Baltic states to make their contribution to the strategic debate within the Alliance by addressing various conceptual as well as practical problems and dilemmas.

We are delighted that this event has attracted so much attention of policymakers, military officers, academics, media and NGOs representatives from across the entire Euro-Atlantic security and defence community. The topic of the 2007 conference has been on everyone's mind lately. It is widely accepted that Afghanistan has become a critical test of NATO's ability to act and deliver "out-of-area", to use a widespread jargon, or to project security and stability well beyond its borders. Indeed, even such challenging missions as those in Western Balkans, which NATO handled quite successfully, pale in terms of complexity and difficulty when compared to the campaign in Afghanistan.

When selecting the topic for the 2nd ABC/D, we sought to identify the issue which encapsulates multiple challenges that the Alliance is currently facing. Mission in Afghanistan is definitely it. From creating new military capabilities to developing a genuinely comprehensive approach in such intricate missions; from establishing a long-term vision of Alliance's overall role to generating and sustaining political will and public support for its accomplishment; from building effective relationships with various actors to coordinating them on the ground; and from acquiring skills in counterinsurgency warfare to integrating them with well-established competencies in peace support and stabilisation – these and many other interwoven aspects can be identified as the drivers of success which also pertain to a broader agenda of NATO's

transformation. We are convinced that the selection of topics and speakers for this conference allowed highlighting these manifold issues as well as their connections with the broader strategic landscape where the Alliance is trying to position itself.

The conference was conducted in three panels. The first panel was moderated by Ambassador Harri Tiido, Undersecretary for Political Affairs of the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and focused on political objectives for the Alliance in Afghanistan. The keynote speakers of the panel were General Wolfgang Schneiderhan, Inspector General of the Bundeswehr, who addressed the audience on the political and security challenges for NATO in Afghanistan, and Mr. Peter C. F. Flory, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Defence Investments, who talked about the impact of the campaign in Afghanistan on the defence transformation within the Alliance. NATO's political and strategic vision for Afghanistan was outlined by Mr. Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, Head of Planning Section, Operations Division, NATO IS. Mr. Hekmat Karzai, Director of the Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies from Afghanistan, provided analysis of situation in his country and discussed future prospects. Mr. David van Weel, Special Policy Advisor of the Netherlands Ministry of Defence, highlighted NATO's performance in Southern Afghanistan and placed emphasis on the need to manage expectations of various constituencies. Panel discussions were led by Dr. Stephen J. Flanagan, Senior Vice President of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, United States.

The second panel concentrated on the issues surrounding international cooperation in Afghanistan and was moderated by Ambassador Imants Liegis, Latvia's representative on the EU Political and Security Council (PSC). The panel started with the presentations of Mr. Ronald Harmsma, NATO Deputy Civilian Representative in Afghanistan, and Mr. Kenneth Deane, Deputy Head of EUPOL Mission in Afghanistan, who covered the international cooperation from NATO and EU perspectives respectively. Brigadier General Jean-Marc Laurent, Deputy Director of Delegation for Strategic Affairs of the Ministry of Defence of France, discussed NATO-EU cooperation from a member state perspective. Mr. Abdul Malik Quraishi, Director of Policy and Oversight, Office of National Security Council of Afghanistan, and Major General Payenda Mohammad Nazem, Deputy Assistant Minister for Strategy and Policy, Ministry of Defence of Afghanistan, introduced the relationship between Afghanistan's government and the international community. Mr. Rory Stewart, Chief Executive of Turquoise Mountain Foundation, offered insights to the day-to-day life in Afghanistan and demonstrated how different are the perceptions of the situation and of the Alliance's efforts in various constituencies in Afghanistan

and outside it. Panel discussion was led by Dr. Julian Lindley-French, Professor of Military Operational Science of the Netherlands Defence Academy.

The third panel, moderated by Ambassador Ginte Damusis, National Coordinator for Afghanistan at the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, focused on provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) and their operational experiences. Ambassador David Slinn, Head of the UK-led PRT Lashkar Gah, discussed whether the PRTs should be manned and led mostly by the civilians. Colonel Almantas Leika, Course Director of the BALTDEFCOL Higher Command Studies Course, analysed operational and strategic lessons from Lithuania-led PRT Ghor, which he commanded at the end of 2006 – start of 2007. Lieutenant Colonel Frank Sturek of the US Army shared his experiences and insights from conducting counterinsurgency campaign in Southern Afghanistan. Finally, Ms Christa Meindersma, Head of Conflict Management Programme of the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, outlined best practices of post-conflict reconstruction and development. Panel discussion was led by Colonel (retired) Stephen Appleton, President of Appleton Consulting Inc and Visiting Senior Mentor of the BALTDEFCOL Higher Command Studies Course.

Although the discussions of the conference took place under the Chatham House Rule, some of the contributors kindly agreed to supply the manuscripts of their presentations. The Baltic Defence College is pleased to present them to a wider audience in this electronic publication.

Alliance's Political and Security Challenges in Afghanistan: What Can Member States Commonly and Germany Individually Do?

General Wolfgang Schneiderhan

Inspector General of the Bundeswehr

Twenty-five years of war left Afghanistan in a chaotic situation. Compared to the situation in 2001 a lot has been achieved in the meantime. Let me highlight the most important steps.

In 2004 the permanent Afghan constitution was approved - a compromise between Afghan traditional culture and modern constitutionalism. The constitution provided Afghanistan with a democratic elected government system and guaranteed rights for ethnic minorities and women. It also set the rules for the October 2004 presidential elections and for the 2005 parliamentary elections, both most notable events.

In January 2006, the so-called Afghanistan Compact was launched. This multinational agreement represents a framework for co-operation and affirms the commitment of both the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to work towards conditions which allow the Afghan people to live in peace and security, under the rule of law, enjoying good governance and human rights protection for all, with sustainable economic and social development.

The so-called Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board has been set up as the principal mechanism for facilitating international coordination and cooperation. It consists of representatives of the Afghanistan Government, major donor-countries like the USA, the UK, Germany and Japan, neighbouring countries like Iran or Pakistan, and international bodies like the EU, ISAF, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Having mentioned this, it becomes apparent that the ISAF is just one of a good number of major players in Afghanistan.

In 2007, however, the situation in Afghanistan remains volatile, and it is difficult to present a single overall measure of progress. On the one hand, we have witnessed growing and more professional security forces and the spread of reconstruction and development projects across the country.

On the other hand, we see increased civilian and military casualties in Kabul and particularly in the eastern and southern part of the country, endemic corruption in the political system, a weak economic infrastructure and a parliament that includes some of the very same individuals responsible for Afghanistan's dire condition.

The most important challenges in Afghanistan are of political nature. Nevertheless, progress in this area is closely related to an improvement of the security situation. That is the reason why Afghanistan will continue to need international military support in order to create the conditions for further development. And in a nutshell, this is what the ISAF mission is all about.

Military presence alone, however, will not put Afghanistan back on track. Only good governance and real development will. Therefore there is a need for a comprehensive approach. This is the coordinated application of both, military and civil instruments, including those civil instruments that are the responsibility of other organizations, such as the United Nations, the European Union, the World Bank, the G8, and the NGOs. That is why the latest UN Security Council mandate to UNAMA was so important, as it emphasizes the UN's leading role in bringing together the international efforts in support of the Afghan authorities.

Afghanistan is still struggling to build a functioning state. There are some key areas of main concern:

- A lack of effectiveness of the governmental institutions slows down the progress of state building – and what is more important, it effects the confidence of the population of Afghanistan.

All areas of public administration have a desperate need for trained personnel and other resources. Government ministries have been created and ministers have been appointed, but the country lacks the trained individuals needed to fully staff those ministries.

- Narcotics production affects the whole development process. Opium production is a core issue because it corrupts the political and economic development of Afghanistan. Latest reports show that the opium production still increases.

Both Afghan government officials and international experts emphasize that the key issue is the provision of alternative livelihoods to enable farmers to earn a viable living from legitimate crops.

This involves amongst others the provision of seed and fertilizer, agricultural credits and other financial measures. But it also involves getting rid of corrupt officials, and it needs a consistent international approach.

- In addition, parallel structures based on the power of the warlords hamper a democratic and safe development. President Karzai called the illegally armed groups in Afghanistan the greatest threat to the country's security and warned that, "without disarmament the Afghan state will have really serious difficulties."

The UN Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programme ended with the successful demobilization of more than 63,000 militia members and the cantonment of approximately 11,000 heavy weapons. A lot of those former militia members entered the UN-established Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme for retraining.

Although the larger militias have disbanded, a lot of smaller units of 20-200 armed individuals are spread across the country. These illegally armed groups are a threat to the ongoing progress in Afghanistan not only because they are often involved in the narcotics traffic. They also form competing power bases, making it almost impossible for province Governors and other representatives of the central government to assert themselves and Kabul's intentions.

- Therefore the development of the Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army and its capabilities relative to the regional warlords and Opposing Militant Forces are critical for an improvement of the security situation. The national police force is rapidly expanding. In addition, the border police is approaching its desired strength and is receiving specialized training and equipment from the United States and other donors.

However, corruption in the police force remains a serious concern. The Ministry of the Interior increased pay to most officers to \$70 per month, a considerable salary in a country where the estimated GDP per capita is, at most, a few hundred dollars per year.

And yet, the devil is in the detail: Getting the salary to the police officers is quite a challenge in a country with an underdeveloped banking- and nearly missing tax-system.

Consequently, polls show a distinct lack of trust in the police force.

Although most Afghans have a high degree of confidence in their army and view it as a source of national unity, they are not pleased with the performance of the police force. Many Afghans believe it is highly corrupt and ineffective.

This is a very serious concern for the international community. Until Afghans have a higher degree of confidence in their police force, it will be nearly impossible to implement the rule of law across the country.

Germany has been key partner in developing the ANP. Much has been achieved compared to where we took off five years ago, but much remains to be done. In order to distribute the burden across more shoulders, and in order to be able to multiply our national efforts, the German police mission has been integrated into a European mission, EUPOL Afghanistan.

Since December 2001, the UN-mandated, NATO-led ISAF has been responsible to assist the Afghan Government in providing a safe and secure environment, a condition for the reconstruction of a new Afghanistan.

Although ISAF is a NATO led force, it also includes non-NATO members like Australia, Switzerland, Finland and Sweden; indeed, in total thirty-nine countries are involved in this operation. ISAF is NATO's first real out-of-area operation. The earlier Balkan operations were within Europe and so close to NATO's formal area of operation that they did not require the kind of logistical and supply effort needed for an out-of-area operation.

On a political level, the ISAF works closely with the Afghan authorities, United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), UN agencies, International Organizations, and Non-Governmental Organizations.

The NATO Operations Plan identifies several key military tasks:

- to assist the Afghan government in extending its authority across the country,
- to conduct security and stability operations,
- to assist the Afghan government with security sector reform, and
- to support programmes to disarm illegally armed groups.

After the enlargement of the ISAF mission to the entire country last year, which basically was successfully conducted, NATO still faces different political and security challenges.

Acceptance and support by the Afghan population is a strategic interest. ISAF will respect local tradition and religion and will not act as an occupying force. International forces must develop public awareness, because they operate under heightened media attention. They need to be transparent and must avoid collateral damage in order not to attract negative attention.

The NATO operation in Afghanistan also clearly demonstrates that stabilization and reconstruction are critical to the success of NATO's mission, even while combat or counter-insurgency operations are still necessary and underway. In today's complex operations stability and security on the one hand, and reconstruction and development on the other are closely linked; neither is realisable or sustainable without the other.

Primary responsibilities for stabilization and particularly reconstruction normally lie with other actors, such as local and international organizations and NGO's. However, there can be circumstances which may hamper the other actors from undertaking these tasks, or undertaking them without support from NATO forces. Such circumstances include situations where such actors are not yet present on the ground or can not operate freely due to a hostile security environment; or do not possess sufficient equipment, resources or expertise. In such cases, NATO forces may be required to fill the security gap or support other organisations within its means and capabilities, helping to create conditions for them to fill that capability gap.

The Provincial Reconstruction Teams working under auspices of NATO offer concrete examples of this type of support. PRTs help rebuild infrastructure, including schools, hospitals and irrigation and, in general terms, assist in expanding government authority in the provinces, for example by assisting and training the Afghan Police and Afghan National Army. These tasks are undertaken in consultation and coordination with the local government and other international

actors. In addition, PRT support maintain a permanent link between local authorities and the Afghan Security Forces and between international organisations and the ISAF.

At present, a total of 25 PRTs are working in Afghanistan under the ISAF command. Through their holistic approach, incorporating civilian and military elements, they help strengthen the authority of central government in the provinces and support stabilization and reconstruction measures throughout the country. The coordination of military operations and reconstruction and development is a permanent challenge and of first interest.

The training and equipment of the Afghan National Army is another important aspect of our mission. This is getting more and more important for a successful outcome of the international engagement and for the exit strategy. Germany therefore supports a more active engagement in the training of the Afghan National Army and Police. ISAF will only be able to withdraw, if and when the Afghans can provide their own security. To do so, they will need an army of at least 70,000 soldiers.

There is progress in building the ANA, which now stands close to 38,000. The ANA is the dominant non-ISAF military force in the country in terms of training, size, and equipment. This is a notable difference from two or three years ago, when the ANA was struggling to be a serious military presence in a country dominated by armed militias.

The ANA is now conducting more and more operations in close cooperation with coalition forces in Afghanistan against the Taliban. There are now several permanent ANA units based around the country including Mazar-e Sharif in the North, Kandahar in the South, Gardez in the East and Herat in the West.

In 2010, the ANA will consist of five army corps headquarters with in total 14 brigades and a total amount of 70,000 soldiers. ISAF is expanding its support of the ANA by attaching Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams to various units, the so-called OMLT's.

These teams consist of individual ISAF officers and NCOs, who are embedded with Afghan units to assist their development. Thus, ANA and ISAF work together at all levels. In addition, ISAF has recently approved the stationing of ANA Officers at HQ ISAF.

The last aspect in this context I like to mention is the issue of civilian casualties. When planning missions, ISAF takes the greatest care to minimise the potential for collateral damage, whether to property or individuals. SHAPE has developed procedures to guarantee that the question of potential civilian casualties is examined as a routine part of the process of planning operations.

In respect of the German contribution I would like to start with our principles. Taking into consideration that the centre of gravity of the ISAF mission is the support of the Afghan population, in the sense of Afghan Ownership, we maintain the military-light-footprint concept. Reconstruction and visible progress for the population are essential elements for the success of the ISAF mission.

We see our long-term military engagement with a focus on training and equipment of the ANA, assist the ANA with OMLT`s and continue to operate with PRT`s.

The German military presence is concentrated in Northern Afghanistan. However, on the basis of our parliamentary mandate, German soldiers can also be deployed in other regions of the ISAF area of operation to provide assistance limited in duration and scope, if this assistance is essential for the fulfilment of the overall ISAF mandate.

Besides that, the German Parliament has also explicitly approved the stand-by deployment of some 100 soldiers of the German Special Forces Command (KSK) in the framework of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Germany currently provides the Regional Commander North, who is based in Mazar-e-Sharif. Regional Command North consists of five ISAF PRT`s: PRT Kunduz and Feyzabad, led by Germany, with a dual civilian-military command. PRT Pol-e Khomri led by Hungary, PRT Maimana led by Norway and Mazar-e Sharif led by Sweden. The German PRTs have a civilian component with diplomats, police instructors, and development experts as well as a significant military component.

In addition, the German Parliament agreed in March of 2007 on the deployment of six Tornado reconnaissance aircraft to Afghanistan. The aircraft are employed for imaging reconnaissance and aerial surveillance as well as for photographic interpretation. The jets are under direct ISAF command, to help to provide a complete overview of the general situation in Afghanistan.

With a German Forward Logistic Base in Mazar-e Sharif and numerous postings at the NATO Composite HQ in Kabul, Germany provides in total almost 3,500 soldiers to the ISAF. Hence, it is the third largest force contributor in Afghanistan.

Germany, as mentioned before, assesses the support of the Afghan National Army to be of predominant importance. In the past, Germany contributed to this aim by – just to mention some major projects - running the Driver and Mechanics School in Kabul and contributing to the OMLT concept.

The new Afghan Concept of our Government as well as the new mandate of the German Parliament for the prolongation of our contribution to the ISAF mission, is expected to pass the parliament on 12 October 2007. By doing so, the German Parliament will underline our will to strengthen the support for the Afghan National Army.

The ISAF mission will remain the most challenging mission of NATO and for Germany as well. We know, that ISAF's mission success is closely related to the progress in reconstruction, for there is no security without reconstruction, and no reconstruction is possible without security.

The Alliance is obliged to maintain solidarity and must be prepared to be sustainable. Thus, a multinational approach is necessary and will always be promoted by Germany. Cooperation with coalition forces continues to be an absolute necessity.

The PRT concept is a cornerstone within NATO and our concept for the support of the Afghan Government. Wherever possible the Afghan ownership as the key principle has to be established and promoted. This is particularly true in respect to our efforts to improve the overall security situation.

ISAF plays hereby an assisting role of major importance in the training of the Afghan Army. Having said this, it becomes apparent that ISAF cannot withdraw before the Afghan Army is able to take full responsibility on its own.

Germany's military commitment to the ISAF remains firm. We aim to maintain the current troop level of about 3500 soldiers and we see our engagement as long-term, with a focus on training and equipment of the ANA, and on maintaining the civil-military approach of "our" PRTs.

NATO's Political and Strategic Vision for Afghanistan

Diego A. Ruiz Palmer

**Head, Planning Section, Operations Division, International Staff,
NATO Headquarters¹**

It is symbolic of what NATO has become, through its enlargement and transformation, that such an exchange of views on the Alliance and its roles should take place in this beautiful and peaceful corner of Europe. Estonia has been doubly on the Alliance's frontline, first and foremost in Afghanistan where Estonian soldiers have gallantly been serving in dangerous circumstances in regional Command South, but also here, where Estonia was subjected some months ago to one of the first instances of cyber warfare.

I will try to sketch some of the challenges and opportunities NATO is facing and where it should be heading with its engagement in Afghanistan, but also address the wider implications of that priority engagement for the Alliance and its further transformation. I will do so without attempting to give an official NATO view, but rather the perspective from a planner at NATO Headquarters.

I do not need to remind this audience of the importance of NATO's engagement in Afghanistan. I would like to highlight, however, that in the current public debate on whether this is a cause worth fighting for, and sometimes dying for, observers often lose sight of some key facts.

First, and foremost, we are making progress. Despite, the crying lack of proper governance in many parts of a vast and difficult country, the unrelenting growth of the narcotics trade, and the enduring Taliban insurgency, progress is unmistakable throughout Afghanistan, even if it is uneven geographically and chronologically.

This progress can be seen in political terms – for the first time in decades Afghanistan has a national leader who has been democratically elected, as well as an elected Parliament, with an ethnically mixed membership and a significant female presence. Progress can also be measured in

¹ The views expressed in this address are the author's alone and do not necessarily reflect those of NATO, Alliance member nations or non-NATO ISAF countries.

economic and social terms, from economic growth rates, to school attendance by millions of children including girls, to the return of million of refugees.

And while one cannot take the last three decades of nearly continuous civil war, foreign occupation and economic deprivation as the only baseline to measure progress, it is worthwhile to remind ourselves that since more or less the fall from power of the last King of Afghanistan in 1973 to the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001, Afghanistan endured three horrific decades and is now, at last, trying to evade that terrible legacy, not the least with the help and commitment of the International Community through the so-called Bonn Process of December 2001 and the London Compact of February 2006.

A key component of that international commitment has been NATO, with an expanded ISAF presence of nearly 40,000 men and women from all 26 Allies plus 11 non-NATO nations, but also a wider engagement that encompasses support to Security Sector Reform in all of its dimensions, the development of Afghan defence institutions, and dialogue and cooperation with many of Afghanistan's neighbours.

I make this point because, as many pundits are wringing their hands, we should not lose sight of how much the International Community's consistent engagement since 2001, notably through ISAF first as a coalition operation, then as a NATO-led operation, but also through Operation Enduring Freedom, has changed the terms of the Afghan equation. Afghanistan has been given the opportunity to deviate from its trajectory of violence, deprivation and despair.

But, of course, this has not been and cannot be painless. You do not change the terms of the equation of a country that is among the most geographically isolated and most rugged and where many people have been prone to armed violence, in just a few years. And certainly not as the contest for the soul of Islam rages in the whole region, from Central Asia to the north, to Pakistan in the East, to Iran and Iraq to the West.

So, I am not blind to all the countervailing forces in and outside Afghanistan – from the Taliban and Al Qaeda, to the warlords, the narco-traffickers and the criminals of all sorts – that want to derail this historic process in Afghanistan, which is so important for Afghanistan, for the region and for the world. And I will be the first to admit that, in relation to governance, we, the International Community, are not where we would like to be. This also applies to the Afghan

Government's and the International Community's counter-narcotics efforts, which I will come back to later.

But let me return to the theme of progress, because it is a very important topic and it raises two paradoxes. Our ever expanding commitment in Afghanistan – politically, militarily and economically – is not the result of failure, but of success, and herein lies the first paradox. We do not need to do more in Afghanistan because we are failing, but because our success to date builds a momentum for further commitment, until such a point where success becomes irreversible, which we have not yet attained but, which in my view and in that of many others, is within reach.

In short, success in Afghanistan is not yet irreversible, but our commitment should be irreversible, because what we have committed to and accomplished in Afghanistan since 2001 is just too important – in brave soldiers who have invested their ideal and their call to duty in helping the Afghan people on the ground, and sometimes given their lives for this noble cause, in economic resources and, not least, in political capital, at home and abroad.

The second paradox is that while we have been making progress in many fields -- and we know for a fact that we have been making progress -- we have difficulty in measuring this progress in aggregate terms, in ways that can be easily explained and understood and can facilitate our planning as well as our messaging, and have a compelling impact on the Afghan people and our electorates alike.

Part of the difficulty resides in the scope of ISAF's mission statement, which is to help establish and maintain a safe and secure environment to enable governance, reconstruction and development. How do you measure execution of such a broad mandate, when every day it involves a thousand separate ISAF actions and activities across a vast territory, from patrolling cities and villages and countering Taliban asymmetric attacks, to enabling local reconstruction projects through ISAF's Provincial Reconstruction Teams and, more broadly, facilitating development efforts by civilian agencies?

No doubt, without a reliable methodology and a better sense of where and how ISAF is making progress – including where it is not and why not – we are bound to have our efforts to build further support and momentum for this mission frustrated, and this is not acceptable. But metrics alone won't do. We need a wider, politically-driven effort to take stock of our mission in

Afghanistan, consolidate and better focus our various NATO initiatives, adjust upwards our resources dedicated to ISAF, and re-energize politically our overall commitment. At the core of such a re-commitment to Afghanistan by the Alliance, there should be what I would call a “global concept” to guide NATO’s further engagement in Afghanistan for the years ahead, starting in 2008.

This global concept would tie together ISAF’s tasks, ISAF’s support to Security Sector Reform across its various strands and to reconstruction and development efforts led by the Government of Afghanistan and by other international organizations, the activities encompassed by the NATO-Afghanistan cooperation program, and NATO’s diplomatic and politico-military engagement with most of Afghanistan’s neighbours.

A key dimension of this global concept would be the pursuit of much greater synergy between ISAF’s operations and its training activities in support of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), including an effort to harmonize further the operations and training activities of the ISAF, OEF, OEF’s Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) and the ANSF. In my view, and this is a personal view, we need a single, integrated operational and training concept that ties together the tasks, forward plans and resources of the ISAF, OEF, CSTC-A and the ANSF, even if – I would say particularly because – they all remain under separate chains of command.

The availability of such a single, integrated operational and training concept would help better identify requirements, resources, shortfalls, potential options and possible solutions to keep the Taliban insurgency at bay and build up the Afghan National Army, including trade-offs and synergies between ISAF, OEF, CSTC-A and the ANSF. Armed with such a concept, the NATO Military Authorities might well be in a better position to secure a greater readiness by all Allies to generate additional forces and trainers for ISAF. For, it should come as no surprise that if we wish to accelerate progress on the ground we will need to sustain and, in some cases increase, our forces in Afghanistan, including through rotation among all ISAF nations, NATO and non-NATO.

Besides the critical military dimension which I have just elaborated upon, and which is at the heart of NATO’s engagement, another important dimension of the “global concept” to guide NATO’s engagement in Afghanistan which I mentioned earlier, is the Comprehensive Approach

and NATO's contribution to it. Much has been written and said about the Comprehensive Approach, so I will spare you another long exposition on this subject. Suffice to say that, to be effective, a Comprehensive Approach bringing together various international organizations in the same theatre – and this would apply to Afghanistan, but as easily to almost any mission where the international military forces and civilian governmental and non-governmental agencies are operating side-by-side – cannot just be a concept, nor strictly a set of pragmatic arrangements on the ground.

A genuine Comprehensive Approach must reflect, first and foremost, a determination by the member nations of the various international organizations concerned to seek and enforce mutual consultation and, where necessary, collaboration. Pragmatism and resolve should be the twin guiding principles, which militate for a flexible approach that combines best practices with concerted mission planning.

In Afghanistan, this would mean greater interaction at higher levels between NATO, the United Nations and the European Union, to enhance mutual awareness and synergy, identify the most serious shortfalls in capacity which are hampering the effectiveness of our collective engagement, and recommend complementary, long term solutions; all with a view to strengthening Afghan ownership, because we should never lose sight that we are cooperating with a sovereign nation.

In this Comprehensive Approach, enhanced governance should be a priority, for governance in Afghanistan is the weak link between security on the one hand and development on the other. This means greater focus on enhancing administrative best practices at all levels, strengthening the rule of law, bolstering the weak Afghan National Police and expanding counter-narcotics efforts.

Lastly, the global concept which I have suggested should include a robust public diplomacy dimension that, in addition to addressing audiences in Afghanistan and in neighbouring countries, helps shape the public and elite debate in our NATO member nations. What we must avoid is the risk of a “balkanization” of the public debate on NATO's engagement in Afghanistan across the Alliance – with some countries more engaged and other less engaged – leading to a political fracture of the Alliance.

Two milestones on the horizon should help the revitalization process embedded in the idea of a global concept. First, the UN General Assembly in September 2007, which is widely attended by Foreign Ministers, should be an opportunity for the International Community to come together on behalf of our engagement in Afghanistan. Second, the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April 2008 should be the occasion for the Allies and the non-NATO ISAF troop contributors to re-commit unambiguously – with the necessary political resolve, military capabilities and financial resources – to seeing NATO’s engagement in Afghanistan through its conclusion.

Re-energizing NATO’s collective commitment to Afghanistan is all the more important because of the implications of our engagement there for the Alliance’s wider purposes. No one would dispute that our engagement is a singularly difficult and ambitious undertaking. Afghanistan is a remote and rugged country, with barely any infrastructure to support military operations by a modern force of more than 50,000 men, when the ISAF and OEF are combined.

Operating in Afghanistan means dealing with an insurgency, terrorism and narcotics all at once, while pursuing stabilization, reconstruction and development. Few international operations anywhere in the world combine such a challenging set of threats and tasks. At the same time, in 2002 NATO Heads of State and Government agreed that the Alliance must have forces that can move quickly to wherever they are needed. ISAF is today the demonstration of that pledge. In many ways, the ISAF is the NRF already operating at a strategic distance in an expeditionary environment. Which is why it is artificial to address one without the other.

There are no soft options in Afghanistan, but there is a way forward. In 2003, NATO took command of the ISAF, in 2004 it expanded to the North, in 2005 to the West, and last year to the South and East. Some thought that it could not be done because the Alliance had no track record of leading a multinational expeditionary operation at a strategic distance from Europe. That NATO would have nearly 40,000 troops deployed in as remote a country as Afghanistan would have been unthinkable as recently as 2003.

The truth is that it has been possible, because our security is directly at stake, because we made a solemn pledge to commit the Alliance collectively, and because, deep down, we know that it is a worthy cause. As General David Richards, Commander of ISAF IX, declared last year, “(...) we are not fighting the Afghan people, (...) we are fighting for the Afghan people.”

Relations between the Government of Afghanistan and the International Community

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I will briefly talk about two main areas of cooperation where the GoA (Government of Afghanistan) and the International Community (IC) have coordination and relations the political and security sectors. However, there is need for more and better coordination between the member states of the IC and on the GoA.

As you are aware, the current Afghan political system is the result of Bonn Agreement which the international community and Afghans initiated and supported. Much has been achieved since 2001 when the events of 11 September 2001 once again brought Afghanistan starkly to the fore of world attention highlighting it as a dangerous and dysfunctional state, as well as being one of the poorest countries in the world. The international community has since worked with the emerging Afghan government institutions to begin rebuilding the country at all levels. More than five years on, the progress towards reconstruction and stabilization is considerable and includes the following benchmarks:

- Nearly 80% of Afghans have now access to primary health care (only 7% did so in 2001) and child mortality has been reduced by 18%.
- Gross enrolment in schools has increased in 2006 alone by 12% to reach 5.4 million students, 35% of whom are girls – compared to 2002 school enrolment has increased by 74%.
- Transport infrastructure has improved with 84% (2,818 km) of the ring road network open to traffic and with 59% (1,983km of it) paved.
- 4.8 million Afghan refugees have returned home representing the largest refugee repatriation in history.
- Democratically-elected community groups in about 17,000 villages have received block grants from the government.
- Nationwide presidential and parliamentary elections were held in October 2004 and September 2005 respectively.

However, after more than two decades of brutal conflict and misrule, punctuated by a series of severe droughts, the country still has challenges and a long way to go.

Afghanistan is a land-locked country situated at the cross-roads between Central and South Asia. It has common borders with six countries. In the 20th Century it became the last battleground for the Cold War when the Soviet Union invaded it in 1979.

The US military action in response to al-Qaeda's terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 led to the overthrow of the Taliban regime.

Following the fall of the Taliban in December 2001, Afghan factions met in Bonn under UN auspices and agreed on a transitional process leading to elections for a "broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government" the process was successfully implemented after the Emergency Loya jirga (Grand Council), after parliamentary elections on September 18, 2005. The first transitional government appointed by President Karzai, which oversaw this process, was dissolved.

Milestones in Afghan state building were the adoption of the new constitution in January 2004, presidential elections in October 2004, parliamentary and provincial elections in September 2005 and the inauguration of the new National Assembly in December 2005. Afghanistan's present cabinet consists of 25 ministers and one senior minister. Each was nominated by President Karzai, approved by the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House), and sworn in by the President on May 2, 2006.

The role of the international community was very significant in all these achievements. The United Nations Special Assistance Mission UNAMA and other western diplomatic missions contributed immensely to the reconstruction and state building efforts of the Government of Afghanistan. For example, the EU provided substantial support for the presidential and parliamentary elections. In financial terms, the EU's collective financial contribution (EC plus Member States) accounted for around 50% of the cost of the presidential election and around 40% of the cost of the parliamentary and provincial elections.

The EU also deployed a Democracy and Election Support Mission for the presidential election and a full Election Observation Mission, headed by Ms Emma Bonino MEP, for the parliamentary and provincial elections.

The inauguration of the National Assembly (Parliament) in December 2005 marked the formal conclusion of the Bonn political transition process. Following more than two decades of conflict, the successful completion of the Bonn process is just a first step in the stabilization and recovery process in Afghanistan. Continued engagement of the international community in Afghanistan remains necessary to deepen and consolidate the progress achieved so far since 2001. With a high-level international conference that took place in London on 31 January – 1 February 2006, the Afghan government and the international community launched a new framework for co-operation, the Afghanistan Compact.

The Afghanistan Compact covers a five-year period (to the end of 2010). It sets out mutual commitments, detailed benchmarks and timelines across four crucial areas: (1) security; (2) governance, rule of law and human rights; (3) economic and social development; and (4) counter-narcotics. The Compact emphasizes increased Afghan ‘ownership’ and ‘leadership’. It includes provisions on increasing the effectiveness of international assistance and for this purpose a new Joint Co-ordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), which is lead by Afghan and international partners, was established to oversee implementation and to maintain political impetus in the framework of Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS).

The Afghan Development Forum was formed to enhance the coordination and cooperation of the IC and regional countries with the GoA. Since then, it has met twice - first in India in November 2006 and then in Kabul on 29/30 April 2007. It provided an opportunity for Afghan government and the international community to set out priorities and review strategies for Afghanistan’s sustainable development. A conference on the “Enabling Environment” held on 4/5 June in Kabul focused specifically on the private sector’s contribution to development in Afghanistan. These forums are some examples of a very close relationship of the Afghan government and international community.

Afghanistan’s relations with the US, UK and EU has proven to be very strong and effective. In the next part, I will expand upon the major sectors that international community is helping with in Afghanistan.

Security and military contribution by the international community

Almost all of the NATO and EU member states are contributing to the UN-mandated and NATO-commanded International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which was established by UN Security Council Resolution following the Bonn Accords to assist the Afghan authorities in

maintaining security. As of April 2007, twenty-five EU member states are involved and account for around half of ISAF's total deployment. Following stage 4 of the geographic expansion phase to the South (October 2006), their combined contribution to the ISAF is approx. 17,000 troops. EU member states are commanding or contribute to a number of civil-military Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in the north, north-east and west of the country.

Above all, the international community led by the United States started the process of developmental reform of security sector, which was one of the IC's commitment to train, equip and arm the ANA and ANP according to the NATO standards to perform in short term joint operations and missions with NATO/ISAF and Coalition forces and at the same time to operate independently. In the long term the ANSF is capable of taking responsibility for the security of Afghanistan on its own.

Separately, several member states are also contributing to the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom coalition conducting counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations in Afghanistan.

In July 2006 President Karzai formed the Policy Action Group (PAG) currently well known among the IC. The purpose of this forum was to better coordinate the efforts of the GoA and international community in the fields of security, reconstruction and strategic communication, specially in four southern provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan and Zabul. Later two other provinces of Farah and Ghazni were also added to it. The members of this forum from the GoA are the National Security Advisor to the President, Ministers of Defence, Interior, Education, RRD, CN, Information & Culture, Religious Affairs, Chief of Intelligence and National Economic Advisor to the President, as well as from the IC UNSGSR (UNAMA), EU representative, NATO SCR, COMISAF, Commander Combined Security Transitional Command Afghanistan CSTC-A, the Ambassadors of the US, UK, Canada, the Netherlands and Australia who have troops in the south of the country. This forum meets every other week and is chaired by the National Security Advisor to the President. The President chairs this forum every quarter in order to evaluate the results and proposals for better coordination. This forum has a secretariat which is known as Implementation and Coordination Team (IACT). It currently has five pillar groups which are SOG co-chaired by MOD & MOI, Intelligence fusion chaired by NDS, R&D chaired by the MoE, StratCom chaired by the MoIC and CN chaired by the MCN. Based on the PAG proposal, the National Communications and Coordination Center (NCCC) was established

and is chaired by the Director of StratCom at the NSC in order to coordinate the media and communication matters between the GoA and IC.

Reconstruction and Development

On 16 November 2005, the EU and Afghanistan adopted a Joint Declaration setting out a new partnership. The Joint Declaration outlines increased co-operation, based on Afghan ownership, across a range of areas. These include support to political and economic governance; security sector reform and justice sector reform; counter-narcotics; development; human rights, civil society and refugee return; education and culture. It also establishes a regular political dialogue, with annual meetings at ministerial level and reaffirmed the EU's long-term commitment to Afghanistan as the Bonn process drew to a close.

On 30 January 2006, just ahead of the London conference, the Council adopted conclusions welcoming the launch of the Afghanistan Compact on the basis of partnership between the Afghan Government, with its sovereign responsibilities, and the international community, with a central and impartial coordinating role for the United Nations. The Council reaffirmed the EU's support for the key pillars of activity identified by the Compact, its commitment to long-term support for the Government and people of Afghanistan through Afghan-led reconstruction efforts and its wish to further enhance the effectiveness of its action.

On 12 February 2007, the Council, confirming strong EU commitment to Afghanistan, agreed on the principle of a mission to Afghanistan in the field of policing with linkages to the wider rule of law. This mission will be under the European Defence and Security Policy. The aims of the mission are to develop an Afghan police force that respects human rights and operates within the framework of the rule of law. Issues of police reform at central, regional and provincial level will be addressed.

Counter-Narcotics

The international community has from the outset of the reconstruction process taken an active role in supporting counter-narcotics efforts, not least because around 90% of heroin on European streets originates from Afghanistan. Related to this, the corruption associated with the burgeoning opium economy continues to undermine institution-building and, ultimately, the entire reconstruction and stabilization process in Afghanistan.

The UK and US have played an important role on counter-narcotics, assisting the Afghan government in drawing up a counter-narcotics strategy (2003) and implementation plan (2005), and in building up specialized bodies, such as the Counter-Narcotics Police, mobile detection units and the Central Eradication Planning Cell. However, counter-narcotics activities need more solid and coordinated efforts among the International Community and GoA.

The EU and several EU member states are actively involved in the field of rural development, which is critical for the provision of sustainable alternative livelihoods for farmers involved in opium-poppy cultivation. The EC contributed some €250m to projects in this sector between 2002-06, focusing on the provision of alternatives to poppy cultivation in the north and north-east of the country. The EU's approach has been one of integrated rural development, aiming to address the range of socio-economic factors that contribute to sustained rural development away from the opium economy. Such projects have included building rural roads to increase access to markets, small business development and a range of community development initiatives.

The rule of law is also critical for the success of any counter-narcotics efforts. Italy's work in justice-sector reform and Germany's efforts in the police sector are of crucial importance here. Providing €205 million for the period 2003-2008, the EC is the largest contributor to the Law and Order Trust Fund of Afghanistan (LOTFA), a key instrument which funds police salaries, training and procurement of non-lethal equipment. For the future, the EU will also be one of the major actors in the justice sector, with the commencement in 2007 of a €60 million program. This programme will address fundamental institutional reform issues in the justice sector, including recruitment and personnel structures, code of ethics, pay and grading.

Trade relations

Afghanistan is entitled to benefits under the General System of Preferences (GSP) and Everything But Arms Initiative (EBA). However, in spite of this favourable treatment, trade volume between Afghanistan and the EU has remained limited and more efforts are needed to enhance the trade between the EU and Afghanistan. The EU imports from Afghanistan in 2005 were €26 million and exports were €321 million.

Best Practices for Reconstruction and Development¹

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Interventions in failed states or states emerging from violent conflict have become an every-day feature of international diplomacy.² Since the end of the Cold War, US-led coalitions have launched an intervention about once every year. During that same period, the Security Council has authorized a new mission on average once every six months.³ In 2006, 80.368 troops were deployed in peacekeeping operations, an increase of approximately 500% compared to 2000. The number of civilian police deployed in peace and stability operations increased to almost 8000 in the same period.⁴ The US military has declared peacemaking and stability operations as ‘core mission’ of the US-military with a priority comparable to combat operations.⁵

Yet, for all the experience we have gained, we are still not very good at it. Time and again, we miss the golden hour after a conflict has ended or a peace treaty has been signed. And we may do so again! In the words of former Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, Lakhdar Brahimi, “The first 6 to 12 weeks following a ceasefire or peace accord is often the most critical period for establishing both a stable peace and the credibility of the peacekeepers. Credibility and political momentum lost during this period can often be difficult to regain.”⁶ From my experiences in East Timor and Kosovo, I know it is a matter of months if not weeks before an international liberation force turns into an occupier in the eyes of the people in whose country we intervene. The key to successful intervention is not to win the hearts and minds of the people, as is often stated, but rather not to lose them.

The Afghan people had high hopes in 2001 when the Taliban regime was toppled. Yet, the international community had no plan, the UN came with a light footprint – more a result of experiences of the UN interim administrations in Kosovo and East Timor than an analysis of the situation on the ground- and the ISAF was deployed in Kabul only with a limited mandate. We had a chance to reconstruct but choose not to. It did not take long for the Taliban to regain strength and to refill the vacuum.

We need to do better. In order to respond more effectively to the realities of conflict, we need to rethink our ways of doing things, learn the lessons that can be learned and adopt a new approach to the resolution of conflict.

Objectives

A successful intervention requires an unambiguous and shared objective that coincides with the aspirations of the population and an integrated approach to achieve it. Withdrawal of foreign troops and presence should be linked to achieving certain objectives rather than a pre-set timeframe. The crucial questions we need to ask ourselves in Afghanistan at this point are: why are we there, what are we trying to achieve and how do we achieve it? Somehow, we have a tendency to skip the first questions and go straight to the last.

So, what is our objective in Afghanistan? The public debate in some countries including my own, the Netherlands, portrays our engagement in Afghanistan as a 'reconstruction mission.' The public narrative is aimed at winning the hearts and minds at home and fits uncomfortably with the harsh realities of combating insurgents on the ground. If reconstruction was the issue, why are we conducting this debate without the presence of representatives of the UNDP, USAID, DFID and the NGOs? And if this was the objective, why didn't we achieve it when it was quite possible to do so?

It is time to agree on our objectives and be modest about them. Are we involved in a counter-insurgency operation against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda? Or are we conducting a stabilization mission, e.g. is the military there to support the emerging local authorities? The fact is that we cannot achieve much in terms of reconstruction as long as Afghanistan is not stable. Stabilization requires basic security, maintenance of law and order and a functioning local government. These are civil responsibilities aimed at achieving political end-states. The military has a crucial but modest role to play, namely to support and strengthen local authorities and, where necessary, fight enemy forces, in order to make the government a credible alternative for the Taliban in the eyes of the population.

It is important to be realistic and to reduce our goals to manageable objectives that everyone can agree on and contribute to. This creates space for various actors to perform in accordance with their mandates and interests.

Political Solution

Though the problems we are trying to resolve are political, the emphasis of our intervention in Afghanistan is largely military while politics, diplomacy and development are seen as something that comes later, once the military has established security, or even as subservient to the military effort. Our thinking is still aimed at winning wars and less so at winning and sustaining the peace.

From the statements made today, there seems to be a general consensus that defeating the Taliban militarily is not possible. Yet, I have missed a discussion of the political dimension of the problem in Afghanistan. The United Nations (UN) tends to interpret political narrowly: elections and the adoption of a Constitution. Though these are significant achievements, particularly the latter, this is not the end of the political process. Some in Afghanistan even emphasize that quick elections have been detrimental to an inclusive political process as it has democratically legitimized the winners – former warlords and mujahideen among them – and consolidated their power positions while largely excluding the Pashtun and Taliban. This makes their removal more difficult and breeds resentment among those that were excluded.

The problem in Afghanistan is political and requires a political solution. This means that we should talk to the Taliban. Hekmat Karzai, Director of the Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies in Kabul, told us yesterday that the Taliban have the ambition to become a political player. We should recognize this and draw the Taliban into the political process in order to stabilize the country. Defeating them politically may be easier than defeating them militarily. Let them fight for votes and seats in Parliament instead of fighting us on the ground.

Yet, talking to the Taliban is easier said than done. Who are the Taliban? Who should talk to whom? Who represents whom? What should be the role of the international community? The Taliban is not a homogeneous group but a loose organization that adapts flexibly to a changing environment. The hard core sits in Pakistan and is known. The majority of the Taliban are traditional tribesmen. They prefer to be left alone. However, the issue is not so much to win the hearts and minds of the local population. The key is to win the loyalty of the religious leader (mullah) and the tribal elders. Previously, there was a balance between the power of the mullah and the tribal leaders. A primitive sort of 'checks and balances'. To fight the communists, the power of the mullahs was enhanced and religious extremism in Pakistan and Afghanistan encouraged. Now the balance needs to be restored in favour of the local authority. The international community as well as individual contingents can play a concrete and positive role to strengthen the local authority.

Negotiations with the Taliban should be conducted by President Karzai and the authorities in Pakistan. We can facilitate the process but understand too little of the complexities of tribal relations to play a dominant role. We should avoid imposing our solution on the parties. However, international troops can provide the necessary back-up to ensure that President Karzai's position in this process is strong.

Comprehensive Approach

Modern-day interventions are not undertaken to gain territory or to win military battles. Rather, we intervene to establish conditions in which political objectives such as peace, stability, good governance and democracy can be achieved.⁷ Experience has shown that effective stabilization of a post-conflict environment requires the integrated use of all available instruments of power and influence, be it political, economic, diplomatic, media, developmental, financial, judicial, humanitarian as well as military. Or more accurately, that the lack thereof hampers achieving durable stability in a post-conflict environment.⁸

The comprehensive approach has become a buzzword in international military circles and academic debate. Yet, for all the recognition that a comprehensive approach is needed, practice on the ground is lacking. Afghanistan is but a sad case in point. In fact, there is little coherence of effort among the many international actors present in the country. Though comparable to Kosovo, there is a single Security Council mandate creating the civilian 'UN Assistance Mission' (UNAMA) and the NATO-led military force (ISAF), there is confusion of roles and responsibilities between the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG), the NATO Senior Civilian Representative, the EU Special Representative and the Commander of ISAF. There is no clear civilian leadership; hence the desperate call for a triple-headed 'super-envoy' to combine all three functions.

In 2001, the UN decided to have 'a light footprint' in Afghanistan, focusing on the political process in Kabul. This was more a response to the experiences with UN interim administrations in Kosovo and East Timor than based on an analysis of the situation on the ground. Six years later, the UNAMA has still not deployed to southern provinces. The responsibility to develop key areas of governance such as the rule of law, police, judiciary and opium eradication was given to individual lead nations, resulting in a piecemeal and uncoordinated approach. An EU (ESDP) police mission was launched only in mid-2007 after alarming reports on the quality of the Afghan police, but the EUPOL has had trouble recruiting only 170 police trainers for the complete overhaul of the police training there. The training of the ordinary police has been turned over to

the US Army. The European Commission justice programme has only just begun, and although the Commission has been a major financial contributor to reconstruction and relief, capacity-building efforts for local and regional administrations have been either absent or disjointed.⁹

The Afghan government is weak, particularly at the provincial level¹⁰, leaving NATO or the Taliban to fill the vacuum. According to former Deputy Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Asif Rahimi, the Taliban are filling a gap in the South created by a weak government rather than by a strong insurgency. In fact, the continued weakness of local administration has allowed militia and criminal elements to assert themselves, undermining reconstruction efforts and aggravating security. Polls among the Afghan population in the tribal southern belt have revealed that absence and poor quality – read corruption – of government institutions was their prime security concern; the Taliban ranked second or third.

Corrupt governors and police at roadblocks harassing the population are often the only evidence of local governance that local communities experience. While the training of the Afghan National Army is progressing slowly but well, the training of Afghan police, particularly local police, is generally considered a failure. This has left NATO with a huge and complex task of which defeating the Taliban is only one element, reinforcing the need for a comprehensive approach.¹¹ The NATO military operations have dealt a fierce blow to the Taliban and other armed opposition groups. Yet, the security situation in Afghanistan is deteriorating, extremism is spreading beyond the Pashtun tribal belt to the major towns. The narco-economy is booming and the population struggles to survive without seeing tangible improvements in their daily lives. Public confidence in the government and its leaders, particularly at the local level, is low, owing to corruption and weak or non-existent governance.

In 2002/3, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were created to deploy NATO troops to the provinces outside Kabul. Heralded as an embodiment of civilian and military cooperation and coordination, PRTs were in fact a poor man's concept to deploy insufficient foreign troops to stabilize the Afghan countryside. Each PRT has a different composition and operates according to its own design and national priorities. Some are more civilian or even civilian-led, some strictly or predominantly military. Some focus more on development, some on military operations. There is no mechanism to learn from each other and adapt to the changing conflict dynamic. To NGOs, PRTs symbolize a militarization of humanitarian and development efforts rather than a truly comprehensive approach to state-building. Cooperation with NGOs is diverse, depending also on the security situation in a province.

The experience in Afghanistan reinforces the need to integrate civilian and military efforts from the very beginning and to develop expeditionary rapidly deployable non-military capabilities.¹² But even from a national deployment perspective, a single national chain of command is unlikely as budgets belong to different departments and separate reporting lines exist.¹³ These complications are, of course, multiplied among international military and civilian organizations deployed in Afghanistan. ISAF strategic plans, development plans and Afghan national security and development plans are developed separately. Moreover, the Operation Enduring Freedom pursues a separate mandate related to the 'War on Terror'.

The experience in Afghanistan also reinforces the need to understand much better the cultural dynamic of the environment in which we intervene. This requires, first of all, that there is sufficient language proficiency. But understanding another culture goes beyond language or knowing certain social mores. It implies understanding the social and tribal (ethnic) power structures that govern societies formally as well as informally, the mindset of people, the role of religion, ideology, identity (national or local), legal or customary codes (of honor), economic and gender factors.¹⁴

Progress, at this key moment, depends on the international community and the Government of Afghanistan better coordinating their efforts to defeat the insurgency, promote good governance and provide tangible improvement to the lives of Afghans.¹⁵ Stabilizing Afghanistan demands a robust military presence but a sustainable solution requires enhanced non-military efforts. Success in Afghanistan requires the international community to define a comprehensive political and military strategy that complements Afghan national development and security strategies.

Notes

¹ See also: Christa Meindersma 'A Comprehensive Approach to State-Building', (Brill Publishers, forthcoming 2008).

² The term intervention does not refer to military intervention alone but to any intervention - be it political, economic, developmental, humanitarian or military- by the international community into the domestic jurisdiction of another state for purposes of preventing, halting or containing conflict or for purposes of post-conflict stabilisation or reconstruction.

³ P. Ashdown, *Swords and Ploughshares: Bringing Peace to the 21st Century*, (Weidenfeld & Nicolson-London 2007). See also J. Voorhoeve, *From War to the Rule of Law: Peace Building after Violent Conflicts*, (Amsterdam University Press-Amsterdam 2007) and Dobbins et al., *The Beginner's Guide to Nation Building*, (Rand Corporation, August 2006).

⁴ *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations*, (Center on International Cooperation, New York University, 2006).

⁵ US Department of Defense Directive 3000.05.

⁶ L. Brahimi, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, (United Nations-New York, 2000), para. 87.

⁷ R. Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, (Penguin Books-London 2006), p. 270.

⁸ F.A. Petersen and H. Binnendijk, 'The Comprehensive Approach Initiative: Future Options for NATO,' in *Defense Horizons*, Number 58, Sept. 2007.

⁹ C. Meindersma, 'Afghanistan: An opportunity for the EU,' in *Europe's World*, (forthcoming, Feb. 2008).

¹⁰ *Service Delivery and Governance at the Sub-National Level in Afghanistan*, (World Bank- New York, July 2007).

¹¹ M. Aaronson, *Report of Visit to Afghanistan*, (15-22 Jan. 2007). Informal copy shared with author.

¹² Amb. E. Edelman, *A Comprehensive Approach to Modern Insurgency: Afghanistan and Beyond*, 27 March 2007.

¹³ R.E. Neumann, *Civil-Military Relations: An Afghan Field Perspective*, paper presented at Integrating Instruments of Power and Influence: Experiences and lessons by European Countries and the United States (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung/ RAND Corporation and American Academy of Diplomacy, Cadenabbia, 4-6 Nov. 2007).

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ Report to the UN Security Council, UN Doc S/2007/152.

Counter-insurgency in Afghanistan - A Way It Was Done in OEF VII & ISAF IV (2006)

Lieutenant Colonel Frank Sturek

Commander, Task Force “Warrior”

I plan to highlight how the manoeuvre task force I commanded conducted counter-insurgency operations for 9 months in Afghanistan. I had the privilege to be the commander of a 1200-Soldier manoeuvre task force built around a 700-man US Army infantry battalion deployed to Afghanistan from March – December 2006. Our first mission was to support Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) as a subordinate unit in Multi-National Brigade-South. Later, the unit transitioned to supporting the NATO-led International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) mission in Regional Command-East. My unit had some unique capabilities in addition to the 700 infantry soldiers. These included:

- a 6-gun, 105mm artillery battery with Q-36 Fire Finder Radar (100 soldiers);
- a logistics company to feed, fix, fuel and transport supplies (110 soldiers) for the task force and our security team partners;
- an engineer company with a platoon of sappers and a light equipment construction platoon (80 soldiers);
- a military intelligence collection platoon (HUMINT, SIGINT, Reachback for National Intelligence – 50 soldiers).

We were first deployed to Zabul Province in Regional Command – South where we led all military operations under the Operation Enduring Freedom mandate from March 15th – August 1st. Zabul Province presented significant challenges for a battalion-sized force in both demographics and geography:

- 365,000 people; 17,500 square kilometres; 50 km of border w/PAK (a minority Hazara ethnic population in Kaki Afghan, but predominately Pashtun throughout the rest of the province);
- Elevation ranges from 1000m Above Sea Level (ABSL) in the South, to 4000m ABSL in the North.

We arrayed our forces to provide a capable security presence throughout the Province in order to attempt to meet the security needs of the populace, our center of gravity. The Task and our Afghan security force partners operated from 8 Platoon and/or Company-sized firebases, and one large Battalion Task Force Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Qalat (the provincial capital).

After turning-over responsibility of Zabul Province to the Romania-led ISAF Battlegroup at the end of July 2006, Task Force Warrior moved to the northeastern neighbouring Province of Ghazni. In Ghazni, we assumed the security assistance and counter-insurgency responsibility for a Province that had no coalition manoeuvre force, just a US Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). Our Area of Responsibility (AOR) consisted of 10 of the 15 Ghazni Districts (Southern portion) and one District in Paktika Province (Dila) from 5 August to 20 November. The demographics and geography were also quite daunting for a battalion-sized manoeuvre force and 80-soldier PRT:

- 490,000 people, 18,000 square kilometers (Pastun & Hazara, some Tajik);
- Disposition: 1 Task Force FOB in Gelan (A town on the Zabul border astride HWY1), 3 Platoon Outposts, and security detachments in all but three district centers – the northwestern Hazara districts (the Hazara districts were secure and required no additional security assistance from the task force).

The US Army's counter-insurgency doctrine calls for the following strategy:

- Clear – a tactical task to remove all enemy and eliminate organized resistance;
- Hold – ideally Host Nation forces execute this part of the approach and it is focused on securing the populace;
- Build –protect the populace while the government connects with people.

Counter-insurgency (COIN) is a hard business. Most senior officers from militaries throughout the world tend to agree that COIN is the graduate level of warfare. COIN requires the military to successfully execute the security and force protection tasks inherent to a combat environment, and the skill to judiciously apply military power to secure the indigenous population from the insurgents. Counter-insurgents are required to use all elements of national power (military, diplomatic, information and economic) to create desired effects and transform the host nation environment.

We found the doctrine of “clear, hold, and build” too simplistic and sequential to describe what actually happens when tactical units (both manoeuvre forces and PRTs) execute successful counter-insurgency operations. A more accurate description of the US Military COIN doctrine (at least what Task Force Warrior executed) applied in Afghanistan follows the following construct:

- Separate the enemy from the populace and control the terrain;
- Connect the government with people to achieve desired positive effects;
- Fundamentally transform the environment both physically and permanently.

“Clear” is too kinetic a task for most COIN operations, and it really is a tough effect to achieve tactically against insurgents who expertly blend into the populace when pitted against a superior force. Separating the enemy from the people is the desired effect. This effect can be achieved kinetically by forcibly killing or capturing the insurgents, or non-kinetically by forcing the enemy to flee the area and/or reconcile with the government. It can also be accomplished by controlling an area by inhibiting the enemy’s ability to influence the people and threatening their freedom of movement (FOM). Connecting the government with people requires the government at the local level to provide basic security (to “hold” the center of gravity – the people) and services to the people, build the capacity to sustain the delivery of services, and make government the more legitimate and desirable authority vice the insurgents. Lastly, by connecting the government with the people, the counter-insurgents allow the government to fundamentally and physically transform the environment and thus convince the people that the insurgents are no longer welcome.

During our ten months of counter-insurgency operations, Task Force Warrior continually refined our concept of operations (CONOPs). A consistent theme throughout our time in both Zabul and Ghazni was that in order to be successful the counter-insurgents have to build and manage a team of security forces and advisors; development agents, advisors, and contractors; and host nation government officials and coalition advisors. We achieved the most success when our team was guided by a capable and visionary Provincial governor, an effective Provincial Reconstruction Team, a supportive US Special Forces unit, a supportive ANSF mentor/advisor team, and willing host nation security forces (ANA, ANP and NDS), all committed to defeating the insurgency.

Here is how Task Force Warrior executed the three phases of counter-insurgency operations. The task to Clear was refined to more specifically “separate the enemy from the populace”. We made the capable actors of the Afghan National Security Forces, initially only the Afghan National Army but later included vetted police units, full partners in the planning and execution phases of the initial operation. It was in the planning stages where we identified what areas would require our combat power to capture and/or kill the enemy (especially the leaders), and where we could use manoeuvre forces to convince the enemy to flee or provide the necessary force protection for key government leaders to engage tribal elders and lower-level insurgent commanders to reconcile. Again, all operations were at a minimum executed in partnership with the Afghan National Security Forces, preferably with them in the lead. No Afghan Security Forces, no operation!

Once our TF Warrior and ANSF team sufficiently separated the enemy from the people we had to HOLD the key terrain, the populace, by first securing them and then facilitating the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) connecting with the people. Our task was, first and foremost, to prevent enemy attacks and acts of intimidation on the local populace. We did this through the establishment of a permanent joint ANSF and ISAF/Coalition force presence. We built firebases and/or outposts or we heavily patrolled the area after garrisoning a police force. This allowed the government to maintain a consistent and visible presence with the Afghan National Security Forces, supported by the international coalition forces if necessary. To solidify the GIROA’s hold on the populace, we facilitated the providing of immediate positive effects such as supporting, or at the request of government officials, conducting a MEDCAP (Mobile Medical Clinic), Humanitarian Food Delivery, and supporting tribal Jirgas and religious leader Shuras. Connecting the government with the people must be sustained through development and including the local tribal leadership and working adults in the decision-making process. The best vehicle to achieve these effects is the Commander’s Emergency Response Fund (CERP) and the PRT. CERP provides the counter-insurgent quick access to resources to fund quick impact development projects and lessens bureaucratic hurdles to the sub-national larger and longer-term development projects to complement national development programmes administered and/or funded by the USAID. CERP quickly improves the Quality of Life (QOL) for the people, typically uses tribal and village elders as the contractors, which ensures locals get the jobs, and focuses on what the Afghans need: agriculture, irrigation and potable water, and roads. The coalition forces and/or the PRT should further foster the circulation/visits by District Leaders and Provincial Council members to villages in the

Area of Operations (AOR) and coordinate the security for these events with the ANSF to solidify the connection of local government leaders with people.

When the tribal elders and the religious “scholars” are included in the political decision-making process for development and governance, it lays the ground work for the final phase of a counter-insurgency operation, a fundamental transformation of the environment. To truly transform the environment, the counterinsurgent must facilitate the host nation government’s ability to BUILD the required permanent infrastructure and permanent sub-national structures and processes for the tribes to support an environment where the enemy is no longer welcome and support for the government is strong. This is accomplished by employing the PRT to assist in the development of District Master Plans (2-5 years) to focus infrastructure development and meet the needs of the community. The PRT has the resources and, in some cases, the expertise to advise the Provincial Development Councils (PDCs), and District Shura Development Working Group (CDCs). The PRT can also find ways to fund and secure the construction of projects identified in the Provincial/District Master Plan, and the permanent infrastructure development by leveraging CERP (typically the cost of these projects require the PRT or O-6 level of command or higher to fund), USAID, Non-Governmental Organizations, the Afghan Development Agency (ADA), and the National Solidarity Programme (NSP). The PRT can also develop and manage a plan to build capacity in the local government ministries and coordinate with the CSTC-A for capacity building of the security forces. CSTC-A and/or the manoeuvre Task Force can assist in the establishment of a functional Provincial Coordination Cell (PCC), ensure the ANSF (especially Police) are paid and provided basic needs/shelter, and empower tribal Jirga, under the purview of the Afghan Government, to enforce the rule of law until a GIROA court is established.

I would like to now discuss our operations in Ghazni Province as a case study for counter-insurgency operations. Operation Mountain Fury (Aug - Oct 2006) started once we arrived and established ourselves in the Province. The purpose of Operation Mountain Fury was the re-establishment of GIROA authority and control in the interior of Paktika, Paktia, Khowst, Ghazni (P2KG). Our Task Force area of operations was southern Ghazni and Dila District (Paktika).

To initially separate the enemy from the populace and control the terrain, the Task Force secured every District Center with US Forces and established relationships with the ANP/District Governors. We did not have the luxury of a partner Afghan Army unit, so we decided to

establish relationships with the ANP in each of the Districts. To solidify the separation and hold the populace, we established platoon firebases in each district (permanent presence) and aggressively patrolled villages and routes/roads in the AOR with the ANP, conducted several company-sized (100-150 soldiers) air assaults and vehicle-mounted cordon & searches of selected villages (intelligence driven), and during all of this kinetic activity the remainder of the Task Force built FOB Warrior to provide the Task Force a logistics and Command and Control Base (held 900 soldiers and civilians).

Simultaneous to separating the enemy from the populace, the subordinate companies and the PRT were executing programmes and operations to facilitate the Afghan Government's ability to connect with the people and create immediate positive effects by executing MEDCAPs at every District Center and resupplying existing medical clinics. The Task Force brought the District Leaders to hold tribal Jirgas and Shuras with the US Force leaders present (two Shuras were attended by the Provincial Governor, and later all were attended by the area's Provincial Council Member). During the MEDCAPS and Jirgas, the government distributed basic farm tools and humanitarian food (provided by the US Forces).

To continue to Hold the human terrain, the Task Force continued to facilitate joint ANSF and US Forces operations to stay focused on securing the populace by building, manning, and operating three platoon-sized Fire Bases where ANP outposts would be the enduring presence at remote District and sub-district Centers (Nawa, Dila, South Ab Band).

Later, when augmented by a US (in Lieu of – ILO) MP company, daily presence of the US forces existed wherever the ANP or ANA were located. The Task Force also provided significant support for the recruitment of locals for the ANP and employed a Hazaran former general and his soldiers to secure a key mountain pass and establish government control of a formerly “ungoverned space”. Due to the significant level of insurgent activity, we continued to conduct intelligence-driven cordon and searches of villages to disrupt TB Command & Control and freedom of movement, and we invested significant resources to ensure the Afghan people's Freedom of Movement on HWY 1 through frequent joint patrols and supporting Hasty ANP Traffic Control Points.

The best information operations campaign to connect the GIRoA with the people was our ability to convince the populace they were safe and that their ANSF was a capable and trusted force.

This happened because the ANP we recruited, trained, and supported quickly began to handily defeat the Taliban in every direct fire engagement. The enemy attempted to limit our freedom of movement and the Task Force responded by not allowing the significant IED/Mine threat (19 detonations, 35 discovered in 4 months) affect our ability to help the ANSF control the AOR and establish government control. Another tool for winning the information battle and facilitating the government's connection to the people was the distribution of more than 8000 Hand Crank Radios to expose remote villages to the IO themes from Radio Ghazni, Tolo Radio, and Radio Sharana. Human intelligence (HUMINT) vice signals intelligence was our primary source of reliable and actionable intelligence. The key to success was having the patience and trust to use Tactical HUMINT Team Soldiers in two-man teams with each subordinate company, and the ANP Police Chiefs' sources to build the intelligence picture. A great example was the defeat of regular Rocket Attacks on FOB Warrior through a joint ANP/US Forces operation (led by ANP) – a powerful message for the populace!

Killed four and captured five Taliban vetted MVTs – all joint or ANP unilateral operations – another very powerful message! Other examples of successful counter-insurgent techniques to secure the populace and connect them with their government were:

- Six out of nine District Jirgas/shuras met weekly and worked with the District Leader to govern the populace and address issues;
- Secured the release of three (3) tribal elders from the Bagram Temporary Internment Facility for significant political leverage with a problematic tribe.

Connecting the government with the people in Ghazni required an immediate improvement in the Quality of Life for the people. This was a team effort with the PRT and the Provincial Government to secure the construction of a Brigade (Colonel-level of command) funded (CERP) 20 km road project (hard-packed gravel) that provided local jobs and facilitated an increase in commerce – Bazaars all increased in size and activity.

The funding for the construction for deep wells to provide drinking water occurred in every district. The Task Force hired local workers based on recommendations of tribal elders to empower them and connect them to their local government. We kept all existing medical clinics (NGO-funded) opened despite Taliban threats to close, employed people locally for jobs on FOB Warrior, and facilitated the re-opening of 20 schools. Even the districts without security issues received funding support through the request of their local and Provincial governments.

The secure Hazara areas received CERP funded projects and maintained their enthusiastic support through the Task Force facilitated Key Leader engagements and patrols.

Finally, before the onset of winter, we sought to transform the environment by creating conditions where the enemy was no longer welcome after his winter exodus to Pakistan. Significant work was completed by the PRT and the Task Force to assist in the development of District Master Plans (2-5 years) to focus infrastructure development and meet the future needs of the communities. The efforts resulted in District Shuras for three of the 10 districts to develop 2-year Master Plans to drive development funded by CERP, RRD, and NGOs. All CERP requests for a district were thereafter based on District Jirga/Shura priorities, and we assisted in finding ways to fund and secure the construction of projects identified in the Provincial/District Master Plan. Some significant longer-term development projects included a brokered agreement between the Hazaran Tribal Elders and Pashtun District Shuras to secure a \$100k - \$200k retention dam project, the Brigade Commander funding the building of two high schools, a retention dam, and a gravel-packed road to support the three district Master Plans. We also worked hard with the PRT to build capacity in the local government and security forces by establishing weekly District Police Chief meetings (information shared, promoted cooperation) and ensured the ANP in each district managed their personnel and equipment properly – MP mentors (E6 MP). At the request of the ANP District chiefs, we built jails in each District Police Center to allow for the confinement of criminals and low-level TB fighters. The District Shuras held hearings for criminals and TB fighters – decided guilt/innocence and punishment to establish the rule of law. To facilitate the ability of the Districts to establish security and the rule of law we supported the recruitment of more than 500 Auxiliary Police and secured funding for the repair of the ANP vehicles. Tribal elders were held accountable to take responsibility for the security and safety of schools, roads and clinics to assist in maintaining security and begin the transformation for the environment.

The results speak for themselves. The counterinsurgency operations were succeeding:

- District Leaders worked with the Jirgas and Shuras regularly to address and solve problems, and drive development;
- Professional District ANP Chiefs recruited quality ANP/ANAP and professionally ran their organizations;
- 7 Taliban major leaders killed or captured;
- 30 schools re-opened;

- Health Clinics remained opened and one re-opened in Nawa that had been closed for 6 months prior to our arrival;
- District Seat re-established in Dila – GIROA control re-established;
- \$800k in CERP projects allocated, \$400k completed;
- Bazaars returned to being the vibrant meeting and trading place for Afghan citizens.

Summary

Truly rewarding experience. Afghanistan is a counter-insurgency that the ISAF and the coalition of the OEF forces are winning. In 2001, 8 percent of Afghans had access to some form of healthcare; now with over 670 hospitals and clinics built and outfitted, more than 80 percent of the population has access to medical care. Almost 11,000 doctors, midwives, and nurses have been trained. In 2001, when we went into Afghanistan and liberated it from the Taliban and al Qaeda, only some 900,000 children were enrolled in school. Today, there are more than 5 million students in that country. More than 1.5 million of them are girls. We know the exact number of girls were in school in 2001 because that number was Zero. In 2001, there were 50 kilometers of paved roadway; now, more than 7,400 kilometres of roads have been built and paved, with 1600 more kilometres due to be completed this year. A new bridge between Tajikistan and Afghanistan opened, creating new opportunities for regional trade and commerce. All this development is for naught, if the society is not protected. Development and security must go hand in hand. All this reconstruction that I have mentioned has been possible because of the NATO-ISAF stabilization effort – and the parallel OEF mission.

Not everything looks rosy, to be sure. Who could expect it to? Since the 1979 Soviet invasion, Afghanistan, one of the world's poorest countries, has been subjected to decades of war and tyranny. Huge challenges lie ahead. But instead of the image of failure created by media coverage, let's look at the overall image of a country coming into its own, despite all the difficulties it faces.

Operational and Strategic Lessons Learned from Running a PRT

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From November 2006 to May 2007 for almost seven months, I had the honor and privilege to command Lithuanian-led PRT Chaghcharan in Western region where I had soldiers and civilians from five nations – Croatia, Denmark, Iceland, Lithuania and the United States. I will share my personal observations from the stay in Afghanistan and discuss whether we were successful in the Ghor province and whether more could have been achieved. First of all, I will cover PRT Chaghcharan. In the second part I will discuss achievements and challenges.

The Lithuania-led PRT Chaghcharan operates in the Ghor province. It is one of the poorest and most isolated provinces in Afghanistan. It is far away from two Afghan centers - Kabul and Herat. The distance is not big physically. But having in mind that the roads from both cities are almost non-existent it is a huge distance to travel. During most of the time, the only way to get in or get out of the province is only by air. High altitudes and extreme temperatures complicate even more the life in the province. Any province in Afghanistan is a unique entity but Ghor being so far away - not only physically - from bigger Afghan centers is even more unique.

The Provincial Governor that I worked with was Ahmad Shah Ahad Afzali from Badaghshan. He was a great man. He was one of the few provincial governors who in the past were not military commanders. Governor Afzali was a very educated and skilful civil servant. He is one of the officials who really cares for Afghanistan and does everything to bring a better life to Afghanistan. I would like to note that officials serving in Ghor but being not from the province were able to better represent a public interest. This is due to the fact that Afghan society is a tribal one and most of the peoples' loyalties lie with their tribes.

Provincial administration had 25 departments. They did not formally report to the Provincial Governor and talked only to their respective Ministries in Kabul. Governor Afzali being a really good and effective manager, he was able to informally direct their activities towards a coordinated effort. The department staffs had a relatively big number of employees but only very few of them

possessed required qualifications for their jobs. As a result of such low capacity, they were not able to deliver what was expected of them.

The provincial Afghan National Police (ANP) – the biggest and most visible security organization in the province - was in a developing phase. It had a force of approximately 800 men. Sixty percent of the policemen were recruited from 2 tribes. We paid a special attention to the police, and they acquired new capabilities and received needed equipment. I would note that it is still a long way till they develop into a trusted police force that is able and willing to accomplish their tasks the way we understand. The provincial organization of the National Directorate for Security was more developed but lacked equipment and suffered from the lack of trained employees. The court system was still at a very early stage of development as international community's support for it was not defined at all. Ten district administrations in the Ghor Province mirrored the provincial administration but they were not able to deliver as they suffered even more from the lack of qualified personnel and competing tribal interests.

The main elements of the PRT mission were to extend the GOA authority in the Ghor Province and assist the Provincial authorities with security. One would argue that the mission is not a military one. Yes, it is indeed but still there is a strong military element. As a consequence there must be an interagency effort to accomplish the mission as the military do not possess required expertise and instruments for it.

In order to accomplish its mission, the PRT maintained regular contacts with the Provincial authorities attending formal and informal forums to assist enhancing security and develop indigenous capacity. We aimed at maintaining provincial people's support to the ISAF while at the same time denying population's support to the insurgents and Taliban.

Working with and training the ANP was a high priority amongst other PRT activities. It was accomplished together with the US Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) elements operating within the Operation Enduring Freedom in a coordinated manner. This effort brought very good results.

The Disarmament of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) process which replaced the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) suffered from the lack of attention from the central government and serious underfunding. The focus in this undertaking was not on weapon

collection but on convincing individuals that had the potential to compete with legitimate provincial authority to become or remain loyal to the legitimate authorities.

Engaging IOs/NGOs was very important in order to become updated on their reconstruction and development efforts. It was done so in order to avoid duplication. Their presence in the province was considered as a testimony of good security.

Reconstruction and development was very significant element of the PRT activities. Quick Impact Projects were conducted in support of military operations. Our civilian partners possessed funds to implement bigger projects. Attention was paid to developing indigenous capacity for self-governance. There is a potential for misunderstanding the PRT role. PRT should be viewed as a platform for reconstruction and development. Available funds were used to implement projects to ensure mid-term stability and develop local capacity. A PRT is meant to assist IOs/NGOs or any other potential donor to implement big projects. A PRT is able to provide security for them and possesses knowledge of the area and provincial needs. Afghan ownership was a key element – every project was cleared through the Provincial Development Council. It was not us deciding what was good for the people of the province – it was Afghans deciding what they needed.

Amongst the PRTs, there are various models for their organizations as every province in Afghanistan possesses a unique set of features. PRT Chaghcharan was a military-led PRT with an integrated civilian element. The PRT consisted of Command Element, Patrol/Manoeuvre Element, Security Element and Logistic Element. This was a military part of the organization. Civilian expertise resided in the Civilian Element of the PRT. It consisted of members of the Lithuanian Special Mission to Afghanistan (Special Mission had other functions as well), US and Icelandic civilians. Totally, there were up to 12 civilians representing 7 organizations from 3 nations.²

I would like to separately mention the importance and significance of a synergistic effort between the military and civilians. Civilian PRT members' activities were fully integrated into the overall PRT activities. Civilians and military together held meetings, together planned and together

² Lithuania provided 5 civilians that represented 3 governmental organizations (MoD, MFA, and Lithuanian Police). Iceland provided 1 civilian from the Icelandic Crisis response Unit (ICRU). The United States provided up to 6 civilians from 3 organizations (Department of State, US Agency for International Development (USAID), and CSTC-A).

implemented plans. There was a clear understanding from both sides that without a complementary approach the mission would be hardly addressed. The challenge was that neither the military nor civilians trained or worked together prior to the deployment. I would argue that it is not in any of our organizations' culture to work with each other.

PRT activities in the Ghor province were a success. There were lots of achievements. The provincial authorities were empowered. The provincial police force acquired new capabilities. The security situation remained stable and good. There were only two significant security incidents but they were not directed against the ISAF or Afghan forces. A good basis was laid out for the reconstruction activities to be conducted later in the year. And everything was done in full coordination and cooperation between the military and civilians. This was the status of the things when my rotation left Afghanistan at the end of May 2007. Despite these achievements, I was not fully satisfied because I felt that the situation was not fully irreversible. I wanted to have a more staying effect of our activities but was not quite sure whether this was achieved. Much more could have been accomplished.

There were a number of factors that prevented the situation from becoming irreversible and stood in the way of the PRT to fully accomplish its mission. The first one is troop numbers. The number of troops could be considered too low after the analysis of past examples of security operations and nation building efforts. A RAND Study³ published in 2003 provides data from Kosovo operations where deployed troops totaled to 15-20 soldiers per 1,000 inhabitants. The numbers for Bosnia operation were 8-18 soldiers. In Japan 5-8 soldiers per 1,000 inhabitants were deployed in support of a nation-building effort. The PRT had 1 soldier per approximately 3,000 inhabitants of the province. Bigger number of troops would allow the commanders to have a more constant presence all over the province. When I speak of number of troops, I don't mean only the ISAF troops. Deploying the Afghan National Army (ANA) or Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP) unit would suffice to address the issue.

The second factor is drugs. Drugs are the source to finance the Taliban. The ISAF is not engaged in counternarcotics activities. Here a clear inconsistency could be observed. We rebuild Afghanistan infrastructure – roads, bridges, schools, etc. Not addressing drug issues but rebuilding the infrastructure could be considered as a means to promote drugs as reconstructed roads, bridges and schools may be used to facilitate drug trade. This situation could be improved

³ Dobbins, John et al. America's Role in Nation Building – From Germany to Iraq: RAND, 2003.

by either allowing the military force to conduct counternarcotics operations or legalizing the drugs for a certain period of time till there was a viable plan developed.

The third is the lack of civilian expertise. PRT's mission is not military one but is being carried out by the military in close cooperation with the civilians. In order to be really effective and efficient we need it through all operational chain of command. Regrettably, the HQ above a PRT level possesses little to none civilian expertise and does not allow consistent civilian effort coordination and promotion throughout the chain of command. The PRT possessed up to 12 civilian from 7 organizations but some of the vital areas such as a judicial sector or agriculture sector were not covered. There are various reasons why such expertise is not present at the PRT but their absence did not allow ensuring a longer staying effect.

The fourth factor is the lack of investments and obvious life improvement while security situation is good. PRTs exist as a recognition of "security first" concept, i.e. in order to conduct reconstruction and development activities security is needed first. The issue in the Ghor province was that security situation was probably one of the best in Afghanistan but there was no money coming. Instead the money was going to the most unstable areas of the country. As long as this is unchanged, the situation remains reversible. This situation deserves to be addressed by the international community and the Government of Afghanistan.

The fifth was the GOA attitude. More than half a year spent working daily with provincial authorities and the people of Ghor formed an impression that the Government of Afghanistan, on numerous cases, demonstrated inconsistency in its decisions. We were there to promote the GOA authority but sometimes they were of little help. There was a clear disconnect between the officials in Kabul and the people of Ghor. In some cases, the central government appointed officials not with the best record. There were instances when the government did not adequately respond to the requests of the provincial authorities to assist in mitigating consequences of natural disasters or provide financial support for DIAG or mediate in centuries' long conflict over land. With such misdeeds of the central government, it is very hard to ensure its good reputation and promote its influence as a legitimate and caring national authority.

The last factor that I would like to mention is the nature of the Afghan society and the model of governance we support. We support the central strong Government of Afghanistan based on a western democracy model. We assist in extending its authority into the provinces. But the Afghan

society is a tribal one. It has existed there for centuries. It existed with their attributes that became more enhanced during almost three decades of wars. Extending central government's reach in the provinces might imply a significant change in the tribal structures or an existential conflict between the traditional governance and the new model.

Having said all the above, I would argue that the situation has the potential for progress. We need to consider the issues and factors that are in our way and slow down our efforts. We might even need to reconsider the ways and means we employ to reach the ends. And we need to do this in close cooperation with the Afghans.