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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE – COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES
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**A STRATEGY FOR EFFECTIVE PEACE-BUILDING:
CANADA’S WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH
IN AFGHANISTAN**

By/par

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Abstract

This paper examines Canada's whole-of-government approach to peace-building and reconstruction in order to determine the overall conceptual soundness of the strategy as an approach to international interventions in fragile, failing and failed states. Specifically, the paper investigates the application of the strategy in Afghanistan with a view to identifying its strengths and weaknesses.

The paper reviews the conceptual underpinnings of the strategy and highlights a number of indicators of success for the strategy in Afghanistan, such as increased school attendance and growth in the number of Community Development Councils in Kandahar. The paper also identifies a number of challenges encountered by Canada in implementing this strategy, including a deteriorating security situation and persistent weaknesses in Afghan government institutions. The paper determines that Canada's implementation of the strategy has continued to suffer from a lack of resources and political backing, which has in turn raised questions with respect to the strategy's effectiveness.

The paper concludes that the whole-of-government strategy is consistent with contemporary perspectives on effective peace-building and reconstruction in post-conflict states. It further finds that Canada's approach is maturing and developing as it is being applied in Afghanistan. Finally, the paper asserts that the preponderance of evidence indicates that, if the challenges of implementation are overcome, the whole-of-government strategy could provide an effective model for future missions, assuming that the global security environment does not change radically again.

Introduction

Canada's whole-of-government approach to intervention in failing or failed states is generally a promising strategy. It appears to be a particularly promising strategy for underpinning peace-building and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan¹ where it is being implemented in a manner that reflects the goals and objectives of the Afghanistan Compact, which provides the fundamental framework for the establishment of a viable state for the Afghan people.²

Nevertheless, despite the potential inherent in its conceptual foundations, the execution of this strategy, as seen in Afghanistan, reveals significant challenges. These challenges include a deteriorating security situation, persistent weakness in terms of the Afghan Government's institutional capacity, widespread corruption, and inadequacies in the security and justice system.³ If these challenges are addressed and overcome, however, it might be possible that this strategy could not only successfully guide Canada's efforts in Afghanistan, but it could well provide an effective model for future Canadian missions of intervention in the interest of peace-building and reconstruction, assuming that the global security environment does not change radically again.

This paper examines Canada's whole-of-government approach to peace-building and reconstruction in order to determine the overall conceptual soundness of the strategy

¹ While this strategy has been described variously as a 3D approach, an integrated approach, or a comprehensive approach, it appears that whole-of-government is the preferred term. Accordingly, the term whole-of-government will be used throughout this paper.

² Beginning in 2006, this five-year agreement is based on four pillars: security, governance, economic development, and social development. The Compact symbolizes the commitment by the Afghan Government to the Millennium Development Goals introduced by the UN and the World Bank, and serves to identify the overarching outcomes sought. In turn, the Compact has served to provide the basis for the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, which is aimed at poverty reduction and addresses the strategic priorities and mechanisms for achieving the Government of Afghanistan's vision.

³ Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, *Report of the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan* (Ottawa: The Panel, 2008), 16.

as an approach to international interventions. Specifically, the paper investigates the application of the strategy in Afghanistan with a view to identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy so as to evaluate its effectiveness in a practical sense. Through this process, the paper will seek to demonstrate that Canada's whole-of-government strategy *is* conceptually sound, and that – if the challenges of implementation are overcome – it could provide an effective model for future missions.⁴

First, the paper will describe the conceptual context of contemporary peace-building. The paper will then describe Canada's whole-of-government strategy with a view to relating it to the conceptual fundamentals of contemporary nation-building operations. Canada's mission in Afghanistan will then be examined to determine what aspects thereof are successful and which parts of the mission appear to be less successful in the context of a whole-of-government strategy. Finally, the paper will seek to draw some conclusions with respect to whether or not Canada's whole-of-government strategy is an effective approach to peace-building based on Canada's experience at implementing it in Afghanistan.

Peace-building and the Conceptual Basis for a Whole-of-Government Approach

At its simplest, peace-building can be described as “activities intended to strengthen structures and processes with the aim of preventing a return to violent conflict.”⁵ Peace-building may also be seen as a sustainable process designed to preclude internal threats to human security from leading to violent conflict, with success depending on the following factors: correctly establishing an operational focus on the

⁴ The argument presented in this paper is focused on highlighting the conceptual and practical applicability of a whole-of-government strategy for any and all Canadian interventions in fragile, failing, or failed states, while acknowledging that Canada is most likely to operate in a multilateral context – as it is doing presently in Afghanistan.

⁵ Michael Pugh, *Regeneration of War-Torn Societies* (London, 2000), 2.

root causes of the conflict; paying close attention to context specificity; giving priority to sustainable peace-building processes; and engaging local forces and assets in the process.⁶ While both nation-building and peace-building constitute efforts at post-conflict resolution, nation-building is a sub-set of peace-building, and involves the complete rebuilding of the state.⁷ Nation-building is a time-consuming endeavour that demands considerable patience – it is not “an exercise in social work.”⁸ The ultimate purpose of nation-building is to “create the state order that is the precondition for any defensible system of human rights, and to create the stability that turns bad neighbourhoods into good ones.”⁹

Today, it is widely believed that interventions cannot be limited to military action and that military force is simply the first step in a complex program of reform of the political, economic and social structures of the targeted state.¹⁰ Military resources may be necessary to prevent or manage crises, and military force may be required to prevent or end violent conflicts in order to create the conditions under which the root causes of the conflict can be addressed by civil means. However, military resources are not a suitable “substitute for civil measures of conflict management;” they must be incorporated into an overarching strategy.¹¹

⁶ John G. Cockell, “Conceptualizing Peacebuilding: Human Security and Sustainable Peace,” in *Regeneration of War-Torn Societies*, ed. Michael Pugh, 15-34 (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 2000), 21.

⁷ Andrea K. Talentino, *Military Interventions After the Cold War: The Evolution of Theory and Practice* (Athens, 2005), 15-16.

⁸In Michael Ignatieff. “State failure and nation-building,” in *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal, and Political Dilemmas*, eds. J.L. Holzgrefe and Robert O. Keohane, 299-321 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 323.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 321.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹¹ Helmut van Edig, “Nation-building: A Strategy for Regional Stabilization and Conflict Prevention,” in *Nation-Building: A Key Concept for Peaceful Conflict*, ed. Jochen Hippler, 151-163 (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 158.

Over the past few years, most international organizations and donors have come to accept the idea that there are strong linkages among poverty, conflict, security, and development. This acceptance has served to reinforce the legitimacy of cooperation and collaboration between military intervention forces and humanitarian agencies in peace-building operations.¹² While nation-building is principally a process of political transformation, security consistently ranks first in the hierarchy or priorities of people living in impoverished areas,¹³ and is fundamental to any substantial progress in governance and economic development. In other words, security is the necessary precondition for full participation in society by all citizens, but military means alone cannot lead the process of state-building.¹⁴

The experience of recent international interventions serves to underline the importance of close collaboration between “governments, communities, donors, non-profit organizations, the private sector, international organizations, and universities.”¹⁵ As well, several experts with a long history of service in Afghanistan, such as Chris Johnson and Jolyon Leslie who between them have spent nineteen years working on development projects and strategies for the UN in Afghanistan during the period 1989-2000, have pointed to the need for an integrated strategy and a “unitary structure” in international intervention initiatives, with clear lines of authority and responsibility,

¹² Ann M. Fitz-Gerald, Addressing the Security-Development Nexus: Implications for Joined-Up Government,” *Policy Matters* 5, no. 5 (September 2004): 7-8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁴ Gordon Smith, *Canada in Afghanistan: is it working?*, Report Prepared for the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute (Calgary, 2007), 20.

¹⁵ Andrew S. Natsios, “The Nine Principles of Reconstruction and Development,” *Parameters* 35, no. 3 (Autumn, 2005-2006): 14-15.

including possibly a single nation-wide system for the delivery of development funding.¹⁶

To successfully intervene internationally, nations must fully understand both the scope and the scale of the task. No insurgency can be defeated by military force alone.¹⁷ Contemporary interventions must be part of a “larger conflict resolution process that combines military and civilian tasks” and aim at ending violence while building government institutions, structures, and processes.¹⁸ The process is a highly complex one that forces individual agencies to concentrate on one specific sector or institution. However, since “development in the different sectors is highly dependent on what happens in the other sectors touched upon,”¹⁹ a high degree of cooperation and coordination is required in contemporary peace-building and reconstruction efforts. This, in turn, translates into a requirement for contemporary peace-building and reconstruction efforts to adapt a holistic approach in order to be effective over the long term.

There appears to be no template for post-conflict development because circumstances differ too greatly between states.²⁰ However, there are a number of recurring “dilemmas” that decision-makers can draw inspiration from in terms of studying how dilemmas similar to the one confronting them now have been handled in other societies suffering from protracted conflict.²¹

Within the context of contemporary interventions and peace- and nation-building efforts, Afghanistan provides a particularly challenging case for establishing potential

¹⁶ Chris Johnson and Jolyon Leslie, *Afghanistan: the Mirage of Peace* (London: Zed Books, 2004), 200.

¹⁷ The Independent Panel, *Report on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan...*, 28.

¹⁸ Talentino, *Military Interventions...*, 303-304.

¹⁹ Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, *Post-Conflict Development: Meeting New Challenges* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005), 11.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 307.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 309.

universal principles of reconstruction and development success.²² However, based on a recent examination of the state of the country, U.S. Army Lieutenant-Colonel (retired) Andrew Natsios has identified nine universal principles that merit consideration: ownership, capacity building, sustainability, selectivity, assessment, results, partnership, flexibility, and accountability.²³ Further, a 2003 UN report has listed the following four principles as having guided the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) mission: light interventionism, a light footprint, an integrated strategy, and a unitary structure.²⁴

Both sets of interventionist principles reinforce the conceptual soundness of a whole-of-government approach to post-conflict peace-building and point directly to its utility in Afghanistan. Success in Afghanistan clearly depends on the active leadership and commitment of Afghans in the process of state-building, and Canada must therefore ensure that there is Afghan leadership and participation throughout, as only institutions administered and led by Afghans will be fully legitimate and acceptable in the eyes of the locals. This means that Canada must concentrate its efforts on strengthening local institutions, transferring technical skills, and promoting supporting policies. To the greatest degree possible, maximum use must be made of Afghan workers and specialists, rather than relying on large numbers of international contractors and specialists. Canadians must also be cognizant of the need to allow Afghans to shape and adapt democracy to Afghanistan in the process. In particular, the principles of ownership and capacity building are critical to sustainable development and reconstruction.

²² Andrew S. Natsios, "The Nine Principles...", 5.

²³ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁴

Peace-building is a long and expensive process. Resources must be allocated selectively in Afghanistan, and in a manner that best reflects local needs as well as Canadian interests and values.²⁵ Furthermore, the resources must be allocated based on a thorough assessment of local conditions, and with projects and initiatives designed accordingly in partnership with other donors, international organizations, non-government organizations, and governments. The process must be aimed at yielding clearly defined and measurable strategic results, while remaining flexible enough to deal with unforeseen challenges and to take advantage of unanticipated opportunities. Finally, the peace-building process must incorporate measures of accountability and transparency to preclude corruption or other activities that may impair progress.

Overall, success depends on integrating the efforts of all participants, and subordinating individual agendas and interests to a commonly-held vision for Afghanistan – in this case a vision that has been captured in the Afghanistan Compact. For Canada in Afghanistan the best way to effect this integration is clearly through a unified structure, with clear lines of authority and responsibility, and within which the flow of resources can be managed to optimum effect.

Canada's Whole-of-Government Approach

In the words of one Canadian expert, the Afghanistan-Pakistan region “arguably represents the single most important, indeed critical, region in the world in the global effort against terrorism.”²⁶ Afghanistan is a special challenge in terms of its impact on both regional and global stability: a relapse in Afghanistan could trigger a crisis involving

²⁵ Canadian values include democracy, human rights and the rule of law. In Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Canada's International Policy Statement: a Role of Pride and Influence in the World (Overview)* (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 2005), 4.

²⁶ Gordon Smith, *Canada in Afghanistan...*, 4.

all its neighbours, and the whole of Central Asia, all of which would threaten world peace more than ever.²⁷ Indeed, since for most of the developed world Afghanistan “represents a case where security interests seem to be clear,”²⁸ it seems logical that Canada, operating as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), under a United Nations (UN) mandate, should become engaged in stemming the violence in the region, and in supporting reconstruction and development projects.

War, in the traditional sense, demands a complete national effort. Contemporary international peace-building efforts similarly demand a holistic approach. A unified approach to intervention is especially critical to effectively addressing the complexities of a failed state such as Afghanistan. For Canada, therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the provision of humanitarian and development aid, as well as initiatives to establish effective governance and security, are undertaken concurrently and in a closely coordinated manner. Similarly, it seems reasonable to expect that a “grand strategy” - one that integrates all Canada’s national elements of power in a single effort that provides for domestic security and opportunities, while concurrently enhancing our status and leverage with our allies and responding in a holistic manner to defined threats from abroad,²⁹ will maximize the country’s strategic impact.

In Afghanistan, Canada is participating in a highly complex international intervention aimed at peace-building, which is a much more ambitious undertaking than the majority of Canadian international missions completed over the last half century. The

²⁷ Rangin Dadfar Spanta, “Afghanistan: Nation-Building in the Shadow of the Warlords and the War on Terror,” in *Nation-Building: a Key concept for Peaceful Conflict Transformation*, ed. Jochen Hippler, 70-80 (London: Pluto Press, 2005): 80.

²⁸ Andrea K. Talentino, *Military Interventions...*, 283.

²⁹ Hugh Segal, “A Grand Strategy for a Small Country,” *Canadian Military Journal* 4, no. 3 (Autumn 2003): 3-6.

mission has become increasingly focused on nation or state-building, and Canada is an important part of this international effort. Canada is not operating in isolation in Afghanistan – not even in Kandahar. Its military engagement in Afghanistan is primarily, although not exclusively, a NATO mission.³⁰ However, Afghanistan is a special mission for Canada. It represents a total government effort, unlike many previous missions in the post-Cold War period. In Afghanistan, Canada is determined to have a significant strategic impact – primarily through concentrating all of its instruments and resources of intervention in its defined geographical area of responsibility. Therefore, while some would argue that Canada could channel its efforts more effectively along a more narrow range of tasks, and leave certain specific duties to other allied nations, Canada's efforts in Afghanistan represent a unique intervention for which a whole-of-government strategy is extremely well suited.

Since 2001, Canada and a number of Western countries have adopted more holistic policy instruments in recognition of the need to unite security and development issues in post-conflict peace-building strategies.³¹ The unique challenge of Afghanistan in particular has forced both Canada and NATO to adapt their doctrine and procedures. Canada has adopted a whole-of-government strategy, incorporating diplomacy, defence, and development. Each dimension of this strategy affects the others, with security enabling development, effective governance enhancing security, and development creating opportunities and multiplying the reward of improved security and good governance. These dimensions interact dynamically “in a virtuous circle of cause and

³⁰ The Independent Panel, *Report on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan...*, 20-21.

³¹ Ann M. Fitz-Gerald, “Addressing the Security-Development Nexus...,” 6.

effect” where security is a prerequisite for effective governance and sustainable development.³²

The policy foundations for Canada’s contribution to nation-building in Afghanistan were articulated in the period 2003-2005 in the form of Canada’s National Security Policy (NSP), and its International Policy Statement (IPS) – including its separate complementary statements on Diplomacy (IPS Diplomacy), and Defence (IPS Defence). The government of Canada recognized that the increasingly complex security environment of the post-9/11 era required an “integrated national security framework.”³³ Thus, in 2003, the Prime Minister announced a number of changes to facilitate a more effectively integrated national security posture, and devised an international policy statement to reflect this “increasingly integrated approach to defence, diplomacy, and development (the ‘3Ds’).”³⁴

This approach was further amplified in the Defence Policy Statement of 2004, where today’s complex security environment, and in particular the operating environment in Afghanistan, was seen to require a “whole of government approach to international missions, bringing together military and civilian resources in a focused and coherent fashion,” with DND and the Canadian Forces (CF) working more closely with other government departments and agencies, including DFAIT and CIDA to further develop the integrated “3D” approach.³⁵ Finally, while the term “3D” is not used specifically within the IPS, there is a clear recognition of the requirement for a forward-looking and

³² The Independent Panel, *Report on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan...*, 11.

³³ Privy Council Office, *Securing an Open Society: Canada’s National Security Policy* (Ottawa: Privy Council Office, 2004), 9.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 9, 47.

³⁵ Department of National Defence, *Canada’s International Policy Statement: a Role of Pride and Influence in the World (Defence)* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2005), 26.

integrated approach that reaches across departments and levels of government in support of global security, and within which the “integration between military operations and civilian assistance is an essential feature.”³⁶ In particular, post-conflict recovery relies on the establishment of public order, and the creation of “strong institutions, good governance, appropriate policies, and the rule of law,” all of which are addressed within Canada’s whole-of-government approach, and all of which critical to the delivery of effective development aid that can ultimately promote social development and create long-term economic growth.³⁷

Michael Pugh, a prominent professor of peace and conflict studies with the University of Bradford, concludes that “external actors in the transition from war to relative peace have lacked strategically coherent approaches to peaceful regeneration,” in particular with respect to the social-civil dimension of peace-building.³⁸ In Afghanistan, at the outset of the mission, Canada’s approach followed a similar path, with the 3D approach appearing to have halted at the thinking stage.³⁹ However, over the past three years the strategy has matured with considerable speed as Canada has begun to realize that effective international interventionism calls for a whole-of-government strategy⁴⁰ that incorporates “non-3D” departments as well as other *levels* of government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), private agencies, immigrant communities, and

³⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Canada’s International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World (Overview)*, 13.

³⁷ Junne and Verkoren, *Post-Conflict Development...*, 239-240.

³⁸ Michael Pugh, *Regeneration...*, 128, 114.

³⁹ Ann M. Fitz-Gerald, “Addressing the Security-Development Nexus...”, 14.

⁴⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Canada’s International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World (Overview)*, Foreword.

academic institutions.⁴¹ While earlier Canadian interventions were primarily military interventions with some civilian and police support tacked on, and often managed through three separate and poorly coordinated policies.⁴² Lately, however, the Canadian government has come to realize that only a whole-of-government strategy is effective when dealing with failed or failing states, given that while each separate government department has its particular role no single government department possesses all of the necessary expertise and capabilities relevant to state-building.⁴³ Each department is a key enabler, but not a single one possesses the complete “expertise in governance, economic management, social services, entrepreneurship, and infrastructure reconstruction that Canada can offer” as a nation.⁴⁴

In earlier post-Cold War missions, Canada’s commitments were characterized by limited public and government interest and involvement. This was reflected in a lack of representation from federal departments other than DND, and including not just DFAIT and CIDA, but also many others. Some critics have argued that Canada should remain with this proven military-centric option in Afghanistan and stay away from nation-building work altogether. In other words, deploy a preponderance of force over a relatively compressed period of time to apprehend or kill the members of the insurgency forces. They may argue that Canada’s experience and strengths lie in this approach, and that it keeps Canadian troops from becoming embroiled in nation-building tasks for which they are ill suited. While this option clearly limits any potential strategic impact

⁴¹ Chris Roberts, “Africa-Stan: Afghanistan’s Lessons for a Whole-of-Canada Africa Strategy,” *Vanguard*, (January 2008), [journal on-line] available from <http://www.vanguardcanada.com/Africa-stanRoberts>; Internet; accessed 28 April 2008.

⁴² David Mulrone, “Common Narrative: Canada’s Integrated Approach to Afghanistan,” (Interviewed by Robert Parkins and Chris Thatcher), *Vanguard*, (July 2007), [journal on-line] available from <http://www.vanguardcanada.com/CommonNarrativeMulrone>; Internet; accessed 28 April 2008.

⁴³ Chris Roberts, “Africa-Stan...,” 1.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

Canada might be able to achieve, and fails to exploit other national capabilities that could be put to good use in nation-building, it is a less complex option in many ways. This military-only option could also be seen as a less extensive commitment in terms of time, given that forces could be deployed for limited military operations with defined end-dates as opposed to unlimited commitments with vague end-states. The problem with this approach, of course, is that it fails to address the root causes of the problem and therefore lacks the sustainability of a whole-of-government approach. A military-only approach is not a truly strategic option. This option is ineffective in terms of bringing an end to the conflict over the long term and for setting the scene for sustainable development and nation-building. Such an approach could only create long-term security problems.

Others may argue that Canada should consider operating along multiple lines in support of a broad international effort, with government departments cooperating separately with similar departments of other nations engaged in Afghanistan. This argument asserts that this is a more efficient approach that permits nations to contribute in a manner that is consistent with their particular areas of strength, while leaving other tasks to nations who have particular strengths in those areas. So, for example, one designated country could take the lead in the military aspects of the mission and provide the vast majority of the forces for the mission, while another nation with large experienced police forces could take responsibility for policing, and yet another for development, and so on. The argument further holds that this “niche” approach makes the best use of resources and capabilities, and encourages the greatest degree of focus on each individual component part of the mission. However, this approach is extremely difficult to coordinate and it invariably leads to duplication of effort amongst the

participating countries in terms of command and control structures and support elements. For Canada, it would ultimately dilute the degree of strategic impact we could achieve as our stove-piped contributions would be lost and nearly invisible amongst those of the lead nations.

The reality is that Canada does not have the luxury of operating along three separate policy lines in today's security environment, and certainly not in Afghanistan. Nor does Canada have the luxury of providing only military forces in support of a military-only option either. Canada needs a single, integrated strategic approach. Thus, while Canada's integrated approach is still incomplete - without integrated planning, integrated policy, truly integrated implementation, or a sense of a clear end-state - the idea behind the whole-of-government approach has led to a much more effective level of joint discussion and analysis,⁴⁵ which at the very least provides a good starting point for a badly needed fully integrated and comprehensive whole-of-government strategy. The whole-of-government strategy is still evolving and maturing, and it still suffers from a lack of resources. However, based on a growing level of government support and engagement, the strategy is beginning to show signs of gaining both legitimacy and momentum in Afghanistan.

Applying Canada's Whole-of-Government Strategy in Afghanistan

This new structure for enhanced coordination was developed around a table in a compound in Masum Gar by representatives from DFAIT, CIDA and the CF to bring together the three departments, along with the Privy Council Office (PCO) and other agencies that may be likely to participate in the creation of policies to guide future

⁴⁵ Ann M. Fitz-Gerald, "Addressing the Security-Development Nexus..." 15.

operations.⁴⁶ The approach is aligned with the three independent pillars of the Afghanistan Compact: security, development and governance, and is all about “Canada operating in a coherent way within an internationally agreed program.”⁴⁷ On earlier peacekeeping and peace-building operations, the various agencies could operate along parallel lines. Today, the contemporary operating environment in Afghanistan has forced the host government, the NGOs, the UN, coalition forces, DFAIT, CIDA, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the RCMP and everyone else, to work together, and bring their different strengths and capabilities to bear collectively.⁴⁸ This new model harbingers the arrival of a “greater emphasis on horizontal thinking” within the Canadian Government,⁴⁹ and while it remains a work in progress, the whole-of-government approach is the “sharp end of Canadian engagement abroad” – although perhaps more as a mechanism than a strategy.⁵⁰ It is a powerful strategy that now links defence, development, and diplomacy into a “single campaign plan for three departments and all others who are engaged in Afghanistan.”⁵¹

Notably, organizations that are successful at maintaining their strategic focus have typically established a high-level unit to oversee all activities related to the strategy, a unit that is dedicated to facilitating the implementation of the strategy across the organization and sustaining an integrated plan. This part of the structure reports directly to the organization’s CEO, and is designed to assist the organization to identify future

⁴⁶ Stephen Wallace, “Afghan Algebra: where 3D equals 1C,” (interviewed by Robert Parkins and Chris Thatcher), *Vanguard*, (September 2007) [journal on-line] available from <http://www.vanguardcanada.com/AfghanAlgebraWallace>; Internet; accessed 28 April 2008.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴⁸ Brigadier-General David Fraser, “The Evolution of 3D: The Military’s New Paradigm,” *Vanguard*, (September 2006) [journal on-line] available from <http://www.vanguardcanada.com/Evolutionof3DFraser>; Internet; accessed 28 April 2008.

⁴⁹ Ann M. Fitz-Gerald, “Addressing the Security-Development Nexus...,” 14.

⁵⁰ Chris Roberts, “Africa-Stan...,” 1.

⁵¹ David Mulroney, “Common Narrative...,” 1.

strategic initiatives, manage the corporate processes in the pursuit of corporate priorities, communicate these initiatives and priorities to the organization, keep the senior leadership of the organization up-to-date, and integrate the strategic priorities into the “organization’s functional authorities.”⁵² In many ways, this idea of creating a specific high-level structure to oversee the implementation of a corporate strategy resonates with the idea of establishing a Cabinet Committee on Afghanistan along with an Afghanistan Task Force within PCO to better coordinate Canadian activities in support of implementing Canada’s whole-of-government strategy in Afghanistan. The establishment of the committee suggests that the government has recognized that its policy was lacking in this regard, and that its strategy implementation efforts were similarly flawed. Further, the establishment of this committee also suggests a growing recognition by the government that the success of its strategy depends in some measure on the successful implementation thereof.

The new Committee meets weekly, and has a mandate to consider diplomatic, defence, development and security issues related to the mission. The Committee includes the Ministers of International Trade, National Defence, Public Safety, International Cooperation and Foreign Affairs, and looks therefore to bring precisely the enhanced Cabinet-level whole-of-government focus and oversight to Canada’s mission in Afghanistan that has been needed all along. One could also reasonably expect this committee to further develop the whole-of-government strategy as a policy.

⁵² Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton, “The Office of Strategic Management,” *Harvard Business Review* 83, no. 10, (2005), 72-80. Cited in Colonel Carl Wohlgemuth, “Managing the Corporate Strategic Agenda within DND – The VCDS Organization: The new wave in Corporate Business Management,” (Toronto: Canadian Forces College National Security Studies Course Paper, 2008).

This committee is critical for purposes of challenging the Afghanistan Task Force, and to provide the necessary integration of Canadian efforts in a single whole-of-government campaign. By constantly challenging the task force to demonstrate progress in all areas the committee is indirectly forcing an integrated approach. Further, having the ministers personally participate in a transparent national-level coordination process reduces the likelihood of departments ignoring the agreed-upon priorities or failing to place the necessary emphasis on the mission, all of which can only serve to speed the progress of peace and development in Afghanistan.

The Afghanistan Task Force will be supporting the Cabinet Committee by coordinating government activities related to Afghanistan. Mr. David Mulroney, formerly the Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, has been appointed Deputy Minister for the Afghanistan Task Force. Mr. Mulroney provides a single focal-point for all aspects of the mission. He is focused solely on Afghanistan, dealing on a routine basis with Canada's ambassador to Afghanistan, the Commander Canadian Forces Expeditionary Command (CEFCOM), the Associate Deputy Minister (Policy) in DND, the Vice-President of the Afghanistan Task Force at CIDA and the Commander of Task Force Afghanistan to coordinate the conduct of the mission.⁵³ Additionally, Mr. Mulroney meets with members of PCO, including the National Security Advisor, and the three Deputy Ministers of the three lead departments (DFAIT, DND, and CIDA). Further, this coordination is "mirrored at various levels," to include group-level directors at DFAIT, DND and CIDA who are "in daily contact."⁵⁴

⁵³ David Mulroney, "Common Narrative...", 1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

Canada's embassy in Kabul has been functioning since September 2003.⁵⁵ Recently, however, steps have been taken to further strengthen Canada's diplomatic presence in Afghanistan. The status of Canada's Ambassador to Afghanistan has been elevated to rival that of Canada's ambassador to Germany. Concurrently, Canada has assigned "one of our best Foreign Service Officers" to assist the Canadian Ambassador in Kabul.⁵⁶ As well, a second seasoned Foreign Service Officer has been assigned to serve as Canada's "senior civilian coordinator in the South, effectively our Consular General in Kandahar."⁵⁷ From a diplomatic engagement perspective, Canada's efforts are geared towards achieving political progress through concerted action in Afghanistan as well as throughout the broader region based on the principles enunciated in the Afghanistan Compact.⁵⁸ These engagements comprise bilateral, multilateral, and international initiatives, and tie together development and security initiatives in a coherent and consistent manner.

The Afghanistan Compact and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) provide the impetus for international aid – including aid being provided by Canada. The ANDS is slowly gaining ground despite a sense that it lacks the whole-of-government type of integration amongst its various departments that is needed for sustainable success. A Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) coordinates international aid and monitors progress on implementation of the Compact for all participants. Afghanistan received U.S. \$104.5 billion in Official Development

⁵⁵ The Independent Panel, *Report on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan...*, 22.

⁵⁶ David Mulroney, "Common Narratives..." 1.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵⁸ James Fox, "The Diplomatic Stake Supporting Sustainable Change," *Vanguard*, (January 2006) [journal on-line] available from <http://www.vanguardcanada.com/TheDiplomaticStakeSupportingsustainablechange>; Internet; accessed 28 April 2008.

Assistance in 2006, with CA \$4.2 billion coming from Canada.⁵⁹ This aid is meant to support a more “stable, self-reliant, and democratic Afghanistan that contributes to national, regional, and global security.”⁶⁰

At Provincial level, the Provincial Development Committee, led by CIDA and DFAIT, sets the tone for Canada’s input into the Provincial Development Plan.⁶¹ This plan, along with its counterpart at the national level, is more sophisticated than any previous plans that elements of the CF have worked with in post-Cold War operations. These new plans are being implemented by several new tools, including: a much better trained and equipped Battle Group, a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), a recently created Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT), and a Strategic Advisory Team (SAT).

From the perspective of DND or the CF, “the 3D concept has been evolutionary, not revolutionary.”⁶² Canada’s troops arrived in Afghanistan in 2002, and despite the enormous challenges inherent in operating in Kandahar, the Canadian Battle Group has made progress in concert with its allies in establishing a secure environment within which reconstruction and capacity building can take place in a sustainable manner. Canada and

the needed operating space for DFAIT and CIDA.⁶⁴ The Battle Group is a critical component of the whole-of-government approach – its operations are coordinated with reconstruction initiatives on the ground, and development aid and government representatives are brought in immediately following a security operation to consolidate the gains made and to start the process of long-term sustainable development.

The U.S. originated the concept of the PRT as an alternative to having its forces participate in any peacekeeping or stabilization mission in Afghanistan, while still expanding the “ISAF effect” to areas outside Kabul.⁶⁵ In Kandahar, with several federal government departments represented in the PRT, the PRT effectively symbolizes the whole-of-government strategy at work. The Canadian PRT appears to be making good progress in establishing a program of sustainable aid and development. In fact, since Canada took command of the Kandahar PRT in August 2005, it has “become a centrepiece of Canada’s engagement in Afghanistan.”⁶⁶ Canada’s PRT is operating in a stabilization and reconstruction support role, in direct support of the Provincial Governor of Kandahar. The PRT occupies “the intersection of military-led stability operations and civilian-led reconstruction activities,” and it is focused on coordination between security forces, development aid providers, and those working on capacity-building.⁶⁷ Generally, despite the difficulties inherent in operating in Kandahar, the PRT has successfully synchronized and unified military stabilization and reconstruction tasks at the tactical

⁶⁴ Canada’s Mission in Afghanistan: Measuring Progress, “Report to Parliament February 2007.” http://www.canada-afghanistan.gc.ca/cip-pic/afghanistan/docs/260207_Report_E.pdf; Internet; accessed 14 February 2008, 12.

⁶⁵ James Dobbins, John G. McGinn, Keith Crane, Seth G. Jones, Rollie Lal, Andrew Rathmell, Rachel Swanger and Agna Timilsina, *America’s Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 2003), 136.

⁶⁶ The Independent Panel, *Report on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan...*, 23.

⁶⁷ Michael J. McNerney, “Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?” *Parameters* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2005-2006): 33.

level, and provided the pivot for both military and civilian initiatives being undertaken in support of, and in close collaboration with the Afghan central government.⁶⁸

While PRTs operating in Afghanistan have often been accused of being beset by problems related to inconsistent mission statements, unclear roles and responsibilities, ad hoc preparation, and limited resources,⁶⁹ they have in fact performed very well. PRTs have involved the local community, hired local workers, and attempted to provide training to locally hired employees. Further, PRTs have been consistent in their efforts to highlight the role of the Afghan government and the people of Afghanistan within their projects, and PRTs have been especially diligent with respect to getting “Afghan guidance and involvement from both the national and local levels.”⁷⁰

The OMLT is “critical” to Canada’s efforts in Afghanistan.⁷¹ Already, the OMLT has made enormous headway, and it is continuing to make good progress in the training of Afghanistan’s security forces by helping to develop the ANA’s own capacity to plan, lead and sustain operations in support of security in Kandahar Province. Accelerating the work of the OMLT is a key objective for both the CF and ISAF, while the ultimate goal foresees “transferring responsibility for security to Afghan authorities.”⁷²

Canada’s earlier missions were based primarily on combat arms units and did not include initiatives such as the SAT, which continues to support the Government of Afghanistan in developing key national strategies along with mechanisms for the effective implementation of those strategies. A unique bilateral agreement to accept this task was arrived at between Canada and Afghanistan early in the mission, and the first

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁷¹ The Independent Panel, *Report on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan...*, 24.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 24.

phase of the SAT's work in Afghanistan represented a major "triumph of imagination over bureaucracy."⁷³ The team works in consultation with the Canadian Ambassador, senior aid officials, and a senior representative of the Afghan government in providing direct planning support to government ministries and working groups in the development and governance realms. The planning team members bring a very wide range of training, education, experience, and military strategic planning skills to bear on the resolution of complex civil problems. To date the team has worked extensively with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy Working Group, and in areas such as public administration reform, civil service gender equity, and rural rehabilitation and development. Members of the team are embedded in their partner Afghan Government ministries and agencies and work under Afghan leadership.

The SAT has made good progress in aiding the efforts of the central government of Afghanistan to establish itself as an effective state government. However, the Government of Afghanistan's authority remains to be fully established in many parts of Afghanistan, and there is still a great deal of work required. As DFAIT becomes more fully engaged in Afghanistan over the near term, the SAT will likely and logically become increasingly civilianized to reflect the more complex policy-making and policy implementation responsibilities expected of the Government of Afghanistan today.

CIDA signed "its first post-9/11 aid agreement for Afghanistan" in late 2002, and today Canada's aid spending in Afghanistan, between CIDA and DFAIT, averages more than \$100M annually, with a principal objective being to help build capacity, legitimacy,

⁷³ Colonel (ret'd) Mike Capstick, "A Military Solution to Fostering Civil Service Capacity," *Vanguard* (May 2007), [journal on-line] available from <http://www.vanguardcanada.com/CivilServiceCapacityCapstick>; accessed 28 April 2008.

and popular support for the Afghan government and the NGOs.⁷⁴ And, while development in Afghanistan depends foremost on the establishment of a secure environment, development and aid is urgently needed in Afghanistan and cannot be held back until security has been fully established. Therefore, in Afghanistan, the provision of development aid, as well as the establishment of effective governance and security, must be undertaken concurrently.

CIDA cites a number of specific achievements in Kandahar Province as of March 2008,⁷⁵ all of which were only achievable based on an integrated approach that addressed the institutional capacity and the security conditions necessary for the completion of these projects and activities. In Kandahar, 532 Community Developments Councils have been elected within the National Solidarity Program, while 644 projects have been completed. With enhanced security measures in effect, more than 15,000 metric tonnes of food have been distributed to more than 550,000 people, approximately 350,000 children have been receiving polio vaccinations, 5220 adults are receiving functional literacy training (80 per cent female), 1500 vulnerable families have received non-food item packages, and 40,715 returnees from Pakistan have been processed through the Daman Encashment Centre (during the period January to July 2007).

Construction of over 190 kilometres of road and 500 culverts has proceeded under difficult conditions and under constant surveillance and protection by both Afghan and Canadian security forces. In turn, these new roads will provide security forces with enhanced access to areas that need further development, which in turn will speed the delivery of other development aid and capacity building measures. At the same time, the

⁷⁴ The Independent Panel, Report on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan..., 22.

⁷⁵ Briefing at CIDA headquarters, Ottawa, by Mr. Michael Callahan, 11 March 2008 (Slides held by author).

area has seen 1200 wells, 120 pumps, and 70 irrigation canals constructed and rendered operational, while more than 420,000 square metres have been cleared of mines. Large infrastructure projects have been completed as part of the Afghan government's National Area Based Development Program and remain in place as a result of a concerted effort at ground level between CIDA and the CF to ensure that these projects are being built in areas that demonstrate the appropriate level of stability and security, including: two check dams at Ghorak, the Paj mountain pass construction project, the Shah Wali Kot Bridge on the Arghandab River, the Chahar Qulba Bridge on the Arghandab River, the bridge over the Tarnak River, and the bridge across the Arghistan River.

The criteria for success of Canada's strategy in Afghanistan and the metrics associated therewith continue to be a matter of debate. However, the criteria for failure are clear: *failing to apply a whole-of-government strategy*. Where a comprehensive and integrated whole-of-government approach is applied, Canada's efforts are generally met with success. Where the whole-of-government strategy is being applied in Afghanistan, and in Kandahar specifically, there are numerous signs that progress is being achieved. Significant improvements have been registered in the areas of governance, security, and socio-economic development. In Kandahar, where security operations have been synchronized with capacity building, Community Developments Councils have been established which in turn have produced development plans that were ultimately implemented. Where security forces accompanied food and medical shipments, food and medical aid was delivered to Afghans outside Kabul.

In Kandahar, where security forces launched combat operations to sweep the Taliban from entire cities and districts and their efforts were followed up by NGOs,

international organizations and Afghan government agencies, schools could be established and students were able to attend school. Where Canadian experts in institution- and capacity-building coordinated their efforts with Canadian security forces, elections were conducted successfully. In areas of Kandahar Province where the community feels safe and development can therefore take place, microfinance projects are spreading rapidly – most of them sponsored by Canada. The ANA is growing steadily with the help of the CF, while the ANP is beginning to show some signs of improvement. Both trends are helping to increase the operating areas of NGOs and other aid and development agencies.⁷⁶ Where security has been coordinated and synchronized with development initiatives, projects of all sizes, including de-mining projects, are making a difference to the lives of average Afghans. And, where development and Afghan institutional capacity is taking root Afghan security forces are gradually beginning to take responsibility for local security, demonstrating that the “virtuous cycle” created by a whole-of-government strategy is effective.

In summary, Canada’s unified, whole-of-government approach, symbolized by the Battle Group, the PRT, the OMLT and the SAT, appears to be making progress in Afghanistan in terms of creating the conditions for further development and reconstruction and a sustainable peace. Having said that, it is nonetheless clear that the implementation of Canada’s strategy in Afghanistan faces a number of challenges.

The Challenges to Canada’s Whole-of-Government Strategy in Afghanistan

The Canadian Government’s Independent Panel on Afghanistan, while reporting on progress being made, noted that the UNDP still ranked Afghanistan 174 out of 178 countries on the global Human Development Index, reflecting food shortages, persistent

⁷⁶ Stephen Wallace, “Afghan Algebra...,” 1.

gender inequality issues, high illiteracy rates, and “one of the world’s highest rates of tuberculosis infection” in the world.⁷⁷ Development and reconstruction has advanced at a relatively slow pace, the narcotics trade is booming, security has deteriorated, and the country’s dependency on aid has been growing.⁷⁸ As well, the agricultural and manufacturing sectors remain underdeveloped, largely “owing to the government’s executive possibilities being limited and because it does not have control of many parts of the country.”⁷⁹

Afghanistan has seen considerable progress in the past few years. Yet, recent assertions that the mission has stalled are indicative of the fact that Canada’s whole-of-government mission faces some significant obstacles in Kandahar. They appear to result from a lack of clear focus and direction, an overall lack of resources allocated to the mission, and, up until lately at least, an apparent lack of commitment from DND’s other partners in this campaign – including DFAIT and CIDA, among others.

From the start, the mission has been plagued by its failure to conduct joint planning at the highest levels of government under the direction of a single national-level task force and based on a flexible, common whole-of-government mission budget.⁸⁰ In today’s security environment the “success of military strategy and the success of development policy have become mutually reinforcing.”⁸¹ By failing to implicitly link Canada’s security operations with tangible examples of Canadian reconstruction and development the strategy has failed to exploit the potential synergistic effect of these two

⁷⁷ The Independent Panel, *Report on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan...*, 18.

⁷⁸ Nasreen Ghufuran, “Afghanistan in 2006: The Complications of Post-Conflict Transition,” *Asian Survey* 47, no. 1 (2007): 87, 98.

⁷⁹ Rangin Dadfar Spanta, “Afghanistan: Nation-Building in the Shadow...,” 73.

⁸⁰ Ann M. Fitz-Gerald, “Addressing the Security-Development Nexus...,” 22.

⁸¹ Andrew S. Natsios, “The Nine Principles...,” 14-15.

activities. In particular, up until recently there appears to have been a sharp disconnect between the work of the CF and that of CIDA. Despite all indications that security and development are inseparable elements of nation-building, CIDA has failed to focus its efforts and resources on supporting programs aimed specifically at Kandahar to help Afghans make the connection between Canada's security operations and Canadian reconstruction support. DFAIT has similarly shown a marked failure to engage with the necessary resources and focus "across the entire diplomatic spectrum."⁸²

The whole-of-government strategy remains a relatively new concept for Canada, and remains therefore to be fully developed as a concept. For instance, at the start of the mission there was no single pool of resources to apply to the mission in response to joint or integrated planning, which indicates that the policy had not been thought through, and that its full potential effectiveness could therefore not be realized. Yet, CIDA still controls most of the funding centrally, which tends to "impede operational effectiveness on the ground."⁸³ Furthermore, it appears that the "inability to operationalize" an integrated policy remains an issue for Canada, primarily for "procedural and budgetary" reasons.⁸⁴ In other words, Canada has been unable to fully "harmonize the defence, development and diplomatic elements of a more strategic, longer-term assistance to achieve a sustainable end-state."⁸⁵

While the recent decision to provide Cabinet-level oversight to the mission has paid early dividends in terms of better focusing all the departments of government involved, including in particular CIDA, and streamlining the processes and procedures

⁸² Gordon Smith, *Canada in Afghanistan...*, 6.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

for providing development aid to Afghanistan, separate department task forces remain in place, with parallel responsibilities, thereby reducing the effectiveness of overall coordination of Canadian whole-of-government activities. Separate department task forces serve to increase the potential for misunderstandings and miscommunications – which serves neither the whole-of-government concept nor the practical implementation of the concept in Afghanistan.

In fact, incidents of departments working at cross-purposes could be eliminated and Canada's cross-government coordination efforts could become much more coherent if the Prime Minister would become more actively involved. After all, he is at the apex of the whole-of-government strategy, and should lead – and be seen to lead – the nation's efforts. Linking the Prime Minister so directly with the supporting committee, which meets weekly with the head of Task Force Afghanistan, who in turn communicates on a daily basis with the key players in Canada's whole-of-government mission in Afghanistan, would serve to significantly increase the effectiveness of the mission through the attendant improvement in the alignment of “national and departmental priorities and operations,” and by concurrently forcing the key players to work in a more collaborative fashion as a result of the Prime Minister's proximity to the process.⁸⁶ While the Prime Minister does not need to direct the mission on a daily basis, direct pressure from the Prime Minister could clearly speed the demise of redundant department-level task forces and heighten the level of personal interest of ministers, which together could serve to streamline the flow of resources to support the mission and thus enhance the potential of success for the whole-of-government strategy.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

From the start, in relative terms, the international presence in Afghanistan has been “deliberately modest.” And, while various initiatives have been launched by individual states and international organizations, there has been “no overarching framework for these efforts.”⁸⁷ In other words, it seems that the international community lacks a common conceptual base as well as a uniform strategy for their collective state-building efforts, which in turn has reduced the effectiveness of their individual programs. In particular, the level of coordination and integration between international peacekeeping forces, U.S. military forces, and the civil agencies engaged in peace-building “is far from adequate,”⁸⁸ which has led to confusion and conflict on the ground, hampered development, and otherwise diluted the effectiveness of Canada’s whole-of-government strategy.

Canada, it appears, has also failed to do its part to create the necessary international collaboration and synergy needed to make progress. Canada has been especially poor at harmonizing its efforts with its closest partner, the U.S. At the moment, it *appears* that the U.S. is concentrating on a primarily military solution, while Canada is pursuing an integrated approach. While the whole-of-government approach provides an excellent platform for intervention in Afghanistan for Canada, its overall potential at the operational level is limited by the fact that Canada’s closest partner has not adopted the same comprehensive approach.⁸⁹ Failing to harmonize their strategies at the conceptual level first has increased the potential for miscommunications on the ground in Afghanistan, and created significant potential for the two allies to come into conflict in their efforts to rebuild Afghanistan.

⁸⁷ James Dobbins et al, *America’s Role in Nation-Building...*, 142.

⁸⁸ Rangin Dadfar Spanta, “Afghanistan: Nation-Building in the Shadow...,” 77-78.

⁸⁹ Ann M. Fitz-Gerald, “Addressing the Security-Development Nexus...,” 22.

This difference in approach clearly needs to be harmonized. Specifically, U.S. security operations should be synchronized with Canadian-led reconstruction efforts for optimum effect. However, if the two approaches are not carefully harmonized, hard-won Canadian-led improvements in socio-economic development could be erased as a result of U.S. military operations launched with poor prior coordination. In other words, while a whole-of-government strategy is the most effective approach to peace-building and reconstruction, it is important that the strategy be carefully aligned and synchronized with that of other nations and allies operating in the state but who may be taking different approaches. In particular, for Canada in Afghanistan, it is very important to coordinate its efforts with its large traditional ally, the U.S.

To highlight the urgent need for Canada to engage its allies and partners, the Government of Canada's Independent Panel on Afghanistan, led by John Manley, argued that the current situation in Afghanistan calls for a "redoubled and reorganized Canadian diplomatic effort – led by the Prime Minister himself – to improve prospects for security, governance, and development in Afghanistan."⁹⁰ While highlighting the central role of its increasingly integrated strategy in the success being achieved in Afghanistan, the Panel determined that this strengthened diplomatic effort should exploit Canada's record in Afghanistan and seek to promote a more comprehensive political-military ISAF strategy, while concurrently working to pressure Canada's NATO partners to deploy more forces to Afghanistan, and in particular to Kandahar to permit Canada to finally establish the required level of security in its area of operations to allow the delivery of development aid.⁹¹

⁹⁰ The Independent Panel, *Report on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan...*, 27.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

The successful implementation of the whole-of-government strategy relies on a significant investment of civilian and military resources to create the necessary conditions wherein security can be established and set the scene for sustainable democratic transformation and economic development.⁹² The “flagship” of development programs in Afghanistan is the National Solidarity Program.⁹³ However, overall development in Afghanistan, “despite rhetoric about a Marshall Plan for Afghanistan,” has been stalled from the beginning by historically low levels of international assistance, by a lack of support for the “wider goals of the process” among donors, and by a poorly coordinated flow of resources – which has served in some ways to support the growth of a “criminalized state,” rather than a “democratic and inclusive one.”⁹⁴ And, while “no post-conflict program of reconstruction” could transform Afghanistan or for that matter Kandahar into “thriving centres of prosperity,”⁹⁵ the implementation of the whole-of-government strategy to achieve that transformation has been further impaired by the fact that the strategy implementation program has been significantly under-resourced, in both military and economic terms.⁹⁶ Specifically, although Afghanistan represents a particular difficult area of operations, it has received less than four per cent of the amount of troops the U.S. and NATO sent to post-conflict Kosovo and on a per capita basis only two per cent of the money sent to Kosovo.⁹⁷ Additionally, personnel to support the mission, from across the Canadian government, with the requisite regional experience, as well as from NGOs with the right technical expertise for conflict management, have been relatively

⁹² James Dobbins et al, *America’s Role in Nation-Building...*, 146.

⁹³ Chris Johnson and Jolyon Leslie, *Afghanistan: the Mirage of Peace...*, 189.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 192, 175, 184.

⁹⁵ James Dobbins et al, *America’s Role in Nation-Building...*, xix.

⁹⁶ Talentino, *Military Interventions...*, 283.

⁹⁷ James Dobbins et al, *America’s Role in Nation-Building...*, xix.

few and far between.⁹⁸ In general, Canada has under-emphasized its capacity-building potential within its comprehensive strategy, thereby failing to create the necessary sense of Afghan “ownership” that is a precondition for development to be sustainable.⁹⁹

While no single approach to stabilization and reconstruction operations will be applicable to all circumstances, the PRT model, which embodies the essence of a whole-of-government approach, may provide “a good starting point for those developing the tools to achieve political and military success in future missions.”¹⁰⁰ And, while PRTs generally find favour with all actors in Afghanistan, including many NGOs who appear to support the idea of a whole-of-government strategy and would like to see an even broader and more active whole-of-government approach, a number of NGOs have observed that more community input should be obtained by the PRTs and incorporated into projects being initiated by the PRTs.¹⁰¹ The NGOs have also argued that the projects and initiatives being promoted by the PRTs are unsustainable, and merely provide short-term help to the communities. And, while PRTs appear to be working well,¹⁰² more PRTs are needed. As well, there is considerable support for increasing the civilian content of the PRT and placing it under civilian leadership as soon as possible in order to enhance its overall effectiveness, to address the concerns expressed by the NGOs, and to better address both Canadian and Afghan priorities for development.¹⁰³ By increasing the civilian component of the PRT, which represents Canada’s whole-of-government strategy

⁹⁸ Derek Fraser, “Failed States: why they matter and what we should do about them,” *International Insights* 5, no. 2 (December 2007): 1,4.

⁹⁹ Andrew S. Natsios, “The Nine Principles...,” 5.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 45-46.

¹⁰¹ Michael J. McNerney, “Stabilization and Reconstruction...,” 42.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁰³ The Independent Panel, *Report on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan...*, 26.

in its most basic tactical form, the PRT will likely be able to accomplish more in the realm of governance.¹⁰⁴

For Canada the success of its whole-of-government strategy depends on a balanced contribution from across the departments. Yet, so far there has been a sense that the military contribution has been disproportionately large. There is, therefore, an urgent need for Canada to complete “practical, significant development projects of immediate value to Afghans, while at the same time contributing (more) to the capacity and legitimacy of Afghan government institutions.”¹⁰⁵ Yet, to date, “Canada’s civilian programs have not achieved the scale or depth of engagement necessary to make a significant impact.”¹⁰⁶ Specifically, in Afghanistan, Canada has deployed only 47 civilians to divide their time between the embassy in Kabul, an office in Kandahar, and the PRT, while there are 2500 Canadian troops deployed to Afghanistan.¹⁰⁷ That discrepancy – although security is a factor therein, demonstrates that there is an urgent need to “adjust funding and staffing imbalances between the heavy Canadian military commitment in Afghanistan and the comparatively lighter civilian commitment to reconstruction, development, and governance.”¹⁰⁸ In fact, a significant growth in Canada’s civilian personnel on the ground in Kandahar will be required in order to set the conditions for Afghans to take on a greater responsibility for their own security and development.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Michael J. McNerney, “Stabilization and Reconstruction...,” 43.

¹⁰⁵ The Independent Panel, *Report on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan...*, 28.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* 29.

The evidence further suggests that the Canadian overall aid program has been impeded “not only by the dangerous security environment in Kandahar, but by CIDA’s own administrative constraints.”¹¹⁰ Specifically, given that more than half of CIDA’s funding in Afghanistan is channelled through multilateral agencies and a further 35 per cent is funnelled through national programs administered directly through the Afghan government, there is very little left to fund local projects that could bring tangible or highly visible relief to the lives of ordinary Afghans.¹¹¹ The result is that few Afghans recognize Canada’s commitment to their future, which indicates that Canada is failing to communicate to Afghans the important link between security and development assistance within its whole-of-government strategy. In other words, to strengthen the impact of an integrated approach, Canada must become more adept at directly linking its development efforts to its security operations while launching capacity building initiatives in the same geographic location.

While Canada has deployed relatively few non-DND department staff to Afghanistan, the problem goes beyond the lack of RCMP, CIDA and DFAIT representation. For countries like Afghanistan, where agriculture is an important aspect of the wider concerns of security and development,¹¹² it would make sense to broaden the whole-of-government team to include a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture. As well, in the light of the significant challenges facing educators in Afghanistan, it might well make sense to deploy representatives from provincial ministries of education to Afghanistan. And, given Afghanistan’s porous borders, especially in the Southern parts

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹¹² Ann M. Fitz-Gerald, “Addressing the Security-Development Nexus...,” 18.

of the country bordering on Pakistan where lawlessness is widespread, it would make very good sense to deploy more representatives of the Canadian Border Services Agency.

In fact, the essence of the whole-of-government strategy is that there are no artificial limits to the types of assets that Canada can deploy to accomplish its mission: whatever the challenge is, a whole-of-government strategy can address it in a synchronized and coordinated manner for maximum effect. Importantly, to achieve the full potential of the whole-of-government approach, all members of the team need to be able to move with relative freedom among the people, based on a coordinated security framework that recognizes the critical contributions of the development and capacity-building partners on the team. Moreover, these representatives of various government departments cannot be subject to overly restrictive departmental regulations that preclude them from moving beyond the camps and forward operating bases, as is currently the case for CIDA personnel,¹¹³ which serves to reduce their effectiveness considerably, and ignores the central concept governing the whole-of-government approach.

Some observers believe Canada is fighting a war that cannot be won – regardless of whether or not the approach is an integrated one or not. John Watson, the President of CARE Canada, believes that Canada’s mission is simply making the country a target.¹¹⁴ In particular, he believes that Canada’s efforts are overly concentrated on “military and technological side of things,” which in turn is “making the efforts of humanitarian workers much more dangerous,” while concurrently “deflecting attention from diplomatic efforts to solve” other important conflicts in the world.¹¹⁵ Watson feels that Canada’s

¹¹³ The Independent Panel, *Report on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan...*, 26.

¹¹⁴ John Watson, “An Unwinnable War,” *Vanguard*, (September 2006) [journal on-line] available from <http://www.vanguardcanada.com/UnwinnableWarWatson>; Internet; accessed 28 April 2008.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

efforts are overly focused on supporting the U.S. agenda as opposed to supporting the UN, and that Canada's goal of leaving behind a stable democratic nation state is impossible to achieve.¹¹⁶

Watson does raise some important questions related to Canada's strategy. His perspective echoes that of others, who see Canada overly focused on military operations while not paying attention to development, failing to work with the UN, and ignoring the regional aspects of the conflict. In many ways, the federal government has been too slow to address these types of challenges – especially when they originate with experienced practitioners such as John Watson. A properly executed whole-of-government strategy provides an effective balance of security and development, and makes maximum use of NGO experience on the ground through CIDA. A properly executed diplomatic campaign focuses on addressing the regional aspects of the conflict with Afghanistan's neighbours, while encouraging a more effective working relationship with the UN. Above all, a properly executed whole-of-government strategy incorporates an active communications strategy, led by the government, to conduct a helpful dialogue with people like John Watson, and to demonstrate that the strategy is coherent and consistent, and that it is indeed based on a solid conceptual foundation with strong prospects for success. Watson's comments only serve to highlight the importance of synchronizing Canada's efforts, including effectively synchronizing these efforts with other agencies on the ground, and communicating their prospects for success.

Communicating success depends to some degree on determining what constitutes success and how this can be measured. Measuring progress through reliable and universally-agreed-upon metrics is an important part of the strategy for any intervention.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

In Afghanistan this has proven to a significant challenge. Selecting metrics to assess progress in nation-building is not straightforward – whether in Afghanistan or elsewhere – because “where chaos and state collapse is the challenge, the test of a successful intervention is no longer whether it defeats an enemy or stops a human rights abuse, but whether it sets in train the nation-building process that will prevent the area from becoming a security threat once again.”¹¹⁷ Measuring progress is an important aspect of any strategy, and it is particularly important to a strategy for international intervention where it is needed to drive a credible argument for investing significant international resources. For its whole-of-government strategy to succeed, diplomatic efforts must focus on linking Canada’s efforts with those of the Afghan and ISAF governments in a unified and coherent manner, with “clear objectives and criteria for success.”¹¹⁸ With the whole-of-government concept, the assessment criteria *are* linked in a meaningful and comprehensive way and suggest themselves naturally along the critical lines of security, development, and capacity-building. These lines of operation lend themselves logically to both quantitative and qualitative evaluation of relevance to nation-building, all of which can serve to illustrate the growing progress being achieved with an integrated approach. However, to date, the federal government has failed to capitalize on this useful aspect of the whole-of-government strategy to demonstrate its efficacy to a population that is growing increasingly sceptical after more than five years of investing in Afghanistan.

The overall lack of resources, both military and civilian, not the conceptual logic of Canada’s whole-of-government approach, has led to delays in reconstruction, challenges in food aid distribution, and therefore created a sense of distrust of ISAF

¹¹⁷ Michael Ignatieff, “State failure...,” 308.

¹¹⁸ The Independent Panel, *Report on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan...*, 34, 13.

forces.¹¹⁹ The whole-of-government strategy assumes that the necessary resources will be supplied, and in areas where Canada's whole-of-government approach is being applied with the right combination of security and development resources, progress is being made. In areas where an under-resourced and poorly coordinated international effort is being made, progress is decidedly poorer and slower.

In general, in situations where a whole-of-government approach has not been applied, Canada's efforts have been met with decidedly less success. For instance, where military operations preclude overt Taliban operations, but there is no overarching plan to include capacity-building or reconstruction measures, the gains achieved by the security forces are short-term and cannot be sustained. Where bridges and roads are created without the sustained presence of security forces they will invariably be destroyed by the Taliban over time, or be left unused by locals for fear of Taliban reprisals. Without the capacity-building skills of civilian experts, Community Development Councils cannot be established to provide the leadership and support needed to create effective local development plans to guide subsequent security operations.

In Canada, the House of Commons voted on 14 March 2008 to extend Canada's mission until 2011. Although the actual nature of Canada's extended mission remains a matter of interpretation, it appears that the mission will see an even greater degree of integration, with a stronger focus on the training of the ANA and a much greater sense of coherence in Canada's diplomatic and development efforts. However, for Canada's strategy to succeed the federal government must remain actively engaged and demonstrate that it has the political willpower to apply it fully until the desired end-state has been achieved. Creating this political will in Canada is a national leadership issue,

¹¹⁹ Gordon Smith, *Canada in Afghanistan...*, 4, 14.

which depends on enlisting the full support of all Canadians in order to ensure that the needed resources will be made available from taxpayer funds. In other words, the federal government needs to spend more time and effort in explaining to the Canadian people how the mission in Afghanistan is going in order to ensure that its whole-of-government strategy is appropriately resourced for success.

Conclusion

The problems of international engagements in Afghanistan are not new, and those being experienced by Canada's mission in Afghanistan are neither new nor unique. Canada had an option of staying in a less demanding or dangerous part of Afghanistan than Kandahar, but it deliberately deployed to Kandahar because it felt that it was needed there and because Canadians were confident that they would be capable of excelling there - in all three "Ds" of the 3D construct. Canada was at the forefront of efforts to define this concept of combining three closely coordinated policy approaches into a single coherent national mission.¹²⁰

A preponderance of evidence suggests that a whole-of-government strategy, based on the converging elements of "political will, effective military enforcement capacity, and sufficient economic resources," can help a failed state complete the transition to a peaceful and prosperous society.¹²¹

The whole-of-government strategy has been effectively applied in the form of the PRT, which has successfully combined a range of whole-of-government tools to connect with local Afghans and local community councils to plan and build sustainable projects. Enhanced diplomatic efforts have successfully been brought to bear to bring a high-ranking UN representative (Mr. Kai Eide) to Afghanistan and force the deployment of more combat troops to Kandahar from other NATO nations (the U.S.) to help improve the security situation.

On the other hand, Canada is facing a number of challenges in the implementation of its strategy in Afghanistan, which raises important concerns, given that the ability to *execute* a strategy can sometimes be seen to be more important than the *quality* of the strategy.¹²³ In Afghanistan, at the moment, it appears that the quality of the strategy is being overshadowed by the problems associated with its implementation. With insufficient military forces available, Canada has been unable to create the required level of peace and security throughout its area of operations to allow sufficient reconstruction and capacity-building to take place to create a sense of confidence amongst the Afghan people. As a consequence, much work remains to be done to create irreversible momentum and progress in the field of development or capacity-building.

Work also remains in terms of fully developing the whole-of-government policy and communicating it effectively to Canadians,¹²⁴ focusing CIDA's efforts in Afghanistan, integrating Canada's efforts better with its allies and partners, and developing a harmonized campaign plan¹²⁵ with a clear end-state and supporting criteria

¹²³ Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton, "The Office of Strategic Management," 72.

¹²⁴ Paul F. Wynnyk, "The Emperor has no clothes....," abstract

¹²⁵ M. Lalumière, "L'approche intégré 3D pour les interventions à l'étranger: un pas vers le succès?" (Toronto : Canadian Forces College National Security Studies Course Paper, 2006), 34-35, abstract.

for success. Canada's whole-of-government strategy has also been deficient in terms of exerting the necessary diplomatic influence on Afghanistan's neighbouring states, in recognition of the regional nature of the conflict.

Overall, while it is too early to assess the results of post-conflict operations in Afghanistan fully, it is increasingly clear that only a whole-of-government strategy can achieve the necessary coherence and focus needed to achieve measurable and sustainable progress. Three separate efforts are neither sustainable nor effective; only an integrated, adequately resourced whole-of-government strategy is viable.

Canada's integrated whole-of-government approach to peace-building and reconstruction is a potent strategy for contemporary peace-building in fragile, failing, and failed states. It has tremendous potential for establishing a lasting peace in Afghanistan, one designed and delivered in the end by Afghans. Nonetheless, a number of issues remain to be addressed for the whole-of-government approach to be truly effective in Afghanistan, and for it to provide a useful model for future missions. Fortunately, the recently published report of the Government of Canada's Independent Panel on Afghanistan offers a good point of departure for completing the process of creating a truly integrated whole-of-government mission.

For Canada, the report serves to highlight the effectiveness of a whole-of-government strategy. It further articulates to Canadians why they should only consider deploying whole-of-government contingents in future interventions to share the tasks and responsibilities across all government departments, and preferably only where – like Afghanistan – their interests as well as their values are at stake and only where they have the potential to achieve a decisive strategic impact. In the interim, more work needs to be

done to fully realize the wider implications of the policy, as well as fully articulating and “institutionalizing” the policy within the government of Canada. Furthermore, the government of Canada needs to take careful note of the lessons emerging from the implementation of this strategy in Afghanistan. In particular, the government needs to recognize its strategic leadership and coordination responsibilities, along with a greater recognition of the importance of getting future missions get off to a better start than that of the current mission in Afghanistan.

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