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CANADIAN COIN IN AFGHANISTAN – DID WE GET IT RIGHT?

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ABSTRACT

The war in Afghanistan saw great triumphs by the Canadian military and Canadian soldiers proved that they are warriors in the true sense of the word. They took on a tenacious enemy and were able to defeat him at the tactical level. Unfortunately, in a counterinsurgency (COIN) victory is not solely achieved through kinetic activity alone at the tactical level. A much broader approach is required on many levels that sees COIN forces working with non-government organizations (NGOs) and governments themselves in order to take a comprehensive approach to securing the population from harm, assisting them in developing in an economic sense and finally ensuring a sound governing body is able to govern over them. In a sense, it is a long term nation building project.

Although the Canadian military rapidly educated itself in COIN doctrine and even developed its own during the campaign, Canada was unable to achieve success in fighting this COIN because Canada was not able to achieve the level of security required to focus on development and governance.

This paper will analyze aspects of the war in Afghanistan from 2006 to 2010 and demonstrate that Canada was only able to disrupt the insurgents during the entire war and never achieved a sustainable degree of security that would allow for freedom of movement and greater focus on development in Kandahar province. This paper will also suggest that a lack of strategic direction, lack of sufficient resources and misguided decisions at the operational level overburdened the Canadian contingent so much that they were a mere band aid that kept the bleed under control until such time as the United States could return with 30,000 troops to level the playing field with the insurgents.

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SP Moran
LCol
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August 2015

INTRODUCTION

“Protecting the people is the mission. The conflict will be won by persuading the population, not by destroying the enemy. ISAF will succeed when GIRoA earns the support of the people.”¹

- General Stanley McChrystal, Commander ISAF, Kabul, Afghanistan, August 26th 2009

The Canadian efforts in fighting a long protracted counterinsurgency (COIN) in Afghanistan were remarkable given the relatively limited amount of resources that they had. Arguably, COIN is the hardest form of warfighting for any army in world to fight. The enemy is unknown and hides amongst the population. Random acts of violence are inflicted on the COIN forces and the native population, which makes for a greater challenge in providing a secure environment. The above quote from General McChrystal highlights the idea that COIN is not won through kinetic operations. Instead the focus must be on the population. Ensuring their security, assisting their development in economic gains and supporting the local government to become a sound ruling organization that General McChrystal states will allow them to gain the support of their own people. However, to do so one must achieve some level of security.

The concept of clearing enemy or securing the population is an underlying theme in COIN doctrine or theory. Indeed, the writings of David Galula, the US doctrine on COIN, FM 3-24.2 and the Canadian doctrine on COIN, B-GL-323-004/FP-003 all cite this as a requirement for success. It makes sense that one has to achieve some level of security so that one can start development projects that will win over the population and allow them to gain confidence. The security forces themselves must also achieve a level of personal security so that they maintain the initiative and focus on providing a secure environment to the local population free of any

¹ ISAF Commander's COIN Guidance, August 2009.

insurgent threat so that the economic development and good governance can be pursued without being thwarted by insurgent activities.

Canada made an error in taking on the mission in Kandahar province as it was severely under resourced to do so. The thesis of this paper is that Canada did not achieve the level of security necessary in Kandahar province, particularly Zharey and Panjwai districts that would allow for significant gains in development and creating an environment for good governance. Instead Canada conducted a number of disruptive operations with very little follow on action to secure the population. This allowed the Taliban to move freely throughout the province, uncontested and conduct attacks against all coalition and Afghan forces and intimidate the population. In a sense, Canada did not get it right in Kandahar in terms of fighting a proper counter insurgency.

A brief look of how Canada arrived in Kandahar will demonstrate that the perception of the conflict was misguided and that the strategic direction was lacking. This paper will analyze what is considered effective troops ratios for COIN and prove that Canada lacked the resources necessary to run an effective campaign. An examination of the United States (US) concept of Clear, Hold, Build and the Canadian use of the Ink Spot theory will demonstrate the requirement to secure areas in order to progress in COIN, which Canada did not do. This paper will also examine the Ink Spot theory that was at the forefront of the Canadian concept for Afghanistan and point out flaws of utilizing the theory without sufficient forces to bring lasting security to those areas including a deliberate attempt to bring security to Pashmul termed Stability Box Juno. A look at specific operations that the Canadian COIN forces conducted will also prove that the focus was on disruption and killing the insurgents with no real plan to bring lasting security to any particular area. This paper will also point out specific examples that demonstrate

Canada's failings to secure Kandahar. Finally, this paper will suggest what might have been a more reasonable plan for Canada in Kandahar province to achieve the Canadian goals and implement the Commander of Canadian Expeditionary Forces Campaign plan.

CHAPTER ONE – HOW WE GOT THERE AND WHAT WERE WE TOLD

It is considered public knowledge the way in which Canada entered Afghanistan. However, Sean Maloney provides a brief description in his article “Afghanistan: Not the War it Was”. One recalls the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, which lead to the US mounted and UN sanctioned removal of the Taliban, in order to disrupt al-Qaeda’s ability to conduct attacks on the western democracies and their allies during 2001 to 2002. From 2003 to 2004 and following the defeat of the Taliban Canada took on the role of stabilizing the area of Kabul, which provided support to the newly formed Afghan government. In 2005 to 2006 Canada took on a mentoring role with the Afghan government and also created a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Kandahar province. In 2006 to 2009 Maloney suggests that Canada took on the defence of Kandahar city and mentoring Afghan national security forces.² This of course is true in a simplified form. In retrospect, one can see that Canada was in a full on COIN fight for the entire province of Kandahar, but didn’t realize it when Lieutenant-Colonel (LCol) Ian Hope’s Task Force (TF) Orion first arrived.

“We deployed to Kandahar in mid-January 2006 and began operations there in early February. Our mission was stated as: “TF ORION will assist Afghans in the establishment of good governance, security and stability, and reconstruction in the province of Kandahar during the Operation (OP) ARCHER Rotation (Roto) I in order to help extend the legitimacy and credibility of the Government of Afghanistan throughout the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and at the same time help to establish conditions necessary for NATO Stage 3 expansion”³

LCol Hope’s mission as read above would appeared to be very broad. It reads more like a mission statement that one might have received during operations in the Balkans in the late

² Sean Maloney, “Afghanistan: Not the war it was,” Policy Options November 2010, 45

³ LCol Ian Hope, “Reflection on Afghanistan: Command Task Force Orion”, In Harm’s Way the Buck Stops Here: Senior Commanders on Operations, Horn Bernd Col, Canadian Defence Academy Press, Kingston, ON, 2007, 212.

1990s. LCol Nick Grimshaw, who was a company commander for LCol Hope recalls being told that they were conducting a peace support operation when they first arrived in theatre and that the focus would be on reconstruction.⁴ Essentially, in the minds of the tactical and operational commanders the war was over and the focus was on reconstruction. LCol Hope goes on to say in his writings that his tasks were “governance, security and reconstruction”.⁵ With this in mind his initial plan was to make his Battle Group an extension of the PRT. This is evidence that the perception of security in Kandahar province was very different when Canadian troops first moved in. LCol Hope and the chain of command were focused on reconstruction without realizing they were entering into a complex COIN environment.

Colonel Craig Hilton in his paper “Shaping Commitment: Resolving Canada’s Strategy in Afghanistan and Beyond” refers to *strategy gap* when referring to policy guidance and direction at the national level. He is stating that there was a lack of strategic direction given in Canada’s overall commitment to Afghanistan and how military leaders need such guidance in order to form their decision making process.⁶ He goes on to suggest that Canada’s involvement in Afghanistan was more about not being involved in Iraq.⁷ This is an interesting idea. One recalls then Prime Minister Jean Chretien on National News, stating “we wish them well”. He was referring to the United States and their ‘Coalition of the Willing’ for a war in Iraq. Canada did not participate as it was not a United Nations sanctioned war and in hindsight it was the right decision given the unpopular outcome of the Iraq War. Canada instead fully committed to Afghanistan. This saw the ousting of the Taliban, the support to the newly formed Afghan

⁴ Lieutenant-Colonel Nick Grimshaw, Interview with the author, 23 May 2015.

⁵ LCol Ian Hope, “Reflection on Afghanistan: Command Task Force Orion”, In Harm’s Way the Buck Stops Here: Senior Commanders on Operations, Horn Bernd Col, Canadian Defence Academy Press, Kingston, ON, 2007, 213.

⁶ Colonel Craig Hilton, “Shaping Commitment: Resolving Canada’s Strategy Gap in Afghanistan and Beyond, Master Paper US Army War College, July 2007, 4.

⁷ Ibid.

government and then what became a full out COIN in arguably the most dangerous province in Afghanistan.

If Canada, did in fact stumble into Afghanistan in order to avoid Iraq, then how could a real strategy have been promulgated? CBC writer Brian Stewart in his article “Canada in Kandahar, wrong place, wrong time” states that the Canadian Military and NATO did not want Canada to move into Kandahar province. He suggests that the Canadian Government wanted to take on greater responsibility in what would be the most volatile province in Afghanistan in order to gain great political clout on the world scene.⁸ If one supports the idea that the Canadian Military did not want to go into Kandahar, but their political master forced them into it, then the entire Kandahar campaign was flawed from the start. The broad use of terms such as assist Afghans in security, development and good governance can be construed in many ways. One might think that the Afghans themselves were doing all the heavy lifting and Canadian assets were just helping out. This of course, is absurd. Anyone who has served in Afghanistan knows that NATO was driving the campaign and attempting to teach, mentor and build Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). What is conceivable is that Canada took on a daunting task of securing Kandahar province without any real analysis of what was required in terms of resources and how they might achieve any success.

⁸ Brian Stewart, “Canada in Kandahar, Wrong Place Wrong Time” CBC News, June 2011, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/brian-stewart-canada-in-kandahar-wrong-place-wrong-time-1.996033>

CHAPTER TWO – TROOP RATIOS – HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

“We just don’t exist in sufficient numbers to give the population confidence.”⁹

- Brigadier-General Denis Thompson interview with Globe and Mail May 2010

The above quote from General Thompson was taken from an interview he gave to Peter Godspeed from the Globe and Mail, where he suggested that a ratio of 20 soldiers to 1,000 civilians was what was required in Kandahar province in order to create a secure environment where the people felt confident. He went on to say that the Canadian troop ratio was 6 to 1,000, which in itself suggests an inadequacy of force in order to do the job. This of course includes the 1st Brigade of 205 Corps of the Afghan National Army (ANA) that was stationed at Camp Hero next to Kandahar Airfield (KAF) and had at least two Kandaks (Battalions) deployed in the field at any given time.¹⁰ This idea of Canadian and ANA lacking in acceptable ratios requires further analysis. How does one determine the ratio and why did Canada lack in the ratio from the start?

In recent years more research has been done on what would constitute effective troop ratios. Major Glenn E Kozelka in his paper “Boots on the Ground: A Historical and Contemporary Analysis of Force Levels for Counterinsurgency Operations” thoroughly looks at previous studies from James Quinlivan, analyst from the RAND Corporation, historian John McGrath of the US Army Center of Military History, a specific RAND Corporation analysis, and Brigadier General (Ret.) John Brown who was Chief Historian at the US Army Center of Military History. These studies varied in troop ratio. On the one hand Brown and the Rand Corporation advocated for 10 soldiers per 1,000 inhabitants versus the Quinlivan and McGrath point of view that suggest 20 soldiers per 1,000 inhabitants was required to achieve success in

⁹ Brigadier-General Thompson, Former Commander Task Force Afghanistan, Interview with Globe and Mail, <file:///E:/MDS/Dusting%20off%20the%20Afghan%20manual%20-%20The%20Globe%20and%20Mail.html>, May 2010

¹⁰ Author was S3 of the Operational Mentor Liaison Team (OMLT) as part of Task Force (TF) Kandahar in 2008.

COIN. Quinlivand suggests lower ratios for lower levels of conflict, however, for major unrest he concedes that 20 to 1,000 is necessary.¹¹

Jeffrey Friedman in his paper on “Manpower and Counterinsurgency” states that the current “conventional wisdom” in the US doctrine suggest that 20 to 1,000 inhabitants is the minimum for success in securing the population.¹² Friedman’s paper centers on the lack of any empirical evidence to support why 20 to 1,000, is required. Both papers state a wide variety of variables including terrain, population, cultural diversity etc., affect the necessary ratio. However, these are two distinct research papers that have 20 to 1,000 as a common accepted practice by COIN forces.

David Galula, in his much earlier works suggests a ratio of approximately 15 to 1,000:

*A concentrated population is easier to protect and control; thus an infantry company can easily control a small town of 10,000–20,000 inhabitants—short of a general uprising—but it would take a much larger unit if the same population were spread over the countryside.*¹³

This, of course, is based on an infantry company that was approximately 150 soldiers in size. Depending on the situation and attachments to the company the size could very well have been closer to 200 which supports the 20 to 1,000 ratio as discussed. It is interesting to note Galula’s recognition that if the population is spread over the terrain than a greater force concentration is necessary which further supports the idea of a 20 to 1,000 ratio.

The population of Kandahar province is listed at 1, 151, 100 people spread over 13 districts with the capital city being Kandahar city, which makes up almost half of the provincial

¹¹ Major Glenn E Kozelka, “Boots on the Ground: A Historical and Contemporary Analysis of Force Levels for Counterinsurgency Operations”, School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2008 11-16.

¹² Jeffrey A. Friedman, Manpower and Counterinsurgency, Empirical Foundations for Theory and Doctrine, Harvard Kennedy School, Security Studies, Vol 12, No.4 2011 p2.

¹³ David Galula, “Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice”, Praeger Security International, Westport Connecticut, 1964, p70.

population. Other than Kandahar city the province is mostly rural.¹⁴ The Canadian troop level was at most 3,000 personnel between 2006 and 2011.¹⁵ The 1st Brigade 205 Corps, stationed out of Camp Hero, but spread throughout Kandahar Province had roughly 3,000 personnel. When one does the mathematics, General Thompson is quite right in saying that Canada, and its ANA allies, were only achieving a 6 to 1,000 ratio for Kandahar Province. The effects of which were felt early on in 2006. Then LCol Omer Lavoie, the battle group commanding officer of TF 3-06 commented that he had insufficient resources to do the tasks assigned to him. During his operation to build Route Summit, a key road linking Panjwai to Zharey, he stated that he was stretched too thin to provide road security and his other Forward Operating Bases and often had to refuse additional tasks (FOBs).¹⁶

The question then becomes why? Why did Canada send inadequate numerical forces to Afghanistan? Part of the answer has already been discussed. The idea that the major conflict was over when Canadian Forces moved into Kandahar and that a support of the ANSF was the main focus and not fighting a counterinsurgency. If one believes this was the case, then the numerical value is irrelevant. If Canada did not know what would transpire then how could it prepare an adequate force? What is also apparent is that Canada could never have provided more than what it did.

The Canadian Managed Readiness Plan outlines four lines of operations for the Canadian Army.

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kandahar_Province

¹⁵ Roland Paris, "The Truth About Canada's Mission in Afghanistan", Centre for International Policy Studies, March 2014.

¹⁶ Colonel Bernd Horn, "In the Breach: The Combat Command of Lieutenant-Colonel Omer Lavoie", In Harm's Way the Buck Stops Here: Senior Commanders on Operations, Horn Bernd Col, Canadian Defence Academy Press, Kingston, ON, 2007, p 229.

“• Lines of Operations 1 and 2, such as the regionally based Immediate Response Units(IRU), Ranger Patrols in the Arctic, and support to special domestic projects, such as the Olympics or G8 summit meetings;

• Line of Operation 3, to lead and/or conduct a major international operation in a non-permissive environment for an extended period. This task is based upon an infantry battalion, enablers such as artillery and tanks, formation enablers such as engineers and logistics, and a formation headquarters, all maintained at high readiness to be operationally effective within 90 days of mission identification. It will require 1700 to 2000 personnel with over 200 armoured vehicles, and a further 400 wheeled vehicles from various fleets;

• Line of Operation 4, enabling the Army to concurrently deploy into a permissive environment in response to crises elsewhere in the world for shorter periods. It is based upon an infantry battalion of 800 to 1000 personnel with key enablers, 65 armoured vehicles, and 220 other wheeled vehicles maintained at 60 days notice to move, with shorter move times mandated for the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) and non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO). ”¹⁷

This model has been around for a long period of time and basically states that Canada is able to commit a Battle Group (BG) organization of up to 2000 personnel for a long term, sustained conflict. The Canadian Army does not have the capacity to fight any war for a lengthy period with more than a BG. The 3000 personnel in Kandahar was beyond what the managed readiness model accounts for.

It is conceivable that Canada did not fully grasp the situation it was getting into, but was committed regardless. There has been some criticism to this effect. Brian Stewart’s article “Canada in Kandahar, Some Allies Weren’t Impressed” suggests that much of NATO felt that Canada was well out of its depth in Kandahar Province. He quotes British General David Richards, who commanded all ISAF/NATO forces in Southern Afghanistan in 2006 to 2007 as stating:

“The British should take on Kandahar because Canadians, as we knew, would never have the resources and the manpower to do that as well as we thought it should be done.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Paul Mooney, <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vol10/no4/11-mooney-eng.asp>

¹⁸ Brian Stewart, “Canada in Kandahar, Some Allies Weren’t Impressed”, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/brian-stewart-canada-in-kandahar-some-allies-weren-t-impressed-1.1168906>

One of the Manley Report recommendations on Canada's involvement in Afghanistan stated that NATO be lobbied to provide more troops to Kandahar province specifically. Unfortunately, even the Manley report missed the mark as it only suggested a mere additional 1,000 personnel.¹⁹

It is evident that Canada lacked the necessary resources to effectively fight a counterinsurgency in Kandahar province. The lack of personnel did not allow a for a feasible troop ratio that is necessary in conducting COIN operations. The question then becomes, how does one fight COIN with inadequate resources?

¹⁹ Independent Panel On Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, 2008, p35.

CHAPTER THREE – HOW DOES ONE FIGHT COIN?

The recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have caused a renewed interest in COIN doctrine. The United States Department of the Army produced two separate publications, the ‘U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5’ in 2007 and a draft document known as Tactics in Counterinsurgency Field Manual 324.2. in 2008.²⁰ The Canadian Chief of the Land Staff produced its own document referred to as B-GL-323-004/FP-003 Counter-Insurgency Operations.²¹ By examining aspects of these two doctrines and some theories of David Galula, it is evident that progress in COIN requires continued security in regions to allow for development and the establishment of good Governance.

One fundamental concept in the American documentation is what is referred to as ‘Clear, Hold, Build’ (CHB).

“A Clear Hold Build operation is a full spectrum operation that combines offense (finding and eliminating the insurgent), defense (protecting the local populace) and stability (rebuilding the infrastructure, increasing the legitimacy of the local government and bringing the rule of law to the area) operations.”²²

This concept has been referenced by the Canadian Government when referring to the Canadian Military actions in Afghanistan.²³

The CHB operation is further described as occurring between “one village, area, or city at a time-and then expands into another area.”²⁴ The CHB concept is further defined by expanding on each term. It provides a good framework to examine the progression of COIN.

²⁰ Department of the Army. The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Department of the Army. Tactics in Counterinsurgency Field Manual 324.2. Draft. November 2008.

²¹ Department of National Defence. B-GL-323-004/FP-003 Counter-Insurgency Operations. Ottawa: DND Canada, 13 December 2008.

²² Department of the Army. Tactics in Counterinsurgency Field Manual 324.2. Draft. November 2008. P3-16.

²³ Independent Panel on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan, Independent Panel on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan, (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services, 2008), p13.

²⁴ United States. Department of the Army. Tactics in Counterinsurgency Field Manual 324.2. Draft. November 2008. P3-16.

CLEAR

“a tactical mission task that requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance in an assigned area. The force does this by destroying, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of insurgent combatants and leaders.”²⁵

This definition of clear by the US military was commonly used by Canadian Forces in Afghanistan. The Doctrinal equivalent is less defined, but referred to as clearing an area of insurgent presence and influences.²⁶ Both are interpreted as conducting combat operations to clear areas of insurgents, involving ground troops conducting kinetic activity or by their mere presence that results in destroying or displacing insurgents from the population.

David Galula describes this as the first step in operations and refers to it as destroying or expelling the insurgent forces.²⁷ It is, therefore, accepted that insurgents need to be removed either physically or by the ability to influence an area. It is also accepted that just clearing an area does nothing to progress the counter-insurgency fight.

HOLD

Hold can be described as the ability of the COIN forces to provide continuous security to the population. It occurs after an area has been cleared of insurgents and allows for the establishment of a local government.²⁸ The U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5 offers the following objectives of the Hold phase:

1. Continuously secure the people and separate them from the insurgents.
2. Establish a firm government presence and control over the area and populace.
3. Recruit, organize, equip, and train local security forces.
4. Establish a government political apparatus to replace the insurgent apparatus.

²⁵ Department of the Army. Tactics in Counterinsurgency Field Manual 324.2. Draft. November 2008. P3-17.

²⁶ Department of National Defence. B-GL-323-004/FP-003 Counter-Insurgency Operations. Ottawa: DND Canada, 13 December 2008. P3-17.

²⁷ David Galula, “Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice”, Praeger Security International, Westport Connecticut, 1964, p75.

²⁸ Department of the Army. Tactics in Counterinsurgency Field Manual 324.2. Draft. November 2008. P3-18.

5. Develop a dependable network of sources by authorized intelligence agents.²⁹

The US Tactics in Counterinsurgency Field Manual 324.2. provides a similar description. The one aspect worth mentioning is the need for continuous security:

Establish civil security – Continuously secure the people and separate them from the insurgents.³⁰

Although it is not described succinctly by phase, the Canadian version of Hold can be seen in section 524 of B-GL-323-004/FP-003:

Development can only be supported by a permanent security presence and stable state. The presence of security forces must be expanded in a logical and measured manner. As the security situation improves, security forces should be increasingly integrated into the local populace in order to avoid development of a fortress disposition and mentality and to further separate and dislocate the insurgent.³¹

Similarly, David Galula suggested that once the insurgent forces were expelled or destroyed the COIN forces needed to provide on-going security: “*Detach for the area sufficient troops to oppose an insurgent’s comeback in strength, install these troops in the hamlets, villages, and towns where the population lives.*”³² These three documents on COIN are all suggesting that a certain amount of forces are needed to be in place following the clearing or destruction of the insurgents in order to maintain security.

BUILD

Both US publications have similar descriptions of the build phase. It is seen when improvements are made in the lives of the inhabitants. Security is continuous in the build stage in the form of on-going patrolling to allow the populace to feel secure. Priorities will go to

²⁹ Department of the Army. The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. P178.

³⁰ Department of the Army. Tactics in Counterinsurgency Field Manual 324.2. Draft. November 2008. P3-18.

³¹ Department of National Defence. B-GL-323-004/FP-003 Counter-Insurgency Operations. Ottawa: DND Canada, 13 December 2008. P5-27

³² David Galula, “Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice”, Praeger Security International, Westport Connecticut, 1964, p56

supporting governance, essential services, economics and infrastructure development.³³ Host nation (HN) governments attempt to establish themselves take on more responsibilities for their people.³⁴

The Canadian version of 'Build' is described as setting the conditions as for sustainable development:

Once security has been established, other agencies within the comprehensive approach should begin to create sustainable development. Agencies will include other government departments (both indigenous and those of supporting nations), international organizations, private business and NGOs.³⁵

David Galula's version has less emphasis on business and development. He does describes his third step to counterinsurgency as 'Contact with and control of the population'. By giving the population jobs such as building roads and defensive positions and paying them for it is in a sense a way to improve the economy, however, the real objective is to control the population by giving them tasks that directly support the military aspects of the campaign.³⁶ Development is linked to the military progression of a counterinsurgency, but less so on having inhabitants conducting tasks that directly benefit the military campaign. Development is much more in line with creating prosperity where the inhabitants want to be in and look with appreciation to the organizations who brought that prosperity.

Having reviewed these theories, it is evident that one key aspect to COIN is the ability to provide a secure environment free of insurgent influence or minimizing insurgent activity so that

³³ Department of the Army. Tactics in Counterinsurgency Field Manual 324.2. Draft. November 2008. P3-19.

³⁴ Department of the Army. The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. P182.

³⁵ Department of National Defence. B-GL-323-004/FP-003 Counter-Insurgency Operations. Ottawa: DND Canada, 13 December 2008. P5-27

³⁶ David Galula, "Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice", Praeger Security International, Westport Connecticut, 1964, p83.

it does not detract from the progress of the COIN campaign in terms of capacity building and economic development. The Afghanistan National Development Strategy, when referring to a deterioration of security in parts of Afghanistan, suggests that the “lack of stability reduces the ability of aid agencies and the Government to operate in many areas and to effectively implement projects and programs.”³⁷ The question then becomes what approach did Canada take in making Kandahar secure and was it effective?

³⁷ Afghan National Development Strategy, Kabul Afghanistan, 2008 p5.

CHAPTER FOUR – THE INK SPOT THEORY

The Ink Spot theory is predominately mentioned throughout the Canadian counterinsurgency manual. LCol Nick Grimshaw in his paper “Two Sides of the Same COIN” analyzes and compares CHB and Ink Spot theory and suggest that, although CHB is not mentioned in the Canadian COIN doctrine it heavily influenced Canadian operations in Afghanistan given its use with our Allies, however, in terms of approach to COIN the Ink Spot theory forms the basis for Canadian doctrine.³⁸

The ink spot theory originated with General Hubert Lyautey, a French General in the late 19th and early 20th century who spent the majority of his career in Algiers, Morocco and Indo China.³⁹ The tache d’huile (oil spot) theory was what he used in Indo China to combat insurgents. Lyautey was influenced by one of his Colonels, Gallieni, who believed that insurgents were more persuaded by economic prosperity and less about politics.⁴⁰ Both Lyautey and Gallieni recognized that kinetic action against the insurgents was necessary, however, they needed to be linked in with development “so that with pacification there flowed forward, like a pool of oil, a great belt of civilization.”⁴¹

The Canadian version can be described as follows:

“ Ink Spot approach sees insurgents gradually dislocated from their physical and moral support bases, through the expansion of physical and psychological influences. Canadian COIN doctrine emphasizes the point that political engagement will lead efforts, followed by simultaneous military, social, and economic engagement, while information

³⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Nick Grimshaw “Two Sides of the Same Coin: An evaluation and comparison of the Clear, Hold, Build and the Ink Spot counterinsurgency approaches”, CFC, Toronto, April 2008. P4

³⁹ Robert B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, Vol 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 224.

⁴⁰ Andre Maurois, *Marshall Lyautey* (London: John Lane, Bodley Head, 1931), quoted in Robert B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, Vol 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 221.

⁴¹ Andre Maurois, *Marshall Lyautey* (London: John Lane, Bodley Head, 1931), quoted in Robert B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, Vol 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 221.

operations play an important role to influence perceptions of the local population and their support."⁴²

Prior to the publication of the Canadian COIN manual the Canadian elements in Afghanistan were practicing the Ink Spot strategy in Kandahar Province. LCol Hope describes how he saw his battle group as an extension of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) back in 2006 in order to synchronize the development efforts. He also speaks of pushing his sub-units into forward operating bases (FOBs) in areas that allowed them to work with local leaders and ANSF to “improve governance, security and socio-economic conditions in key districts of the province”.⁴³

Later in 2007 to 2008 the Canadian task force, Task Force Kandahar (TFK), established what were known as Police Sub Stations (PSS) throughout Zhari and Panjwai districts. In summer 2007 clear operations were conducted by the Canadian Battle Group (BG) and the PSS were built and held by small numbers of Afghan National Police (ANP) averaging about ten at each location. These PSS were overrun by the Taliban and the ANP were slaughtered. This resulted in TFK re-thinking the strategy of PSS and in doing so created the Police Operational Mentor Liaison Team (POMLT) which consisted of Canadian infantry and military police being used to mentor the ANP at the PSS. Clear operations were conducted again in the winter of 2007, but this time the PSS with a half dozen Canadian troops supporting the ANP were deposited in six PSS.⁴⁴

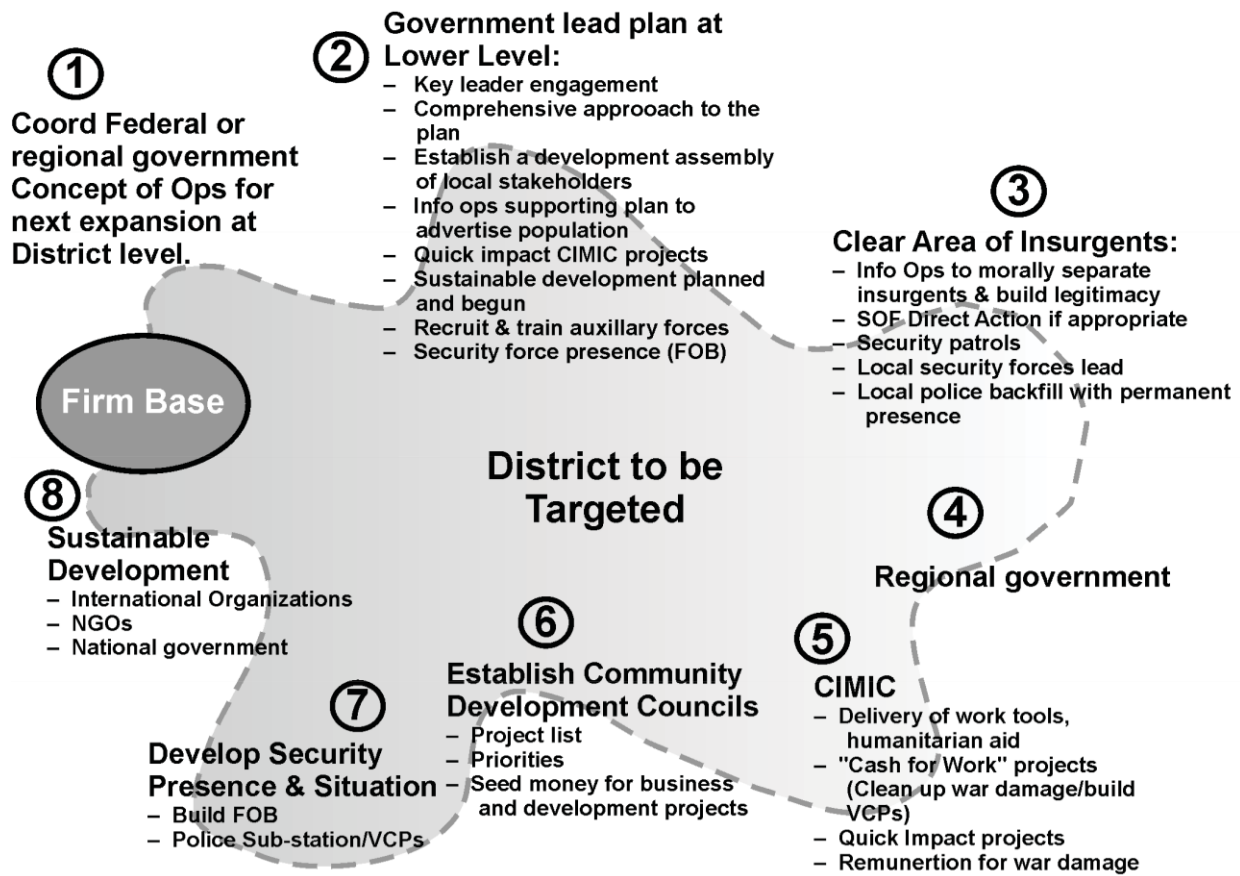
⁴² Lieutenant Colonel Nick Grimshaw “Two Sides of the Same Coin: An evaluation and comparison of the Clear, Hold, Build and the Ink Spot counterinsurgency approaches”, CFC, Toronto, April 2008. P74,75

⁴³ LCol Ian Hope, “Reflection on Afghanistan: Command Task Force Orion”, In Harm’s Way the Buck Stops Here: Senior Commanders on Operations, Horn Bernd Col, Canadian Defence Academy Press, Kingston, ON, 2007, 214.

⁴⁴ Author was S3 for the Operational Mentor Liaison Team (OMLT) for TF 1-08.

The establishment of PSS in Zahri-Panjwai is an example of the practice of the Ink Spot theory. The ANP and POMLT teams were tasked to patrol their immediate areas. Figure 1.1 below taken from the Canadian COIN manual describes the steps of the ink spot theory. The last item in step two “security force presence” and items in step three such as “security patrols and local police backfill with a permanent presence” would seem to reflect the intention of establishing PSS. The Canadians established a security presence by creating PSS, which patrolled their surrounding areas with Canadian soldiers and ANP working together.

Figure 1.1



It is evident that TFK embraced both COIN strategies, that being CHB and the Ink Spot theory. The CHB approach is sequential. One clears, one holds and one builds. Although there are similarities the Ink Spot approach is somewhat holistic. One establishes infrastructure, interacts with the population on many levels and in doing so creates a secure environment that allows for development and good governance to follow. The Ink Spot strategy would seem to be a valid concept for TFK in Zhari/Panjwai districts given that the PSS in Zhari were located on Ring Road South, the main supply line linking Kandahar and Helmand Province. The PSS in Panjwai coincided with a road paving project, the intent of which was to pave from Bazaar-e Panjwai to Mushan.⁴⁵



⁴⁵ Ibid.

The TFK/ANSF infrastructure located along this route were up to five kilometres apart. The PSS located at Talukan and Zangabad had, as previously, stated six Canadian soldiers and potentially 10 to 15 ANP. This is of course assuming that the ANP did not abandon their posts, which was known to happen on a regular basis. The average patrol radius of a POMLT/ANP patrol was about 1.5 kilometres. Strong Point Mushan, located west of PSS Talukan was again approximately 5 kilometres away. The 75 man Afghan National Army company from 1st Brigade with six OMLT team members was able to project and conduct operations in the Mushan area, but was not able to project eastward to secure the route which was also the main supply route for all said infrastructure.⁴⁶ This route was narrow unpaved and susceptible to ambush given the close terrain surrounding it.

In this particular example, ink spot was really ink dot and the PSS and strong points were not able to mutually support one and other and could not create a secure environment that would allow for development and governance. To further exasperate the situation, the isolation of PSS and strong point Mushan meant that supplying them was problematic. In fact resupplying the OMLT/POMLT and ANSF forces along this route required a major operation conducted by the BG involving tanks and eventually route clearance engineer equipment in order to get the needed supplies or replace personnel during relief in place missions.⁴⁷ The eventual arrival of Canadian helicopters alleviated the situation, however, during the period of 2007 and 2008 the mere resupply of infrastructure in Panjwai was a major concern and resource heavy, not to mention risky. In fact the relief of out-going and incoming OMLT elements in 2008 at strong point Mushan saw multiple IED attacks that resulted in the death of Trooper Michael Yuki Hayakaze

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

from the Lord Strathcona Horse who was driving a tank that was supporting the relief and resupply effort.⁴⁸

The same situation, but to a lesser extent, could be said of the infrastructure located along Ring Road South in Zharey District. In 2008 from January to August Forward Operating Base (FOB) Wilson was controlled solely by OMLT personnel. In fact the TF-1-08 OMLT controlled the battle space in Zharey District, until August of 2008 when the relieving BG took back ownership and stationed a Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) III company there.⁴⁹ Along Ring Road south there were three PSS and two Strong Points. Garrisoned in the same way as Panjwai in terms of a hand full of Canadian troops and small numbers of ANP. ANA strong points were company size at approximately 75 soldiers. The difference between Ring Road South and the route in Panjwai was that Ring Road South was constantly travelled. The British BGs in Helmand used it as the major supply route as did TFK from Kandahar Airfield to Maywand, where in summer of 2008 the OMLT along with an ANA company occupied a FOB there. A major BG operation to supply the Zharey infrastructure was not required as the route was not isolated as the Panjwai route was and the route was paved and therefore, considered safer. It did require regular culvert inspections for IEDs and cameras were installed in some areas to watch the route for insurgent activity. The PSS and strong points themselves were not mutually supportive and the quick reaction force was at least 45 minutes away if a major attack occurred against them and could easily be thwarted with an IED placed on the route.⁵⁰ The lack of manpower resources did not allow for an effective troop concentration within the numerous infrastructure within Zharey and Panjwai.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

As previously examined under both CHB and Ink Spot, clearing the area of insurgency is a vital step to allow for building and development. The Canadian approach using Ink Spot as described above was to put it mildly, inadequate. The infrastructure was too far apart and the lack of resources in terms of troops did not allow for projecting security in Panjwai and Zahri districts. Very little economic development occurred and governance if any was limited.

The lack of man power resources did not allow for the ink spot theory to succeed. Had a full strength Canadian Infantry Company of a 120 personnel or more been positioned in each of the strong points in Panjwai or in Zahri, the ability to conduct several random patrols lasting for weeks versus a few hours would likely have displaced the Taliban in the area and provided more security to the population.⁵¹

⁵¹ Ibid.

CHAPTER FIVE – STABILITY BOX JUNO

Midway into TF1-08 tour of operation in the summer of 2008 it became apparent that TFK was not having a lasting effect on the insurgency in Panjwai and Zharey districts. Several disruptive operations were successfully conducted by both Afghan and BG forces and several insurgents were killed. The immediate withdrawal of forces at the end of such operations meant an immediate return of the insurgents with no real way to deter them. An idea was brought forth by then Major Bob Ritchie, the Officer Commanding (OC) of the OMLT/POMLT in Zhari district that became known as Stability Box Juno.⁵² This essentially was a four kilometer square centered on the Pashmul area in Zharey district. It was chosen due to the fact that Pashmul had the most significant population of a few hundred, it was close to already established key infrastructure and at the time the population was thought to be pro ISAF and the ANSF.⁵³

The plan was to conduct randomized activities within the box to deter the insurgents and to give the people of Pashmul a sense of security. Forces committed were an ANA company with OMLT mentors stationed at FOB Wilson nearby, a BG LAV-III Platoon, the ANP and POMLT at PSS Pashmul within the box and elements from the PRT in Kandahar city who would be conducting civilian military cooperation visits. A weekly matrix was drafted and patrols were slotted in from the various elements that would saturate the Pashmul area with an ongoing presence. Any elements of TFK were encouraged to drive through Pashmul if nothing else but to bring an additional presence. The intent was to conduct these presence patrols for six months and work with the Canadian agencies to bring development to the area.

⁵² Author was S3 OMLT for TF1-08 and was involved in the initial planning of Stability Box Juno.

⁵³ Author was S3 OMLT for TF1-08 and was involved in the initial planning of Stability Box Juno.

“Stability Box Juno was also supposed to give focus to Canadian development efforts: CIDA, DFAIT, and other government departments now had a specific area in which to establish a joint interagency team to work together on a series of projects.”⁵⁴

Once stability was achieved the plan was to flip the box to another four kilometer every six months through Zharey and Panjwai districts. This would be an enduring process that would have lasted for years.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, it was doomed to fail. There were not sufficient resources to commit to Stability Box Juno. The BG was constantly being reverted to higher priority tasks.

“Several factors mitigated against the effective operation of Juno. The primary reason was the Sarposa prison break and the subsequent diversion of forces to conduct the Arghandab 2 operation in June 2008. The secondary factor was the ongoing demand for the 2 PPCLI Battlegroup’s infantry companies to occupy legacy tactical infrastructure positions along Route Fosters.”⁵⁶

The ANA in Zharey were also being diverted into Helmand province to support operations being conducted there.⁵⁷

A major operation that required both TFK and ANA forces was that of Operation Asp-e-Janoubi. This operation was the movement and security of a huge turbine from KAF to the Kajaki Dam in Helmand province. The turbine would restore the dam as a major producer of hydro-electricity in the area.⁵⁸ This operation stripped away any BG and ANA forces committed to Stability Box Juno to occupy key bridges and vital areas along the route to ensure the safe passage of the turbine.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Sean Maloney, “The Mechs Operation Timus Preem, August 2008”, Canadian Military History Volume 19, Issue 3, Article 7, April 9, 2015.

⁵⁵ Author was S3 OMLT for TF1-08 and was involved in the initial planning of Stability Box Juno.

⁵⁶ Sean Maloney, “The Mechs Operation Timus Preem, August 2008”, Canadian Military History Volume 19, Issue 3, Article 7, April 9, 2015.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Author was S3 OMLT for TF1-08.

The one opportunity that TF 1-08 had to practice the proper application of COIN theory, being either the US version of Hold, by having a lasting security presence or the Canadian COIN version of Ink Spot referring to Step 3 'Clearing Area of Insurgents', or David Galula's version of expelling insurgents from the area was not achievable due to lack of man power to commit to the area. The Canadian COIN campaign in Zharey and Panjwai was unable to progress due to the lack of man power committed from the beginning.

CHAPTER SIX – DISRUPTIVE OPERATIONS

“ISAF has been constantly disrupting the Taliban in Kandahar. This approach is flawed, as simply disrupting the Taliban is insufficient for success. Constant disruption cannot get ISAF closer to an endstate of the prolonged, if not permanent, reduction of Taliban violence and intimidation necessary to prevent the insurgency from having a strategic, delegitimizing effect on the government of Afghanistan.”⁶⁰

The above quote from Carl Forsberg refers to the operations conducted by the Canadian forces from 2006 to 2009. The Canadian Forces in Kandahar were tied to several PSS, FOBs and strong points, as previously mentioned, which limited their resources. They had to pool together sub units, and sub-sub units with ANSF support to conduct operations. These operations, though highly successful in killing Taliban, had a limited affect in furthering the campaign because they lacked the follow on forces to hold or maintain a permanent substantial presence in any given area.

The clearing operations conducted in Zharey and Panjwai in 2006 were in order to oust insurgents operating near and therefore threatening Kandahar city. As there was no plan and no resources to hold or maintain after the clearing operations, they only produced a disruptive effect and therefore, can be considered disruptive operations.⁶¹ The culmination of these clearing missions was Operation Medusa in September 2006 that saw a decisive conventional engagement and victory for the Canadians over the Taliban.⁶² The hundreds of Taliban killed was significant but still amounted to no lasting affect given the lack of resources to hold the area.

⁶⁰ Carl Forsberg “The Taliban’s Campaign for Kandahar” , Afghanistan Report 3, Institute for the Study of War, Washington DC, 2009, p56.

⁶¹ Lieutenant Colonel Nick Grimshaw “Two Sides of the Same Coin: An evaluation and comparison of the Clear, Hold, Build and the Ink Spot counterinsurgency approaches”, CFC, Toronto, April 2008. P36.

⁶² <http://cips.uottawa.ca/how-canada-failed-in-afghanistan/> Roland Paris

The construction of Route Summit in 2007 which was intended to link the Panjwai farmland to a major highway, Highway 1 was seen as bringing the farm economy to Kandahar is an example of an attempt to bring development to that particular area. However, without the necessary forces to maintain an effective presence the insurgents were able to conduct ambushes and lay improvised explosive devices (IEDs) along the route.⁶³ In this case, this was a Clear and Build with no Hold and did very little to disrupt the insurgents.

In 2008 the same disruptive operations were occurring by both BG and ANSF forces. The ANA based in Zharey District were fortunate in the first three months of the TF1-08 tour to have a Kandak (Battalion) Commander by the name of LCol Sharin Shaw. He was a highly motivated, intelligent and a daring officer, who commanded with great authority amongst his Kandak and was highly respected within his brigade. He gathered his own intelligence and planned his own operations (aided by the OMLT) to root out the Taliban in his area of operations (AOR). However, none of this mattered as none of the operations had a lasting effect. His AOR may have remained somewhat quiet under his command, however, as soon as he left and was replaced by a less motivated commander the insurgency flared up and the AOR became less secure.⁶⁴ The operations conducted by LCol Sharin Shaw thwarted and disrupted the Taliban for a time, but they were always able to come back. Without proper resources to capitalize on the successes to hold and developed the area, the successes achieved little. In this case it was not only the Canadians who were lacking in resources to properly conduct and progress the war, but the ANSF themselves were also lacking.

Perhaps the best example of Canadian disruptive operations is that of Operation Timus Preem. Named after the popular character on the Transformers movies, Optimus Prime, in

⁶³ <http://thewalrus.ca/2007-12-international-affairs-2/>

⁶⁴ Author was S3 OMLT for TF1-08.

relation to utilizing mechanized troops, the operation was summarized in detail by Dr Maloney in his article, 'The Mechs Operation Timus Preem, August 2008'.⁶⁵ Dr. Maloney describes that the operation had multiple objective:

“First, it would probably interfere with enemy operations in Sanjeray and his IED operations in Highway1. That would draw off heat from the turbine move. Second, 3 Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR) Battlegroup was arriving in September to affect a relief in place (or RIP) with 2 PPCLI Battlegroup. One lesson from 2006 was that the enemy would use every means available to exploit the lack of acclimatization of the incoming forces. A major operation that put the enemy back on his heels right before the RIP would positively contribute to the process and protect the incoming forces. Finally, an operation like this would force the enemy away from Juno and give the interagency and governance process some breathing room.”⁶⁶

The turbine that Dr. Maloney is referring to is the one from operation Asp-e-Janoubi.

Zharey district and particularly the area west of Pashmul had become an area of interest to the BG and the All Source Intelligence Coordination Cell (ASIC) given that it was believed that an insurgent command element was functioning west of Pashmul and was coordinating attacks on both Panjwai and Zharey districts including the always threatening IED strikes.⁶⁷

As Dr. Maloney's mentions, one focus of Timus Preem was to set the conditions for a successful relief in place for the incoming BG from the Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR). From the author's perspective this and the destruction of the insurgent command element were the focus of Timus Preem. There was no plan to exploit the successes of Timus Preem to allow for development, because again there were no follow on forces available to hold the areas gained. In fact the BG had to cobble together two LAV platoons and two tank troops with engineer and

⁶⁵ Sean Maloney, "The Mechs Operation Timus Preem, August 2008", Canadian Military History Volume 19, Issue 3, Article 7, April 9, 2015 p3.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Author was S3 OMLT for TF1-08.

command and control as the main component of the force. This was deemed too few and a company from the ANA with OMLT mentors were required in order to launch the mission.⁶⁸

Of note, there was one other operation being considered at the same time that was developed by the OMLT. The OMLT was attempting to re-align the ANA Kandaks within Zharey, Panjwai and Maywand so that they would co-located with similar BG sub-units in order to utilize BG assets as potential mentors. Specifically, the combat support elements consisting of artillery and a recce company would be aligned with the BG artillery battery and the reconnaissance (recce) platoon and the infantry ANA companies were to be rotated throughout Zharey and Panjwai and aligned with the appropriate BG LAV Company. This was not to be a combat operation but more of a logistics operation that would allow the incoming BG, in the OMLT's opinion, to build the relationships with the ANA and work together to fight the insurgency. In the end it was decided to launch Operation Timus Preem for the reasoned described above.⁶⁹

The operation lasted three days and resulted in the destruction of the Taliban command element and it is believed to have hampered the Taliban IED production ability. It also likely deterred Taliban activity in Stability Box Juno.⁷⁰ However, other than setting conditions for a successful handover between BGs it had no lasting effect.

“Operation Timus Preem, however, continued to highlight the problem of not being able to install an enduring Afghan government security and governance presence in an area subjected to a clearance operation. The enemy forces were swept from the area, many were killed and wounded, but without adequate security in place they returned the night after the Mechs left for home. It was noted by all involved in the operation, and understood beforehand, that the populations in some of the objective areas were either pro-government or potentially pro-government and it is a tragedy for the Afghans and

⁶⁸ Sean Maloney, “The Mechs Operation Timus Preem, August 2008”, Canadian Military History Volume 19, Issue 3, Article 7, April 9, 2015 p3.

⁶⁹ Author was S3 OMLT for TF1-08.

⁷⁰ Sean Maloney, “The Mechs Operation Timus Preem, August 2008”, Canadian Military History Volume 19, Issue 3, Article 7, April 9, 2015 p16.

their Canadian allies that adequate forces were not available to expand the security “bubble” west from Stability Box Juno.”⁷¹

In fact within just a few weeks the security situation in Zharey district was such that the Taliban were able to attack a Canadian LAV III with an 82mm recoilless rifle, destroying it and killing three Canadian soldiers on September 3rd.⁷² The question becomes why go through the effort and expending of resources if it is not to have a lasting effect?

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Author was S3 OMLT for TF1-08.

CHAPTER SEVEN – MEASURES OF FAILURE

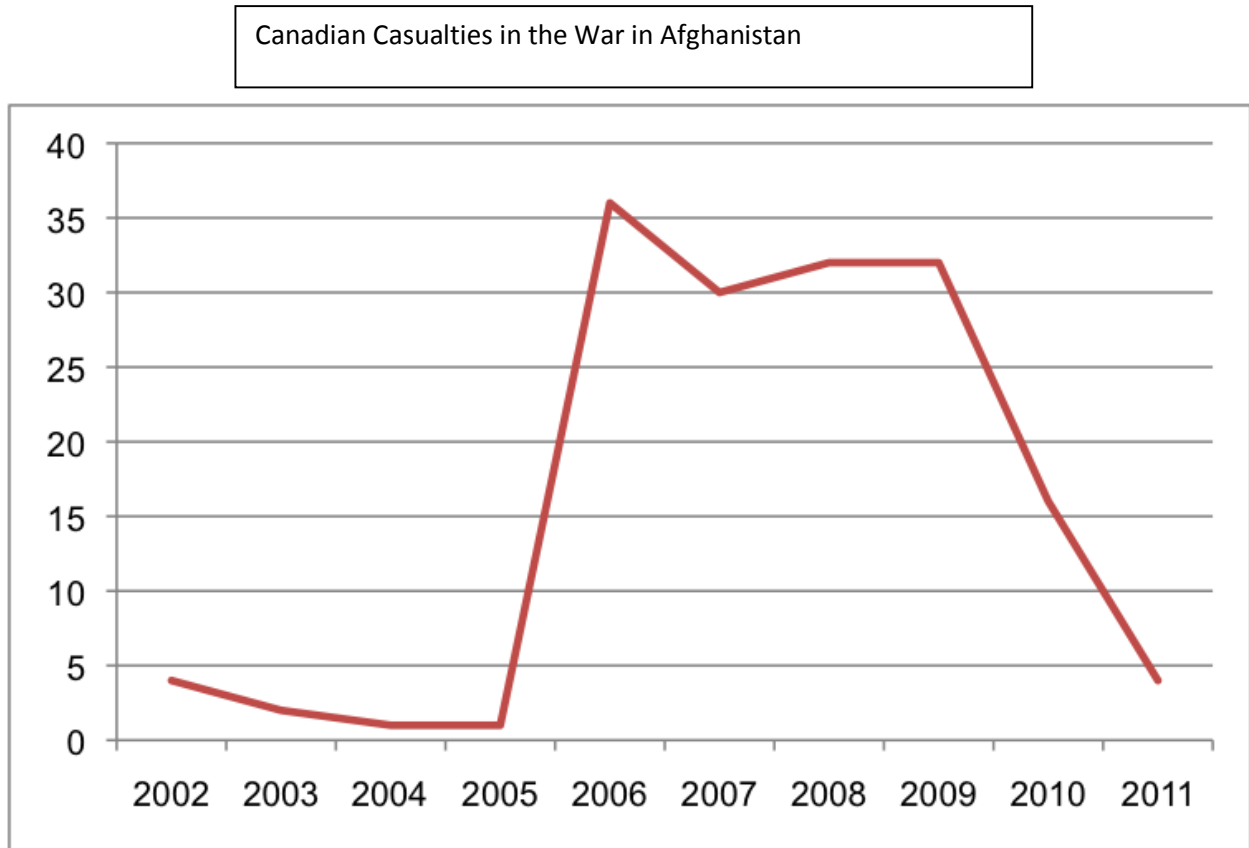
Militaries and governments use terms such as measures of success when determining progress. In Kandahar one might look at progress as providing aid to a particular area or the building of route Summit was progress as fighting aged males were being kept busy working and now a road that did not previously exist can be utilized by the people of that area. One might also look to the Dahla Dam project in the Arghandab district, which was the Canadian signature project to bring development into Kandahar province by re-opening a dam that supported irrigation for farming.⁷³ This paper has laid out the concept that security is fundamentally the most important aspect of progressing forward to winning a counter-insurgency. Development and governance are also important but cannot be achieved without some level of security to allow them to take place.

One way to analyze Canada's inability to achieve security is to look at examples of the lack of security within the region from the period of 2006, when Canada took over Kandahar, to 2009 when the US began surging into Kandahar. There were numerous, IED strikes, direct attacks, intimidation and even a daring jail break that occurred right under the Canadians noses that prove security was lacking.

Perhaps the most obvious way to view the lack of security is by the number of casualties that Canada took during the time in Kandahar. If an area is secure one might agree that casualties will be low. Casualty rates remained high throughout Canada's time in Kandahar. The following graph shows that Canadian casualties increased in 2006 and only started to reduce in 2010. This reduction is directly related to the US troop surge that flowed 30,000 US troops

⁷³ Carl Forsberg "The Taliban's Campaign for Kandahar", Afghanistan Report 3, Institute for the Study of War, Washington DC, 2009, p40.

into Kandahar in 2009 and 2010. When one does not have the capacity to bring security to ones area of operation then one can expect higher casualties.



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June 14th 2008 saw the daring Sarposa prison break in downtown Kandahar city. At 9pm 30 armed insurgents attacked the prison's front and rear gates using suicide bombers and water truck loaded with explosives. Masked gunmen on motorcycles and armed with rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) stormed the prison killing 15 guards and freed the entire prison population of 1,100 inmates including 450 known Taliban fighters. The Taliban escaped through nearby fields

⁷⁴ <http://opencanada.org/features/blogs/roundtable/adding-up-kandahar/>

and were loaded on waiting trucks to take them away.⁷⁵ This daring and well planned escape happen just a few short kilometers away from Camp Nathan Smith, the Canadian Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) camp located in Kandahar city.⁷⁶ Although not responsible for the security of the prison, the PRT, had the prison in its area of operation. Kandahar city was considered key to the security situation for the province. If it fell to the Taliban the province was likely lost. The city did not fall, however, in this example TFK did not have real security over the city in such that a large armed insurgent group could move at will and free 1,100 prisoners uncontested.

The Taliban were also able to use intimidation tactics right in the heart of Kandahar city. Towards the end of 2008 it became apparent that the Taliban had developed a wide network of informants and agents inside the city and were spying on government supports. These agents conducted an intimidation campaign which saw ‘night letters’ being delivered to the populace that supported the government. These letters threatened the people with violence if they continued to support the government.⁷⁷ This was a primary example of the inability of the Canadians to bring security to people of Kandahar city.

In May of 2008, a Canadian PRT patrol was escorting a US AID VIP into Pashmul. The intent was to show the VIP Pashmul as an area to start development projects to support the local populace there. The patrol was ambushed by a well-coordinated Taliban attack that saw heavy fire coming from three different locations. Corporal Mike Starker, a medic with the patrol, was killed and the patrol itself had to fight hard to extract itself.⁷⁸ This attack occurred within a few

⁷⁵ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/2131235/How-Taliban-sprang-450-terrorists-from-Kandahars-Sarposa-prison-in-Afghanistan.html>

⁷⁶ Author was S3 OMLT for TF1-08.

⁷⁷ http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/The_Talibans_Campaign_For_Kandahar.pdf p46.

⁷⁸ Author was S3 OMLT for TF1-08.

short kilometers from PSS Pashmul and FOB Wilson. It resulted in the dashing of any chance of US AID support in the area and is another example of the Taliban's ability to move freely and launch coordinated attacks against the Canadians and therefore highlight the Canadians inability to bring security to that area.

The summer of 2008 saw the Taliban take control of key areas of Arghandab district despite the Canadian presence in FOB Frontenac, a large base built in the district to bring security to the area and guard the dam project.⁷⁹ These bases allowed the Taliban to bring in weapons, fighters and IEDs to Kandahar city. It was not just intimidation that was occurring in Kandahar city and the surrounding towns in 2008. Assassinations of key tribal leaders who opposed the Taliban and government leadership were successfully conducted as well. Perhaps the most significant was that of Member of Parliament Habibullah Jan in Sanzaray on July 5 2008. Jan, well-known for his opposition to the Taliban, was gunned down after visiting an ANA compound in Zahri district.⁸⁰ To add insult to injury, further assassinations continued and the Taliban hold on Senjaray, on the outskirts of Kandahar city, progressed to the point that they held their own prayer session and provided their own security for the event.⁸¹

The Taliban had successfully infiltrated into Kandahar city over the course of the latter half of 2008 and 2009 in the area of district 9.⁸² This impoverished district of 90,000 had a small under resourced ANP contingent and was permissible to the establishment of Taliban safe houses

⁷⁹ Carl Forsberg "The Taliban's Campaign for Kandahar" , Afghanistan Report 3, Institute for the Study of War, Washington DC, 2009, p40-42.

⁸⁰ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/afghan-lawmaker-assassinated-1.769675>

⁸¹ Carl Forsberg "The Taliban's Campaign for Kandahar" , Afghanistan Report 3, Institute for the Study of War, Washington DC, 2009, p42.

⁸² Carl Forsberg "The Taliban's Campaign for Kandahar" , Afghanistan Report 3, Institute for the Study of War, Washington DC, 2009, p43.

and IED construction facilities. Multiple raids in May of 2009 by ANSF forces discovered large weapons caches and large amounts of bomb making materials in the district.⁸³

There are countless other examples of how Canada failed to bring security to Kandahar province, but these few demonstrate that security was never achieved and therefore the counter insurgency could not progress.

“Defeating the Taliban—or at least destroying it —requires more coalition and afghan forces in Kandahar province. If ISAF does not generate sufficient force densities in critical areas, its attempted counteroffensive will culminate, giving enemy fighters a permissive environment and allowing Taliban terror to continue in Kandahar city.”⁸⁴

Canada did not have sufficient resources to mitigate the IED attacks and direct actions that were being taken against them by the Taliban, nor did they have the ability to stop the prison break and intimidation that was plaguing the population.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid p55.

CHAPTER EIGHT – CAMPAIGN PLAN 2008

In 2008 Canadian Expeditionary Force Command (CEFCOMD), then responsible for all Canadian operations worldwide issued its campaign plan for TFK. The author received an initial briefing on the plan during the tactical recce of key leadership of TF 1-08. At the heart of this plan was the idea of building ANSF capacity. In fact the priority for the Canadian Campaign was to do just that. Build up the ANA and ANP. It did not say occupy key infrastructure throughout Zharey and Panjwai. The point is that the plan itself did not correlate with the actual activities that were being conducted by TFK in 2007 and 2008. One could have read the campaign plan and concluded that all Canadian Forces should pull back to KAF and mentor and train ANSF forces. This of course is unrealistic. Turning over Kandahar city and some key infrastructure would have made the fight to get it back all the more difficult. It does however, illustrate the earlier point of some misguided strategic direction in that this direction did not correspond with what was happening on the ground. Who told TFK to build infrastructure throughout Zharey and Panjwai? Was it ISAF? Was it an internal plan developed by TFK and passed to each new commander? Was there an analysis of the resources in terms of troops required to occupy said infrastructure while conducting Clear, Hold Build and or Ink Spot strategies? The answers to these questions are unclear. If a proper analysis of the situation had occurred a different approach might have been taken on by the Canadian Forces operating in Kandahar that might have been more functional given the lack resources.

It is the author's opinion Canada never should have taken on nor been chosen to take on the huge responsibility of conducting COIN in Kandahar province. As stated previously, the Canadian Military and NATO leadership did not approve of the task going to Canada, yet somehow the political leadership was able to force the issue. Given the lack of resources and

using hindsight TFK might have chosen a different approach to the security situation in Kandahar. Firstly, NATO and TFK needed to come to terms that the entire province could not be secured due to inadequate resources. A more reasonable lay down of troops would have seen Kandahar city as the priority. The majority of the province population lived in Kandahar city, therefore, the majority of TFK troops should have been occupying infrastructure there. Patrolling throughout the city in conjunction with the ANSF forces would likely have had a more positive effect by keeping the Taliban from being able to establish a network within the city. The density of troops in the city would have meant that the Taliban could not move freely there without the likelihood of being caught or engaged with direct action. Secondly, TFK should have been focused on the main supply route (MSR), that being Ring Road South from Kandahar Airfield to Helmand province. In June 2008, two contracted fuel trucks delivering fuel to Helmand province for the British BGs were destroyed by Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs). The Taliban fired upon them from the side of Ring Road South and sent the tanker trucks into flames. This single event brought the British to within 24 hours of being out of fuel.⁸⁵ Had the focus been Kandahar city and the MSR the chances of this occurring would have been greatly reduced. As it was, anyone could walk up to that road and shoot an RPG. Rather than having under resourced OMLTs with ANSF occupying infrastructure along Ring Road South, BG sub units with OMLTs and ANSF should have be placed along the route. This of course would strip the forces that were occupying infrastructure in Panjwai. It is the author's opinion that on FOB Masum Ghar, located close to the populated area of Bazar-E-Panjwai should have been occupied by a platoon of the BG and a Kandak with OMLT from 1st Brigade 2015 Corps. This would be necessary to attempt to bring security to that local area and disrupt any threat to Kandahar city

⁸⁵ Author was S3 OMLT for TF1-08.

from the south. Thirdly, FOB Frontenac should never have been built as it had no effect on the security situation in the Arghandab. It is possible that proper irrigation was a good thing for the populace and the Taliban alike therefore there was no need to secure the dam with a complete rifle company. A possible layout of TF 1-08 forces could have been something as follows:

- Tank Squadron – FOB Maywand (Western Edge of Zharey District on Ring Road South)
 - The terrain there is better suited for tanks and the squadron could respond along a paved route.
- Recce Squadron – FOB Wilson (North of Pashmul on Ring Road South)
 - Grouped with a Kandak and OMLT this squadron could have provided the presence into Pashmul and perhaps Stability Box Juno could have been successful. Also route security is a traditional Recce task.
- 2 x LAV Companys and PRT – Kandahar City
 - These companies working with ANSF and the LAV Company integral to the PRT could have greatly affected the security situation in Kandahar City and put the bulk of the forces with population.
- BG HQ – Kandahar City
 - Saturates the area with more soldiers and better provides better and timely communication as the HQ and majority of the sub-units would be co-located
- Defence and Security Platoon – Generated by reserve forces to guard Kandahar Airfield this platoon could have been used to guard FOB Mashum Ghar as mentioned with POMLTs and ANSF to patrol Bazaar-E-Panjwai.

The above lay down of forces assumes that Kandahar Airfield is left to NATO and TFK HQ to occupy. It also assumes that POMLTs and OMLT maintain infrastructure along Ring Road South, but supported by a LAV Company and a tank squadron. It achieves a saturation of forces where the bulk of the population live thereby providing the opportunity to bring security to Kandahar City and possibly development and good governance. It also provides dedicated forces to the security of the vital supply route along Ring Road South. It sets what could have been an adequate framework for the US to fall in on when they flowed in an additional 30,000 troops.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/canadian-troops-formally-handover-kandahar-battlefield-to-us-forces/article4199298/>

CONCLUSION

“All we could do was not lose”⁸⁷

The above quote was spoken by General John Vance on his second deployment as Command of TFK.⁸⁸ He, of course, was referring to TFKs inability to defeat the Taliban given that there were insufficient forces in Kandahar from 2006 to 2009. By 2010 and 2011 the influx of 30,000 US troops changed the situation in Kandahar. The Canadian BG was able to consolidate in the Dand District just north of Kandahar city and was able to apply proper COIN doctrine as described by CHB and the Ink Spot Theory. This allowed them to bring in several development projects to the area given they had achieved a level of security to do so by saturating the area with forces.⁸⁹ This was all as a result of the realization of General McChrystal, the then Commander of ISAF, that Kandahar city was the main objective of the Taliban and needed the proper resources to defend against it.⁹⁰ General Petraeus, McChrystal's successor, carried on with a strategy that saw protecting the population as a main effort.⁹¹ This could only be achieved by a properly resourced force that was able to stay in place amongst the people. Later on the Canadian BG was grouped in Panjwai district. The same force that had once been responsible for the entire province. Again through a concentration of force in one district, they made considerable gains in bringing security to the area.⁹²

The period of 2006 to 2009 in Kandahar was a great hardship for the Canadian Forces operating there. The strategic decision to commit to the province was misguided given the

⁸⁷ General John Vance, Commander of TFK, June 2010.

⁸⁸ <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/monitor/canadas-afghanistan-intervention-disastrous-failure>

⁸⁹ Carl Forsberg “The Taliban’s Campaign for Kandahar” , Afghanistan Report 3, Institute for the Study of War, Washington DC, 2009 p52.

⁹⁰ Ibid p47.

⁹¹ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/15/AR2010081501514.html>

⁹² <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/canadian-troops-formally-handover-kandahar-battlefield-to-us-forces/article4199298/>

inadequate forces that Canada had to deploy and failure of the government and senior military leadership to understand the type of mission that was being committed to. When the realization came that this was a full blown counter-insurgency, it was too late. The right concentration of forces is vital for success in fighting a counter-insurgency and Canada never had a chance in that regard. At some point the military leadership should have recognized this and asked for an increase in forces or, as suggested, scale back the scope of the mission. The inability to see the importance of troop ratios with respect to being able to Hold terrain that was cleared, or by being able to project security out of key infrastructure as is the process of Ink Spot theory, suggests that Canada and specifically the Canadian Military leadership at the highest levels lacked the initial understanding of how to properly conduct a protracted counterinsurgency that can progress once security is maintained. The attempt of Stability Box Juno suggests that the leadership in Kandahar became aware of what was required but lacked the resources to achieve it. As a result, the disruptive operations that were conducted did not have a lasting effect as there were no follow on forces to remain and protect the areas. The number of failures mentioned in this paper are proof that security was never achieved in Kandahar and that the campaign plan was all but useless as it did not reflect the reality on the ground.

Canada did not lose the counter-insurgency in Afghanistan, but it certainly didn't win or progress it to any acceptable level in Kandahar that would have brought lasting development and governance. Canada in retrospect was a band aid in Kandahar trying to control a massive bleed and only got relief with the arrival of the surge of US troops. Canada did not get it right.

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