

DIIS REPORT

NATO IN AFGHANISTAN

– WHAT LESSONS ARE WE LEARNING,
AND ARE WE WILLING TO ADJUST?

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Contents

Abstract	4
Resumé	4
Acronyms and Abbreviations	5
1. Introduction	6
2. Political/strategic level	9
2.1 Mandate and objectives	9
2.2 Unity of effort	13
3. Operational level	19
3.1 Unity of command	19
3.2 Credibility	22
3.3 Transparency of operations	26
3.4 Promotion of cooperation and consent	29
4. Tactical level	34
4.1 Media plan and public information	34
4.2 Use of force: rules of engagement	36
5. Findings on the ISAF operation in Afghanistan	41
5.1 Political/strategic level	41
5.2 Operational level	41
5.3 Tactical level	42
6. Literature	44
Appendix 1: Operationalised matrix	48

Abstract

This report explores the complexity of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan. The actual conduct of operations in Afghanistan is measured against the principles of NATO Peace Support Operations. The report analyses the different aspects of operations and finally lists important recommendations that should be considered if more effective operations are to be conducted, and if success it to be achieved. The study examines the important lessons that can be derived from the current ISAF mission on the basis of field studies focusing on all levels of command. Overall, the findings suggest that the ISAF mission suffers from a lack of coherent political strategic understanding of the mission, the tasks and strategy. The impression is very much one of a mission being implemented with a lack of civilian resources, holistic strategy, interagency coordination and lacking an appreciation of the context and importance of mission success – there is a need for an overall political military strategic campaign plan. This being said, success is still within reach, but a serious discussion on the international commitment, the desired end state and the way ahead is both urgent and important.

Resumé

Denne rapport vil forsøge at identificere de væsentligste udfordringer, den afghanske stat og det internationale samfund står over for i det afghanske projekt. Rapporten vil fokusere på de tre overordnede dimensioner, som alle nationsbygningsprojekter rummer – den politiske, den institutionelle og den økonomiske. Gennem en analyse af disse dimensioner vil rapporten komme med anbefalinger til en ny styrket indsats. Der ikke er nogen nemme løsninger på vejen mod et stærkt og bæredygtigt Afghanistan, og opbygningen af den nye afghanske stat vil tage lang tid. Der er fra international side brug for at styrke den nuværende udvikling i landet hen mod en bæredygtig stat, men denne styrkelse skal ske gennem en holistisk tilgang, hvor der tænkes bredt og langsigtet. Det er vigtigt, at man ikke vælger en løsning, hvor kun enkelte og ofte kortsigtede elementer af en samlet strategi følges. Hvis bestræbelserne på at opbygge den afghanske stat skal bære frugt, er det nødvendigt, at de politiske, institutionelle og økonomiske dimensioner inden for den afghanske stat styrkes i en indbyrdes interaktion.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADZ	Afghan Development Zones
AJP	Allied Joint Publication
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
AU	African Union
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
CIMIC	Civilian Military Cooperation
CJSOR	Combined Joint Statement of Requirement
COMISAF	Commander International Security Assistance Force
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DFID	Department for International Development
DIAG	Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
EU	European Union
HQ	Head Quarter
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
IO	International Organisation
JFCB	Joint Force Command Brunssum
KFOR	Kosovo Force
MED	Medical Unit
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MP	Military Police
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OPLAN	Operational plan
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
PSO	Peace Support Operations
PSYOPS	Psychological Operations
QRF	Quick Reaction Force
RC	Regional Command
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe
SRSR	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TACP	Tactical Air Control Party
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

I. Introduction

In August 2003, NATO took control of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. At the time of the takeover the mission was centred on Kabul, and not much fighting had been seen in the area of operations. Today ISAF is leading the international operation in the whole of Afghanistan – known as Theatre Command –, and the mission has evolved to become the most complex NATO has ever been engaged in. In the northern parts of Afghanistan, development and stability operations are being carried out by ISAF along with simultaneous security and counter-insurgency operations in the southern and eastern parts of the country. Daily fighting is on-going, and some western capitals have begun to call the ISAF mission the absolute test for NATO and its' member states. The complexity of the mission is evolving at a pace that demands a rapid and concurrent adaptation of strategy if the success of the mission is to be achieved.¹ The aim of this report is exactly to examine the current conduct and strategy of operations with the aim of listing recommendations for future political and military discussions on the used strategy, the end state and the way ahead. This discussion needs to be carried out at the highest political and military level within NATO, especially considering the current ambivalence in terms of national political environments of some member states regarding support for the mission.

The analysis is structured and focused according to the lessons learned derived from NATO principles on peace support operations.² These principles will constitute a template that will be used to lay down eight criteria of success on which the ISAF engagement in Afghanistan will be measured. The template chosen is the NATO Allied Joint Population (AJP) 3.4.1 'Peace Support Operations' a collection of some of the most important and latest lessons learned within peacekeeping operations conducted by NATO throughout the 1990s and beyond. The AJP doctrines – and especially AJP 3.4.1 'Peace Support Operations' – are dynamic documents which are reviewed, modified and approved by NATO experts panels from different member countries on a on-going basis. This template has been selected as it is widely recognised and used as a guideline for nations other than NATO-members and international organisations engaged in peacekeeping operations, such as the Eu-

¹ On the lack of coherent strategy within the NATO mission see also Chatham House 2007.

² NATO Allied Joint Population (AJP) 3.4.1: 'Peace Support Operations'.

ropean Union (EU), the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN).³ The focus of this report and the operationalised research questions are therefore derived from AJP 3.4.1. The eight criteria are listed in Appendix 1, where the definition of each criteria and the research questions are presented.

Peace Support Operations (PSO) is defined by NATO as:

“Operations designed to tackle the complex emergencies and robust challenges posed by collapsed or collapsing states in an uncertain and evolving strategic environment. PSO are conducted impartially, normally in support of an internationally recognized organization, such as the UN or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). They involve military forces, diplomatic and humanitarian agencies and are designed to achieve a long-term political settlement or other specified condition. They involve a spectrum of activities, which may include Peace Enforcement and Peacekeeping as well as Conflict Prevention, Peacemaking, Peace Building and Humanitarian Relief”⁴.

For the sake of clarity the research is structured according to the three overall levels: political/strategic, operational, and tactical. The analysis and recommendations of this report are based on interviews conducted in Afghanistan in autumn 2006 and spring 2007. The informants represented different levels within a number of different institutions and organisations. These included, among others, NATO ISAF Head Quarters (HQ) in Kabul, Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan, Kabul Military Training Centre, Regional Command South, Afghan National Army 205 Corps, UK Task Force Helmand, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) Feyzabad, Civilian Development Advisors, Political Advisors, the US Military, and Afghan Representatives from Badakhshan Province.⁵ The report will proceed by analysing the listed measurement criteria in Appendix 1. The analysis will be divided into three levels and followed by findings and recommendations on the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.

³ Until now the EU is using the NATO planning access and doctrine when conducting peacekeeping operations (Berlin Plus arrangements 2003) e.g. operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) or operation Althea in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The AU is currently in the process of establishing five standby brigades for peacekeeping operations. The AU doctrine for these brigades has not been developed yet, but the work will be initiated under the auspices of the EU (Council of the European Union 2004).

⁴ NATO Allied Joint Publication (AJP)-3.4.1: ‘Peace Support Operations’.

⁵ A number of the informants is placed within the ISAF mission itself, and can therefore be somewhat biased in their statements, both in terms of ISAF and their own nationality. I have tried to counter this by using own observations, external sources and written rapports. Furthermore, the statements have, when possible, been verified or falsified by asking the same questions to a number of people holding the same level of positions within the mission. This has been done on both research field trips in autumn 2006 and spring 2007.

In sum, the findings suggest that the ISAF mission suffers from the lack of overall coherent political strategic understanding of the mission, its tasks and the strategy(s) used. The implication seems to be that of a mission being implemented with a lack of civilian resources, holistic strategy, interagency coordination and lack of appreciation for the context and importance of mission success – here is a need for an overall political military strategic campaign plan. This being said, success is still within reach, but a serious discussion on the international commitment, the desired end state and the way ahead is both urgent and important.

2. Political/strategic level

2.1 Mandate and objectives

International military involvement under ISAF is authorized by the Bonn Agreement⁶ and the subsequent UN Security Council Resolution 1386. Overall the mandate does not seem to complicate or disturb relations between ISAF, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the government of Afghanistan. The tasks are clear, and Afghan government support and backing for ISAF is strong. However, the politically defined, so-called end state of the mission, namely a self-sustaining democratic Afghan government, is very ambitious. ISAF seems to be the main implementing actor covering the whole country, with only some understaffed international organisations and a civil administration, which lack the capacity to act as counterparts. When visiting Afghanistan in October 2006 and April 2007, I was presented with extensive plans for operations by ISAF HQ. However, all political, civilian, military or economic objectives were expected to be reached mainly through ISAF's efforts. This seems optimistic at best, especially if the Afghan project is to be a success within a feasible time-frame.

Annex 1 of the Bonn Agreement states that responsibility for bringing peace and law and order to the country resides with the Afghans themselves. In recognition of the lack of capacity of the then still new Afghan Interim Authority, the participants in the Bonn talks requested the UN Security Council to authorise *"the early deployment to Afghanistan of a United Nations mandated force. This force will assist in the maintenance of security for Kabul and its surrounding areas. Such a force could, as appropriate, be progressively expanded to other urban centers and other areas"* (The Bonn Agreement 2001: Annex I). Also, the Agreement requested assistance from the international community in rebuilding and training the new Afghan security forces.

The ISAF mission operates under an operational plan (OPLAN) that outlines the terms of implementation. The OPLAN has been revised on several occasions but is currently designed as a response to the ISAF enlargement to cover the southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan. The current OPLAN lists the Alliance's (i.e. NATO's) political objectives and end state, together with the overall plan for achieving objectives. The end state is *"A self-sustaining, moderate and democratic Afghan govern-*

⁶ The Bonn Agreement is the result of a conference held in Germany in late November to early December 2001 that lists the conditions and international commitment under which the rebuilding of the Afghan state was to advance for the first five years (S/RES/1383(2001)).

ment able to exercise its sovereign authority, independently, throughout Afghanistan” (ISAF OPLAN 2006: 1). In other words, “*We [ISAF] will remain until the people of Afghanistan have developed government structures and security forces that are sustainable and capable of ensuring the security of all Afghans without outside support.*”⁷ To achieve this, NATO has listed a number of ‘Key Military Tasks’ and ‘Key Supporting Tasks’ in the OPLAN⁸:

- Key Military Tasks (extract):
 - Assist the Afghan government in extending its authority across the country, including stimulation of the security-sector reform process;
 - Conduct stability and security operations in coordination with the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP);
 - Mentor and support the ANA; and
 - Support the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) programme
- Key Supporting Tasks (extract):
 - Support the ANP;
 - Support the Afghan government’s counter-narcotics efforts; and
 - On request, provide support to humanitarian assistance operations coordinated by Afghan government organisations (ISAF OPLAN 2006: C1-C2).⁹

The strategy for reaching this and for implementing the different objectives in this process are subdivided into what NATO refers to as stability and security operations. Stability operations are conducted mainly by the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), which operate within the context of expanding the Afghan government’s authority throughout the country by helping to build local capacity in creating a sustainable administration (ISAF OPLAN 2006: 3). Security operations, on the other hand, will mostly be carried out by the more robust troop contingents, with the aim of creating the operational environment for the PRTs and civilian organisations to operate in. These operations will range from force protection to “*decisive, pro-active military ground and air manoeuvre*” (ISAF OPLAN 2006: 4). As part of this, the ‘Desired Strategic Military End-State’ is that, “*Afghan national security forces [shall] provide security and stability in Afghanistan without NATO support*” (ISAF OPLAN 2006: 5). ISAF will contribute to building, training and equipping

⁷ www2.hq.nato.int/ISAF/mission/mission_role.htm

⁸ ‘Key Military Tasks’ is the direct tasks of ISAF where the ‘Key Supporting Tasks’ merely underlines supporting roles and not tasks that ISAF is to lead.

⁹ See also: www.nato.int/issues/afghanistan_stage3/index.html

the ANA so that it can increasingly be involved in achieving the security tasks of the country and thus eventually, rendering ISAF superfluous.

Objectives are achieved in a number of ways. One of the main efforts¹⁰ involves the concept of Afghan Development Zones (ADZ), launched by President Hamed Karzai in the summer of 2006. The concept of ADZ is to *“Identify strategically important geographic zones (initially in the south and east) where improvements in security and governance will create conditions conducive to more effective, noticeable development. Ensure that more funding reaches these priority areas as well as districts where little or no assistance has yet been delivered.”*¹¹ In Afghanistan, the concept have been further modified and adapted to the current context, with emphasis placed on development, reconstruction and good governance within the ‘boundaries’ of the zones centered around the main cities in each province. It is commonly known that security should be a precondition for economic growth and development, and that there can be no sustainable security without genuine development (Dobbins 2007: 12-15 & Hänggi 2005: 11-12). The idea of the ADZ therefore, is to link security with development and vice versa to give the Afghan population a visible sign that the international forces and the Afghan government actually are delivering. The core of the concept is to establish priority zones in which synergies of combining and focusing development, reconstruction, and security measures within the more fragile parts of the country can take place. The ADZ concept is built on the assumption that, if a geographically defined area is made secure for the local population to live in and at the same time large-scale development projects and good governance are being implemented, those residing outside the ADZ will be envious and will also want to be part of a development zone. The focus is on creating the conditions in which the local population will cooperate with, or at least not fight against, the international forces or local government. The ultimate aim of the strategy is to win hearts and minds and thereby to undermine the basis of support for the insurgents and the Taliban.

The means required, however, to achieve the objectives are not available in theatre, nor are they being made available in sufficient quantities to create success within a reasonable time-frame. To some extent but by no means adequate, the military

¹⁰ Another effort is the PRTs’ operations around the country. These will be analysed in the section on “Promotion of Cooperation and Content”.

¹¹ On 16 August 2006 President Karzai presented ten objectives in a directive to strengthen development in the country. Objective no. 7 establishes the ADZs. The idea of the ADZ can be traced back historically to the use by British forces in Malaya of the so-called ‘ink spot’ strategy.

means available¹² can create some level of security in the ADZs¹³ to facilitate the implementation of large-scale development projects. On the other hand, the non-governmental or governmental organisations that have the capability to implement development projects and hence to improve living conditions in the ADZ are not in place to take advantage of the situation. This became especially apparent in the autumn and winter of 2006 to spring 2007, where Regional Command South created a security situation first in the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah, and later to the northeast in the town of Gereskh, which actually made development projects possible. The military effort was then supposed to be followed by development, but this never happened on a sufficient scale to actually convince the local population of the benefits of supporting the Afghan government and the international forces. The only development the population saw were small-scale projects implemented by the ISAF PRT and different Civilian Military Cooperation (CIMIC) elements. Failure to attract Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to the ADZs is primarily due to the NGOs' perceptions of an insufficient level of security for them to carry out their work. This level has not been reached in the ADZs in the southern and eastern parts of the country.

The political and strategic end state cannot be reached by military means alone. The military instrument is only one element in creating successful nation-building projects (Dobbins 2007: 14-15). Civilian expertise, together with economic funds, is crucial to the operation, especially when the key issues are good governance, winning over the local population, and development. The dilemma is that the ADZ relies on those other than military actors to implement large-scale development projects, yet these actors are not present in the more unstable parts of Afghanistan where the current ADZs are located.¹⁴ There is an obvious dilemma in the choice of the strategy: Do not implement a military strategy if the means to implement is not made available from the start. However, the ADZ strategy promoted by President Karzai, seems to have been well thought through, and may yet prove workable as an objective towards the end state. Also, requests for more funds and civilian expertise have been made. At the NATO summit in Riga in November 2006, national caveats and the shortfall in the forces available were placed on the agenda, but with little

¹² More details about the number of troops available can be found in the section on "Credibility".

¹³ Currently ADZs have been implemented in the towns of Lashkar Gar, Kandahar, Qalat, Tarin Kwot, Ghaz-in, Parwan and Jalalabad. The problems of implementing sufficient development have been pointed out in all the ADZs.

¹⁴ Local NGOs are present in the southern provinces, but they do not have the capacity to carry out large-scale development.

result. These problems were presented again in January 2007, but this time with a focus on the lack of development funds and civil advisors – again with little result.

In terms of political commitment, Afghan delegates and representatives from the international community met in London in January 2006 to agree on the next five-year plan for the development of Afghanistan.¹⁵ The result, the ‘Afghanistan Compact’,¹⁶ listed the different objectives to be reached until 2010 and stressed the genuine commitment from the international community towards the Afghan people. The three overall focus areas were Security, Good Governance and Economic Development. Unfortunately, more than a year after the Compact was agreed, the international community still has not honored the commitment. Today this is manifested in the immense challenges ISAF is facing in the country, especially with achieving results in the ADZs.

In sum, in a complex peace-keeping and peace-enforcing mission, where the traditional tasks to be performed by the soldiers have been widened to include also the broader aspects of nation-building, military force alone will not do the job. Although clear objectives have been listed for ISAF, they are not attainable because of the lack of civilian support for the mission. The former Commander of ISAF, Lt.-Gen. David Richards, has on a number of occasions asked the international community for more resources and civilian involvement to secure the results achieved on the ground by ISAF. However, the calls for more assistance have not been taken seriously by the international community, with the result that ISAF and thus also NATO is being left to carry out a task that is unachievable with the means made available – within a reasonable time-frame. Given the mission complexity of present-day Afghanistan, civilian and donor efforts need to be implemented at the same rate as the military effort. Alternatively, these instruments must be made available in theatre for the military to implement. There is an urgent need to formulate an overall strategic political military campaign plan is success is to be reached.

2.2 Unity of effort

As seen in the above analysis, the impact of other actors is crucial for reaching the end state. Several actors are involved in the efforts of achieving a stable and democratic Afghanistan, especially the Afghan government itself, and also different states

¹⁵ The Bonn Agreement – the first five-year plan – concluded in December 2005.

¹⁶ See: www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1132599285324

that are heavily engaged in the process of successful implementation. In the area of security sector reform, some G8 countries have contributed together with ISAF to achieve the tasks set. However, some problems need to be addressed if progress towards a sustainable Afghan government is to be reached. For example, the US has with success devoted considerable resources to the process of rebuilding the Afghan National Army (ANA). On the other hand, the project to rebuild the Afghan National Police (ANP), led by Germany and the UK-led counter-narcotics effort, has partially failed. Compounding this, the overall efforts of the security sector reform have been poorly coordinated and have been built up more or less independently.

ISAF has several key military tasks including monitoring and support of the ANA and conducting stability and security operations in coordination with the ANA and ANP. Furthermore, ISAF supports the Afghan government in its counter-narcotics efforts. The institutional rebuilding of the security sector is divided into five pillars: military reform; police reform; judicial reform; counter-narcotics and disarmament¹⁷.

Here, the three pillars of military reform, police reform and counter-narcotics¹⁸ will be analysed. The rebuilding of the ANA was started in May 2002 by US forces. The programme can largely be characterised as an overall success. Approximately 46,000 soldiers out of a projected total of 70,000 by 2010, have been trained, and the project to make the ANA a sustainable force is progressing. Success can be seen in the light of the high level of training and the generally positive response of the civilian population towards the ANA when it has been deployed to the provinces (The Asia Foundation 2006: 30).¹⁹ Once ANA units have gone through basic training in Kabul, they are deployed to the regions for active duty, where they work closely with ISAF. During their collaboration with ISAF, the ANA units receive further training, take part in exercises, and conducts patrols and operations in close coordination with ISAF. The ANA seems to be performing its duties professionally in the field, as well as when it is involved in larger operations with coalition forces and ISAF.²⁰

¹⁷ Each pillar has a lead nation responsible for implementation of the reform.

¹⁸ The last two pillars of the security sector reform are also of great importance for ISAF, but ISAF is not directly involved in the judicial reform, and the first disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme has now been finalised (for further details, see Thruelsen 2006). The current disarmament programme has not yet had sufficient impact for it to be dealt with in this report.

¹⁹ Interviews conducted with leading staff at ISAF HQ, 22 September 2006, and with Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan, 12 April 2007.

²⁰ Interviews conducted with British Operational Monitoring and Liaison Teams to the ANA and own obser-

The ANA has been an important element in creating stability and security throughout the country. The greatest challenge facing it seems to be institutional, that is, how to professionalise and transform itself into a sustainable actor. When the US started the ANA rebuilding programme, it emphasised the need to give the training programme sufficient time to create effective fighting units. The approach has proved to be successful in relation to the ANA's professional conduct. The downside of the approach, however, has been that the number of trained troops going through the programme has been far less than needed. The consequences of the low training rate are many. First, the ANA is in no position to take over the demanding security tasks. Second, it cannot support the provincial governors with troops even in the more stable areas. Third, the ANA has become somewhat run-down because of the heavy fighting and the lack of reinforcements. Recent reports from the south have shown that the demands on the ANA are so heavy that units do not have the time to rebuild their strength between battles. As a result, the rate of desertion is rising in units stationed in the eastern and southern parts of the country, where almost 20 percent of soldiers deployed have gone absent.²¹

The rebuilding of the ANP under German leadership commenced in April 2002. However, it is clear that Germany has not put enough effort into the programme. The fact that only a very limited number of German police officers have been stationed in Afghanistan to lead the rebuilding shows that too few resources have been allocated. As of the time of writing, the programme to strengthen the Ministry of Internal Affairs and rebuild the ANP cannot be described as a success. Although all of the projected 62,000 police officers to be trained by 2010 have gone through basic training, only about half of the trained officers can be characterised as fully functional and able to serve (Inspectors General 2006: 15). The training programme of the ANP is not based on any analysis of the actual security situation in the country, resulting in a high level of casualties. Also, the ANP and the Ministry of Interior is beset with corruption, which is creating general mistrust in the local population (ICG 2007: 16). Police officers do not receive an all-round and thorough education. Instead the focus is on the quantity of police officers being trained rather than on the quality of the training. The principal problems here are the lack of training to cope with the security situation and the difficulties that corruption creates for cooperation with ISAF, primarily because ISAF does not trust ANP officers.

ventions during operations in Kajaki in Helmand Province 16-19 April 2007.

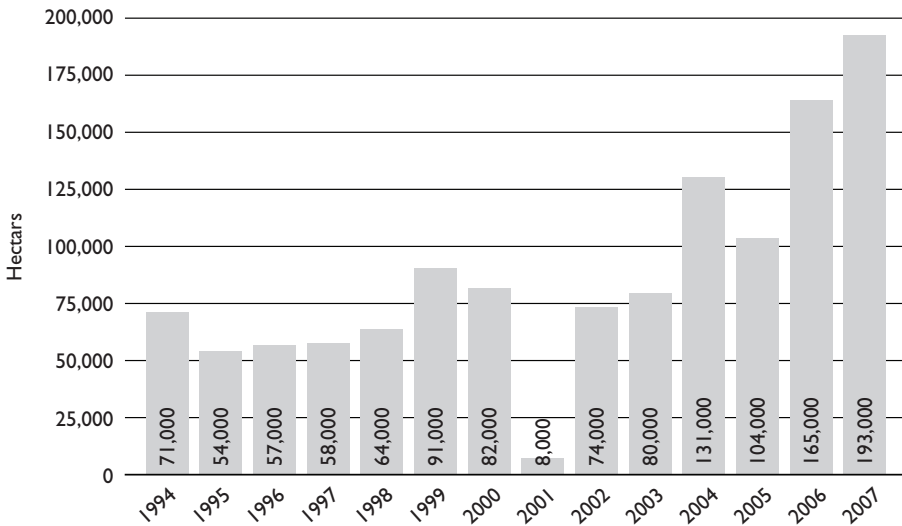
²¹ Interviews conducted with leading staff at ISAF HQ, 22 September 2006, and at Regional Command South in Kandahar, 24 September 2006, and Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan, 12 April 2007.

The corruption primarily takes the form of bribes, due to low wages and because of personal clan relations (patron/client relations) in the districts in which police officers are stationed. There can be no doubt that the scale of corruption affects the effectiveness and credibility of the ANP in the eyes of the civil population. This is a major problem because the negative civilian perception of the ANP affects the view on the Afghan government. The ANP is often perceived as being a part of a state institution that has slipped back into its former role of suppressing police forces in the country, as was the case under previous regimes, which hardly consolidates the work of ISAF. Therefore the ANP is not perceived as an actor that can be trusted to implement and maintain security and authority in the provinces. In interviews conducted in Afghanistan in 2006 and 2007, I was presented with the dilemma that international support for the ANP is in some instances seen by the local population as direct support for the repressive and criminal elements in society. Also, civilians sometimes express greater confidence in the Taliban than the ANP because the Taliban does not collect bribes or special taxes at checkpoints.

Opium production is another significant problem in Afghanistan, though hardly a new phenomenon. It stems from the circumstances that the civil population has faced through several decades of war. As early as the beginning of the 1980s, opium production was being organised and used by the Mujaheddin as an important economic asset in fighting the Soviet invasion (ANDS Volume One: 32). However, production was not on the same scale as today (see Figure 1 below). Counter-narcotics operations are not a key military task of ISAF, but a supporting task. The problem of opium production is, however, indirectly influencing the success of ISAF, primarily because the Taliban is again beginning to collect a tax on opium to finance its insurgency (UNODC 2007: iv-v). The Taliban offer local farmers protection against the international forces and the Afghan government's eradication campaigns in return for this tax. Secondly, the Taliban is using the poppy eradication campaigns to recruit locals to their fight against the international forces. Finally, the Afghan state is losing its financial base through the lack of revenue collection. Today, since the illegal production of opium is the single most important income for the Afghan rural population, if ISAF is to reach the end state, the problem must be handled.

Figure 1: Opium poppy cultivation from 1994 to 2007 in hectares

Source: UNODC 2007: 3



The UK, as lead nation on counter-narcotics, and in close cooperation with the US and local authorities, is engaged in tackling the opium problem. The focus of the counter-narcotics campaign has been on eradication programmes, with the Afghan national forces eradicating poppy fields with long sticks and tractors to show the international community that something is being done. The problem, however, is that every time a field has been eradicated, and no alternative to opium production has been offered to the farmer, the probability of him withdrawing his support from the Afghan government increases. In many instances, the farmer is left with debts and a family he cannot support. As an alternative, he can borrow money from the local drug baron or join hands with the Taliban, who are said to pay well for the services of individuals in this situation (UNODC 2005: 61-65 & UNODC 2006: 17-20). In this scenario, the indirect supporting task of ISAF becomes a direct threat, meaning that ISAF has become the recipient of the unintended consequences of an underdeveloped counter-narcotics strategy.

In sum, the unity of effort is there, but the resources allocated to implementing the various tasks are very different, and individual coordination between the “pillars” is often lacking (ICG 2007: 6-8). Some nations are allocating large amounts

of funding to these tasks, while others are trying to solve the tasks listed for them by using only a minimum of resources. To minimise the attrition of the ANA, it raises the question of whether it could be put in charge of some of the more stable provinces in the country, such as Regional Command North and eventually Regional Command West, thus releasing ISAF units for security, stability, mentoring or development tasks in the more fragile southern and eastern provinces. This could strengthen the ANA in the eyes of the local population and move forward the process of handing the country back to the Afghans themselves. Also, a joint effort should be undertaken to strengthen the education and day-to-day performance of the ANP, with training teams in the provinces and embedded advisors attached to the ANP in the districts – much the same programme as implemented in regards to the ANA. Preferably the EU, with its recent experience of policing the Balkans, and the US with its experience from the ANA programme, should take the lead in a future ANP programme and allocate extra resources and manpower to the task.²² Also, salaries and deployments should be reformed so that a police officer receives sufficient pay to support his family and he should not be stationed in the same district as his clan. Finally, the counter-narcotics campaign should focus less on forced eradication and more on alternative products such as fish, melons, saffron, nuts etc., and it should be recognised that this problem will take many years to deal with. Other development strategies such as ‘weapons for development’²³ could be used as inspiration to handle the opium problem e.g. in creating an ‘opium for development’ programme in close connection with the ADZs. The point being that the counter opium strategy must be closely coordinated with an overall holistic effort of other development tasks, such as education, infrastructure, health care and especially security – the primary task of ISAF.

²² The EU has deployed a police mission to Afghanistan, but only with some 160 officers and judicial experts – not at all sufficient to solve the problems involved (http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=1268&lang=en).

²³ For more on ‘weapons for development’ see OECD 2005: 42.

3. Operational level

3.1 Unity of command

Unity of command is normally a non-negotiable principle within NATO operations. NATO principles place much emphasis on the issue because of a tendency towards restrictiveness when it is not applied. With unity of command, a clear command and control mechanism is in place so that the authority, roles and relationships involved in accomplishing an assigned task are clear and unrestricted. This enables the commanding officer to lead his forces with free maneuverability in order to counter any situation that might develop in the area of operations. The lack of a unity of command is often reflected in national restrictions imposed on the use of different national forces in operations. National restrictions, also called caveats, are written restrictions formulated by the particular country deploying forces and they are mainly intended to limit how that country's military contingent may be used. A variety of national caveats have been applied in NATO missions conducted in the Balkans and in Afghanistan, ranging from restrictions in night-time operations and combat operations, through to permitted operational range from the base and restrictions on the use of helicopters, so the problem is not new.

It quickly becomes clear in ISAF that national caveats are one of the most difficult problems facing the ISAF commander (COMISAF) in order to maneuver his troops. In most instances national caveats actually reduced the number of troops at his disposal. The problem became particularly acute with the Stage III enlargement of 31 July 2006 into southern Afghanistan, where the Taliban posed a serious security threat. ISAF needed to implement a firm approach in order to counter the threat, but the approach is in danger of being undermined by "*tons of caveats*".²⁴

For a peace support operation to move forward and adapt to an ever-changing conflict or post-conflict environment, it needs to be flexible. That flexibility means the individual commander's ability to maximize the utility of the forces under his control. NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Operations, General James Jones, calls national caveats on the use of various military forces in Afghanistan "*NATO's operational cancer*" and "*an impediment to success*" (YaleGlobal 2006). In an effort to map the numerous restrictions that have been drawn up, NATO officials came up

²⁴ Interview conducted with leading staff at ISAF HQ, 22 September 2006. See also NATO Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 336 on Reducing National Caveats (www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=828).

with no less than 71 different caveats that NATO commanders need to take into consideration when planning an operation.

The problem clearly emerged during interviews conducted at ISAF HQ and the HQ of Regional Command South in Kandahar. One obstacle is the caveats that have been written down by national parties. The extent of the problem, however, goes beyond the written caveats to include also an unknown number of non-written restrictions. Preferably, if caveats are nationally formulated, they should be put down on paper before the force is deployed to the mission area; this enables the mission commander to plan and consider the optimal use of the force. Currently, however, the real extent of caveats is indeterminate, because a number of new caveats are only made known when a unit seeks clearance for operational use back in the national capital. These 'ad-hoc' extensions to existing national caveats hamper the effectiveness of ISAF operations and the likelihood of operational success in the provinces. ISAF commanders lose the initiative, with a reduced possibility of success, and the insurgents, who know that caveats exist, use them to their advantage.

When NATO took over command of ISAF on 11 August 2003, its area of operations was Kabul and its surroundings. ISAF soon expanded into the northern and western parts, and more forces were deployed to the country. During these expansions, the issue of national caveats was not of great concern, mainly because the situation in the ISAF area of operations was relatively calm. By autumn 2005, however, NATO had started to assemble troops for the Stage III ISAF enlargement. The convening of forces proved difficult because of the unstable security situation and a number of NATO allies had second thoughts about deploying troops to an area where actual combat was likely. Canada and Britain decided relatively quickly to commit troops to the enlargement, and the Netherlands followed suit after an extensive parliamentary debate.²⁵

However, implementation of Stage III and the experience gained shows that unity of command does not exist within ISAF. The number of written and non-written national caveats drawn up by NATO capitals is so large that effective operations have been hard or impossible to carry out effectively.²⁶

²⁵ Currently Australia, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, the Nederland, Romania, the United Kingdom and the United States have troops stationed in southern Afghanistan.

²⁶ Interviews conducted with leading staff at ISAF HQ, 22 September, and at Regional Command South in Kandahar, 25 September 2006.

The clearest example of the problem is illustrated by Operation Medusa,²⁷ conducted in September 2006 by ISAF Regional Command South in the Panjwayi and Zhari Districts of Kandahar Province. In planning the operation, Regional Command South considered that it needed support from other regional commands, especially Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) and Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) capacities.²⁸ ISAF HQ was requested to identify units to support the operation. When I visited Kandahar in late September 2006, after Operation Medusa had been finalised, the requested support had still not been identified. ISAF HQ had requested a French CIMIC team stationed at the Regional Command Centre to go to Kandahar, but the request had been turned down because of French restrictions allowing the unit only to operate within the area of Regional Command Centre. ISAF HQ then turned to the other regional commands, but without success.²⁹

Other requests to use different nations' combat troops in support of operations around Afghanistan have been declined because of the web of written and non-written national caveats. In particular, restrictions on the use of German troops in other areas of operations than the north have been a topic of much national and international discussion. In Regional Command North, the German troops are restricted to operations within the PRTs located there. For example, in PRT Feyzabad, which has German, Danish and Czech troops, the Danish troops were doing more than 50% of all patrolling,³⁰ primarily because of German restrictions on movements outside the camp and their restrictive rules of engagement.³¹ Also, in Regional Command West, requests from ISAF HQ for troops to be sent into the southern Nimruz Province, have been turned down because of caveats, with the consequence that ISAF HQ only has vague information on the situation in the Province.³²

At the overall level, the commander of ISAF requests as a minimum, the designation of an operational reserve, a Theatre Task Force, within the current force – a

²⁷ Operation Medusa was launched on 2 September 2006, and the major combat operations completed on 17 September.

²⁸ Regional Command South also needed regular troops from other regional commands to engage in the operation, but it could not find them. Regional Command South therefore "borrowed" troops from UK Task Force Helmand, among others a Danish Reconnaissance Squadron.

²⁹ Interviews conducted with leading staff from J9 and Liaison Officers to the regional commands at ISAF HQ, 22 September, and at Regional Command South in Kandahar, 25 September 2006.

³⁰ It should be noted that Denmark only had 41 out of approximately 400 soldiers in PRT Feyzabad. Denmark has now reduced that number to 20 in PRT Feyzabad.

³¹ Interviews conducted in PRT Feyzabad, 27 September to 1 October 2006.

³² Interviews conducted with leading staff at ISAF HQ, 22 September 2006.

force without caveats. The operational reserve, consisting of CIMIC, engineers, combat troops, logistics etc., once designated, should be on call to reinforce other units engaged in operations in the different regional commands. This practice has been followed, among other cases, in the NATO KFOR (Kosovo Force), where units rotate in readiness to be sent to reinforce other units engaged in operations in other areas if needed. The operational reserve might, for instance, consist of troops on call from the different regional commands. The crucial point is, of course, that the operational reserve should be ready and not need to be 'released' by its national government first.³³

In sum, there may be many reasons why NATO capitals impose restrictions on the use of the forces deployed in Afghanistan. To be fair, some of the caveats exist because of a lack of equipment and training, but mostly they are drawn up for domestic political reasons. The mere deployment of forces to an operation is however not sufficient to create stability in a complex operation like the ISAF mission. A force needs to be deployed as a genuine addition and support to the whole operation, not just as a political courtesy. In the operations in southern Afghanistan, the consequence was and still is that there is virtually no flexibility in countering new threats once a force is already engaged in operations. It is difficult to seize the operational initiative when the maze of caveats is becoming ever more unclear, as operations increase in complexity.

3.2 Credibility

Credibility is a force's ability to carry out its mandate. If the local government that the mission is designed to support or the local population does not regard the mission as credible, domestic support will crumble. Overall, ISAF seems to enjoy a great deal of credibility with the Afghan government and the majority of the local population in respect of its ability to carry out its tasks, especially in the northern, western and central parts of Afghanistan. In the southern and eastern parts of the country, however, the local population seems to be waiting to decide who they will support – the insurgency, or ISAF and the government.

According to a survey conducted by The Asia Foundation (2007b) a large part of the local population (42%) thinks that Afghanistan is moving in the right direction

³³ In spring 2007 the US attached a battalion US troops to COMISAF as a temporary Theatre Task Force. The arrangement is, however, not permanent and a viable solution still needs to be found.

(see Table 1 below) (The Asia Foundation 2007b: 11) and 73% of the population are satisfied with the way democracy³⁴ works in the country (The Asia Foundation 2007b: 78). 78% support the ISAF presence in the country and believe that ISAF has the ability to provide security and stability in Afghanistan (ABC/BBC poll 2006: 19-21). They identify ISAF with development, security and stability, an important tool for turning Afghanistan into a sustainable state. With this perception, come high expectations in relation to delivering the goals laid down. However, as in most post-conflict situations involving a large number of international military and civilian personnel, the expectations of the local population regarding the prospects for a 'new beginning' rarely accord with reality. In Afghanistan, optimism has been particularly high because of the long period of conflict up to the present day and because of the promises of large-scale international involvement. Today, the local population and the Afghan government have many unfulfilled expectations, which may backfire on the popularity of ISAF if they are not delivered.³⁵ The rise in the number of unfulfilled expectations is illustrated in the declined in the national mood from 64% in 2004 to 42% in 2007 (The Asia Foundation 2006: 9 and 2007b: 11). The Afghan people are waiting for ISAF to bring them security, stability and development. ISAF has brought security and some stability and development to large parts of the country, but not enough to satisfy the expectations of the local population (see Table 2 below).

³⁴ According to The Asia Foundation the Afghan population identifies democracy with liberal rights such as economic development, security, stability and education (The Asia Foundation 2007a).

³⁵ Interviews conducted in Feyzabad with representatives of Badakhshan Province, 28 September, and with the civilian development advisor from PRT Feyzabad, 29 September 2006.

Table 1: Direction of the country/national mood Source: The Asia Foundation 2007b: 11

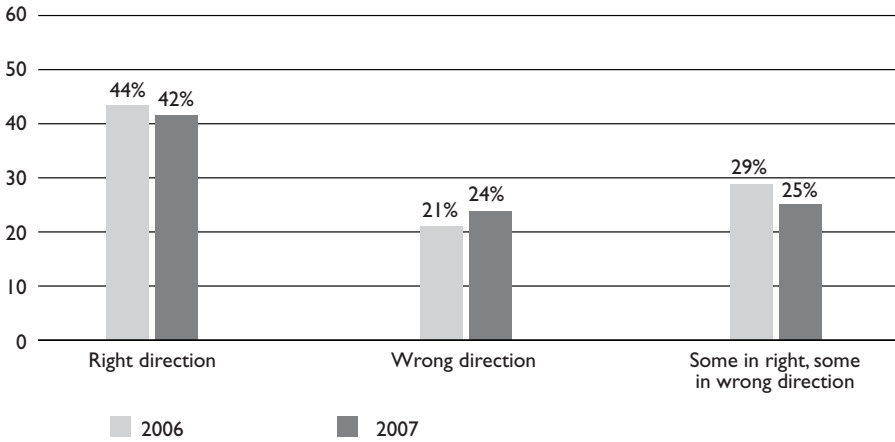
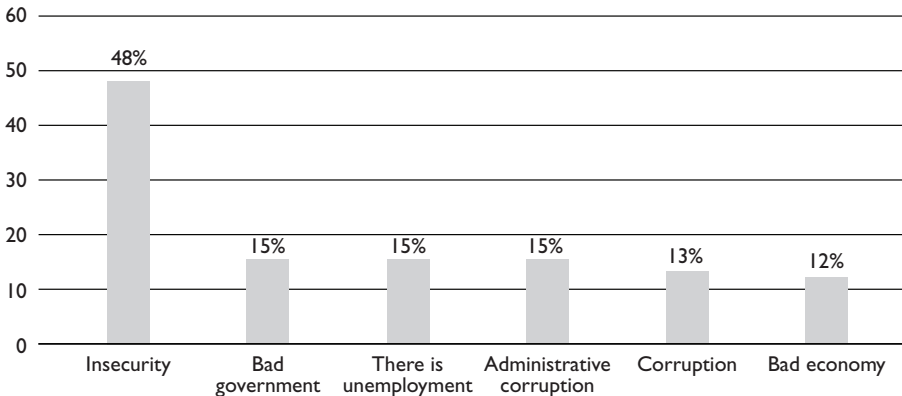


Table 2: The biggest problem facing Afghanistan as a whole

Source: The Asia Foundation 2007b: 13

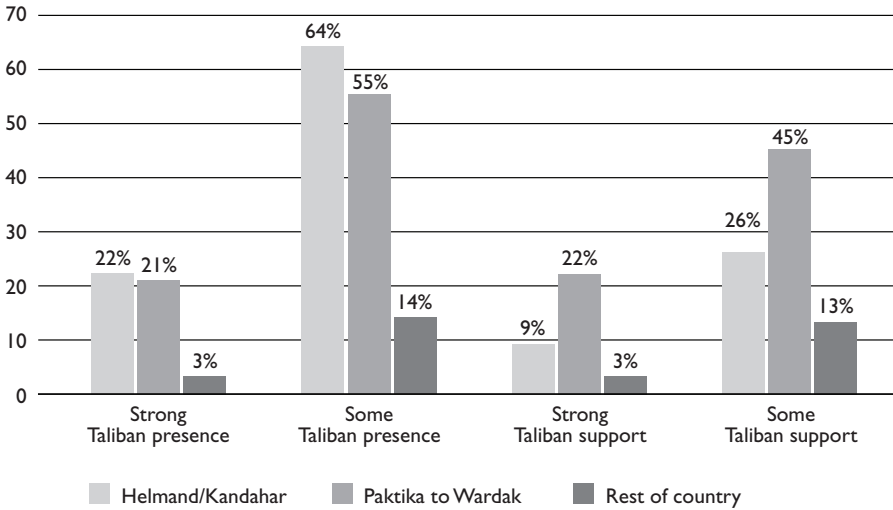


In the south of the country, ISAF has been trying to create a stable security situation, but it is faced by a determined enemy, primarily manifested in the Taliban. The fighting has shown that the Taliban and ISAF have an almost identical focus in that they are both trying to win the 'hearts and minds' of the local population. They both know that the key to success rests in the support of the people, which can only be won through a credible effort. History shows that Afghans back those who are winning, and it is still not clear who they are in the southern and eastern part of Afghanistan. According to an ABC News/BBC World Service poll (2006) the sup-

port today for the Taliban in the Helmand and Kandahar province is at about 25% of the population, see Table 3.

Table 3: Presence and support to the Taliban

Source: ABC News/ BBC World Service Poll 2006: 7



The fighting in the south has also shown that ISAF has to overcome considerable shortcomings in resource capacity if it is to be a credible provider of security and long term stability. When high-level staff at ISAF HQ and Regional Command South was interviewed, the resource capacity problem was often seen to lie primarily in the lack of combat troops on the ground and in mobility. As one informant stated during an interview, *"We need troops, assets, aircraft and mobility"*.³⁶ Currently ISAF is only present in four out of the six provinces included in Stage III, and with no immediate prospects of deploying troops to the last two provinces. The consequences of having too few troops in the southern region are many. Firstly, ISAF has a hard time providing the promised security; secondly, it cannot implement sufficient development through the PRTs; thirdly, it is spread too thinly in trying to solve the numerous different tasks; fourthly, it has to rely heavily on the use of the Afghan national security forces, thus wearing them down; and finally, and as a consequence, it is not yet seen as a credible provider of security, stability and development in southern Afghanistan.

³⁶ Interviews conducted with liaison officers to the regional commands at ISAF HQ, 22 September, and at Regional Command South in Kandahar, 25 September 2006.

The problem is again illustrated by Operation Medusa. Regional Command South had difficulties in assembling the necessary troops for the operation and had to bring in, among others, troops engaged in other vital security tasks in the area at that time. When the operation was launched, Regional Command South had only a very limited number of troops left to deal with any other situations that might arise, a situation that favored the Taliban in other parts of Kandahar and Helmand provinces. When ISAF is overstretched, national forces have to be deployed on tougher and longer tasks – resulting in attrition and thereby weaker ANA and ANP units. As mentioned many times during my field trips in Afghanistan, it is difficult for ISAF to be flexible and proactive when the number of troops committed to it is far below what the military assessment suggests is required.³⁷

In sum, broadly ISAF seems to be regarded as a credible implementer of security, stability and development in the northern, western and central parts of Afghanistan. In these areas the security situation is relatively stable, and small to large-scale development projects are being implemented. However, in the eastern and especially southern parts, the security situation is not satisfactory for the local population, and even small-scale development projects have not been implemented to a degree that would show the local population that ISAF, and thus the Afghan government is credible partners and should therefore be trusted and supported. ISAF's low credibility rate is primarily manifested in a shortage of men to counter the immense security, stability and development challenges. ISAF barely has enough troops to hold the Taliban back – certainly not enough to commence large-scale initiatives, without adverse consequences for other areas. The fact is that the 'hearts and minds' campaign will be delayed and perhaps undermined, due to the low numbers of combat troops and their poor operational manoeuvrability and flexibility.

3.3 Transparency of operations

The international community, the civilian population and local government in a conflict zone need to know the tasks of the international military presence as well as the tasks of the international community as a whole. This is important if the mission is to gain support in its efforts to implement its mandate. In Afghanistan, the majority of the population seems to understand the tasks of ISAF but some uncertainties concerning key military and supporting tasks have been identified both at the inter-

³⁷ ISAF has only 85% of the troops it requested to fulfill the mission. The troop request is made in a Combined Joint Statement of Requirement (CJSOR), made by the Supreme Allied Commander, Operations.

national and local levels. This has already been used to undermine the mission.

The tasks of ISAF can be found both on the web and in the international media. When the Danish parliament made the decision to deploy troops to the southern parts of Afghanistan, it was decided to make public a declassified version of the ISAF OPLAN.³⁸ Also, the key military tasks and key supporting tasks can be found on the NATO web page. The wording of the OPLAN can, however, be interpreted differently, and confusion over the role of ISAF in counter-narcotics operations has been debated frequently. In Annex C of the OPLAN it is stated that ISAF can “*Support the Afghan government counter narcotics effort*”. This support is then defined as follows in Appendix 3:

“The Afghan government, supported by the international community, is making a significant effort to tackle the illicit opium trade. NATO, as the primary military force, can contribute. Facilitating Afghan institutions and security forces in a long-term national counter-narcotics strategy is consistent with ISAF’s role to support the Afghan government extend its authority across the country.”

At the end of Appendix 3 of the OPLAN, it mentions that this support must be provided within the authorised rules of engagement. In the Danish Parliament some of the questions asked by different parliamentarians related to the interpretation of this wording. Generally, the understanding of the mandate is that direct poppy eradication is not a task for ISAF but that indirect support is allowed, e.g. logistical support to national counter-narcotics units. In the local context, the overall task also seems to be understood. When talking to ISAF personnel involved with the local population regarding the civilian understanding of ISAF, they reported that most of the locals knew why ISAF is there and what its tasks are, though with some high expectations. Also, representatives from Badakhshan Province seemed well informed about the task of ISAF.³⁹ On the other hand, the unclear wording of the ISAF involvement in counter-narcotics operations has been reported by Regional Command South to be creating confusion amongst the local people – is ISAF there to eradicate opium or not? It seems that the Taliban is using this uncertainty and confusion against the international forces by trying to persuade the local population, that the core ISAF purpose is to eradicate opium fields and thus to take away

³⁸ The OPLAN can be found at <http://www.folketinget.dk/>

³⁹ Interview conducted in Feyzabad with representatives of Badakhshan Province, 28 September 2006. Interviews conducted with military personnel stationed in Regional Command North and in Regional Command South.

their livelihoods. This perception is hard to counter and is making the task of winning the trust of the local population difficult for ISAF.

ISAF is trying to counter these uncertainties at the tactical level. In Regional Command South, Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) are being conducted with, among others, the aim of informing the local population about ISAF's real tasks. To counter the disinformation campaign by the Taliban, ISAF PSYOPS teams are using local radio stations to broadcast information on the mission and producing leaflets which are then distributed to the local population by ISAF patrols or by airdrops. Overall, the PSYOPS strategy is to counter all known Taliban propaganda with ISAF countermeasures. For example, when the Taliban distributes what are known as 'night letters' threatening the locals to refrain from supporting ISAF, ISAF produces 'day letters' listing the benefits of supporting ISAF and the Afghan government.

The PSYOPS campaign is an uphill struggle. There are several problems in engaging in these types of operations in an Afghan context. One problem is the high level of illiteracy in the population, which limits the range of means at the disposal of the teams. Another problem is the hostile environment and the Taliban's hold on power in the local communities. The majority of the local radio stations will not broadcast anti-Taliban propaganda, but only ISAF messages that leave out the Taliban. This is simple due to the fact that the employees at the radio stations fear for their lives if they openly support ISAF. Thirdly, unlike ISAF, the Taliban have a 'home advantage' in distributing messages to the community. The Taliban can use local Mullahs to distribute their messages, which it is hard for ISAF to counter. Finally, since the Taliban consist primarily of local people, it is considered more trustworthy than the foreign troops.

In sum, to gain support for a mission, it is important that the international and national communities have full knowledge and understanding of the aims of the mission and the tasks it has been given. This transparency can have a positive effect on international and local support to the mission and eventually help to create realistic perceptions and expectations. Expectations have been high and some uncertainties regarding the mandate have been seen, especially regarding counter-narcotics operations. The confusion has been used by the Taliban to undermine the ISAF mission, which clearly illustrates that transparency of operations is of great importance. Two important lessons need to be learned. Firstly, key military tasks and key supporting tasks need to be formulated in clear terms, so that different interpretations do not

appear in the mission area or in troop contributing countries. Secondly, effective communication strategies to inform the local population about the tasks of ISAF are extremely important. For this reason, PSYOPS have become a crucial element of today's ISAF mission, and therefore should be prioritised.

3.4 Promotion of cooperation and consent

The topic of the promotion of cooperation and consent will be analysed with reference to a new concept developed during the initial period of the operation in Afghanistan: the PRT or Provincial Reconstruction Team. Cooperation and consent may include a variety of initiatives, such as facilitating meetings with the local authorities, encouraging civilian–military cooperation, and assisting or establishing development projects etc. In Afghanistan, PRTs were originally developed by the US-led coalition of the time, their purpose being to enhance security and visibility in the regions and provinces of Afghanistan. The concept developed steadily, and today 25 PRTs are operational across the country.⁴⁰

With the rapid fall of the Taliban government in 2001, the US-led coalition had to sustain the positive development across Afghanistan by deploying troops into the individual provinces. This was important because of the power vacuums that might have been created with the collapse of the official structures. The fear was that warlords and mid-level commanders would fill the vacuum in these areas and undermine the creation of a new Afghan state. However, it quickly became clear that the number of troops required to create security and fill the security vacuum would not actually be committed to the operation (Thruelsen 2006: 13-14, 31-5). The US-led coalition therefore had to think up alternatives to a heavy troop presence. As a result, the US developed the concept of Joint Regional Teams⁴¹ to build small military bases in the provinces, thus extending cooperation and content with the local authorities and supporting the reform of the security sector. The scheme was hastily drawn up, and as a consequence, clear guidelines required for implementation were not developed, thus leading the individual team commanders to implement it in accordance with their individual preferences. The concept behind the scheme therefore became quite diffuse, giving rise to considerable criticism from the Afghan authorities and the international NGO community (Jakobsen 2005: 17-20). To counter this criticism, the concept was renamed Provincial Reconstruction

⁴⁰ As of August 2007: see www.nato.int/issues/isaf/index.html

⁴¹ The first team was established in Gardez City, Paktia Province, in January 2003.

Teams in 2003 and was to focus less on coordinating reconstruction and development efforts and more on supporting security sector reform and providing a visible security presence in the provinces⁴² (Jakobsen 2005: 18-19).

The official PRT mission statement states that: *“Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) will assist the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to extend its authority, in order to facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment in the identified area of operations, and enable Security Sector Reform (SSR) and reconstruction efforts”* (ISAF PRT Handbook 2006: 2). The three overall operational areas are governance, security structures and development (outlined in Box 1).

Box 1: Task list for PRTs in Afghanistan

Governance	Security structures	Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable provincial governance and assist capacity building • Monitor the credibility and effectiveness of provincial governance • Inform and promote provincial governance activities to the local population and traditional institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical presence and engagement with the Afghan population through patrolling • Support provincial authorities in mediation dispute and resolution • Support security sector reform (ANA, ANP, Judicial Reform, DDR and Counter Narcotics) • Provide assistance in protection and evacuation to IOs and NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate, monitor and assess provincial development • Carry out humanitarian assistance and quick impact projects when needed • Conduct village/area profiles when conducting patrols

⁴² Under the Stage III and IV expansions of ISAF in the summer and autumn of 2006, ISAF deployed PRTs across the whole country and today most NATO countries are involved in PRTs in Afghanistan. Different nations have undertaken to lead individual PRTs, with other nations supporting individual tasks. PRTs differ in size, but they normally consist of between one and five hundred people. Most PRT personnel are military, but PRTs also include some development advisors, police officers and other civilians carrying out particular functions. The PRT structure can typically be divided into two pillars, one military, the other civilian. The two pillars normally have no control over each other, but rely solely on cooperation and good relations.

Security is fundamental and a prerequisite for the effective expansion of the other focus areas. Security is achieved by the physical presence of forces in the provinces and districts. At the same time, the other operational areas are supposed to be implemented in close synergy, as security is established. However, these directives are not closely followed by the various PRTs. Interviewees at ISAF HQ expressed concern that the troops allocated by different nations to the individual PRTs are deployed to the mission as national contributions and not as delegated ISAF troops. Thus, those individual states deploy troops on the basis of their own concerns, preferences and funding criteria in solving and defining the PRT tasks. If a deploying nation wants to focus on demonstrating a presence in the province at the cost of fewer development projects being implemented, ISAF HQ cannot intervene other than to request that the guidelines be followed.

For example, German-led PRTs in northern Afghanistan are deployed with restrictive national rules allowing patrols to be conducted only in relation to medical support and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) support, and only then with a rather high number of soldiers and armoured transport.⁴³ Also, the German development agency, the Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ), has some quite bureaucratic procedures for releasing development funds, which tends to slow down the implementation of development projects, and especially quick-impact projects.⁴⁴ The main form of cooperation between the patrols operating out of the PRT and the BMZ is on sharing the 'village profiles' made by the patrols. BMZ then use the village profiles to identify and implement projects, though this part of the work does not involve the patrols themselves. At the other end of the spectrum, the Danish troops deployed to the German PRT have a close relationship with the Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA) advisor stationed with them. The Danish patrols help to identify projects, and assist in implementing them, thus acting as a direct partner. By contrast, the Czech patrols that are also stationed with the German PRT do not have any development money with which to carry out projects, so they focus primarily on showing a presence in their area of responsibility. These differences in approach within the same PRT make it difficult for the local population and civil administration to adjust expectations to the presence of a PRT. Also, the different areas in which the national patrols

⁴³ This is also the case with some PRTs in Regional Command West and Centre.

⁴⁴ Interviews conducted in Feyzabad with a civilian development advisor from PRT Feyzabad, 29 September 2006.

work receive a different level of development.⁴⁵ The implication is twofold: there is no uniform civilian perception of the patrols, and some of the locals feel they have been left behind, thus creating feelings of mistrust towards the PRT.

In the south of the country, the United Kingdom has a PRT in Lashkar Gah, Helmand Province, consisting of a military and a civilian element represented by, among others, the Department for International Development (DFID), DANIDA, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). However, because of the security situation in the province, this PRT has been focusing on creating security and stability in Lashkar Gah and has not yet been acting in the entire province. Cooperation between the civilian element and the military is described as constructive, but many new lessons have been learned in terms of the different approaches to managing the task, i.e. long-term development versus quick impact. The UK Task Force in Helmand is focusing strongly on security operations and is therefore not able to supply enough troops to support both the PRT and the civilian component with security in identifying and implementing development projects.⁴⁶ The result is that, while the two parts of the PRT do support and reinforce each other's objectives in some respects, it has yet to be seen how managing the task in achieving higher levels of security and benefits for the population will turn out.

During the field trips to Afghanistan, interviews revealed the impression that every nation contributing troops to PRTs has a different agenda.⁴⁷ Some have an emphasis on development, others on security, while yet others are more concerned to show their own national flags and implement national development agendas. It seems that the PRT concept is here to stay, and many of the different approaches taken to PRTs have solid advantages. Nonetheless, it is evident that the PRT concept needs to be modified so that the local population, the Afghan government and the international NGO community know what to expect from the presence of a PRT.

In sum, overall PRTs can be considered a good idea, with many positive elements. However, the concept needs to be redefined as an instrument with which military operations can secure the end state, not one for individual governments to imple-

⁴⁵ Interviews conducted in Feyzabad with military representatives of the PRT, Feyzabad, 27–29 September 2006.

⁴⁶ Interviews conducted with military representatives from Regional Command South in Kandahar, 24–25 September 2006.

⁴⁷ Interviews conducted with leading staff from J9 at ISAF HQ, 22 September 2006.

ment national development policy. PRTs are deployed nationally, and the funds they bring with them are 'owned' by national governments. ISAF HQ cannot decide where the money should be used, and although it can make policy, that policy is seldom followed. The funds are donor money and are allocated to each national PRT with stipulations. It is important, however, that a certain amount of donor money be given without caveats and made available so that military PRT commanders and their civilian counterparts at the PRTs can take these assets into account when, for example, planning a military operation or acting in coordination with the national development strategy.

4. Tactical level

4.1 Media plan and public information

In modern military operations, media plans and public information are essential for mission success. All sides in theatre – the international forces, the local government and the opposing forces – use the media as part of their strategy. As described earlier, the central focus is to win the trust and support of the local population. In doing so, the local and international media, together with the information campaigns of the military, become the centre of attention. The term ‘the strategic corporal’, referring to how action taken on the tactical level can influence the political strategic level, has become everyday reality in Afghanistan (Krulak 1997). ISAF is aware of it in their media strategy, and the Taliban are using it in their engagement with the international media and in their quest to undermine the support of the local population for ISAF and the Afghan government.

Within the sphere of information concepts, three overall types of operation have to be defined, namely Public Information, Information Operations and Psychological Operations:

- Public Information is defined as *“information, which is released or published for the primary purpose of keeping the public fully informed, thereby gaining their understanding and support”* (Military Committee 457 NATO Military Policy on Public Information);
- Information Operations are *“coordinated actions to create desired effects on the will, understanding and capability of adversaries, potential adversaries and other approved parties in support of the Alliance’s overall objectives by affecting their information, information-based processes and systems while exploiting and protecting one’s own”* (NATO Allied Joint Population 3.10: ‘Information Operations Doctrine’); and
- Psychological Operations are *“Planned psychological activities using methods of communications and other means directed to approved audiences in order to influence perceptions, attitudes and behaviors, affecting the achievement of political and military objectives”* (Military Committee 402/1 NATO Military Policy on Psychological Operations).

All three of these aspects are deployed in the ISAF mission. However, this analysis will only focus on the public information being implemented by ISAF HQ.⁴⁸ Public information is targeted towards a broad audience, including national, regional and international media and public. The primary tools in reaching the audience are press conferences, press releases, an official spokesperson and the ISAF website. The Public Information Office, which is in charge of public information, is responsible for handling media requests and accrediting journalists and media surveillance. An example of the work of the Public Information Office was seen in Operation Medusa, when ISAF HQ handled these activities directed towards the international and national media. During the operation, which lasted from 2 to 17 September 2006, ISAF HQ released media updates on major progress and incidents almost daily, together with special press releases on extraordinary events, e.g. when a British Nimrod aircraft went down, killing the entire crew, or the 'blue on blue' incident between Canadian troops and US A-10 aeroplanes. This approach was again seen during Operation Achilles conducted in spring 2007, where radio broadcasts, leaflet airdrops, and media updates were used to reach both the international and local populations.

Other examples of the active approach can be seen in the frequent statements of the number of Taliban and other insurgents killed in operations. The strategy of releasing information on enemy combatants killed seems to be driven by the wish to signal performance and tactical effect in theatre. By releasing such statements, it appears to satisfy the desire of some governments who prefer to focus on short-term tactical effects rather than long-term strategic effects. The downside to this approach is the effect on intra-theatre audience, which consists of the local population, the government and very importantly the Taliban. The Taliban in particular, uses such information in their drive to undermine local support for ISAF and the government. When ISAF states that a certain number of Taliban have been killed, the Taliban tell the local population that in fact it was ordinary Pashtuns⁴⁹ who had been killed in the battle. President Karzai has on a number of occasions warned ISAF about this strategy because, as he sees it, it is sending the wrong message to the world, and especially to the Afghans themselves. The ordinary Afghan does not want a foreign power to come and kill Afghans in their own country: instead, he wants the peace and development he has been promised. The recipients of the

⁴⁸ Psychological Operations have been analysed in the section on "Transparency of Operations" above.

⁴⁹ The Taliban originates from the ethnic group of the Pashtuns, which comprise approximately 44 % of the Afghan population.

information, primarily the international press and different governments, may feel satisfied by it, but Afghans are not, and here too the Taliban use the information to their advantage.

In sum, the local and international media do indeed have access to military information through press conferences, press releases and the ISAF website and by embedding journalists with military units on the ground in Afghanistan. Also, operational updates are issued to the public when needed. The media pay close attention to the work of ISAF, which the latter can turn to its advantage. However, the ISAF public information strategy must calculate whether or not the international and especially the national population deem it a success when ISAF have killed some insurgents. It can be hard to identify the strategic gains and advantages from a local perspective when one is told that a certain number of people have been killed, especially when the credibility of the information is being undermined by the Taliban. The ISAF Public Information Office should be focusing on the longer term gains by explaining to the local and international media why particular combat operations with the Taliban and other insurgents are being conducted, thereby demonstrating the long-term importance of particular operations to these media.

4.2 Use of force: rules of engagement

Clear and robust rules of engagement, and those pertaining to the use of force by the military deployed in peace support operations are essential for the ability of the force to carry out its mandate. Rules should be clearly formulated so they easily can be followed by the soldiers on the ground when engaging in a dangerous situation, but at the same time formulated according to the principles of minimum use of force. The rules of engagement applied in Afghanistan, specifying when and how soldiers can use military force, lethal or non-lethal, are very wide and described as robust. The ISAF personnel interviewed during the field trips were quite satisfied with the rules and their ability to use them. On the other hand, the robust rules of engagement are beginning to be seen as a problem for ISAF because of the growing number of civilians being killed during ISAF operations.

The strong focus from western governments, and especially the military itself, on authorising what have begun to be known as 'robust' rules of engagement should be seen in the light of especially the experiences of the Balkans and Rwanda in the 1990s. During the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) mission in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1992-1995 and UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda

(UNAMIR) from 1993-1996, the international community was put to the test because of the complexity of the missions and the fact that the warring factions did not respect the weak mandates and rules of engagement of the UN peacekeepers. The international community and the soldiers realised that the complexity of the mission and the task of protecting the civilian population did not correspond to the mandate issued by the UN Security Council. The soldiers on the ground were often in no position to intervene because of a weak mandate, rules of engagement and the lack of equipment. This was especially seen with the 'safe areas' in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Rwandan genocide, where the peacekeepers could not prevent the atrocities. Both the politicians and the military forces realised that strong mandates and rules of engagements would be needed if international forces were to contribute positively to the peace efforts.

Today the mission mandate and rules of engagement given to ISAF are characterised as robust, meaning that the international force has a wide range of options available to it in implementing the mandate, fighting the insurgency and protecting themselves. When ISAF staff were asked whether the rules of engagement were wide enough to carry out the task, all interviewees responded that they were sufficient and that they did not need any wider authority.⁵⁰ They have strict targeting procedures for using air support,⁵¹ but the procedures could be followed in the field, and on the ground they could follow up enemy attacks. The downside, however, of such robust rules of engagement have been seen on a number of occasions, when the massive and frequent use of force in some of the quite complex situations facing the military have resulted in a number of civilian dead. The enemy is, of course, exploiting the fact that ISAF is fighting back with massive force and are deliberately selecting urban areas and other places with civilians present when choosing a battleground. Over the summer of 2006 and spring 2007, reports on civilian deaths due to the fighting began to appear more frequently, and the Afghan civilian community began to oppose this development in demonstrations and calling on President Karzai to take action. Classified figures from the Afghan Ministry of Interior leaked in August 2007 estimated that some 1060 civilians had been killed from April to August 2007 due to fighting between Afghan and international troops and the Taliban.⁵²

⁵⁰ Interviews conducted with leading staff at ISAF HQ, 22 September 2006, and at Regional Command South in Kandahar, 24-25 September 2006.

⁵¹ 'Target Engagement Authority', issued by Joint Forces Command Brunssum in relation to the OPLAN.

⁵² www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=73759

For instance, on Sunday 4 March 2007, an incident occurred in Nangrahar Province in eastern Afghanistan, when a US convoy was attacked by a suicide bomber. According to the press news release, the following happened:

*“Militants assaulted a Coalition forces convoy Sunday morning as it moved east along Highway 1 killing eight civilians and wounding 35 people in Nangarhar Province. The five-vehicle convoy was moving through a crowded market place near Bari Kot, located in the Muhmand Dara District, when militants attacked the convoy from several directions with small arms fire and a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device. Coalition forces returned fire in defense of the patrol, and Afghan National Police, Afghan National Army and Coalition forces responded promptly to the attack, securing the area and providing immediate on-site medical attention to the wounded civilians.”*⁵³

However, the international media reporting from the scene after talking to locals who had apparently witnessed the incident had another view of it:

*“Nine witnesses — including five Afghans recuperating from bullet wounds in the hospital — told The Associated Press that U.S. forces fired indiscriminately along at least a six-mile stretch of one of eastern Afghanistan’s busiest highways — a route often filled not only with cars and trucks but Afghans on foot and bicycles. “They were firing everywhere, and they even opened fire on 14 to 15 vehicles passing on the highway,” said Tur Gul, 38, who was standing on the roadside by a gas station and was shot twice in his right hand. “They opened fire on everybody, the ones inside the vehicles and the ones on foot.”*⁵⁴

The two stories fully illustrate the dilemma the international forces face when operating in Afghanistan. It does not really matter which of the stories is the most accurate. The perception of the population and the rumours spreading after the incident become the truth, in an environment where the majority does not know how to read and write and has a general mistrust of central institutions. The ‘truth’ is therefore the one told by the crowd on the streets, and that is the reality the international forces have to relate to.

After the incident, President Karzai “*strongly condemned the incident which took place due to a suicide attack on a coalition convoy and which prompted the coalition*

⁵³ www.centcom.mil

⁵⁴ www.msnbc.msn.com/id/17446441/

firing on civilians that killed 10 people".⁵⁵ President Karzai has been critical of the international forces for their failure to protect civilians from casualties when operating throughout the country. In June 2006 he said that *"It is not acceptable for us that, in all this fighting, Afghans are dying. [Even] if they are Taliban, they are sons of this land"* (Mills 2006: 17). He understands the complexity of the fighting, but also realises that if too many civilians are killed, it will eventually undermine his own support and especially support for the international forces. Also, the United Nations Assistance Mission Afghanistan (UNAMA) has raised concerns over the deaths of civilians during military operations and has, like Karzai, stated *"that the safety and welfare of civilians must always come first, and any civilian casualties are unacceptable, without exception"*.⁵⁶ A report from Human Rights Watch states that more than 4,400 Afghans were killed in conflict-related violence in Afghanistan in 2006⁵⁷. Many of them were killed by the Taliban or other anti-government forces, but the international forces were also responsible for a number of the killings. Again in May 2007 some fifty civilians were said to have been killed in fighting between the international forces and the Taliban in Herat Province. Here again local populations demonstrated against the international forces, and President Karzai warned: *"Civilian deaths and arbitrary decisions to search people's houses have reached an unacceptable level"*.⁵⁸

The frequent use of airpower and artillery have also been criticised by the Afghans because of the extensive damage a 500 to 2000 pound bomb does to a small community. The Taliban often attack ISAF troops from areas where the civilian population is living and doing their daily chores. This strategy is used with overwhelming success because of the often massive retaliation to an ambush by ISAF.⁵⁹ The civilians easily become caught in the crossfire, with the result that they feel ISAF is not protecting them. It becomes hard for the civilian population to understand why the fight against the Taliban needs so much civilian suffering and why it has to be conducted at the cost of their living. Eventually the robust use of force will turn the population against ISAF, thus causing the mission to fail. President Karzai told NATO and coalition commanders in May 2007 *"... that the patience of the Afghan*

⁵⁵ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6418459.stm

⁵⁶ www.unama-afg.org

⁵⁷ <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/01/29/afghan15223.htm>

⁵⁸ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6615781.stm

⁵⁹ The Danish soldiers requested air support 112 times between January 2002 and December 2006, i.e. there were 112 occasions on which bombs or other weapons were used. Most of the deliveries were in 2006 (<http://www.folketinget.dk/>).

*people is wearing thin with the continued killing of innocent civilians,*⁶⁰ heavily implying that support for ISAF will not last if the 'robust' use of force continues on the scale that is currently being seen.

In sum, when rules of engagement are formulated, the politicians are quite aware of the importance of not sending soldiers to do a job without a sufficient mandate and robust rules of engagement. If the rules are too vague, soldiers' lives can be lost and the civilians they are there to protect will not be given the security guarantee they need. On the other hand, if the rules are too wide, the massive use of force to protect soldiers from casualties and to create safety among the locals can backfire and result in substantial distrust from the local population, thereby undermining the support for the whole mission. In the short term a number of civilian casualties can be accepted by the population while searching to bring security to the country, but when the short term becomes the long term, with frequent civilian casualties, the mission to bring security is jeopardised. It becomes indistinguishable from insecurity for the local population, and in the end this will mean ISAF losing the struggle. ISAF has pledged to change some of its operational procedures, including targeting procedures and the size of the bombs when using airpower, but attempts must be made to balance the short-term tactical effects of the massive use of force with the long-term strategic effect of winning the hearts and minds of the local population. Also, western politicians need to realise that too few soldiers and the lack of a number of other resources will eventually force the troops on the ground to resort to the extensive use of force due to undermanning when engaged in the complex task of fighting an insurgency.

⁶⁰ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6615781.stm

5. Findings on the ISAF operation in Afghanistan

5.1 Political/strategic level

- The overall ISAF mandate seems to be in line with the aims of the international community. Also, the Bonn Agreement and subsequent Afghanistan Compact envisage a certain division of labour. On the other hand, the political and strategic end state set by NATO clearly cannot be implemented with the current military, civilian and economic resources available. The strategic end state has been politically defined, but the resources allocated by the international community to reach the end state have not been made available in theatre. The international community must moderate its ambitions for a stable Afghanistan to match the resources it is prepared to make available, thereby creating a holistic strategy for the mission. Meaning, that a strategic overall political military campaign plan needs to be formulated and agreed upon by the Afghan government and the international community.
- There is unity of effort in Afghanistan, and many international and local actors are working towards the same goals. However, the energy given to each individual task differs markedly. To minimise the attrition of the ANA, consideration should be given to the possibility of it being put in charge of some of the more stable provinces in the country, thereby releasing ISAF units to be involved in security, stability mentoring and development tasks in the more fragile southern and eastern provinces. A joint effort should also be made to strengthen the education and daily performance of the ANP. The EU and the US should allocate resources to the mission on the same scale as in the Balkans if success is to be achieved. Finally, the counter-narcotics campaign should focus less on forced eradication and more on alternative forms of production, and it should be recognised that it will take many years to deal with this question. The counter opium strategy must be closely coordinated in a holistic effort with other development tasks, such as education, infrastructure, health care and especially security – the primary task of ISAF.

5.2 Operational level

- Without any unity of command, effective military operations are hard to carry out. The ISAF task is to implement the mission mandate, but ISAF in itself is restricted in its conduct of operations as caveats are drawn up nationally, mainly because of domestic politics. These caveats need to be lifted so that ISAF can

conduct operations more effectively. Taking the political reality into consideration as a minimum, all the caveats should be clearly written on paper, and not just developed on 'ad hoc' basis.

- The international community must provide ISAF with the resources it originally requested to carry out its task. In the short term, deploying troops will undoubtedly tax the existing resources of the troop-contributing countries, but in the long term it will save lives, shorten the mission, and limit the current exploitation of ISAF and Afghanistan's national security forces.
- It is important that the international and national communities have full knowledge and understanding of the aims of the mission and the tasks it has been given. Two important lessons need to be learned. First, key military tasks and key supporting tasks need to be formulated in clear terms, so that different interpretations do not appear in the mission area or in troop contributing countries. Second, effective communication strategies to inform the local population about the tasks of ISAF are extremely important, which is why PSYOPS have become a crucial element in today's ISAF mission, and therefore should be prioritised.
- It is essential that the commanders on the ground know what assets they have at their disposal so that they can conduct effective coordinated operations. Also, the Afghan government and the local population find it hard to know what to expect when they become involved with PRTs. The non-delivered expectations may become counterproductive in winning the 'hearts and minds' of the local population. Therefore, troop-contributing countries must actually allocate the command of the PRT to the ISAF commander in the area of operation – and thereby the overall PRT strategy – if success is to be achieved, and not just deploy the PRT as an instrument of national politics. Provisions for the use of development money assigned to the national PRT should be determined by the PRT commanders and their civilian counterparts at the PRT or at the very least funds should be allocated directly to a fund at ISAF HQ or the respective PRT.

5.3 Tactical level

- The ISAF public information strategy must calculate whether or not the international and especially the national population deem actions a success when insurgents have been killed. The ISAF Public Information Office should focus on the longer-term civilian gains of engaging in combat operations with the Taliban and other insurgents, thereby demonstrating the long-term importance of particular operations to the local and international media.

- The rules of engagement have to reflect the complexity of the mission it is the soldiers' mandate is to implement. If the rules are too vague, soldiers' lives can be lost and the civilians they are to protect will not be given the security guarantee they need. On the other hand, too massive a use of force can backfire and result in substantial distrust from the local population, thereby undermining the support for the whole mission. If the search to bring security becomes indistinguishable from insecurity for the local population, in the end this will mean ISAF losing the struggle. Attempts must be made to balance the short-term tactical effects of an operation with the long-term strategic effect of winning the hearts and minds of the local population. In addition, western politicians should realise that too few soldiers and the lack of a number of other resources will eventually force the troops on the ground to resort to extensive use of force due to chronic undermanning when engaged in the complex task of fighting an insurgency.

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Operationalised matrix

Dimension	Success Criteria 1	
<p>Political/ Strategic</p>	<p>Objective and Mandate: <i>“Every campaign must be directed towards a clearly stated and attainable end state. In a joint and multinational campaign, involving many civilian organizations and agencies, military strategic objectives may be milestones along the way to achieving the desired political end state or an element of that end state”</i></p>	
	<p>Unity of Effort: <i>“Unity of effort recognizes the need for a coherent approach to a common objective between the various military contingents and between the military and civilian components of any operation. Cooperation between military and civil elements requires continual military interaction with a large number of International Organizations and NGOs. Effective liaison at all levels and regular conferences and meetings involving all agencies and parties are essential in achieving unity of effort.”</i></p>	

	Derived Research Question	Level of analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have clearly stated and attainable objectives or an 'end state' been incorporated into the mandate?	Military/Government/ IO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has there been sufficient coordination between the military, international and national components in relation to the peace-building objectives?	Military/Government/ IO/NGO

Dimension	Success Criteria 1
Operational	<p>Unity of Command: <i>“Unity of command, based on principles and arrangements for command and control, is a non-negotiable principle (...) Unity of command requires clearly defined authorities, roles and relationships to accomplish assigned tasks.”</i></p>
	<p>Credibility: <i>“A military force must be credible. A force must respond with professional bearing and swift, effective reactions to incidents. Establishing credibility is essential for building confidence (...). While a force should not appear to pose a direct threat as long as compliance exists, there must be no doubt that a force is fully capable of carrying out its responsibilities and has the will to coerce if required to do so.”</i></p>
	<p>Transparency of Operations: <i>“The mission and concept of operations as well as political/military end states must be readily understood and obvious to all parties and agencies. Achieving a common understanding will remove suspicion and mistrust.”</i></p>
	<p>Promotion of Cooperation and Consent: <i>“The promotion of cooperation and consent amongst the parties are pre-requisites for many PSOs. Before execution any military force activity, which may result in a loss of consent, should be carefully balanced and assessed against the long-term objectives of the operation. This may be achieved through careful coordination of national agendas and enhanced consultation and cooperation.”</i></p>
Tactical	<p>Media Plan and Public Information: <i>“Any PSO will generate and attract intensive major international and domestic media and public attention. (...) While support by the media does not guarantee an operation’s success, continuing media criticism and hostility can help cause its failure.”</i></p>
	<p>Use of Force – Rules of Engagement: <i>“The potential use of force affects every aspect of a mission and requires continual review to accomplish the mission. In all cases, the use of force must be in accordance with the provisions of International Law, including international humanitarian law, and the politically approved amplifying guidance attached to the rules of engagement.”</i></p>

¹ All criteria definitions are extracted from NATO Allied Joint Population 3.4.1: ‘Peace Support Operations’

	Derived Research Question	Level of analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was a unity of command established for all the military components of ISAF? • Were national restrictions formulated regarding how the units deployed to the ISAF mission could be used? (and what were the consequences of imposing these restrictions?) 	Military/Government/NGO/Media/Locals
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is ISAF perceived by the Afghans as a credible force, with the ability to carry out its mandate and reach the end state? 	Government/Local Authorities/IO / NGO/ Media/Locals
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the concepts of operation and mandates sufficiently communicated to the civilian population and the parties of the conflict? • Are the tasks of the military force obvious to the international and local populations? 	Military/Government/IO/NGO/Locals
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has ISAF entered into relations of cooperation and consent with the local authorities, and have sufficient funds been allocated to these activities? 	Military/Government/NGO/Locals
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the media have access to military information and ongoing operations? • What kinds of procedures were established for keep the public informed on an ongoing basis? 	Military/IO/NGO/Media
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the rules of engagement been formulated according to the principles of proportional and minimum use of force? • How is the use of force by ISAF being perceived by the population? 	Military/Government/IO/NGO/Media/Locals

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