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International Peacekeeping: NATO's Comprehensive Approach and its application in Afghanistan.

By: Andri Már Friðriksson
Supervised by: Jón Ólafsson
Fall Semester
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Abstract

The current conflict in Afghanistan has been ongoing for an entire decade, and still there are complications. Promises of troop withdrawals are continually delayed due to the complexities involved. Here, the role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in international peace-support operations as they have developed from the early nineties until today will be examined. The primary focus is NATO's so called "Comprehensive Approach", a strategic concept formally adopted at the 2010 Lisbon Summit, but had been used and developed as a concept in the years prior, based on the Alliances experience in the Balkans and especially in Afghanistan.

The thesis will discuss the development of peacekeeping. The primary focus will be on the Comprehensive Approach and in particular its application in Afghanistan, which remains the Alliances most ambitious and expansive undertaking outside its traditional area of responsibility. To fully comprehend the issue at hand the paper will examine both the general concept of peacekeeping, the strategic concept itself, the specific challenges posed by Afghanistan due to its historical and geographical uniqueness, and the strategies which have been employed from the beginnings of the Afghanistan conflict in 2001. From this the practicality and likelihood of the Comprehensive Approach will be examined, especially with regard to the recent conclusions of the Bonn Conference in December 2011.

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Preface

The following thesis, my final submission towards my Bachelor of the Arts Degree in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics at Bifröst University, was written in the hopes of gaining a further understanding of the conflict in Afghanistan. From a political science point of view, it is an interesting case study due both to how it started with the attacks on the World Trade Center, and also its decade long duration and the conflicts which have arisen on an international scale as a direct cause. Economically, it brings forth many questions when it comes to the development of Afghanistan, such as what military and civilian strategies will help Afghanistan's development the most?

I chose to examine the Afghanistan conflict, partly because it has been ongoing since I was in fifth grade. I lived in Washington D.C. on September 11, 2001 and was able to witness first hand how one day instantly changed an entire nation. However, while much was said about how this conflict affected Americans, I had never had a real chance to examine the effects which this conflict has had on Afghanistan and its citizens. I wanted to know more about the reasons why the conflict began and why after an entire decade it still seemed as complex and overwhelming as it did back in 2001. I wanted to know if anything had changed with the entry of a new American president.

I would like to take this time to thank the people who helped me with this. First and foremost I must thank my father due to the tremendous help and support he has given me during the long process this thesis has been. He has been one of my main inspirations, and of course a personal reason why I chose the subject matter due to his period of working in Kabul both for UNAMA and ISAF. I would also like to thank my supervisor for his seemingly endless patience. Finally I am able to turn in a thesis which I feel proud of, and I hope that you will enjoy it.

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Andri Már Friðriksson

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Glossary

UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
EU	European Union
COIN	Counter-insurgency

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Introduction

International peacekeeping has its origin in the foundation of the United Nations in 1945. Although the UN Charter does not specifically mention peacekeeping as one of the tasks of the then newly formed international organization, chapters 6 and 7 of the Charter have been interpreted as giving the UN the authority to establish peacekeeping missions.[1]

The first peacekeeping mission was established in 1948 to oversee "...the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbors – an operation which became known as the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)."[2]

> "Since then, 66 peacekeeping operations have been deployed by the UN, 53 of them since 1988."[3]

These operations have included civilians and military personnel from more than 120 countries and one can see from this that the peacekeeping process is a big part of UN work. Peacekeeping within the UN has become one many tools for the UN in international relations in conflict areas.

Peacekeeping as it was originally conceived has developed rapidly over the past two decades, following the end of the Cold War.

> "Peacekeeping was primarily limited to maintaining ceasefires and stabilizing situations on the ground, providing crucial support for political efforts to resolve conflict by peaceful means. Those missions consisted of unarmed military observers and lightly armed troops with primarily monitoring, reporting and confidence-building roles."[4]

This is one of the main parts in the definition of peacekeeping forces as opposed to peace-building or peace enforcement. Peacekeeping forces are neutral and are far more limited because as stated they consist of mostly unarmed or lightly armed troops, whereas peace enforcement and peace-building forces are usually more heavily armed. All have their separate roles in crisis management and serve different functions.

> "With the end of the Cold War, the strategic context for UN Peacekeeping changed dramatically. The UN shifted and expanded its field operations from 'traditional' missions involving generally observational tasks performed by military

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1   History of UN Peacekeeping
2   UN News Center, 16 Mar. 2012
3   Ibid.
4   UN News Center, 20 Mar. 2012

personnel to complex 'multidimensional' enterprises. These multidimensional missions were designed to ensure the implementation of comprehensive peace agreements and assist in laying the foundations for sustainable peace.''[5]

By multidimensional enterprises, they are referring to how peacekeeping missions have changed from strictly military enterprises to now including other parts such as electoral observers, human rights monitors, and other non-military personnel. Until the mid-nineties, traditional peacekeeping was exclusive to the UN, with each mission formed under a specific mandate from the UN Security Council. The nineties and the Balkan wars exposed the limitations of traditional peacekeeping, which opened the door to NATO involvement, something that previously had been considered unthinkable.[6]

NATO adopted a new strategy of a comprehensive approach at the Lisbon Summit in 2010. Efforts at peacekeeping and crisis management have been wildly differing in their results and often controversial. This problem is especially true in Afghanistan where NATO and its allies have been trying to maintain security and stability since the American led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 following the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center. Worldwide controversy has surrounded this decision and the implementation of crisis management efforts in Afghanistan, especially following the Iraq war which drew funds and efforts away from Afghanistan. NATO and its allies have been involved for a decade now in Afghanistan and there is a call for an end to this effort. However, for NATO forces to be able to pull out, Afghanistan should preferably have reached the level of security and capability to provide for its own security and guarantee that the situation which arose and required eventual international interference does not occur again. A successful implementation of the comprehensive approach is vital in this respect.

Yet, to fully comprehend what is at stake, it is necessary to understand what exactly does NATO mean when it declares that there is a need for a comprehensive approach to crisis management? Has there been a lack of such an approach in the past? In order to answer these questions, we must examine both the general philosophy behind the concepts of peacekeeping and crisis management, and the practical application of such efforts. For this there is no greater and more current example than Afghanistan, which is today the primary fuel for the increased need of a comprehensive approach. We will then look to see whether new priorities and strategies are being implemented in Afghanistan and a basic analysis will be done to see whether this new approach will be more successful than past strategies.

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5   UN News Service, 21 Mar. 2012
6   Jackson, 1997

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Peace-keeping and crisis-management

The first step to this thesis will be to examine the general workings and philosophy behind peacekeeping and crisis management. What does this entail policy wise and what are the different components of a peacekeeping and crisis management strategy?

There are essentially two instrumental goals. The first is that once a crisis has occurred there is a need for stepping in to establish order, especially when local forces cannot do so by themselves. The second is to make sure that peace is maintained while conflicts are being managed. In order to do this, there are several methods which must be considered.

The precedent for peacekeeping and peace building is developed through the UN Charter. In Chapter I, Article One of the UN Charter it states that the purpose of the UN is to:

> *"To maintain international peace and security, and to that end:*
> *to take effective collective measures for the prevention and*
> *removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts*
> *of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about*
> *by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of*
> *justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of*
> *international disputes or situations which might lead to a*
> *breach of the peace;"*[7]

This creates a precedent for a neutral international actor, or actors, to step in to provide and maintain peace in situations where international peace is threatened. Furthermore, in Chapter VII of the UN Charter there is outlined the process for which the UNSC can take action in order to enforce and maintain peace.[8] Thus the UNSC becomes the highest authority in such matters and in most cases is the main actor in deciding when military force is to be used in matters of peacekeeping and peace building.

When a crisis has occurred there is the question of whether there is indeed a need for an international effort to step in and manage said crisis. In the Kosovo war, NATO felt that they should step in to aid Kosovo-Albanians. While NATO was originally founded as a defense alliance at the beginning of the Cold War and remained as such until the early nineties, the Balkan crisis led to a a redefinition of its roles and responsibilities in international politics. In the Kosovo war, NATO interfered in the Serbian crackdown on Kosovo-Albanians, who were citizens of what remained of Yugoslavia, following the secession and recognition of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early nineties. Actions which by themselves had led to civil war and massive international intervention, including by NATO and the UN. In Kosovo, NATO's role took an active step forward when

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7 UN News Center, 13 Feb. 2012
8 UN News Center, 14 Feb. 2012

the Alliance went ahead and launched an 11 week bombing campaign against Yugoslavia in order to try and force Slobodan Milosevic to remove his forces from Kosovo. Here NATO's member states felt a great humanitarian crisis was occurring in which it needed to intervene.

Following said campaign, its goal of intervention and establishing some semblance of order was given international legitimacy with the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1244 which:

> *"7. Authorizes Member States and relevant international organizations to establish the international security presence in Kosovo as set out in point 4 of annex 2 with all necessary means to fulfill its responsibilities under paragraph 9 below;*
> *8. Affirms the need for the rapid early deployment of effective international civil and security presences to Kosovo, and demands that the parties cooperate fully in their deployment;"*[9]

Paragraph 9 goes on to define the duties of the international security presence which in general work towards maintaining public safety and the protection of the people of Kosovo as well as general peacekeeping efforts.

The Kosovo war shows a strategy of involvement by international organizations and alliances such as NATO and the UN due to humanitarian or other reasons. There, the argument by NATO was based on humanitarian reasons, which is further emphasized by Resolution 1244's focus on allowing the safe return of refugees and those who have been displaced by the conflict and the trials that followed which prosecuted members from both sides for crimes against humanity.[10]

The Kosovo war clearly shows the two steps of peacekeeping and crisis management. First off NATO determines that there is a crisis occurring in which they need to step in and interfere. Citing humanitarian reasons, NATO steps in and starts military action to stop the inhumane actions against Kosovo-Albanians. This was a significant step, as Kosovo was not an internationally recognized state, but a province of rump-Yugoslavia (Serbia). Afterward, Kosovo is placed under UN administration as a way of keeping peace and ensuring the safe return of those who were displaced by the Kosovo war. This continues to the present day as the debate of Kosovo's future status is debated.

This reflects a changing trend in international politics where organizations such as NATO and the UN no longer shy away from interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign nation-states. In the Kosovo conflict peace-keeping and crisis management is very clearly demonstrated through periods before and after UN administration.

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9 S/RES/1244 (1999)
10 Human Rights Watch, 25 Jan. 2012

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There are several means in which the process of crisis management and peacekeeping can be implemented. The first is military means which up until recently has been NATO's main focus. Then there are political and civilian efforts and also the use of aid as a tool in peacekeeping and crisis management.

Militarily there are several parts to the peace-keeping and crisis management process. First, there is the use of military force in order to remove a force which is considered as threatening or oppressive. In the Kosovo war, this applies to the bombing campaign in Yugoslavia in order to stop the Yugoslav efforts against the population in Kosovo. In Afghanistan, this applies to the initial invasion into Afghanistan in order to topple the Taliban and to remove Al Qa'ida influence in Afghanistan. While it is often the most controversial part of such actions, it can be an essential part and precondition in establishing stability in a region.

Following the first strike military forces may still be needed. For example, in cases where an insurgency is formed there is a clear need for military forces in order to counter said insurgency. This falls into the greater military goal of maintaining security while stability is being established in a region. If a region is not able to provide its own security and none is supplied, there is a great chance that the conditions which called for international interference will arise again. Military means thus become necessary in maintaining stability.

In political efforts, there is an urgent need to either support the current legitimate government or establish one in its absence. While international actors can at first select candidates it is vital that said candidates have support from the local populace so as to be able to remain in power. This is especially important in a region such as Afghanistan where political turmoil has been a large part of its history. There has already been turmoil with the current Afghani regime due to accusations of corruption against Afghanistan's current president, Hamid Karzai, which has on several occasions threatened political stability.[11] If a government is not seen as legit by its people the likelihood of non-legitimate parties taking control increases. Therefore a legitimate government is crucial in building and maintaining peace.

Subsequently, it then follows that the local government and its supporters need to provide minimal infrastructure and services to its population. This is necessary to build legitimacy and local trust in two ways. Not only does it show that the government is actively working for the local population it also decreases all incentives for the local population to

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11 Rubin, Alissa J. and Helena Cooper, 28 Mar. 2010

support other organizations or actors which might be working to establish an alternative to the current legitimate government. This is especially true when it later comes to public voting. If when an election is called there is not guaranteed access for all members of the population then that in and by itself will cause the government to lose legitimacy, for example in areas where there is no access to voting booths. This will in turn undermine future efforts by the government to extend its influence in said areas.

Through all of this, the training of a local police force is essential in maintaining government legitimacy. In Max Weber's "Politics as a Vocation" he states that:

> *"We have to say that a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the 'monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force' within a given territory."[12]*

The main tool for the state to maintain this claim is the police force. For the state to maintain legitimacy the police force must be a reliable source of enforcement of the state's laws. The police force must be trained to become a truly visible and trustworthy force and any attempts to undermine said "monopoly" must be stopped. This can be achieved militarily, through the use of physical force by the police in order to affirm its power, and the use of political means to improve police legitimacy. If the police are not considered a legitimate or effective force, alternatives are bound to show up and thus undermine the state. If a state and its government are to be seen as legitimate, an effective and legitimate police force is key. This is also a key element in ensuring future stability in a region once foreign participants have left. Without a local legitimate police force, the security of a region is continuously threatened.

There exists a need for clear cooperation between allies involved in a peacekeeping operation. In the absence of clear goals and communication there is a high risk of redundancy and that some allies will abandon the efforts in frustration. For an alliance to work effectively, all members must have faith in their cooperative efforts. If one ally is seemingly working against alliance efforts, as has often been the case with Pakistan, it will cause general distrust. The alliance must work together comprehensively lest they lose legitimacy and undermine their efforts to create stability in the region. There are cases in conflicts where precisely this has occurred especially due to lack of cooperation in the training of the local police force and the lack of commitment due to other engagements.

During a peacekeeping operation, there is a high chance of further conflicts developing in an unstable region. While military means might be the only option, there is a

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12 'Politik Als Beruft', 1921

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need for diplomatic efforts to attempt to solve them first. For example, while it may seem quicker and easier to destroy opposition forces through military means, there remains the option of giving members of said forces the opportunity to defect without fear. Reintegration and reconciliation efforts are a vital component in the establishment of lasting peace. This is one way in which to gain support and undermine efforts by opposition forces. Diplomatic means should not be overlooked in favor of military ones and can be a key element in the peacekeeping and crisis management process. Diplomatic efforts can have longer lasting effects on peace and stability than military ones.

Political means are a key element in securing stability in a region. Without a legitimate state government a region is more likely to develop into crisis once outside participants and militaries have left. If the political situation is unstable due to corruption, lack of infrastructure, of lack of a legitimate law enforcement agency, then the future stability of the region is greatly compromised. Thus political efforts are a necessary side to the peacekeeping and crisis management process.

Aid can be a necessary part in the stabilization of a troubled region. Due to aid organizations neutrality and independence, it is able to provide necessary infrastructure such as health services and access to food and water in regions where the local government has difficulty establishing security and legitimacy due to opposing forces. Therefore there is a need for independent humanitarian aid organizations to step in to provide necessary services where the local government has not yet been able to establish them. Ideally this should only be a temporary solution until the local government can provide the necessary security and infrastructure to troubled regions.

Of course, humanitarian aid organizations must maintain their neutrality officially, as otherwise they would most likely not be allowed to operate in areas which are currently under control of opposition forces. It is the reason behind their freedom of movement in many cases. Some can provide a neutral force for convincing opposition forces to behave differently. For example, human rights organizations might be able to gain access and attempt to convince opposition forces to adopt a philosophy which increases their consideration for human rights. In this way, non-governmental organizations can help in providing a better foundation for stability in the region.

Through these different means, the possibility of removing foreign forces and actors without threatening the security and stability of the region become a realizable goal. Without

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these means, the possibility of another crisis occurring after foreign withdrawal is immense, especially in volatile areas.

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NATO's Comprehensive Approach

NATO, with its redefined purpose as a force for international security and stability has had to develop a comprehensive approach. What does NATO mean by this? There has been an ongoing debate within NATO on how best to proceed in these matters and what exactly it entails to have a comprehensive approach. In peacekeeping and peace building there remains the challenge of how to do so effectively in order to allow for the withdrawal of peacekeeping forces so that they will not be needed again in the foreseeable future. In a NATO review article, titled "From Comprehensive Approach to Comprehensive Capability," authors Friis Arne Petersen[13] and Hans Binnendijk[14] state that:

> *"Developing a Comprehensive Approach to civil-military cooperation represents one of the major challenges facing the Alliance today. Afghanistan remains the clearest illustration of that."[15]*

One of the key components of NATO's call for a comprehensive approach is that military means are not enough. While they are important, there is a need for greater cooperation between civil and military participants. Friis' and Hans' article illustrates how such an approach might be formed and implemented.

There remains a primacy for military means. In the article it is stated that NATO must evaluate which military resources are necessary to build stability and necessary services directly following military operations. This is a logical first step in crisis management and shows that there is still a need for military means in such conflicts. However, NATO emphasizes the facts that said forces must have the experience and awareness necessary to work both with the local population and civilian actors. Right away this reflects the necessity of increased focus on cooperation between military and civilian actors which is the main idea behind NATO's new strategic concept. Secretary-General of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, states that:

> *"In today's world, we have to realise that the military is no longer the complete answer... We have to understand that the only way forward is to coordinate and cooperate with others."[16]*

Following this first step which Friis and Hans outline there follows that NATO

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13 Ambassador of Denmark to the United States at the time the article was written
14 Director of the Center for Technology and National Security Policy at the National Defense University in Washington at the time the article was written.
15 Petersen, Friis A., and Hans Binnendijk, Mar. 2008
16 Rasmussen, Anders F., 4 Mar. 2010

organizations must have the capabilities to work with civilian actors with efficient communications. Here they outline the need for military forces to work along with civilian groups in order to provide security and resources which are required for said missions to succeed. They call for both security in stopping any unlawful use of force and the protection of those who are affected by the conflict. Civil-military planning must step up to the challenges which faces current peacekeeping and crisis management efforts.

Friis and Hans mention that there is an inherent difficulty with the deployment of civilian resources. They argue that unlike military resources, civilian resources are not as readily available for deployment in times of crisis. This could be solved with the establishment of a standing civilian corps which is ready for immediate deployment internationally. Such resources would require the appropriate training and information provided to them so as to make them effective in most cases.

Another problem is that of the cultural barrier not only between different nations but also when it comes to the unique cultures present within civilian organizations. NGO's have a long standing culture of impartiality which is necessary to their effectiveness and survival. Military organizations must refrain from either doing or saying anything which will compromise said impartiality. NATO must focus on the integrated training of military and civilian personnel and that information is shared equally and rapidly so as to improve the efficiency of civil-military operations.

A large focus which appears both in the review article but also amongst NATO documents is the need for further cooperation between NATO and the EU. Closer collaboration of these two significant international organizations in matters of peacekeeping and crisis management would be highly beneficial to them both. Integrated planning and coordination would be an essential step for these two organizations to work effectively.

The article concludes by stating that effective civil-military cooperation is mutually beneficial to both civilian and military actors as it helps to both increase efficiency and reduce overall costs. It is in the interest of all parties involved in crisis management to make their efforts more efficient through an integrated comprehensive approach. From a simple strategic point of view, this is the approach that will most likely culminate in a favorable result for all parties involved.

This still leaves the question of whether this is a credible strategic approach. In the book "Thinking Strategically" by Avinash K. Dixit and Barry J. Nalebuff, they put forth the argument that "credibility requires *commitment* to the strategic move."[17] Some argue that NATO has not shown full commitment to the comprehensive approach. In a speech for the

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17 Dixit, Avinash K., and BarryJ. Nalebuff, 1993 page 124

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EUSA Twelfth Biennial International Conference, Professor Sten Rynning claims:

> *"Afghanistan illuminates the kind of problem that is built into NATO's comprehensive and networked approach: abundant intuitive appeal but no strategy of action... It not only is bereft of leadership; it undermines it and in turns erodes both operational efficacy and political legitimacy."*[18]

Criticism such as this is not limited to a few cases. The NATO-led operation in Afghanistan has had problems where different components of the crisis management effort have failed due to massive redundancies and lack of commitment due to different actors having different priorities and methods. To implement an integrated plan NATO and its allies would have to address and overcome these problems in order to gain credibility and thus show that they are committed to the strategy of a comprehensive approach in practice, not just in theory.

NATO's Comprehensive approach thus calls for the continued use of military force for the purpose of peacekeeping and peace-building, yet in a coequal partnership with civilian organizations and institutions for the advancement of mutually agreed goals.

Specifically, NATO, in its new Strategic Concept, adopted at its Lisbon Summit in 2010 states the following:

> *"Crises and conflicts beyond NATO's borders can pose a direct threat to the security of Alliance territory and populations. NATO will therefore engage, where possible and when necessary, to prevent crises, manage crises, stabilize post-conflict situations and support reconstruction."*[19]

The alliance learned that in order to effectively manage a crisis a clear and comprehensive civil-military approach is needed. NATO must cooperate fully with other international actors both befre and after crises so as to deal with a crisis in the most efficient and coherent methods possible. Without this, reconstruction and stability will be a much more difficult process and it is for these reasons that the new strategic concept has been adopted by NATO at the Lisbon summit.

We witness here some of the general aspects of the new strategic concept of a comprehensive approach which NATO has adopted. There lies the remaining question of whether it can be said that such an approach has not been in effect prior to its adoption in Lisbon and whether such an approach will prove effective in practice. In order to answer that

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18 Wendling, Cécile. 5 Feb. 2012
19 NATO, Lisbon 2010

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it is best to look at a current case, and for that there are few as current and critical to the credibility of the new strategic concept as the conflict in Afghanistan.

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Case study: Afghanistan

NATO's intervention in Afghanistan followed a US led invasion in the winter of 2001/2002. Under the auspices of a UN Security Council Resolution, renewed annually since 2002, NATO leads an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), in Afghanistan. To fully understand the conflict and its impact, Afghanistan's history and geography must be taken into account.

History

When it comes to illustrating the need for a comprehensive approach to crisis management Afghanistan provides for an interesting case study. The conflict in Afghanistan has been an ongoing venue for NATO forces since the US led invasion in the winter of 2001/2002. Under the auspices of UN Security Council Resolution 1386[20], renewed annually since 2002, NATO leads an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), in Afghanistan. The conflict in Afghanistan has been a long and difficult one, which has seen many problems including the diversion of funds and forces towards the Iraq war. It remains one of NATO's biggest challenges, and thus is a worthy example to use in analysis of NATO's strategic concept and the way forward in peacekeeping and crisis management.

The first step in understanding the conflict in Afghanistan is to examine the nation's history in relation the country's geography which has made military efforts in the region immensely troublesome for foreign powers.

The name Afghanistan directly translates as "Land of the Afghans."[21] It was a region which compromised mostly of Pashtun, or Afghan, tribes. This is supported by the fact that:

> *"Archaeologists have found evidence of human habitation in Afghanistan from as far back as 50,000 BCE The artifacts indicate that the indigenous people were small farmers and herdsmen."*

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20 S/RES/1386 (2001
21 Banting, Erinn. 2003 p. 4

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With Afghanistan's strategic location in Asia, it was a desirable location for foreign invaders. The first famous case is that of Alexander the Great's invasion into the region in 330BC.

Alexander the Great ran into many problems in Afghanistan. His conquest of Eurasia became bogged down in Afghanistan and India[22] and is said to have commented that Afghanistan was "easy to march into, hard to march out of." What followed was two thousand years of conflict where foreign invaders such as Genghis Khan, Timur, and Babur ran into deep problems in trying to control the Afghan region.[23]

Afghanistan was later united under Ahmed Shah Durrani in 1747.[24] Following a period of relative independence Afghanistan later became a conflict in "The Great Game" between the British and Russian empires where Afghanistan served as a sort of "buffer state" between the two great powers. There occurred a series of three Anglo-Afghan wars in which the British suffered humiliating defeats. The first of which was particularly devastating, as an army of 16,000 was reduced to one lone survivor. The British did not fare better in the latter two wars, and eventually Afghanistan broke entirely out from British influence with the signing of the Treaty of Rawalpindi in 1919 which recognized Afghanistan as an independent sovereign state.[25]

There were attempts to modernize the nation but due to ethnic conflicts and regime changes that did not succeed until Zahir Shah took over the Afghan government in 1963. During his time of rule, Afghanistan enjoyed years of prosperity and gained status as a hotbed for tourists. This continued until the 1970s where there began to appear signs of political unrest.

Zahir Shah left Afghanistan in 1973 to receive medical treatment, but was not able to return until 2002. After he left a coup was initiated by Daoud Khan. Five years later, in April of 1978, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan overthrew Daoud Khan's regime. The next year and a half were marked by political instability and unrest. It was in fact this political instability and unrest that contributed to the Soviet decision to deploy troops and to invade Afghanistan.[26] Ultimately, though, the decision was made in support of the Soviets ideological allies within the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and to ensure their hold on power.[27]

While there had been many warnings against such a decision due to previous Afghan response to foreign occupation, they carried out the invasion in light of a regime change that

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22 Jones, Seth G. 2009 p. xxv
23 Ibid p. xxvi
24 CIA, 10 Feb. 2012
25 Jones, Seth G. 2009 p. 7
26 Ibid p. 11-18
27 Coll, Steve, 2005, p. 42

was possibly pro-USA under the leadership of Hafizullah Amin. The Soviet Union decided to interfere and replace Amin with the Soviet-friendly Babrak Karmal.[28]

What followed was essentially ten years of civil war wherein a Cold War super-power war by proxy took place in the mountains and valleys of Afghanistan. Ultimately, the Soviet Union pulled back its troops in 1989, yet maintained economic support to the communist regime in Kabul until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992. The collapse of the Soviet Union and loss of its economic support consequently led to the loss of the hold of power in Afghanistan by the communists. An interim government was formed in Kabul, in essence a power sharing arrangement among the warlords and mujaheddin who had fought against the communists and the Soviet invasion.[29]

The interim government in Kabul held little real power. Warlords kept control in their respective regions, and large parts of Afghanistan in effect became ungoverned and at the mercy of gangs and bandits. General lawlessness and corruption ran rampant. At the same time the international community seemed to have lost all interest in Afghanistan.[30]

It is out of this atmosphere of chaos that the modern day Taliban movement is born in 1994. The word Taliban is from the local pashto language which means a student of Islam. Initially, they were a reactionary force against the oppression of local warlords in southern regions of Kandahar. Ultimately, the movement grew as well as its momentum, until by 1996 it more or less controlled all of Afghanistan, save for a few pockets in the north. Formal Taliban rule lasted from 1996 until the US led invasion in 2001.[31]

The history up to this point led to several mentions of Afghanistan as a nation in which it was in the interest of the international community to act upon the situation in Afghanistan. Amongst one of those voices was Amnesty International. Amnesty released a report in 1995 where straight away in the title it describes the situation in Afghanistan as a "human rights disaster." It also opens up with a scathing criticism of the inaction which it feels has taken place in Afghanistan since the end of the Soviet conflict in Afghanistan.

> *"During a rare lull in the bombardment of Kabul in 1994, a woman left her home to find food. Two Mujahideen guards grabbed her and took her to a house, where 22 men raped her for three days. When she was allowed to go home, she found her three children had died of hypothermia."[32]*

Events such as this were a daily occurrence for the citizens of Afghanistan. This event in particular shows that there was a lack of necessary resources such as food. At the same

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28 Coll, Steve, 2005 p. 49
29 Infoplease, 5 Jan. 2012
30 Fergusson, James, 2010, p. 24-25
31 Ibid. multiple pages.
32 Amnesty International, 1995, p. 1

time, it shows the lack of respect which Mujaheddin fighters had for human life. Forces which claimed to be working for the people against the Soviets were showing a great lack of respect towards the sanctity of human life, and as such the local populace suffered immensely. These acts were being indirectly supported by the US due to their financing of the Mujaheddin in order to undermine Soviet influence in the area.

> *"For more than a generation Afghan civilians have been the main victims of a human rights catastrophe. It is a catastrophe that has been fueled by outside powers and is now being largely ignored by the rest of the world."[33]*

Straight away, they show that in humanitarian terms Afghanistan had sunk to the level of disaster. It places blame on the international community, and it is not without backing that they do so.

Besides the large amounts of weaponry and ammunition which were poured into the country during the Soviet conflict, at the time the report was written, there were still large amounts of weaponry flowing into Afghanistan:

> *"Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed in deliberate or indiscriminate artillery attacks on residential areas by all factions in the civil war. These killings have been carried out with arms and ammunition supplied to the political groups by outside powers."[34]*

Weapons and ammunition flowed into the country from various neighboring countries in order to further their influence in Afghanistan. They reportedly maintained links with warring factions within Afghanistan and continually supplied Afghanistan with weapons and ammunition. This created an abundance of weapons amongst all sides in the conflict, resulting in thousands of civilian deaths and routine abuses against the civilian population.

Here Amnesty would argue that the international community should interfere as many of the weapons available to the warring factions in Afghanistan were provided by outside forces. Amongst them were weapons and ammunition provided to anti-Soviet factions by the USA and its allies. These were met by matching military provisions from the Soviet Union.[35] After the conflict, weapons continued to pour into the country.

This sort of political manipulation helped to create a volatile situation in Afghanistan. With the human rights violations which were taking place during this time Amnesty argues for an international interference in order to at least make sure that the warring factions of

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33 Ibid, p. 1
34 Ibid, p. 28-29
35 Ibid. p. 21-27

Afghanistan would not use the weapons which they had been supplied with to commit large breaches against civilians. This was largely ignored by the international community as is pointed out in the report.[36] In such an environment, rebuilding and stabilization will most likely take a long time due to the complexities of national issues following widespread atrocities performed by rival factions in the country, and may unfortunately set a precedent where in the current conflict, insurgents might further continue a policy of human rights abuses in order to keep control over the Afghan population.

With this look at history, one can see that Afghanistan has a very violent history. This especially relates to the years leading up to the 2001 invasion, both in terms of a volatile political state and widespread abuse of its citizens. This gives a glimpse into the complexities presented by a stabilization effort in Afghanistan as there have been relatively few years of peace experienced in Afghanistan.

Geography

In terms of geography, Afghanistan provides a unique problem as it is a geographically complex country in terms of combat. It is landlocked, bordering China, Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan. It is mostly mountainous which creates a strategic problem.[37] The mountains of Afghanistan provide ample cover for local insurgents who are more used to the local terrain as opposed to foreign forces who often have had difficulty with the landscape due to unfamiliarity. In the book "In The Graveyard of Empires" by Seth G. Jones it is stated that:

> *"David Galula, a French military officer and counterinsurgency expert, wrote that the ideal location for insurgents is a landlocked country with mountains along the borders, a dispersed rural population, and a primitive economy. If ever a country matched this description, it surely would be Afghanistan."[38]*

This shows that Afghanistan's geography is a major factor to be considered in any and all civil-military efforts within the nation. Without the consideration of geography, there is a substantial "home court advantage" for those working against international forces.

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36 Ibid, p. 3
37 CIA, 10 Feb. 2012
38 Jones, Seth G. 2009 p. 154

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Strategic approaches to CM in Afghanistan

Now there is a certain need to analyze some of the strategies in place in the early period of the Afghan conflict. This is in order to be able to analyze whether the approach up until now has been non-comprehensive and thus whether there is truly a need for this new strategic concept.

Light footprint

The initial strategy implemented by the US and its allies in the Afghan conflict was that of a "light footprint." This was proposed as a possible way to avoid Soviet mistakes in their invasion of Afghanistan. Under Secretary of Defense for Policy at the US Defense Department, Douglas Feith, argued that "The history of British and Soviet military failures in Afghanistan argued against a large U.S. invasion force."[39] The argument was that a large foreign military presence in Afghanistan had contributed to said military failures.

In the beginning of the Afghanistan conflict there were two main camps. The first one included those that felt a substantial peacekeeping force was necessary to ensure security in Afghanistan. Within the US State Department there was a tendency to favor such a force in order to stabilize key urban areas. Secretary of State Colin Powell argued that a US strategy had to take "...charge of the whole country by military force, police, or other means." James Dobbins, who was the Bush administration's special envoy to the Afghan opposition, stated that it was "naïve and irresponsible" to believe that "Afghanistan could be adequately secured by Afghans in the immediate aftermath of a twenty-three year civil war." This camp felt that a small NATO presence in Kabul would help in establishing security and allowing Afghan leaders to return to Kabul. However they also felt that international forces would be needed in key cities in order to provide security across all of Afghanistan.

Members of the Afghan government also supported this plan, along with other members of the international community. The Bonn Agreement of 2001 includes a paragraph which allows for the expansion of an international security force outside of Kabul:

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39 Ibid p. 132

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> *"Conscious that some time may be required for the new Afghan security and armed forces to be fully constituted and functioning, the participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan request the United Nations Security Council to consider authorizing the early deployment to Afghanistan of a United Nations mandated force. This force will assist in the maintenance of security for Kabul and its surrounding areas."[40]*

There was also an increase in calls for expansion of ISAF forces to the rest of the country from local Afghans.

Those who were in this first camp followed a doctrine of military engagement which became known as "The Powell Doctrine," named after Secretary of State Colin Powell, which stated that "military force, when used, should be overwhelming and disproportionate to the force used by the enemy during stability operations." Powell felt that "we should win and win decisively." Former Secretary of State Caspar Weinberger had a similar theory which he stated in his speech "On the Use of Military Power" in 1984:

> *"In those cases where our national interests require us to commit combat force we must never let there be doubt of our resolution. When it is necessary for our troops to be committed to combat, we must commit them, in sufficient numbers and we must support them, as effectively and resolutely as our strength permits. When we commit our troops to combat we must do so with the sole object of winning. Once it is clear our troops are required, because our vital interests are at stake, then we must have the firm national resolve to commit every ounce of strength necessary to win the fight to achieve our objectives."[41]*

The overwhelming consensus in this first camp was that there was a need for security and stabilization efforts in Afghanistan. However, there were several key opponents which affected the decision to ultimately adopt the "light footprint" plan.

The second group supported peacekeeping forces in Kabul but were generally opposed to extending the reach beyond that. Pentagon officials were especially adamant that there should be no peacekeeping force outside of Kabul. There was especially concerns over including US forces in such efforts as the fear existed that if US forces were to be placed into ISAF allied nations might begin to rely too heavily on the United States. The State Department preferred to expand ISAF and felt that the stabilization process in Afghanistan should be mainly Afghanistan's responsibility.[42] White House spokesman Ari Fleischer added

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40 UN News Center, 5. Feb. 2012. Annex I, paragraph 3
41 Weinberger, Caspar W. 1984
42 Jones, Seth G. 2009 p. 112

that "The President continues to believe the purpose of the military is to be used to fight and win wars, and not to engage in peacekeeping of that nature."[43]

The primary US mission in Afghanistan was to combat Al Qa'ida, and everything else was considered purely incidental.[44] This led to a conflict of commitment. For example, US forces were told not to engage in counterinsurgency operations, but rather counter-terrorism operations.[45] Nation-building as well was not part of the US plan in Afghanistan. This, along with a rushed move to invade Iraq, helped to undermine the credibility of the Afghan conflict and showed a lack of commitment from the US government.

There was no international police force deployed in Afghanistan.[46] This was not in keeping with previous NATO missions, where for example in Kosovo both Italy and France deployed their gendarmeries in order to provide security in the region. In Afghanistan, no such action was taken. The US itself lacked an international police force which it could deploy in cases such as this. International police training is handled by two federal agencies in the US: The State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and the Justice Department's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program. Neither agency had the resources for police deployment abroad and thus they had to rely on private firms.[47]

The Afghan police thus faced difficulties in becoming an effective institution. The Afghan police force was largely viewed as being poorly led and highly corrupt, with a history of demanding bribes. Any efforts of police training often focused too much on the training of high-level personnel with little to no training of mid or lower level police. The Afghan police was thus unable to cope with the law enforcement challenges it faced, such as in counterinsurgency and counternarcotics operations. Another problem followed with DynCorp training of the Afghan police, where the DynCorp focus was mostly on the quantity of police officers trained and not the quality of said training. This and other problems in developing an Afghan law enforcement agency helped to increase insurgent power and influence.[48]

Funding was as well a major issue. In the US, the Iraq war took much of the resources which otherwise might have gone to the Afghan conflict. At the same time, one of the large

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43 Press Secretary Ari Fleischer, 2002
44 Jones, Seth G. 2009 p. 118
45 Ibid p. 142
46 Dobbins, James 2003. Chapter 8, p. 147
47 Jones, Seth G. 2009 p. 120
48 Ibid p. 170-176

problems was the Office of Management and Budget. Dov Zakheim, the Pentagon's coordinator of civilian programs in Afghanistan, had this to say on the subject:

> *"The biggest scandal was OMB ... It was beyond our comprehension that OMB refused to provide more support to Afghanistan than it did ... There was no major insurgency in 2002 and 2003 yet we couldn't get funding. The levels of poppy cultivation were low, and we lobbied to get assistance for alternative crops. But we couldn't get it from OMB. Neither could State or USAID."[49]*

US allies were not much better in providing funds and resources. Partly due to the low commitment shown by the US, its allies were unwilling to provide the necessary support. Zakheim describes that getting allied assistance was like "pulling teeth:"

> *"In general, the levels of assistance were too low... But most of this was for support to forces moving through their countries. We didn't get a lot of material support in theater."[50]*

There was a repeated response of there being limited resources, and thus Afghanistan went without the necessary aid in these crucial early stages.

During this early period,the lack of funds and resources from both the US and its allies has most likely made several important reconstruction programs more difficult. At the time Ashraf Ghani held the seat of Afghanistan's finance minister. He was recognized by *Emerging Markets* as Asia's best finance minister in 2003[51] and in 2010 made number 50 in *Foreign Policy*'s list of Top 100 Global Thinkers. Ghani might have been able to provide some good work in governance in that early period but despite his best efforts he was not able to gain the required assistance from the US and its allies.

The Iraq war, which began in 2003, set the light footprint plan in stone in Afghanistan. This was due to the fact that such an early involvement in Iraq meant that US and NATO forces were now spread thin over two missions, with the main focus being Iraq. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage stated that "From day one it was Iraq, Iraq, Iraq." He went on to further describe the emphasis which the Bush administration had placed on Iraq:

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49 Ibid p. 123
50 Ibid p. 122
51 Ibid p. 123

"Afghanistan was really an accidental war for much of the Administration. No one wanted to do it. And once it became clear the Taliban was likely to fall, senior Pentagon officials wanted to turn to Iraq as quickly as possible."[52]

The argument behind the Iraq invasion was that Iraq was a state which supported terrorism. It was said that Iraq might provide terrorists with weapons of mass destruction and that a definitive blow against Iraq would cause terrorist-supporting regimes to rethink their policies. This shift in focus would become detrimental to the Afghan effort as the resources were not available in order to provide security and stability to the region, thus prolonging US commitment in Afghanistan.

Powell argued that the Afghanistan conflict had to be dealt with prior to any consideration of an Iraq invasion. Which is not surprising due to a prior statement of his in 1992:

"We[US forces] must not go too far, too fast. This is the easiest mistake to make and, therefore, the one that troubles me most."[53]

However, planning from Rumsfeld and others who followed his line of thinking eventually pushed the Iraq invasion through. This early planning lead to a downsizing of US commitment in Iraq which led to the US having decreased credibility. It drained resources away from Afghanistan before the situation there was fully under control. This meant that stabilization efforts were threatened from early on and would most likely end up lengthening international commitment to the Afghan conflict.[54]

Under the light footprint plan, US and other NATO forces could clear territory held by the Taliban, but did not have the sufficient numbers to hold it. This was especially true in the South and in rural areas where a bulk of the fighting occurred. These areas ended up not receiving the security and development assistance required to defeat insurgent influence.[55]

Another consequence of the light footprint plan was that without sufficient local and/or international forces local warlords ended up filling the gap. Some were aided by the US military since it was clear that the number of US forces in Afghanistan would not be increased anytime soon. Al Qa'ida was an urgent enough target that instead of waiting for the development of Afghan national forces, the US government ended up putting money and

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52 Ibid p. 125
53 Powell, Colin L. 1992
54 Jones, Seth G. 2009 p. 124-129
55 Ibid p. 115

support behind local warlord-led militias. This had the effect of weakening the central government, as with US backed support of local militias, the central government and its backers did not hold a "monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force." Karzai's government as well made halfhearted attempts to reduce warlord power by moving them away from their power base. This however did little as it did not remove them from power. With local government supporting warlord driven militias, the local government was in fact undermining its own power. One provincial governor put forward his analysis on the dilemma:

> *"The most negative point of the government is keeping warlords strong in the regions... Keeping warlords in power is weakening the government. The more the government pays them off, the stronger they will become and the weaker the government will be."[56]*

As he illustrates there, by creating a power vacuum through a lack of resources, international forces have undermined the credibility of the local government and thus led to weaker governance and stability as long as they had to support and pay local warlords.[57]

The light footprint plan was a failure. It failed to provide adequate assistance and security in the delicate early stages. The Soviet issue was not one of a heavy footprint, but rather that they failed to gain support for the Afghan regime. Thus resentment built against the Soviets which their enemies could exploit. The Soviets were trying to fight a conventional war which led to the build up and support for insurgency.

The direct effects of the light footprint were highly negative. One of the negative effects was a collapse in Afghanistan's national security. The Afghanistan National Police is a clear example of this. In a joint report by The Royal United Services Institute and The Foreign Policy Research Institute they say that "Unsurprisingly, a high proportion of the ANP are known abusers of human rights." They go on to further saying that the ANP are largely corrupt, and are undermining the local government both by taking an active part in the drug trade and accepting bribes from insurgents. Defection has also been a huge problem, along with the militia-like aspects of many of the members. This is a clear example of the corruption which has infected the local government in Afghanistan.[58]

The light footprint plan as a whole has been a direct cause of such problems. As a strategy, it is wholly without a comprehensive approach. The cooperation between military

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56 Evans, Anne. 2004p. 14
57 Jones, Seth G. 2009 p. 129-131
58 FPRI & RUSI

and civil forces was very limited due to non-committed forces and misplaced priorities. The lack of commitment to a strategy of stabilization and peacekeeping has allowed for many of NATO's goals for a comprehensive approach to become more difficult in practice.

First, there is the matter that national security became severely compromised. The amount of military force needed in the Afghanistan conflict was grossly miscalculated. This resulted in a large security gap which was filled by local warlords. Without a true commitment to the local governments, regional warlords have gained an incentive towards corruption. The financial incentive towards turning a blind eye towards the drug trade or towards insurgent forces is large, with the FPRI and RUSI report claiming that "police chief posts along major drug transit or transport routes such as Balu Beluk, have been auctioned off for as much as $200,000 to $300,000." Insurgent groups have also been allowed to regroup with this non-interference by the Afghan National Police

(ANP). Without a comprehensive approach, situations such as this have been allowed to continue. NGOs within the field of human rights have also pressed for reform within the ANP, with Human Rights watch pressuring President Hamid Karzai "to stop appointing known human rights abusers such as Jamil Jumbish - implicated in murder, torture and intimidation - as top ANP officials."[59] This shows a clear divide between the local government and NGOs and thus goes directly against what the comprehensive approach is attempting to accomplish.

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59 FPRI&RUSI,

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EU & NATO Partnership – EUPOL in Afghanistan

Throughout the research for this paper, many sources cite the importance of further cooperation between NATO and the EU in the development of a comprehensive approach to civil-military cooperation. As a political entity, the EU has come into play in international security due to the development of the European Security and Defense Policy(ESDP). Started in 1999 at the Cologne European Council summit in June 1999[60] the ESDP has been working to create a working relationship with NATO, although this has not always succeeded due to differences between some EU states and the USA and Turkey. While at times a shaky relationship, the EU and NATO are both hoping to push forward to cooperate further in the future on a more effective level.[61]

In Afghanistan, the ESDP has had a EU Police (EUPOL) mission since 2007. Prior to that, the Germans had been mostly tasked with training the ANP, but had run into several challenges. So in 2007 the EU decides to establish an EUPOL mission in Afghanistan. The purpose of the EUPOL mission is outlined by the European Union Institute for Security Studies(EUISS):

> *"The remit of EUPOL as a non-executive mission is focused on institution-building. The mission implements its mandate through advising, mentoring, monitoring and training... The mission operates at different levels: at the strategic level... and at the operational and tactical levels.[62]*

One of the specific projects of EUPOL in Afghanistan is the so-called Kabul City Project which involves conducting a district-by-district SWOT(strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) assessment and creating a support unit for each district. One of their most successful project is a hotline in Helmand for denouncing police misbehavior which has led to the conviction of nearly 30 police officers.

It was delayed in its initial implementation due to a lack of EU member commitment of personnel. Add that amongst the many challenges which face EUPOL faced on the ground due to the deteriorated state of the ANP and it was clear that this would be an overwhelming and difficult challenge. There was an apparent rift in the way in which the US and NATO approached police training and the way in which EUPOL approached the given task. The US

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60 EUISS p. 13
61 Ibid. p. 127-136
62 Ibid. p. 329

and NATO, with a more militarized approach, focused more on increasing the quantity of police forces available especially as it felt the police to have an important role as a supporting force to the military. EUPOL on the other hand focused more on the qualitative aspects of training and worked on training the management and trainer levels in the ANP.

Due to a lack of a comprehensive agreement on protocol and the sharing of information between EUPOL and ISAF, close cooperation between the EU and NATO has thus been hindered in this respect in Afghanistan. This has increased EUPOL's difficulties in for example arranging security for its missions and its staff. This has led to EUPOL being more strict in its security rules than it perhaps would be under a framework of closer cooperation between the EU and NATO.

There has also been an issue of comprehension within EUPOL itself as different member states focus on different approaches due to a difference in priorities. The French might end up focusing more on surveillance training while the German forces are focusing more on forensic training, leading to a situation where regions which are under the police training of different national police forces under EUPOL are not receiving the same training. This leads to an uncoordinated police force and can lead to a further weakening of the ANP. There is a general feeling of EUPOL policy being disjointed and creating confusion for its staff on the ground.

EUPOL stands as a clear example of the problems which arise when an operation which is good in theory is put into action without clear goals and protocol. In order to be more effective, internal disputes within the EU as to the purpose and methods of the EUPOL mission need to be solved. A comprehensive plan will have to be put in place first in order to make EUPOL as effective as it can be. Once internal disputes have been hammered out, it must then work on integrating itself with the other forces operating in Afghanistan. This will allow it to further increase the effectiveness of its efforts and do away with any redundancies which might arise when for example ISAF has one method of police training and EUPOL another but there is no comprehensive information-sharing going on between them. This will help to be able to achieve the goal of a new and improved ANP.[63]

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63 EUISS p. 325-336

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Counter-insurgency - COIN

As a candidate for President of the United States, Barack Obama had criticized the Bush administration for focusing on the wrong war. Afghanistan, by this logic, was the "good war", the war that had been all but abandoned for a misguided and unnecessary war of choice in Iraq. Following Obama's inauguration as President in January 2009, plans for scaling back the US's involvement in Iraq and ramping up the efforts in Afghanistan went into high gear.[64]

The situation in Afghanistan had seemingly reached a stalemate. The military had long argued the forces in country were under resourced and needed to be bigger. President Obama, in a speech on March 27, 2009, announced a new strategy, in line with his campaign rhetoric[65]:

> "To achieve our goals, we need a stronger, smarter and comprehensive strategy. To focus on the greatest threat to our people, America must no longer deny resources to Afghanistan because of the war in Iraq. To enhance the military, governance and economic capacity of Afghanistan and Pakistan, we have to marshal international support...
>
> Our troops have fought bravely against a ruthless enemy. Our civilians have made great sacrifices. Our allies have borne a heavy burden. Afghans have suffered and sacrificed for their future. But for six years, Afghanistan has been denied the resources that it demands because of the war in Iraq. Now, we must make a commitment that can accomplish our goals.
>
> I've already ordered the deployment of 17,000 troops that had been requested by General McKiernan for many months. These soldiers and Marines will take the fight to the Taliban in the south and the east, and give us a greater capacity to partner with Afghan security forces and to go after insurgents along the border. This push will also help provide security in advance of the important presidential elections in Afghanistan in August."

President Obama further argued for a significant increase in the civilian effort in Afghanistan, making a direct link to success in security being contingent on the success of the civilian effort:

> "This push must be joined by a dramatic increase in our civilian effort. Afghanistan has an elected government, but it is

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64 Woodward, Bob. 2010 p. 62-73
65 Obama, Barack. 27 Mar. 2009

undermined by corruption and has difficulty delivering basic services to its people. The economy is undercut by a booming narcotics trade that encourages criminality and funds the insurgency. The people of Afghanistan seek the promise of a better future. Yet once again, we've seen the hope of a new day darkened by violence and uncertainty.

So to advance security, opportunity and justice -- not just in Kabul, but from the bottom up in the provinces -- we need agricultural specialists and educators, engineers and lawyers. That's how we can help the Afghan government serve its people and develop an economy that isn't dominated by illicit drugs. And that's why I'm ordering a substantial increase in our civilians on the ground. That's also why we must seek civilian support from our partners and allies, from the United Nations and international aid organizations."

Following this announcement, further debate continued within the US Government on the conduct and resourcing of the Afghan operation. It culminated in the early dismissal of General McKiernan, the four star US General who headed simultaneously the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and US Forces – Afghanistan (USFOR-A). In his place a freshly minted four star US Army General, Stanley McChrystal, was nominated and approved for the joint position and tasked with providing his assessment and strategic review for how to move forward in Afghanistan.[66]

Upon arriving in Afghanistan in June of 2009, General McChrystal started this review with the support of noted military and strategic thinkers from primarily US universities and think tanks. The final report was, however, his own and submitted on August 30, 2009, through the both his chain of command to the US Secretary of Defense and his NATO chain of command, the Secretary General of NATO.

In his assessment, General McChrystal stated that "The situation in Afghanistan is serious. The mission is achievable, but success demands a fundamentally new approach – one that is properly resourced and supported by better unity of effort." Building on the arguments made by President Obama in March, he argued that ISAF should reorient itself toward fighting counter-insurgency warfare.[67]

Counter-insurgency, or COIN, is defined as follows in the US Army Counterinsurgency manual[68]:

"COIN is an extremely complex form of warfare. At its core, COIN is a struggle for the population's support. The protection,

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66 Woodward, Bob. 2010 p. 118-119
67 McChrystal, Stanley A. 2009
68 Department of the Army, Dec. 2006

welfare and support of the people are vital to success. Gaining and maintaining that support is a formidable challenge. Achieving these aims requires synchronizing the efforts of many nonmilitary and HN [host nation] agencies in a comprehensive approach."

This reorientation, which was supposed to "...change the operational culture of ISAF to focus on protecting the Afghan people, understanding their environment, and building relationship with them...", would as well require be based on "...*a profoundly new strategy with four fundamental pillars:*

> *1)   develop a significantly more effective and larger ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] with radically expanded coalition force partnering at every echelon;*
> *2)   prioritize responsive and accountable governance – that the Afghan people find acceptable – to be on par with, and integral to, delivering security;*
> *3)   gain the initiative and reverse the insurgency's momentum as the first imperative in a series of temporal stages, and;*
> *4)   prioritize available resources to those critical areas where the population is most threatened."*

This represent the transition in US and NATO strategy from "light footprint" to full fledged Counter insurgency operations, in line with NATO's Comprehensive Approach.

The Assessment was accompanied by a resource request of which the request in significant increase in the number of forces received the most attention. This again caused much further deliberation in Washington DC, at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, and allied capitals.

Undeniably, the Americans, and President Obama, were in the drivers seat, and it was not until three months after receiving General McChrystal's assessment that the President announced his decision. In those three months, tense arguments between American government officials, both in Washington and in Kabul, took place, as reflected for example by the leaked cables from the US Embassy in Kabul, wherein the US Ambassador to Afghanistan, a former commander of ISAF himself, expressed serious doubts about the viability and appropriateness of a COIN strategy in Afghanistan.[69]

On December 1st, 2009, President Obama, in a speech at the US Military's most prestigious military school at West Point, made his announcement, backing the COIN strategy and committing a further 30,000 American troops to Afghanistan, while at the same time announcing an expect additional 10,000 troops from other allied and partner nations[70]:

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69 Woodward, Bob. 2010 p. 261-262
70 Obama, Barack. 1 Dec. 2009

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"Our overarching goal remains the same: to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to prevent its capacity to threaten America and our allies in the future.

To meet that goal, we will pursue the following objectives within Afghanistan. We must deny al Qaeda a safe haven. We must reverse the Taliban's momentum and deny it the ability to overthrow the government. And we must strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan's security forces and government so that they can take lead responsibility for Afghanistan's future.

We will meet these objectives in three ways. First, we will pursue a military strategy that will break the Taliban's momentum and increase Afghanistan's capacity over the next 18 months...

Second, we will work with our partners, the United Nations, and the Afghan people to pursue a more effective civilian strategy, so that the government can take advantage of improved security...

Third, we will act with the full recognition that our success in Afghanistan is inextricably linked to our partnership with Pakistan.

We're in Afghanistan to prevent a cancer from once again spreading through that country. But this same cancer has also taken root in the border region of Pakistan. That's why we need a strategy that works on both sides of the border."

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With a full presidential backing for his counter-insurgency approach, General McChrystal was finally able to fully implement his new campaign design:
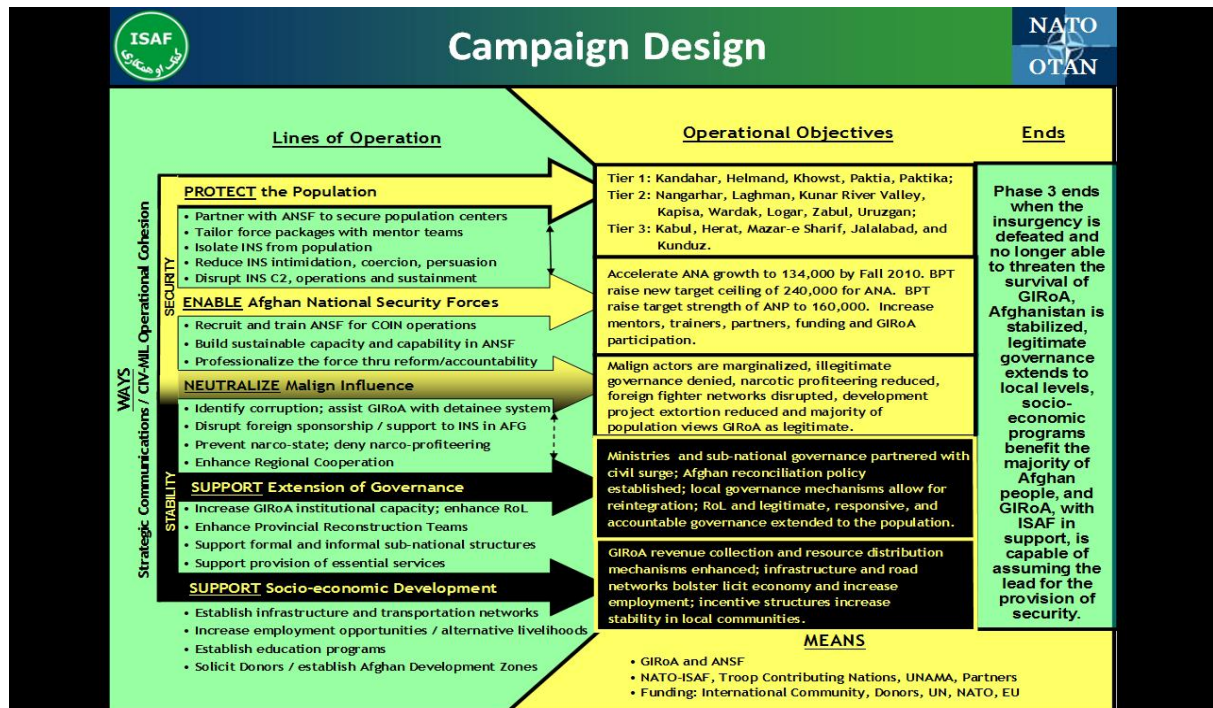

Illustration 1: Campaign Design from Lt. Col. Doug Clark's ISAF Campaign Plan, 3 May 2010

In keeping with the dogma of Counter-insurgency, or COIN, and the Comprehensive Approach, the campaign design reflected the necessity of moving beyond mere military approaches to solving the Afghanistan challenge. Five separate so-called "Lines of Operation" or LOO's were developed, each representing a fundamental strategic goal:

1) Protect the population;
2) Enable Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF);
3) Neutralize Malign Influence;
4) Support Extension of Governance;
5) Support Socio-Economic Development.[71]

These Lines of Operation reflected the realization that the international military presence was insufficient to solve the challenges facing Afghanistan and that interlinkages across domains usually reserved among different actors were fundamental in order to achieve the required success. General McChrystal, and thereby the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), took the view that the first two Lines of Operation, Protect the Population and Enable the ANSF, were the primary responsibility of the international militaries.

71 Clark, Doug. May 2010

Neutralizing Malign Influence, i.e. dealing with corruption, detentions and prisons, as well as the consequences of criminal and narco trade activity, straddled the responsibilities of both the international militaries and their civilian counterparts in the Afghan Government and other International Organizations.

However, the last two lines of operation, Support Extension of Governance and Socio-Economic Development, were seen as fully civilian led, but with a major strategic and tactical impact on military goals and objectives. In fact, for both to succeed, the creation of common goals and vision for moving forward would be essential.

This view is represented by ISAF's mission statement, developed on the basis of this new plan: "ISAF, in partnership with GIRoA[72], conducts population-centric counterinsurgency operations, enables an expanded and effective ANSF and supports improved governance and development in order to protect the Afghan people and provide a secure environment for sustainable stability."[73]

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[72] Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan - GIRoA
[73] Clark, Doug May 2010

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Challenges to the Comprehensive Approach

As NATO has now adopted the Comprehensive Approach as formal policy, it is valuable to focus on some of the challenges entailed in achieving the ambitions of said Approach.

The Comprehensive Approach in essence calls for a much closer coordination and cooperation of military and civilian actors in peacekeeping and peace-building environments. This recognition is by no means limited to NATO, as the UN Security Council Resolutions on Afghanistan, both those referring to UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission Afghanistan) and ISAF (International Security Assistance Force), call on the two organizations to cooperate and coordinate their activities in country. Said resolutions also specifically lay out the division of labor between them, with UNAMA having the lead on donor coordination and development aid on behalf of the International Community.[74][75]

To achieve better Aid Effectiveness in fragile and conflict environments has been studied to a great extent in the past few years, as delivery of Aid and Assistance has increasingly been needed in such situation around the world and by no means limited to Afghanistan or the Balkans. This is exemplified in particular by the recent World Bank "World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development".[76] The report "...argues that international interventions are often fragmented, slow to enter, quick to exit, reliant on international technical assistance, and delivered through parallel systems."

Margaret L. Taylor, an International Affairs Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, offered these lessons: "Develop the capacity of the host country to co-ordinate, manage and implement aid programs... Clarify the mission... Beware hastily planned and executed aid programs... [and] Innovate ways to protect aid delivery."[77]

These are issues that commonly seem to be lacking in any mission involving both military and civilian actors. A particular challenge on the civilian side is its fragmented nature and lack of clear command and control. For example, the UN systems extensive efforts in Afghanistan do not respond to a single command authority. They are coordinated through a so-called country team. The UN's highest authority in country is UNAMA, headed by a Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations. He will work with the heads of other UN agencies and seek to coordinate among them, but they do not follow his orders or directions. They do so at their own discretion.[78]

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74 S/RES/1974 (2011)
75 S/RES/2011 (2011)
76 World Bank, 2011
77 Taylor, Margaret L. 26 Jan. 2012 p. 49
78 *UNAMA Brief,* 2010

Same applies to the actions and activities of other civilian actors, whether those are national donor agencies or non-governmental organizations: they follow their own course of action, which may or may not be in synchronization with the overall development effort. The weaker the national plan of action of the country being assisted, the higher the risk for lack of Aid Effectiveness. This was for a long time the case in Afghanistan as...

> *"The primary guide for development in Afghanistan is the Afghan National Development Strategy. Although a significant and important document in its own right, its major shortcoming has been its lack of true prioritization and goal setting. This has lead to the development effort in Afghanistan being fragmented and unfocused."[79]*

Over the past couple years there has been a significant effort on behalf of the Afghan Government and its major donors to rectify this. The London and Kabul Conferences of 2010 were in essence a way to give the Afghans greater say and control over their own destiny, culminating in the Bonn conference of December 2011, where the International Community agreed to support an Afghan led plan for transition and transformation of the country as the international military presence would be scaled down and the international donor effort would unify to the extent possible behind a more focus and prioritized Afghan plan for economic development.[80]

As for the application of the Comprehensive Approach, the combination of "..three main logical lines of operation (LOO) of Security, Governance and Socio Economic Development is critical." Furthermore, "...translating effective planning into program implementation requires a clear understanding and appreciation of expectation management within the parameters of what can effectively be achieved...".[81]

In the summary conclusions of a lessons learned workshop on stabilization and reconstruction efforts at NATO headquarters in the spring 2010, the following conclusion was offered:

> *"Each theatre is different and there is no single blueprint for operations, but a number of lesson learned can be applied to better prepare for future operations, as well as to better conduct the ongoing ones. These include strengthening coordination, transparency, dialogue with relevant actors and their early involvement in planning; taking into account that many NGOs will want to keep their distance from NATO even when it helps provide their security, whilst working on dialogue and de-*

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79 Jónsson, April 2010
80 *Bonn Conference Conclusion,* 2011 & *UNAMA Brief,* 2010
81 Jónsson, April 2010

confliction and paying more attention to the implementation of guidelines for NGO-military relations; recognising the need for more civilian input into NATO planning in order to continue military efforts with civilian effect from the beginning; taking into consideration the need to incorporate strategic communications in civil-military planning and execution; ensuring clear communication from top to bottom of the chain of command; putting into place proper and coherent training to ensure cultural and political awareness; implementing a coherent contracting policy; and improving institutional memory and continuity...

There is also a need for better inter-agency coordination within the nations, as well as increased coherence of national positions in different international organisations.

The international community needs to be aware of the need to support security, governance and development on the one hand, and not create a dependency mentality on the other."

At that conference, the question was raised as well whether military operations needed a change in orientation, that is should they "...be shape more by governance and development requirements and not vice versa as is currently the case?"

Thus any implementation of a Comprehensive Approach will have to come to terms with all the aforementioned challenges that will relate to the differing priorities of the various actors and stakeholders involved. The lessons have seemingly been learned and various approaches to mitigation of these challenges offered, but as always the devil will be in the details and how traditional institutional rivalries and the stipulations of common purpose and vision between the assisting international community on the one hand, and the recipients of said assistance on the other.

Conclusion

The official version of the international community's efforts in Afghanistan is that, on balance, it has enjoyed more successes than failures. This is prominently represented in the conference conclusions of the Bonn conference, "...chaired by Afghanistan, hosted by Germany and attended by 85 countries and 15 International Organizations...", that took place on December 5th, 2011:

> *"Ten years ago today at the Petersberg, Afghanistan charted a new path towards a sovereign, peaceful, prosperous and democratic future, and the International Community accepted the responsibility to help Afghanistan along that path. Together we have achieved substantial progress over these ten years, more than in any other period in Afghanistan's history. Never before have the Afghan people, and especially Afghan women, enjoyed comparable access to services, including education and health, or seen greater development of infrastructure across the country. Al Qaida has been disrupted, and Afghanistan's national security institutions are increasingly able to assume responsibility for a secure and independent Afghanistan."*

The Bonn Conference was held partially to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the initial Bonn conference, which was held in anticipation of the collapse of the Taliban regime, following the US intervention in response to the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Despite the notification of great achievements, the conference recognized as well the significant challenges that still lie ahead. As noted as well in the conference conclusions "...our work is not yet done. Shortcomings must be addressed, achievements must be upheld." The document reflects the continued commitment by the international community to continue to support Afghanistan throughout the period of Transition, whereby "Afghan authorities are assuming full security responsibility for their country and will complete this process by 2014." It further spells out a commitment by the conference participants of continued support to Afghanistan beyond 2014 by "...deepening and broadening their historic partnership from Transition to the Transformation Decade of 2015-2024." During this decade, "...the International Community commits to directing financial support, consistent with the Kabul Process, towards Afghanistan's economic development and security related costs, helping Afghanistan address its continuing budget shortfall to secure the gains of the last decade, make Transition irreversible, and become self-sustaining."

Thus, it is evident, that even as NATO and other troop contributing nations the effort in Afghanistan draw down their military presence, the essence of the comprehensive approach

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remains, i.e. the continued interlinkage and interdepence of security and civilian activity. One is mute without the other.

It is hard to envisage any military intervention from here on not duly taking into consideration the broader implications of that intervention. The lessons learned from the interventions of the past two decades, from the Balkans to the Middle East, to Africa, and to Afghanistan, that even in limited engagements, there is no such thing as a purely military intervention any more. NATO's comprehensive approach is a recognition of this reality, a concept which will have to be adjusted in application depending on the nature of any future intervention. We have already witnessed this during this years intervention in Libya. The military intervention was strictly limited, and in fact, it was recognized early on that whatever followed the anticipated collapse of the then regime, NATO would not have any primary role.

However, as reflected in the UN Security Council resolutions on Libya, number 1970, 1973 and 2009 of this year, multinational action in and against a sovereign nation-state is a multi-layered and not limited to military action. It is rather a combination of multiple activities, including political, economic and humanitarian, as well as military. In short: a Comprehensive Approach.

The main challenge in current and future interventions will though probably be how to balance the activities and their respective tools, as well as in some cases determining their primacy, or rank order. Is the military intervention in support of primarily humanitarian objectives, or are the humanitarian efforts in response to the consequences of military action? Is aid and development provided primarily in support of security objectives, or does security action follow aid and development requirements? The balance and prioritization of goals and objectives among these different components will ultimately impact any strategy and plan for an intervention for the purpose of peace-keeping, peace-enforcement or peace-making in the future.

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