



**JOINT SERVICES  
COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE**

---

---

**Defence Research Project**

**By**

**Wg Cdr I Laing RAF**

---

---

**ADVANCED COMMAND AND  
STAFF COURSE**

**NUMBER 10**

***SEP 06 - JUL 07***

# **‘How can the UK ensure success in its missions in Southern Afghanistan?’**

---

**DISCLAIMER** - The views expressed in this paper are entirely and solely those of the Author and do not necessarily represent those of the UK Ministry of Defence, any other department of Her Britannic Majesty’s Government of the United Kingdom. Further, such views should not be considered as constituting an official endorsement of factual accuracy, opinion, conclusion or recommendation of the UK Ministry of Defence or any other department of Her Britannic Majesty’s Government of the United Kingdom.

---

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the UK's current operations in Afghanistan. Reconstruction is considered the key to Afghanistan's recovery because it underpins infrastructure, government capacity and further economic growth. Successful reconstruction requires adequate security. The impact of removing the income from the illegal trade in poppy must be managed, and international investment will be vital to achieve the required level of economic growth. Using information presented in academic and government literature, along with newspaper reports and web articles, this essay concludes that operations in Afghanistan are a case study for the Comprehensive Approach. Whilst the UK is applying the Comprehensive Approach relatively well at the operational and tactical levels, this paper argues that the strategic implementation is not working as well and that a cross-government transformation will be required to achieve unity of command and purpose at all levels. Ultimately, the long-term support of the British public must be ensured for the UK to be successful in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is the poorest country in the world outside sub-Saharan Africa<sup>1</sup> and has been ravaged by years of war. It was the launch-pad for 9/11 and its ungoverned areas posed a real security threat to the world because they permitted international terrorists like Al Qaeda to operate freely from within its borders. Whilst operations in Iraq are widely perceived as a mistake, those in Afghanistan have not yet fallen into that category. The International Community (IC) has the opportunity to turn the situation into a success but it will require political commitment now and the operations must be properly resourced. General Dannatt, the Chief of the General Staff, was putting the case for Britain's mission in Afghanistan last October. He was trying to explain the great efforts being made there and his belief that the objectives are commendable, emphasising that British troops were in Afghanistan at the invitation of its elected government.<sup>2</sup> There is still time to shore up international opinion in favour of the campaign. Success will require positive, sustained political commitment from the IC now, and for the next few years. Most observers and military officers involved in Afghanistan agree that the mission is set to fail unless the IC puts more resources into the country. Barnett Rubin consistently says that the IC needs to double its resources<sup>3</sup> and the out-going International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) commander, General Richards, agrees that NATO is taking a lot of risk by operating with fewer troops than are actually needed.<sup>4</sup> There are around 47,000 troops in Afghanistan from 37 nations,<sup>5</sup> including 35,000 operating with the NATO-led ISAF and 12,000 serving with the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).<sup>6</sup> They are attempting to provide security in a country larger than Iraq, which has upwards of 150,000 troops in theatre. The real problem this presents is that NATO has no operational reserve in Afghanistan to reinforce success or to help if operations are not going as hoped, nor does NATO have enough boots on the ground to provide lasting security and reassure the local population that they will be protected. Once NATO has had a tactical success the Taliban only has to wait until NATO troops have left and then walk back into the village or area that had been secured. This is not a sustainable way to pursue the campaign. There is some hope though; the UK recently announced that she would send an additional 1,400 troops to bolster her forces in Helmand province.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the US has announced a further US\$11.8 billion in civilian and military aid over the next two years<sup>8</sup> and this will go a significant way to help. However, other NATO members must do more; for example, French and German troops in Afghanistan are held

---

<sup>1</sup> Rubin, Barnett R, 'Saving Afghanistan', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2007, p.66.

<sup>2</sup> *Focus: In the Line of Fire*, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2087-2404819,00.html> , accessed 17 January 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Rubin, op.cit., p.61.

<sup>4</sup> Norton-Taylor, Richard, *Full Interview: General David Richards*, *The Guardian*, 22 January 2007.

<sup>5</sup> *A double spring offensive*, *The Economist*, 24 February 2007, p.26.

<sup>6</sup> US Army.mil/News, <http://www.army.mil/-news/2007/05/10/3060-4500-101st-airborne-division-soldiers-slated-for-afghanistan-deployment/> , accessed 19 May 2007.

<sup>7</sup> BBC News, Des Browne Statement, *UK to boost Afghan force by 1,400*, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/6396001.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6396001.stm) , accessed 4 March 2007.

<sup>8</sup> *The Economist*, op.cit, 24 February 2007, p.26.

back from fighting by national caveats.<sup>9</sup> These caveats adversely affect the efficiency of ISAF in theatre. However, despite the requirement for more troops to set the security conditions required to move forward, the long-term solution in Afghanistan is political, not military.

Therefore, the UK's version of success in the mission will be defined by politicians from HM Government (HMG) and the Government of Afghanistan (GoA). Adam Ingram defined success as:

***A stable, secure, democratic and self-sustaining Afghanistan, free from terrorism and terrorist domination.***<sup>10</sup>

This is the definition of success that this essay will use. Success in Afghanistan will not be quick; historical analysis suggests that it is likely to take a generation to turn the country around. It is a decade since the end of hostilities in Northern Ireland and a political solution is just starting to emerge. It is important to remember that the UK is just one among 37 other nations in Afghanistan and does not lead the overall effort. Any changes to strategy must be agreed internationally, and the US in particular must be persuaded if we are to make a difference; this will require diplomatic effort. This campaign is a case study for the Comprehensive Approach (CA) which attempts to apply all of the levers of national power. It is where the CA meets reality. However, we should not limit our thinking to Southern Afghanistan alone; Afghanistan will be viewed as a whole and success in the south will require stability throughout the entire country.

This essay argues that the key to Afghanistan's success lies in reconstruction. Reconstruction underpins everything from basic sanitation, hospitals, schools, transport, and government capacity to further economic growth. However, reconstruction is impossible without security and sustained economic support from the IC. Therefore the priorities for Afghanistan are security, then reconstruction followed by economic growth. This essay will briefly discuss the current position in Afghanistan before analysing how security might be achieved. Areas for reconstruction will then be examined, followed by economic opportunities. This essay will go on to discuss the UK's attempts to implement the CA, and examine areas for improvement.

Overall, this essay argues that to ensure success in Afghanistan the UK must address how it implements the CA at the strategic level, which will require a cross-government transformation. The campaign in Afghanistan will require the efficient application of all levers of state power. Ultimately, enduring international commitment and time will make the difference in Afghanistan. This will require the UK and the IC to exercise strategic patience. Securing public support in the nations involved is the real challenge for the IC if it is to be successful in Afghanistan. The

---

<sup>9</sup> Harding, Thomas, *Do your fair share in Afghanistan, NATO told*, The Daily Telegraph, 10 March 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Ingram, Adam, 'Speech to All Parliamentary Army Group, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2006', <http://www.mod.uk/defenceinternet/Aboutdefence/people/speeches/minaf> , accessed 20 November 2006.

government must engage more effectively with the UK public to ensure enduring national support for the campaign, or the mission will fail.

## Current Position

Although some of the trends are positive, the situation in Afghanistan is grave. Afghanistan has a government where none of the ministers, including the President, or the majority of civil servants have any experience of government.<sup>11</sup> The security situation still prevents civilian companies, International Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Other Government Departments (OGDs) from operating safely. However, Afghanistan has had elections, the currency is stable, and the GoA has some authority across the country.<sup>12</sup> Ben Smith argues that there are two fundamental problems in Afghanistan. The first relates to state formation and control. The Karzai government is predominantly Pashtun. The Pashtun ethnic territory extends from the south of Afghanistan into Pakistan. Afghanistan is a tribal country and the Northern Alliance (NA), who consider that they won the war against the Taliban, want a share in the governance of the country and also to retain their hold on the best land in the north. They perceive that they are losing influence to the Karzai government who they see as working with Pakistan. Smith goes on to say that the northern criminal gangs and northern politics, not the Taliban, are the problem in Kabul. The second problem is the tension between two opposing views in Afghanistan regarding reconstruction. Some are in favour and some, the village mullah-dominated rural society, are against development, particularly if it involves foreigners. There is a religious undertone here, and a concern that new schools will introduce foreign ideas. Furthermore, there is a fear among the mullahs of their being replaced by younger, better educated leaders.<sup>13</sup>

The security situation has improved in Afghanistan as a consequence of international military involvement. However, crime is still a serious concern and warlords wield significant influence.<sup>14</sup> The NA rushed to Kabul after the fall of the Taliban and took up the majority of the government jobs in contradiction with the agreements they had made with the IC. Initially this led to the IC paying for the large numbers of the newly created soldiers and civil servants. However, a combination of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and the creation of the Afghan National Army (ANA) caused many commanders to lose their income. They turned to poppy growing to provide income to compete with their Pashtun rivals, who as southern tribal leaders enjoyed a more established income.<sup>15</sup> The south is less stable than the north with recent, intense battles between ISAF and the Taliban. These high profile events have drawn attention away from the north and west. Some would argue that the north has become very unstable, with the warlords from all ethnic groups joining the drug mafias. Local commanders are seeking to strengthen their position against the central government and as they do so aid and reconstruction

---

<sup>11</sup> Smith, Ben, *Afghanistan, Where are we?*, CSRC June 2005, p.1.

<sup>12</sup> Smith, op.cit., p.1.

<sup>13</sup> Smith, op.cit., p.2.

<sup>14</sup> Courtney, Morgan L, *In the Balance, Measuring Progress in Afghanistan*, (CSIS 2005), p.29.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, op.cit., p.4.

workers are caught in the middle.<sup>16</sup> The NA, comprising Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara militia, is the traditional enemy of the Pashtun Taliban and the NA does not want their return. However, the ethnicity of the group brings friction between the Karzai government and the NA who appear ready to weaken the GoA to gain autonomy in the north.<sup>17</sup> The leaders of the NA have been sidelined by the GoA and their support cannot be assured without including them in the government or at least assuring them of a degree of influence, particularly in the north. The Taliban are the armed opposition in the south, but the NA represents political opposition to the GoA in the north,<sup>18</sup> and it is possible that we are seeing peace enforced by the warlords in the north rather than a naturally stable region. In order for Afghanistan to be able to govern itself it will need effective security instruments of state, which require Security Sector Reform (SSR).

The Bonn Agreement in 2001 divided Afghan SSR into five strands with Germany responsible for police reform, the US leading army reform, Italy in charge of justice, Japan running DDR and the UK in the lead for counter-narcotics.<sup>19</sup> This piecemeal approach led to a lack of coordination of the strands of SSR, an imbalance in the level of resources committed, and failed to produce a unified concept for development.<sup>20</sup> The US-supported ANA's strength has reached 35,000 and it is anticipated that it will achieve its goal of 70,000 by 2008.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, the Afghan National Police (ANP) is not progressing as well. Ali Jalali, the recent Interior Minister of Afghanistan, said the police force is needed more urgently than the ANA but little attention has been paid to development of the ANP. The ANP has been at the forefront of the fight against terrorism and the drug trade, enforcing border security, and tackling the warlords and organized crime. Consequently, the ANP has lost more men than the ANA and Coalition forces over the last four years. The ANP is widely believed to be riddled with corruption, is ill-trained, poorly paid, under equipped and inadequately armed.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, no improvement of the ANP will be effective unless the judicial system is overhauled and the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) reformed.

Finally, much of the infrastructure in Afghanistan is shattered and in remote areas it has never been developed. Sustained economic growth is required to address these levels of poverty. Afghanistan's economy grew by 29% in 2002, 16% in 2003 and 8% in 2004.<sup>23</sup> In general, although it is growing, Afghanistan's economy is weak, and it does not generate sufficient revenue to support its own government; moreover, a large proportion of revenue comes from the illegitimate

---

<sup>16</sup> Morarjee, Rachel, *To a Second Front? How Afghanistan could again be engulfed by civil war*, Financial Times, 22 November 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Morarjee, Rachel, *op.cit.*

<sup>18</sup> Morarjee, Rachel, *op.cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Wright, Joanna, 'Police Reform in Afghanistan', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol 18, No. 11, November 2006, p.43

<sup>20</sup> Jalali, Ali A, 'The Future of Afghanistan', *Parameters*, Vol 36, No. 1, Spring 2006, p.10.

<sup>21</sup> Courtney, *op.cit.*, p.34.

<sup>22</sup> Jalali, *op.cit.*, p.10.

<sup>23</sup> DFID Interim Strategy for Afghanistan 2005/6, 1.4.

trade in poppy. Since the overthrow of the Taliban opium production has soared to provide 92% of the world's supply. Opium has a huge effect with opium GDP estimated at 27% of the total economy. The challenge is that unless offset by years of development eradication of the illegitimate opium trade will have a devastating impact on the economy.<sup>24</sup> However, before the economy can be expected to recover, reconstruction must occur and that requires a minimum level of security to be provided.

---

<sup>24</sup> *Heroin Dominates Afghanistan's Economy*, The Economist, 2-8 December 2006, p.67.

## Security

Reconstruction is the key to progress in Afghanistan because it underpins economic growth and the building of national capacity. However, until an acceptable level of security is provided, meaningful reconstruction will not take place because civilian agencies and companies will not be able to work in safety. Indeed, personal security is the local Afghan number one concern<sup>25</sup> and if the state was seen to be instrumental in providing security it would go a long way to increasing the legitimacy of the GoA. However, it is important that we do not wait for a perfect security situation before reconstruction commences. The only way to win lasting Afghan support is to show tangible progress quickly to prove that life under the Kabul government will be better than life was under the Taliban. One short-term solution is to use military engineers to carry out the work and the UK has done this with the deployment of additional Royal Engineers in July 2006.<sup>26</sup> However, the relatively small number of soldiers will not be able to do all of the work alone. The immediate aim should be to end major armed conflict and to ensure that the basic requirements for life are met. Security in the longer-term must also be assured; one view of human security, associated with the UN Development Programme's 1994 Human Development Report, describes seven categories of security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security.<sup>27</sup> This essay would argue that the most pressing need is for the state to ensure the personal, food and health security of the people. Afghans need freedom from fear and threat. In the longer-term, economic, community and political security will follow if sensible reconstruction is carried out and sound economic measures are taken.

It is important to understand how fundamental the requirement for security in Afghanistan is. The majority of Afghans do not have electricity or access to clean water.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the physical risk from the fighting and criminality is significant. In such basic circumstances it is worth revisiting Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

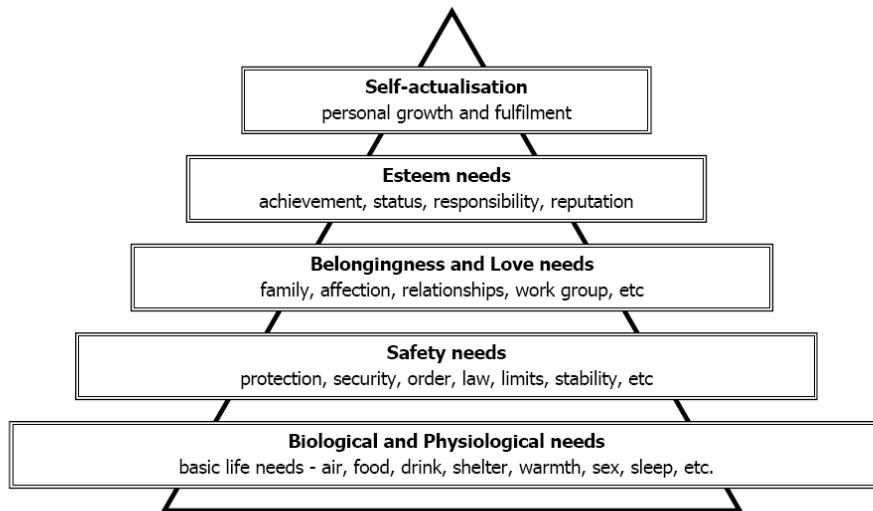
---

<sup>25</sup> Bollen, Myriame, T.I.B, Linssen, Col Eric T and Rietjens, IR. Sebastiaan J.H., 'Are PRTs Supposed to Compete with Terrorists?', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol 17, No.4, December 2006, p1.

<sup>26</sup> Browne, Des, 'Afghanistan, A Comprehensive Approach to Current Challenges', *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 151, No. 5, October 2006, pp.8-12.

<sup>27</sup> Maley, William, *Rescuing Afghanistan* (London: Hurst and Co. Ltd, 2006), p.58.

<sup>28</sup> DfID 1.3.



© 2002 alan chapman Based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs www.businessballs.com

In the short-term the state must provide the biological, physiological and safety needs of its people, and it must be helped to nurture its capacity to do so. Until these basic needs are ensured, Afghans will not be able to concentrate on the wider task of rebuilding their country.

But why is security not present? The Taliban-led insurgency, mainly in the south and east, the presence of illegal armed groups and the illegitimate drug trade are the main threats to security.<sup>29</sup> The Taliban are the highest profile threat but many observers argue that the main threat to security in Afghanistan is criminality. In the north, which is not under threat from the Taliban, the situation is troubling. The general perception is that the authorities are corrupt and that ISAF is soft and works closely with them.<sup>30</sup> The legacy of the American decision to arm and support the NA and Afghan warlords in the fight against the Taliban in 2001 is that NA power has been consolidated throughout the country.<sup>31</sup> Commanders who had been defeated by the Taliban filled the vacuum left when the regime collapsed, appointing themselves as police, army commanders, provincial governors and cabinet ministers.<sup>32</sup> However, with the lack of personal security, many of the warlords are supported by the locals. The GoA does not exert any real control at the provincial level, does not have a workable judiciary and the ANP is corrupt. In these circumstances the local people need their commander to protect them.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Jalali, op.cit., p.8.

<sup>30</sup> Clark, Kate, 'The Real Afghan War', *Newstatesman*, November 2006, p.14.

<sup>31</sup> Vaishnav, Milan, Afghanistan, *The Chimera of the Light Footprint*, in Orr, Robert C, (ed.), *Winning the Peace, An American Strategy for Post-Conflict Resolution* (Washington D.C.: CSIS, 2004), p.245.

<sup>32</sup> Clark, op.cit., p.14.

<sup>33</sup> Smith, op.cit.,p.2.

Ben Smith argues that criminality is probably a more serious threat than terrorism, and that criminality and terrorism are mostly unconnected in Afghanistan.<sup>34</sup> So what are the implications for our mission in Afghanistan? The Taliban are hindering progress in the south and must be dealt with. ISAF should continue to counter the direct threat from the Taliban to provide the secure conditions for reconstruction. However, the military cannot solve the problem of the Taliban alone; it can only deal with the attacks, and not the root cause. There is evidence to suggest that external drug cartels are running the narcotics industry; General James L. Jones, Supreme Allied Commander NATO, has said that drug cartels with their own armies engage in regular combat with NATO forces.<sup>35</sup> If cartels are running the illegitimate drug trade then it is possible that the criminal gangs are employing the Taliban to generate insecurity to distract attention from their activities and to prevent the establishment of a functioning state that would stop them. The question is to what extent are the Taliban funded by the criminal gangs? The answer to this would give an indication of the root cause of the instability. But does it matter? The Taliban must be dealt with anyway, and ISAF and the ANA should deal with them. However, the important point that follows from this is that more priority must be given to dealing with criminality in Afghanistan as it has a significant effect on security across the whole country.

To find a lasting solution to the Taliban insurgency the Pakistan border must be closed to them. Currently the border is porous permitting the Taliban to retreat to Pakistan to recuperate and re-arm between battles; insurgencies with refuge abroad have historically proved very difficult to defeat.<sup>36</sup> William Maley argues that President Musharraf's attempts to control the radical groups and the colleges (Madrassas) where they train have been largely ineffective and that some see the Taliban as beyond Pakistan's capacity to control. However, the successful and peaceful conduct of the elections in 2004 which the Taliban had every reason to disrupt, but the US was desperate to see successful, suggests that Pakistan may have more control over the Taliban than it is willing to admit.<sup>37</sup> More recently, Rubin has pointed out that some Western military leaders believe '...that Pakistani leaders could disrupt the senior levels of [Taliban] command and control but have chosen not to'.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, Pakistani leaders may be paranoid about a resurgent Afghanistan forging closer ties with India and threatening Pakistan.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, the border must be closed to the Taliban if we are to defeat them. This will require a diplomatic line of activity to engage with Pakistan to enlist its wholehearted support, while reassuring Islamabad that this will not lead to a pact between India and Afghanistan that would be against Pakistan's interests. Barnett Rubin and Abubakar Siddique argue that an enduring problem is that no Afghan government has ever

---

<sup>34</sup> Smith, op.cit.,p.18.

<sup>35</sup> De Young, Karen, *Afghanistan Opium Crop Sets Record*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/01/AR2006120101654.html> , accessed 18 January 2007.

<sup>36</sup> Rubin, op.cit.,p.71.

<sup>37</sup> Maley, op.cit.,p.61.

<sup>38</sup> Rubin, op.cit.,p.72.

<sup>39</sup> Maley, op.cit.,p.62.

recognized the Durand Line,<sup>40</sup> drawn as a border between the two countries by the British in 1893. As *The Economist* points out, 'The Durand Line is a sensitive issue for Pakistan, which has seen attempts by both Pushtun secessionists and Afghan irredentists to carve away chunks of the frontier'.<sup>41</sup> The IC should send a consistent message to Islamabad that sheltering the Taliban in Pakistan poses a threat to international peace and stability that Pakistan must deal with immediately and, in parallel, encourage Afghanistan to recognize the international border. Removing Pakistani support to the Taliban is considered so important by Rubin that he argues '... failing to address Pakistan's support of the Taliban amounts to an acceptance of NATO's failure'.<sup>42</sup> The IC should also engage with Afghanistan and India to support Pakistan in addressing these sources of insecurity.<sup>43</sup>

One area that may be exploited is the unrest amongst some Pashtun leaders in Pakistan who are growing war weary. A recent gathering spoke out forcefully in favour of an end to Taliban violence in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and encouraged the Pakistani government to cut its alleged ties with the Taliban.<sup>44</sup> The Taliban are predominantly Pashtun; this may indicate a fracturing of their support from the grass roots and could be an opportunity that could be exploited diplomatically. Additionally, Prime Minister Blair visited Pakistan in November 2006<sup>45</sup> to build relations and to promise to invest British money in Pakistani education in an attempt to limit the dependence on the Madrassas for schooling. This is a good long-term strategy but it must be realised that soft power takes time to work and an initiative like this will take a generation before the effects are felt.

The other dimension that must be dealt with to defeat the Taliban is the illegal trade in poppy. It is a significant source of funding for Taliban activities and cutting it off will hamper them.<sup>46</sup> Removing the drug trade has much wider benefits than just defeating the Taliban. President Karzai recently noted that '...once we thought terrorism was Afghanistan's biggest enemy' and went on to say that now '...poppy, its cultivation and drugs are Afghanistan's major enemy'.<sup>47</sup> So how could we tackle the poppy trade? Lutz Kleveman argues that taking down the poppy trade is in the local and global interest. The smuggling gangs use many of the neighbouring countries as transit routes spreading drugs into many states including Russia.<sup>48</sup> The Federal Drug Control Service in Russia reports that

---

<sup>40</sup> Rubin, Barnett R and Siddique, Abubakar, *Resolving the Pakistan-Afghanistan Stalemate*, <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr176.pdf> , accessed 16 January 2007,p.2.

<sup>41</sup> *They walk the line*, *The Economist*, 20-26 January 2007, p.68.

<sup>42</sup> Rubin, op.cit.,p.72.

<sup>43</sup> Rubin, Siddique, op.cit.,p.2.

<sup>44</sup> Rashid, Ahmed, *Pashtuns in Pakistan Speak out Against the Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*, [http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav112706b\\_pr.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav112706b_pr.shtml) , accessed 10 January 2007.

<sup>45</sup> UK and Pakistan Forge Terror Pact, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/6161500.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6161500.stm) , accessed 18 January 2007.

<sup>46</sup> Applebaum, Anne, *Legalize it. How to solve Afghanistan's drug problem*, <http://www.slate.com/id/2157644/> , accessed 18 January 2007.

<sup>47</sup> De Young, Karen, *Afghanistan Opium Crop Sets Record*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/01/AR2006120101654.html> , accessed 18 January 2007.

<sup>48</sup> Kleveman, Lutz, *The New Great Game* (London: Atlantic Books, 2003),p.194.

90% of heroin in Russia is of Afghan origin. Russian intelligence indicates that heroin laboratories have moved into the northern provinces of Afghanistan,<sup>49</sup> possibly due to ISAF activity further south. Russia plans to open drug control offices in Afghanistan as part of an intensified international effort to counter drug trafficking. There is a diplomatic opportunity here to exploit the Russian initiative and enlist their help in stopping the trafficking of drugs. Indeed, all of Afghanistan's neighbours have an interest in this and should be asked to cooperate. There is also an option to continue to cultivate poppy for legal use, and this option will be discussed in the economy section. However, if it is decided that the poppy must be destroyed then the cultivation of the poppy must be stopped and the current harvest dealt with. This must be done sensitively and, since the majority of poppy is grown in the south, the British have the lead here. However, American impatience with the British and Afghan approach led to the US announcing plans to spray the poppy crops in January 2007 despite fears that it would undermine attempts to win over the locals. Crop spraying is very likely to damage legitimate crops that the farmers grow to feed their families, which is why the British favour ploughing the crops instead. The farmers pay the Taliban to protect their crops and spraying could lead to increased support for the Taliban just as NATO and the GoA are trying to persuade the population to back international reconstruction efforts. Targeted eradication of the poppy is essential, but it must be led by a crackdown on the drug barons so that the farmers see the process as genuine enforcement of the law.<sup>50</sup> If this is not managed properly it may result in increased support for the Taliban and the recruitment of the farmers to their ranks, which in turn will lead to a further deterioration of security in the south.

Another opportunity that should be fully explored is the possibility of a deal with the Taliban. As pressure builds both from the Afghan side of the border and from their traditional Pashtun supporters it would be sensible to talk to the Taliban and attempt to negotiate an end to hostilities. There have been precedents. As Des Browne explains, one high profile defection was the Governor of Uruzgun Province who was ex-Taliban, brought in by the government's reconciliation programme and who is now backing political and economic progress. Browne goes on to say that while some of the Governor's associates have followed him we must persuade more to follow.<sup>51</sup> The offer of attractive positions in government to senior Taliban members may tempt them. However, any attempt to recruit them must consider the impact on local opinion of restoring a previously feared leader to a position of authority. The effect on the quality of government must also be considered; it is very likely that such people are not best qualified to take Afghanistan forward. Maley points out that this process annoys those who argue that disloyalty attracts reward while competence is undervalued. This results in very capable Afghans leaving government in disgust. At the provincial and local level this leads to very poor governance and the progressive

---

<sup>49</sup> *Russian Drug Control Service to Open Foreign Offices in 2007*, <http://www.interfax.ru/e/C/0/28.html?menu=1>, accessed 10 January 2007.

<sup>50</sup> Smith, Michael, *Doubts grow as sprayers target Afghan poppies*, *The Sunday Times*, 31 December 2006.

<sup>51</sup> Browne, op.cit.,p.10.

erosion of the legitimacy of the state.<sup>52</sup> Another precedent is the peace deal negotiated by British forces with tribal elders in Musa Qala. Britain wants more such deals but the US and other NATO allies are against them.<sup>53</sup> In February 2007, Musa Qala fell again to the Taliban who overran the village defeating the local Afghan leaders.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, communication with the Taliban could yield positive results, and Britain should promote this option at the diplomatic level within the IC. Negotiation is much more positive (and cheaper) than fighting, and any Taliban member that can be persuaded to stop fighting and become part of the solution should be encouraged to do so. Whilst it is probably unwise to offer them senior government positions, it cannot be beyond our imagination to offer them a relatively well-paid occupation of some sort, even if it is a nominal position with no real influence. This should be effective against those whose motivation to fight is purely financial. Nevertheless, there will always be a hard core of ideological fighters who cannot be bought or persuaded; it is these Taliban that we must kill. Whilst the Taliban pose a threat to security in the south, arguably the biggest country-wide threat to security is criminality.

The Afghan national security services must be strengthened to deal with the criminality. The current SSR must concentrate primarily on the ANP and Judiciary, which Rubin describes as the two fatal weak points in the GoA today because both are corrupt, lack basic skills, equipment and resources.<sup>55</sup> However, reforming the organisations alone will not be sufficient; the structure and personnel within the Afghan MOI must also be addressed if the reform is to have lasting effect. The MOI is responsible for the ANP, the appointment of governors and provincial officials. Ben Smith describes the MOI as nothing more than a collection of armed gangs who have divided the country between them. They retain contact with their criminal associates who do not have places in the MOI. Under Ali Jalali's tenure few of these criminals actually answered to the MOI so Jalali attempted to counter this by bringing in unscrupulous Pashtuns.<sup>56</sup> Evidence suggests that the MOI is involved with drug smuggling itself; while the MOI should be resourcing the provinces, it seems that areas like Helmand are sending large sums of money to the Ministry.<sup>57</sup> This dire situation must be remedied in parallel with any reform of the security sector or any improvements will not last. However, reform cannot succeed unless President Karzai fully supports it and roots out corrupt officials and replaces them with honest and competent leaders.<sup>58</sup>

Although the ANA is doing relatively well, Jalali points out that it has insufficient combat power, lacks indigenous air support and is reliant on military support from the Coalition and financial

---

<sup>52</sup> Maley, op.cit.,p.35.

<sup>53</sup> Rashid, Ahmed, *Deals with the Taliban put Britain 'out of step' with NATO allies*, The Daily Telegraph, 6 January 2007,p.18.

<sup>54</sup> Rashid, Ahmed, *Taliban Takeover of Town Could Mark Start of Military Offensive*, [online], <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav020507.shtml> , accessed 21 February 2007.

<sup>55</sup> Rubin, op.cit.,p.72.

<sup>56</sup> Smith, op.cit.,p.9.

<sup>57</sup> Smith, op.cit.,p.10.

<sup>58</sup> Rubin, op.cit.,p.74.

support from the US.<sup>59</sup> Realistically, the GoA must decide what it can afford to pay for the ANA over the long term, and what it wants the ANA to do. Then the GoA must structure the ANA accordingly; it is unlikely to fight without IC support for some time. The ANA will probably have to be smaller than 70,000 to be sustainable from Afghan government revenue.<sup>60</sup> However, while the ANA should assist with border security and tackling the Taliban, the ANP should take the lead in the fight against criminality.

The ANP has had fewer resources injected than the ANA<sup>61</sup> and the reform process has been slow. Although over 55,000 police officers have received basic training so far,<sup>62</sup> reform of the ANP is most urgent and the IC must allocate sufficient resources to permit the ANP to deal with the internal security threats. Currently the ANP lacks training and basic equipment and is unable to enforce domestic security.<sup>63</sup> As part of his political rivalry with the chairman of the lower house of parliament, Muhammad Yunus Qanuni (a senior member of a leading faction of the NA suspected of exploiting riots), Karzai appointed members of a rival NA group to key police positions, including the police chief of Kabul. Karzai argued that such political methods were necessary because his continued requests for more resources for the ANP were ignored by the IC. Predictably, many Afghans view such appointments with cynicism.<sup>64</sup> Whatever the reasons for these appointments, they do nothing to promote the government's legitimacy within the Afghan population; furthermore, it is highly unlikely that they do much for the security of Kabul either. However, part of the US\$11.8 billion that the US has pledged to invest in Afghanistan over the next two years is aimed at reforming the ANP so hopefully the relative lack of investment so far will be remedied.

With some police salaries as low as US\$15 per month, and the required minimum monthly salary for ordinary policemen to be satisfied to not make links with crime assessed as US\$120 per month,<sup>65</sup> it is not hard to see why the police turn to crime and corruption. They need to be able to feed their families and until their pay permits them to live a reasonable life they will be susceptible to corruption in order to bridge the gap in income. Even a poor working family in Kabul has an average cost of living of US\$250 per month.<sup>66</sup> The Taliban pay as much as US\$100 per month;<sup>67</sup> therefore, there are clear economic reasons why Afghans either join the Taliban or turn to corruption to survive. We must solve this basic issue before we can expect any lasting commitment

---

<sup>59</sup> Jalali, op.cit.,p.9.

<sup>60</sup> Rubin, Barnett R, *Still Ours to Lose: Afghanistan on the Brink*, Written Testimony to Senate Foreign Relations Committee 21 September 2006,p.22.

<sup>61</sup> Rubin, Barnett R, *Afghanistan's Uncertain Transition from Turmoil to Normalcy*, Council on Foreign Relations, 12 March 2006,p.20.

<sup>62</sup> Jalali, op.cit.,p.10.

<sup>63</sup> Rubin, op.cit., 21 September 2006,p.5.

<sup>64</sup> Rubin, op.cit.,p.6.

<sup>65</sup> Wright, op.cit.,p.43.

<sup>66</sup> Smith, op.cit.,p.9.

<sup>67</sup> Pant, Harsh V, 'Growing Instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan's Role', *RUSI Newsbrief*, Vol 26, No.11, November 2006,p.125.

to the ANP from its Afghan employees. Joanna Wright argues that the support of the IC can only achieve so much, and that the GoA must lead the reform; however, corruption is a significant barrier to reform of the ANP. Police salaries are paid through the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan, established by the UN Development Programme in 2002, but these funds were due to run out in January 2007.<sup>68</sup> At this fragile stage of its development, the last thing that the GoA should have to worry about is how to pay the people who will ensure lasting domestic security, the vital requirement upon which all else depends. Without security, reconstruction cannot take place, the economy will not grow and Afghanistan will never be self-sufficient. If we are serious about succeeding in Afghanistan it is essential that the IC provides sufficient resources to allow Afghans to reform their security sector so that they can govern themselves. In the short term one of the measures the IC should consider is supplementing the meagre pay of the ANP to reduce the corrosive temptation of corruption. Dr Helmut Frick, a special German representative for police sector reform in Afghanistan, has called for repeated training and mentoring of the ANP and 'a fundamental pay reform that will lead to a considerable salary increase (of 200 to 300%) from top to bottom'.<sup>69</sup> The IC should underwrite this proposal, and ensure that the ANP is properly equipped. Furthermore, the pay of the ANP should be guaranteed by the IC until the GoA can afford it from its own revenues. If this is not done, police will continue to rely on extortion to supplement salaries; the corollary of this is that for many Afghans their first contact with the new government is as a victim of the ANP's criminal activities.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, at a local level there is often no discernible difference between the ANP and the Taliban. This perception severely undermines support for the government and results in continued support for the local warlord to protect the people. We cannot expect to remove support for the warlords until the state can demonstrate that it is capable of protecting its citizens.

Rubin recommends that the structure and mission of both the ANA and ANP should be reassessed because the Afghan security sector must be sustainable from government revenue.<sup>71</sup> Jalali also points out that since the security sector is funded by foreign aid the long-term sustainability of the ANA and ANP is a major challenge. Even if Afghanistan's economy grows by 10% a year above the current rate, the country will not be able to pay for its security forces from government revenue for many years.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, the IC must accept that for the foreseeable future it must be prepared to subsidise the Afghan security forces. Whatever the cost, it will almost certainly be less than the cost of not doing so. Ultimately if the security sector is not reformed and sustained until the GoA can pay for it from government revenue, stability will not be achieved, reconstruction will not take place and the economy will never grow. It is the provision of security that is the crucial requirement

---

<sup>68</sup> Wright, *op.cit.*,p.43.

<sup>69</sup> Wright, *op.cit.*,p.43.

<sup>70</sup> Wright, *op.cit.*,p.43.

<sup>71</sup> Rubin, 12 March 2006, *op.cit.*,p.22.

<sup>72</sup> Jalali, *op.cit.*,p.10.

at the moment, not the inability of the GoA to pay for it. However, the structure of the security forces must be designed with long-term sustainability in mind. This may mean that, given the cost of maintaining professional forces, the national draft system may have to be restored. There is strong support for this in Afghanistan, and it would also promote national integration.<sup>73</sup> The pay structure must also be addressed to be sustainable, with consideration given to the provision of housing and other facilities as part of the package instead of just cash reward.<sup>74</sup>

No reform of the ANP will be effective without parallel reform of the judicial system. The justice sector has insufficient personnel and a lack of infrastructure capacity. The court structure is old fashioned, many judicial personnel are unqualified and corruption is widespread.<sup>75</sup> Progress has been made in law reform, but not much else. Rubin argues that the lack of judicial reform has become a bottleneck for security, governance and economic development.<sup>76</sup> This must be addressed if we are to move forward. The GoA has adopted the Action Plan on Transitional Justice and the Afghan Compact requires it to be implemented by 2008. The IC should support this plan impartially, and give it the priority and resources it needs.<sup>77</sup>

DDR has been controlled by the Afghan New Beginnings Program, under the patronage of the UN Development Programme, and supported financially by Japan.<sup>78</sup> It has had some success, demobilizing over 62,000 militiamen, collecting 36,000 small arms and removing nearly all of the militia heavy weapons. The second phase has begun under the Disbanding Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) scheme targeting up to 2,000 armed groups and seeking voluntary, negotiated and forced disbanding of over 100,000 militiamen.<sup>79</sup> The DIAG program is proving difficult. Maley argues that disarmament follows, rather than drives, an improvement in relationships between parties. Therefore, while some progress may be made, developments in the political landscape will ultimately determine how successful DDR can become.<sup>80</sup> This seems a reasonable deduction and means that we should not invest too much effort in the process now, and concentrate on the voluntary and negotiated disbanding. The main effort should be the provision of sound government with functioning, legitimate security forces that can enforce an acceptable level of security. Further DDR would then probably follow. Ultimately, no country in the world is totally free of crime or armed criminals. The key is to generate a functioning government that can police its country effectively, and to provide alternative livelihoods for the people.

---

<sup>73</sup> Jalali, *op.cit.*,p.11.

<sup>74</sup> Rubin, 12 March 2006, *op.cit.*,p.22.

<sup>75</sup> Jalali, *op.cit.*,p.10.

<sup>76</sup> Rubin, 12 March 2006, *op.cit.*,p.24.

<sup>77</sup> Rubin, 12 March 2006, *op.cit.*,p.25.

<sup>78</sup> Maley, *op.cit.*,p.68.

<sup>79</sup> Jalali, *op.cit.*,p.10.

<sup>80</sup> Maley, *op.cit.*,p.70.

Above all, it should be remembered that the end result of successful SSR will be to achieve security within Afghanistan's borders. This will control crime and the criminal gangs. If this is done, the illegal trade in drugs will be significantly reduced, and the revenue from the trade will also be largely removed. If state security existed, then many of the issues that plague Afghanistan today would start to disappear. Warlords would be disarmed, narcotics traffickers imprisoned and the Taliban would have less money to fund their armed resistance. Indeed, if the Taliban are predominantly funded by the criminal gangs the Taliban would no longer be employed. Finally, the people of Afghanistan would support their government and live in relative peace. Reconstruction would be able to go ahead relatively unmolested, and economic growth would follow. Security is the most basic and urgent requirement in Afghanistan and the IC must help the GoA achieve it as quickly as possible.

## Reconstruction

Once an acceptable level of security has been achieved, meaningful and lasting reconstruction will have a chance. Reconstruction is the key to Afghanistan's recovery. The economy rests on it because it provides the country's capacity for economic growth. In the short term reconstruction also offers the opportunity to show the local Afghans that life under the Kabul government is preferable to life under the Taliban by building the basic infrastructure for communities to live in and offering opportunities for work. There is time pressure here and it is important that meaningful reconstruction starts as soon as possible because this is the opportunity to show the local population that the GoA can offer a better life. But what does it entail? Michael McNerney explains that reconstruction activities include all aspects of improving governance, including the training of civil administrators, improving essential services and public safety, supporting civil society and self determination, and promoting the rule of law and economic development.<sup>81</sup>

Starting at the most fundamental level, is the current form of presidential government favoured by Karzai sustainable? Rubin describes the government as a corrupt and ineffective administration without resources and a potentially dysfunctional parliament.<sup>82</sup> Karzai himself is widely respected, is not ethnically partisan and has been an effective leader during the transition. However, he has a political style that tends to rely on networking, patronage and building alliances. This has led to a tendency to placate opponents by offering them positions in the government, annoying loyal supporters and ignoring competent competitors who might be better suited to the job.<sup>83</sup> This is a difficult problem to solve under the presidential system, which is more suited to a society where people are generally united in their values. It permits one winner, and potentially generates numerous unhappy losers; furthermore, Karzai is not a strong policymaker but as president he has responsibility for policy leadership.<sup>84</sup> How does the government reward competence and so promote the most capable people while also keeping the political support required from the tribal leaders? The answer may lie in a more inclusive style of government where the tribes feel better represented. One solution might be to adopt a decentralised government system based on the existing framework of the tribes, led by the elders and responsible to Kabul for regional government. This would put regional and border security in the hands of the tribes and permit a smaller ANA which could be controlled from Kabul and used to reinforce areas of instability. A decentralised approach might also offer a way to appease the Taliban; they could be offered a political role in the administration of the southern borders of Afghanistan.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> McNerney, Michael J, 'Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan', *Parameters*, Vol 35, No 4, Winter 2005/2006,p.34.

<sup>82</sup> Rubin, Barnett R, *Making Aid to Afghanistan Effective*, Testimony to the House Committee on International Relations, 9 March 2006,p.3.

<sup>83</sup> Maley, op.cit.,p.34.

<sup>84</sup> Maley, op.cit.,p.46.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Lt Col I Rigden, Royal Gurkha Rifles, 14 March 2007.

Another fundamental question is how do we raise up a government that is manned with enough competent personnel to function effectively? Outside of Kabul, local government structures and roles are poorly developed and staff illiteracy is high. It is extremely difficult for the government to hire competent staff; most civil servants are paid US\$40-50 per month which makes it hard to recruit and retain capable people. This problem is exacerbated by international organizations which hire many of the best Afghan staff.<sup>86</sup> Realistically, unless the staff are paid more, high quality people will go elsewhere and the less capable will remain and continue to be tempted by corruption to make ends meet. To break this vicious cycle the IC must accept that it will have to subsidise pay in the public sector for now to increase the quality of the employees and to root out corruption.

Additionally, the GoA finds it difficult to raise taxes to fund public expenditure because 80-90% of the economic activity is in the informal economy.<sup>87</sup> The IMF estimates government revenue at 5.4% of non-drug GDP, less than any other country with data.<sup>88</sup> Growth of the legitimate economy will be essential to enable the GoA to raise tax revenue. Another problem that should be addressed is the difficulty that the GoA has in spending the aid it receives for development projects. In 2005 it managed to spend just 44% of the aid budget with key ministries like agriculture, energy, water, and public works unable to spend their budgets. Rubin suggests that the World Bank's initiative to enable the GoA to hire technical advisers should be supported and that the implementation capacity of these ministries be increased.<sup>89</sup> Until the GoA can raise sufficient revenue, foreign aid will be vital to underpin reconstruction efforts; therefore, making aid effective is crucial if reconstruction is to occur at the desired rate.

Although development aid is almost ten times government revenue, it is tiny compared to the amount spent on the military forces in theatre.<sup>90</sup> Drs Paramonov and Stokov point out that while the IC spends huge sums on its military presence in Afghanistan, very little is spent on the reconstruction of the economy; US\$4.5 billion over five years (approximately US\$0.9 billion per year) was promised to Afghanistan at the Tokyo conference in 2001, and under US\$0.5 billion was devoted to the transport infrastructure.<sup>91</sup> The US alone is spending US\$12 billion a year on sustaining the American military presence in Afghanistan and shoring up the security sector.<sup>92</sup> This represents a fundamental imbalance in the distribution of funds; if we want a self-sustaining Afghanistan more money must be spent on helping Afghans govern themselves. Furthermore, over

---

<sup>86</sup> DfID1.9.

<sup>87</sup> DfID1.5.

<sup>88</sup> Rubin, 9 March 2006, op.cit.,p.4.

<sup>89</sup> Rubin, 21 September 2006, op.cit.,p.10.

<sup>90</sup> DfID2.3.

<sup>91</sup> Paramonov, Dr Vladimir and Stokov, Dr Alexey, *The Economic Reconstruction of Afghanistan and the Role of Uzbekistan*, CSRC, June 2006, p.4.

<sup>92</sup> Paramonov, Stokov, op.cit.,p.1.

75% of aid to Afghanistan funds projects implemented or contracted by the donors,<sup>93</sup> making it more of a donor-state subsidy to their national companies than it is aid to Afghanistan. Rubin argues that this is self-defeating; if prolonged it undermines the state because it prevents the GoA providing services which would promote its legitimacy. However, three of the largest donors, the US, Japan and Germany, argue that the corruption in the GoA and lack of capacity in Afghanistan make it difficult to give the aid directly to the Afghan government budget. The UK, on the other hand, does channel most of its aid through the budget<sup>94</sup> and the UK should take the lead in encouraging other donors to do the same. This problem brings into sharp focus the need to tackle corruption and the lack of capacity within government. The US gives its aid to US-based contractors who do not always deliver high quality work. Ben Smith reports that standards of work are often extremely low and there is no international supervision of standards. Indeed,<sup>95</sup> it appears that some projects exist only on the balance sheets of the companies given the work;<sup>95</sup> the GoA is not the only organisation where corruption is a problem. This type of aid does not promote competition, often results in a very poor standard of work if it is done at all, and represents extremely bad value for money for the taxpayers of the donor countries. Furthermore, it undermines the legitimacy of the GoA and shows foreign aid in a very bad light with the locals.

This is a very disappointing situation. Ideally, aid should be paid to the GoA who could then put the work out to tender and generate competition. However, corruption within the GoA must be dealt with first, and if those on sufficient pay are caught being dishonest then they should be dismissed. It will take time to root out corruption so one option in the short term is to allow the GoA to set the priorities for the disbursement of the funds without holding the money, and be seen to be doing so; this will help to shore up the legitimacy of the government.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, the way in which international aid is spent should be fully transparent<sup>97</sup> and there should be international supervision of the quality of work carried out. Local companies which will employ Afghans should be given the reconstruction contracts if possible. Reconstruction provides an opportunity to employ the militiamen who have undergone DDR and the young men who need work. This would help the economy, increase public support and provide livelihoods so that the people can feed their families without turning to crime.

Afghanistan has the youngest population in the world, with an estimated 57% under 18 years old.<sup>98</sup> Employment opportunities will be essential to prevent these people turning to crime to survive; however, they must be educated to a basic level before they can be productive, and schooling must be improved for the young if Afghanistan is going to be self-sustaining. It was estimated in

---

<sup>93</sup> Rubin, 9 March 2006, op.cit.,p.8.

<sup>94</sup> Rubin, 9 March 2006, op.cit.,p.8.

<sup>95</sup> Smith, op.cit.,p.6.

<sup>96</sup> Jalali, op.cit.,p.16.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Rubin, 9 March 2006, op.cit.,p.4.

2004 that it would cost US\$27.6 billion to achieve stabilization goals over seven years with disbursements over 12 years. The cost of delivery of assistance has been higher, mainly due to the amount of aid required by the security sector which has cost more than estimated.<sup>99</sup> Some 71% of Afghans over 15 are illiterate, rising to 92% for rural women, and 60% of girls do not go to school. Life expectancy at birth is 45 years, and 20% of children die before they are aged five. Maternal mortality may be the highest in the world with one woman dying from pregnancy-related causes every 30 minutes, and in the countryside less than 10% of women give birth in a health facility. The majority of Afghans do not have access to electricity or clean water.<sup>100</sup> If the population remains largely uneducated it will prove impossible for the country to govern itself in the future. The most basic requirements are the provision of shelter, clean water, food, healthcare, education and electricity to power everything.

The supply of electricity to Kabul is problematic. No major power projects have been completed in the last five years and a plan to bring power from central Asia is still some years from completion. The city's population has nearly doubled and they have less electricity than they did five years ago. Foreigners and rich Afghans live in relative luxury while Kabulis have no power for fans or heaters.<sup>101</sup> Rubin emphasises that the immediate need for power should be met by the purchase of diesel for generators, followed by cross-border electricity supply deals with Pakistan for the south and east.<sup>102</sup> This is sensible for the near-term, but it should be remembered that Pakistan is energy hungry itself and may not be able to supply Afghanistan on a long-term basis. A less well-known, and perhaps longer-term, opportunity exists to export hydro-electric power from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (who possess significant hydro-electric potential) through Afghanistan to Pakistan and India. Afghanistan signed a memorandum of understanding with Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan on 30 October 2005 relating to closer energy cooperation. Currently, the national economies of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan do not have a large market for electrical power but large markets are growing to the south in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.<sup>103</sup> The possibility of a deal whereby Afghanistan gets some of the electricity in return for providing the infrastructure to export the electricity across the country should be explored. Innovative routing of the electrical power lines could supply power to Mazari-Sharif, Kabul and many other areas of Afghanistan on its way south. However, there are obstacles to this potential deal that must be overcome. The electricity networks in both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are run down and unable to handle domestic demand, and they do not have sufficient hydro-electric power stations to generate the required amount of electricity. Tajikistan is building several new dams and power stations with Russian investment.<sup>104</sup> The IC

---

<sup>99</sup> Rubin, 9 March 2006, op.cit.,p.7.

<sup>100</sup> Dfid1.3.

<sup>101</sup> Rubin, 21 September 2006, op.cit.,p.6.

<sup>102</sup> Rubin, 21 September 2006, op.cit.,p.11.

<sup>103</sup> Hanks, Reuel and Gleason, Gregory, *Regional Electrical Integration*

<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav> accessed 8 January 2007.

<sup>104</sup> Hanks, Gleason, op.cit.

should engage diplomatically with Russia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to encourage further development and offer investment in return for some of the electricity being exported south across Afghanistan. At the same time, Afghanistan's power infrastructure must be developed. Currently, it does not have a national integrated power grid and this must be built if the country is to recover economically. The security of the long-distance power lines would have to be guaranteed by the IC for now to attract investment, while Afghanistan works towards a functioning state security sector.

Drs Paramonov and Stokov urge the involvement of Afghanistan's neighbours, and Uzbekistan in particular in the north, in the reconstruction process.<sup>105</sup> There are historical ties between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan that can be exploited; 7% of the population in northern Afghanistan is ethnically Uzbek. The UK should consider the implications for the south; there may be an opportunity to involve Pakistan in the same manner as that for reconstruction in the south exploiting supportive elements of the Pashtun tribe. Although Pakistan is not a rich country, there would be economic benefits for both sides if it was involved. They go on to argue that one of the priorities for the IC should be to reconstruct the country's transport network, industry and agriculture.<sup>106</sup> Afghanistan has no railways at all; the roads are in poor condition and of low capacity with inadequate main routes linking it to its neighbours. This results in international and regional trade bypassing Afghanistan.<sup>107</sup> Construction of a country-wide transport network is crucial and regional cooperation is key. Decent transport links might lead to a significant increase in regional trade and economic links. Uzbekistan in particular could gain access to the sea across Afghanistan, which would represent a journey of half the distance to the Baltic Sea. The proposed 80 Km railway line from Termez to Mazari-Sharif has much interest in Uzbekistan and would be a start on a north-to-south trans-Afghanistan railway;<sup>108</sup> this would eventually bring economic benefit to the whole of Afghanistan and commence the regional economic integration. Although the cost is estimated at only US\$210 million the project has not been taken forward. When contrasted against the US\$12 billion the US spends on its military presence in the country, it seems irrational to allow such a beneficial project to fail because of a lack of money. The IC must allocate more money for the reconstruction of Afghanistan's transport network; the development of Afghanistan as a regional transport hub would also have global economic effects by boosting trade and economic links between the coastal and continental countries of Eurasia.<sup>109</sup> It should not be forgotten that improved transport links would also benefit the Coalition forces in theatre providing more robust lines of communication and perhaps reducing the reliance on local transport mafias to move supplies from Pakistani ports.

---

<sup>105</sup> Paramonov, Stokov, op.cit.,p.1.

<sup>106</sup> Paramonov, Stokov, op.cit.,p.4.

<sup>107</sup> Paramonov, Stokov, op.cit.,p.4.

<sup>108</sup> Paramonov, Stokov, op.cit.,p.4.

<sup>109</sup> Paramonov, Stokov, op.cit.,p.9.

One of the ways that the IC has attempted to make progress in Afghanistan is through Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), a concept developed by the US in 2002 to spread the GoA's influence. The PRTs consist of up to 100 soldiers, Afghan advisers and representatives from civilian agencies.<sup>110</sup> In the early days PRTs suffered from a lack of resources and unclear or ambiguous mission statements which caused civil-military tension within the teams. This led to difficulties in generating a meaningful contribution to the overall mission.<sup>111</sup> As time went on the US PRT mission evolved into enhancing security, extending the influence of the GoA and facilitating reconstruction.<sup>112</sup> NATO recognised the potential of PRTs and used them to extend ISAF operations outside of Kabul. The measurement of success of PRTs is important and Michael McKerney suggests that three measures of effectiveness should be how well they improve tactical level coordination, build relationships and build capacity.<sup>113</sup> The UK's PRT in Mazari-Sharif has been held up as an example of how the PRTs should prepare for operations; the training and deployment together of the military and civilian members of the Team meant that they all had a good understanding of both the military and civilian objectives. The PRT was also very good at building local relationships due to the efforts made to understand the local politics and identify the leaders.<sup>114</sup> McKerney concludes that while PRTs are working, there need to be more of them and they must be deployed quickly. The PRTs must be adequately equipped and resourced for a broad range of projects, they need appropriate civilian expertise, and civilians should be prepared to take the lead. Furthermore, PRTs should conduct more capacity building programmes to improve local governance and tie local officials and institutions to the central government.<sup>115</sup> PRTs offer a practical way of applying the CA at the tactical level, and are helping with the reconstruction that will underpin economic growth.

---

<sup>110</sup> McKerney, op.cit.,p.32.

<sup>111</sup> McKerney, op.cit.,p.36.

<sup>112</sup> McKerney, op.cit.,p.37.

<sup>113</sup> McKerney, op.cit.,p.39.

<sup>114</sup> McKerney, op.cit.,p.40.

<sup>115</sup> McKerney, op.cit.,p.45.

## Economy

The legitimate economy must grow fast enough to provide employment, incomes, and investment that more than balance the loss of revenue from the drug trade and provide a financial basis to expand public services.<sup>116</sup> Currently, Afghanistan is not integrated into the regional economic system. Very little trade takes place between Afghanistan and its bordering countries.<sup>117</sup> The potential for cooperation with neighbouring countries has barely been pursued, and this undermines international efforts to rebuild the economy. The IC must avoid a situation where no investment takes place because of a lack of security, and security is not provided because of a lack of international investment in the economy.<sup>118</sup> However, there is some hope on the horizon for Afghanistan. Rubin points out that while Iraq has suffered economic collapse since the US invasion, Afghanistan's non-drug economy has averaged a growth rate of 15%. However, the World Bank has assessed the growth in its current form as unreliable and unsustainable;<sup>119</sup> nevertheless, the economy is growing. Reconstruction will underpin the growth, and many options have already been discussed. This essay will now look at potential opportunities for longer-term economic growth within Afghanistan. The GoA estimates that a sustained, real growth rate of 9% per year of legitimate GDP is required to provide a tangible sense of improvement while compensating for the economic impact of removing the narcotics revenue.<sup>120</sup> The question is, how do we achieve that growth?

The first problem is how to sustain economic growth while stopping the illegal trade in poppy. This essay argues that there are two main options; the first is to continue to cultivate poppy for legal use, and the second is to destroy the poppy crops. Anne Applebaum argues that every time a poppy field is destroyed a poor person is made poorer and is therefore more likely to support the Taliban against the Coalition forces. She goes on to say that Turkey once had a similar problem where the drug trade threatened the country's political and economic stability. In 1974 the Turks, with support from the UN and US, licensed poppy cultivation and used it for the production of morphine, codeine, and other legal opiates.<sup>121</sup> This option should not be dismissed out of hand. Poppy crops are extensive throughout southern Afghanistan and the farmers are unwilling to see their livelihoods destroyed. This approach would avoid the difficulties associated with the eradication of the poppy and probably shore up support for international efforts among the rural community. In the short term the IC would have to buy the poppy from the farmers at the market rate while the legitimate industry grew, and the poppy fields would have to be protected from both the narcotics traffickers and the Taliban who profit from them. The GoA would need assistance to

---

<sup>116</sup> Rubin, 9 March 2006, op.cit.,p.7.

<sup>117</sup> Paramonov, Stokov, op.cit.,p.4.

<sup>118</sup> Paramonov, Stokov, op.cit.,p.6.

<sup>119</sup> Rubin, 21 September 2006, op.cit.,p.6.

<sup>120</sup> Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Afghanistan National Development Strategy*.

<sup>121</sup> Applebaum, op.cit.

license the poppy as it would probably face difficulty doing so before its security forces became effective.<sup>122</sup> This approach has the benefit of utilising an existing part of Afghanistan's economy and therefore would make any efforts to sustain the economic growth more likely to succeed. However, some of the poppy could still reach the drug cartels<sup>123</sup> or a black market could emerge. Even if this happened, it is likely that the illegitimate poppy trade would be significantly reduced and it would be better than the current situation. Ultimately, if poppy purchase could not be made to work, the poppy could still be destroyed. This essay argues that such an approach is worthy of consideration.

The other option is to destroy the poppy and this has been discussed in the security section of the paper. However, we must consider how to offset the potentially devastating effect on the economy of the eradication of the poppy crops. In the short term the farmers and the rural communities that currently depend on the poppy for their survival must be financially compensated and offered alternative employment, possibly in agriculture or construction. The EU compensates its rich farmers with the Common Agricultural Policy so this approach should not be viewed as radical. However much it might cost to keep the farmers' support, it will be less than that of the cost of fighting. It must be remembered that the illegal poppy revenue funds the serious organised crime and the Taliban. Removal of this source of income will make it difficult for the drug cartels to operate in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, arguably, the best opportunities for economic growth do lie in agriculture. It is the largest sector of the legal economy and regional cooperation could be fruitful. Neighbouring countries could gain mutual benefit from bilateral agricultural holding companies concentrating on fur, livestock, cotton, fruit and vegetables. This would provide an alternative source of income to that of poppy;<sup>124</sup> however, this would be less lucrative than poppy and measures would have to be taken to militate against this in the short term. Furthermore, it must be accepted that agriculture is unlikely to provide the level of economic growth that Afghanistan needs in the long term;<sup>125</sup> that level of growth will require regional economic integration.

Opportunities for trade with the bordering countries of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan and perhaps China must be investigated. The construction of a pipeline to transport gas from Turkmenistan to the Pakistani port of Gwadar has been muted for many years. On 29 May 2002 President Karzai signed a treaty in Islamabad with President Musharraf and the Turkmen leader Saparmurat Nyazov authorising construction of a US\$3.2 billion gas pipeline. Plans for a second, parallel, pipeline for oil have also been discussed. The proposed 900-mile route runs through the Herat-Kandahar corridor. The project could generate up to 12,000 jobs and US\$300

---

<sup>122</sup> Applebaum, op.cit.

<sup>123</sup> Applebaum, op.cit.

<sup>124</sup> Paramonov, Stokov, op.cit.,p.6.

<sup>125</sup> DfID1.6.

million per year in transit fees.<sup>126</sup> Construction of the pipeline has not commenced; the main reason is probably the lack of security in Afghanistan. This opportunity should be investigated. Another proposed pipeline is the Iran – Pakistan – India (IPI) line. US foreign policy seeks to limit Iran's energy exports where possible and so the US opposes this pipeline whilst favouring the one from Turkmenistan. Conversely, Russia supports the IPI pipeline and Gazprom has offered to help build it. Additionally the Chinese have expressed interest in linking to the IPI pipeline which would allow China to import energy via overland routes rather than relying on tankers on the Indian Ocean.<sup>127</sup> There is a geopolitical game between the US and Russia being played out here. In an ideal world it would be beneficial if Russia and the US could cooperate rather than compete. Accepting that this is probably unlikely to occur, we must decide whether to pursue a pipeline or not, and if so which one?

Stephen Blank explains that Afghanistan may have significant reserves of oil and gas which could alter the region's geopolitical balance.<sup>128</sup> If true, the export of energy could contribute to the economy. However, the size of the reserves has not yet been confirmed and it takes about six years for an oilfield to generate oil and gas after the decision to exploit it has been taken.<sup>129</sup> Nevertheless, the possibility of Afghanistan having large energy reserves does increase the probability of a pipeline being built. Furthermore, both India and Pakistan value their relationship with America and may favour the Turkmenistan pipeline to avoid angering the US.<sup>130</sup> Therefore, given America's investment in Afghanistan and all of the other factors, this essay would argue in favour of pursuing the construction of the Turkmenistan pipeline. Currently, Turkmenistan exports most of its gas through the Russian pipeline system and Gazprom, the Russian state giant, buys the gas cheaply and sells it at profit.<sup>131</sup> Diplomatic activity will be necessary to alleviate Russian concern that this project would be against their interests; perhaps Gazprom could be offered involvement in the construction of the pipeline. Furthermore, it remains to be seen what effect the death of Turkmenistan's President Nyazov will have on the country's regional relationships. Nevertheless, if it did go ahead, this would be a medium-to long-term project which would take between five to ten years to generate revenue. Afghanistan's history is littered with missed opportunities and it is time to realise some of the potential. The prerequisite will be an assurance for the security of the pipeline whilst under construction and subsequently; if that is not assured then it will prove impossible to attract the necessary investment to start the project. The IC should be bold and accept that a significant international presence will be required in Afghanistan for at least ten to 15 years. Therefore, this paper argues that the IC should underwrite the security of the

---

<sup>126</sup> Kleveman, op.cit.,p.222.

<sup>127</sup> Blank, Stephen, *Afghanistan's Energy Future and its Potential Implications*, [http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav090306\\_pr.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav090306_pr.shtml) , accessed 10 January 2007.

<sup>128</sup> Blank, op.cit.

<sup>129</sup> *Peak Oil and International Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, lecture to ACSC 10, 24 January 2007.

<sup>130</sup> Blank, op.cit.

<sup>131</sup> *A bad father of the Turkmen*, The Economist, 6-12 January 2007,p.47.

project to kick-start it; young poppy farmers could be employed protecting the pipeline. This could become Afghanistan's pioneer international investment project, which, if successful, would produce income before the IC leaves (indeed, it might produce the economic conditions that allow the IC to leave) and demonstrate to the world that investment in Afghanistan is worthwhile and profitable. This might attract other foreign companies and start a domino effect of investment. The project would generate jobs for Afghans, supply gas to the transit towns and consequently strengthen public support for the international forces and the GoA. Unocal (now part of Chevron) has already shown that the pipeline is both feasible and profitable.<sup>132</sup> Another similar opportunity exists in the region with the exploitation of the oil and gas reserves in the Caspian Sea. Afghanistan offers a potential corridor from these oilfields on Turkmenistan's shores to Pakistan, India and the Persian Gulf, avoiding Iran. This pipeline was also investigated in the early 1990s; unfortunately, the instability caused by the conflict between the then emerging Taliban and the NA prevented the pipeline being built.<sup>133</sup>

One potential disadvantage of a pipeline is that Afghanistan would become vulnerable to the vagaries of the energy market. The recent experiences of Belarus illustrate some of the potential pitfalls. Russia exports oil through a pipeline in Belarus to its European customers. In 2006 Russian demands that Belarus pay more for its gas led to a disagreement between the two countries. Belarus resisted, and Russia imposed new duties on the oil it exports to Belarus instead. Belarus retaliated by demanding a transit fee for the oil that crossed it and, when the Russians refused, it siphoned off oil in lieu of payment. Russia stopped pumping oil into the pipeline and threatened to reroute supplies and to place duties on Belarusian goods. The two presidents talked on the telephone and resolved the issue, but Russia emerged with a 50% stake in Belarus's pipeline.<sup>134</sup> As a transit country, not an energy producing one, Afghanistan would have to be aware of such pitfalls, although a sensible contract with Turkmenistan should help allay fears and Turkmenistan is not as powerful as Russia. Although it could be argued that income from pipelines is not secure, the potential for further international investment once construction of the pipeline commenced should not be ignored, and this essay would argue that the project is worth the risk.

Having looked at the north, this essay will now discuss what opportunities exist in the south with Pakistan. As a land-locked country Afghanistan would benefit economically from access to Pakistani ports. Options for deals with Pakistan should be investigated. One possibility would be to persuade the GoA to reach an agreement on the Durand Line with Pakistan and settle the border dispute in return for guaranteed access to the ports. This approach would complement the diplomatic efforts to close the border to the Taliban. Historically, Afghanistan has shown a

---

<sup>132</sup> Kleveman, op.cit.,p.227.

<sup>133</sup> Kleveman, op.cit.,p.160.

<sup>134</sup> *Loveless brothers*, The Economist, 13-19 January 2007,pp.33-34.

tendency to ally with India<sup>135</sup> and diplomatic activity should be undertaken to try to stabilise the region. The main area of contention between India and Pakistan is Kashmir. Musharraf has suggested a resolution involving no territorial changes but greater autonomy for Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control and some cooperative bodies involving both India and Pakistan.<sup>136</sup> The IC should support the proposal and attempt to help to resolve the dispute.

Further afield, Russia also offers opportunities. Russia has an interest in a stable, developing and secure Afghanistan that will not export Islamic extremism to her borders and which would act as a strategic buffer from unrest.<sup>137</sup> There is potential for great benefit in involving Russia in the reconstruction of Afghanistan; there is a significant Afghan diaspora in Russia today and Russia maintains substantial personal contacts in Afghanistan from the Soviet period.<sup>138</sup> There would appear to be room here to make a mutually beneficial deal with Russia, especially as Russia's nationalised power companies are becoming major players in the Central Asian oil, gas and hydroelectric markets. Strategically, the US has good reason to consider cooperation with Moscow in the energy field because Russia, with its large oil and gas reserves, could alleviate America's dependency on Middle Eastern oil.<sup>139</sup> An improvement in cooperation between the US and Russia would be beneficial for Afghanistan because it would defuse a lot of the potential tension that could arise from the efforts to export energy from Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan through Afghanistan. President Putin recently suggested that '...we need a new treaty on strategic partnership between Russia and the EU' to enable a higher level of economic integration and interaction;<sup>140</sup> this approach from the Russian President shows that there is room for negotiation with the West and the EU appears to have an opportunity to influence Russia to some degree. The UK is particularly influential in the diplomatic arena and could use this strength to further Russian support for the mission. It is clear that success in Afghanistan will require the application of all of the UK's levers of power using what is described by the MOD as the Comprehensive Approach.

---

<sup>135</sup> Smith, op.cit.,p.11.

<sup>136</sup> *Up Sir Creek*, The Economist, 20-26 January 2007,p.69.

<sup>137</sup> Smith, op.cit.,p.12.

<sup>138</sup> *Karzai meets with Putin, other Russian officials*,

[http://www.jamestown.org/publications\\_details.php?volume\\_id=25&&issue\\_id=2219](http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=25&&issue_id=2219) , accessed 24 April 2007.

<sup>139</sup> Kleveman, op.cit.,p.260.

<sup>140</sup> Putin, Vladimir, *From Russia with love*, The Sunday Times, 25 March 2007.

## Comprehensive Approach

Afghanistan is a case study for the CA; furthermore, lessons must be learnt and applied if we are to be successful. Afghanistan is unstable. It requires basic security to be provided before serious reconstruction can commence in the south. This will then enable economic development and consequently empower the GoA to run the country from its own revenue without relying on large amounts of foreign aid. Unfortunately, currently Afghanistan as a whole is not stable, and the south is particularly insecure. ISAF and OEF forces are operating in theatre together but are not always united in their purpose. Recently the US has disagreed with the UK approach over the peace deals in Musa Qala<sup>141</sup> and with General Richard's method for dealing with the narcotics trade. Some NATO members have national caveats that prevent them from conducting all tasks which reduces the efficiency of the ISAF troops in Afghanistan. The IC does not seem sufficiently resolved to give Afghanistan the support it requires to save the mission from failure. General Richards was calling for a reserve of 1,000 combat troops for most of 2006<sup>142</sup> but NATO nations were unwilling to supply them. The US recently announced that an additional brigade would be sent to Afghanistan and a further US\$11.8 billion in civilian and military aid for Afghanistan over the next two years;<sup>143</sup> this is an impressive commitment and the EU, an economic powerhouse, has a golden opportunity to contribute a similar sum which it could target at reconstruction efforts. However, a common, internationally agreed strategy appears to be lacking in Afghanistan. The IC appears unwilling to provide sufficient political and financial support. The UK has a small military but wields significant international influence; it is possibly here that the UK can make the biggest contribution by exercising her significant diplomatic power to influence the IC. However, the UK cannot solve the lack of international commitment to Afghanistan, she can only engage politically in an attempt to persuade nations to help more. Nevertheless, the UK government can address the shortcomings in its own approach.

The UK strategy is to pursue a stable and democratic Afghanistan, but is this totally clear across government? More importantly, do the British people understand that this is the mission? The counter-narcotics role is high-profile and well reported; it is highly likely that the majority of the UK's public do not understand the wider aim of the mission in Afghanistan. This essay will return to this point later. The UK is attempting to apply the CA in Afghanistan even though the concept is not fully accepted across government. At the operational and tactical levels in theatre the CA appears to be working quite well, mainly due to the quality of the personnel involved in the operations. This paper argues that it is at the strategic level where the problems exist. MOD attempts to formalise the approach in doctrine have been met with suspicion from OGDs who seem to suspect that it is

---

<sup>141</sup> Rashid, Ahmed, *Taliban Takeover of Town Could Mark Start of Military Offensive*, [online], <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav020507.shtml>, accessed 21 February 2007.

<sup>142</sup> Lamb, Christina, *Job Done: The Taliban are 'on the Run'*, *The Sunday Times*, 4 February 2007.

<sup>143</sup> *A double spring offensive*, *The Economist*, 24 February 2007, p.26.

an attempt by the military to take over and impose a military template on a complicated concept. However, it is the MOD's personnel who are in action and getting killed; therefore, it is understandable that the MOD is keen to take forward the CA as rapidly and efficiently as possible. The UK is not alone in struggling to solve the problem of interagency cooperation. Christopher Schnaubelt points out that the US Department of Defense (DOD) is also facing similar issues in Iraq, to the point where he argues that improving interagency operations needs to become one of the DOD's highest priorities. He also points out that cultural differences and confusion over the chain of command and coordination, particularly at the operational level, have resulted in a failure to apply effectively all of the American levers of national power.<sup>144</sup> As a solution he suggests that in the face of an asymmetric enemy, US military doctrine and planning need to increase the efficiency of interagency cooperation in order to effectively harness the non-military elements of American power in the pursuit of political goals. He also argues that while coordination of the OGDs may not be an appropriate role for the military, there is no obvious alternative department to take the lead and accomplish the task at the strategic, operational and tactical levels.<sup>145</sup> General Richards has also argued that '...more authority and money should be given to military commanders to orchestrate the overall campaign'. While discussing reconstruction efforts he also suggests that, while the military can set the security conditions, it is often powerless to implement key parts of the plan and that '...our civilian colleagues are not geared up to serve in such an environment and are certainly not trained to do so in the energetic manner that alone can deliver early success, keeping pace with the people's expectations'.<sup>146</sup>

The MOD has embraced the concept of Jointery and it is now commonly accepted as best practice across the UK military components. A similar transformation should take place within government. Leadership should be provided by the Prime Minister (PM) and the Cabinet Office (CO) to persuade the OGDs to fully support the CA at the strategic level, and if necessary compel them to do so. It is the government that has set the agenda by stating that the threats to national security will be tackled at source using all of the levers of power.<sup>147</sup> This requires expeditionary armed forces, and deployment of personnel from OGDs, whose actions are coordinated across government within the CA applying the Effects Based Approach to operations. Only government leadership can make this happen. The MOD cannot lead this change as it does not have the authority within government to do so; however, MOD is at the sharp end of the consequences of not aligning across-government strategy to make the application of all levers of national power as efficient as possible. Servicemen and women are dying conducting these operations. This is not a game. Who is making the strategy here?

---

<sup>144</sup> Schnaubelt, Christopher M, 'After the Fight: Interagency Operations', *Parameters*, Winter 2005-06, p.48.

<sup>145</sup> Schnaubelt, op.cit.,p.57.

<sup>146</sup> Norton-Taylor, op.cit.

<sup>147</sup> Ministry of Defence, *Delivering Security in a Changing World Defence White Paper*, December 2003,p.5.

The UK is fighting a war in Afghanistan and it is unacceptable that the CA has not been fully endorsed and applied across Whitehall. Pan-government organisations do exist in the form of the Joint Intelligence Committee, dealing with national intelligence requirements, and the Cabinet Office Briefing Room to deal with national crises. The government has stated that the future security of the UK is going to require the UK to help rebuild failed states; therefore, why not also establish a strategic-level group designed for cross-government operations like the one in Afghanistan? The government should consider the requirement for a standing National Strategic Planning and Operations Team (NSPOT) to plan and execute such operations at the strategic level. The NSPOT should be led by the CO and include planning representatives from DfID, MOD, FCO, PCRU and, most importantly, the Treasury. These representatives should have executive authority, empowered to speak on behalf of their departments; initial meetings should be led by the PM and involve the Secretaries of State. A planning system should be developed that works at the strategic level and produces national strategic plans to guide the subordinate levels. The consequences of involvement in operations should be fully examined and careful consideration of all factors should occur before the decision to act is taken. Representatives should plan, exercise and operate together to foster across-government relationships which will be crucial to the success of the concept. NSPOT liaison representatives should be present within other departments to provide advice and a point of contact, in much the same way as component headquarters include officers from the other services. Strategic jointery should be the aspiration. Within the military much is made of 'operational art' and it is successful. Where is the UK's 'strategic art'? Formalising the CA would lead to supported and supporting departments within the campaign plan which would give clear authority to the lead department for each phase of the operation. This would clarify the chain of command and empower the appropriate department at the appropriate time and lead to unity of purpose. As Schnaubelt has said, '...contemporary threats require inter-agency decision-making and collaboration at the operational level'.<sup>148</sup> The OGDs will also require deployable personnel properly trained and supported by their departments for expeditionary operations. This will require a significant shift in mind-set for some OGDs and possibly a change in emphasis on the recruitment requirements. DfID currently has a mandate to pursue the UN's Millennium Development Goals<sup>149</sup> and all allocations of DfID funds must pass a 'poverty test'. Perhaps, in this era of taut budgets and overstretch, some amendment to DfID's mandate could be considered to align the department more fully with overall government strategy. Furthermore, there might be some future in the development of an 'Expeditionary DfID' and an 'Expeditionary PCRU', both more robust and able to deploy and operate in less permissive environments with the degree of urgency and energy that General Richards alludes to.

---

<sup>148</sup> Schnaubelt, op.cit.,p.59.

<sup>149</sup> DfID, op.cit.

In determining what is decisive at the operational level it should be remembered that combat operations can only shape the environment for reconstruction and economic development to take place.<sup>150</sup> Therefore, the decisive act in operations such as in Afghanistan does not lie in military action, but in the successful reconstruction of the country which the military cannot achieve alone. In other words, the real decisive act occurs in the post-combat stabilisation phase. This may redefine the concept of operational art; instead of it being a military concept, it must become a cross-government concept with art and design being applied across the whole operation and across all government departments with the appropriate department in the lead. It would make sense for the MOD to take the lead for the intervention phase if it requires military action, but once the campaign enters the stabilisation phase it might be more appropriate for another department to lead; this should be considered. It might be that the MOD is best to lead throughout and, if so, then the operational commander should be empowered as General Richards argues. HMG has appointed the FCO as the lead department for counter-narcotics in Afghanistan<sup>151</sup> while the MOD has the lead for the combat operations; the two roles are closely linked and it would make more sense, and be more efficient, to nominate one department for the lead role for all government activities in theatre. Unity of command would lead to unity of purpose; someone must be in charge of all of the government actors in theatre, manage the campaign across departments at the operational level and be responsible to the NSPOT back in London.

The MOD's Joint Discussion Note (JDN) on the CA<sup>152</sup> is a good starting point and it should be supported by the PM. There are cultural differences between government departments and these should be embraced and used to strengthen the UK's armoury for dealing with contemporary threats; however, they must not be allowed to delay progress in taking forward this concept. One of the potential limitations of the proposed CA doctrine is its failure to discuss or allow for the role of friction. Clausewitz describes friction as the accumulation of difficulties,<sup>153</sup> but it is also the resistance to progress caused by a clash of wills, temperaments or opinions; the net result is to reduce the efficiency of the campaign and to undermine IC cohesion and resolve. Afghanistan represents an example of friction on a grand scale. States disagree with each other; this essay has already discussed one example of disagreement between the UK and US, two close partners. NATO, an alliance of democratic states, has internal disagreements; the issue of national caveats restricting what some deployed forces are prepared to do is a sensitive area. General Richards commented that the use by some nations of caveats made the sequencing of tactical operations more difficult than it should have been. In September 2006 one or two nations over-focused on 'their' province and were reluctant to support the fight in Kandahar province (Operation

---

<sup>150</sup> McNerney, op.cit.,p.33.

<sup>151</sup> Norton-Taylor, op.cit.

<sup>152</sup> The Comprehensive Approach, JDN 4/05.

<sup>153</sup> Clausewitz, Carl von, *On War* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1997), p.66.

MEDUSA).<sup>154</sup> However, although not ideal, national caveats are a reality that must be allowed for; democratic nations can only support an operation if they can sustain popular support for it in their capitals. For some nations like Germany, taking casualties would lead to a loss of public support and possibly force them to withdraw their forces from theatre. The impact on the overall campaign would be negative as other forces would have to be moved north to fill the gap. There are divided loyalties within Afghanistan; the Kajaki dam project illustrates some of the problems that beset the country. The workers at the hydro-electric power station work with the British forces by day, and sleep alongside the Taliban in the villages at night.<sup>155</sup> There is also friction within HMG. How can a truly CA be achieved when each of the government departments has equal status, different political agendas and no one in overall charge? This cannot lead to unity of purpose. General Richards has explained that while his relationships with the FCO were good, he was very frustrated by the speed of DfID's delivery on the ground and their reluctance to join his team as planning partners.<sup>156</sup> Finally, there is friction between HMG and the British public. HMG has to sell the operation to a cynical public to ensure enduring support for British engagement.

So what are the doctrinal lessons that we can learn from Afghanistan? The government has stated that one of its roles is to fix failed states; this is a strategic task. Afghanistan will be a long-term commitment requiring soft and hard power, diplomacy, reconstruction and the building of capacity; it will probably take up to 20 years before success is achieved. The government appears to have the intent to carry out the operations efficiently, but since articulating the CA concept years ago it has not pursued it firmly enough. The time has come for a review of how these operations are conducted across government and this essay has offered some ideas for improvement. Something must be done soon. There is some hope on the horizon. The PM has recently urged a strategic approach to conflict prevention and nation-building, emphasising that Whitehall must take a strategic and long-term approach to international security and conflict issues.<sup>157</sup> He goes on to say that '...we should consider bringing the disparate conflict-related sources of funds together into a single strategy, subject to collective ministerial decision'. He also argues for an effective civilian expeditionary capability.<sup>158</sup> However, this attempt to set the agenda now is too late and it will be essential to secure the support of the new PM as soon as possible to take these recommendations forward with urgency. Furthermore, how do we ensure long-term political commitment to this campaign in a democracy where the government is liable to change every four to five years? Perhaps the NSPOT should include politicians from the major political parties to achieve across-party political support for operations conducted in the UK's national security interest. This would go some way to ensuring continuity of support over the years. The role of friction requires

---

<sup>154</sup> Norton-Taylor, op.cit.

<sup>155</sup> *A double spring offensive*, The Economist, 6-12 January 2007, p.28.

<sup>156</sup> Norton-Taylor, op.cit.

<sup>157</sup> *Building on Progress: Britain in the World*, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, April 2007, p.9.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10.

consideration and must be allowed for. Perhaps the biggest lesson is the need to be able to sell the message to a cynical public that operations in Afghanistan are essential for UK national security.

Coalition public opinion is the strategic Centre of Gravity and the public must support this mission for the duration if the IC is to succeed. A recent YouGov poll in The Daily Telegraph revealed that 53% of UK voters polled considered that the UK's forces should be brought home from Afghanistan almost immediately, and 65% thought that the UK is over-extended and should not seek to have as much military influence in the world as she has now. Importantly, however, 72% said that Britain should be reluctant to become involved in any foreign conflict unless it is absolutely clear that it is in Britain's own interests to do so.<sup>159</sup> This is telling; it shows that if the reasons for the UK's involvement in Afghanistan were properly explained in the context of our national security then it should be possible to win public support for the operation. It also implies that since the majority felt that the armed forces should be brought home immediately that this case has not been adequately made. There has to be a consistent message passed to the public and it must be regularly reinforced. The government must find a way to explain why things happen. Consideration should be given to releasing low-level intelligence explaining the Taliban network and the threat that they present. The language used is important; the 'War on Terror' does not appear to work well in the UK and Europe, perhaps because it is too emotive. The real trick will be to sell a coherent, believable message without appearing to have a 'department of fear' approach. The coherence of the message would naturally follow a true CA across government because all departments would genuinely be pursuing the same goal. Finally, the consequences of failure should be clearly explained. NATO cohesion and credibility would suffer which would have a detrimental effect on our security; Afghanistan would remain a failed state and it would continue to be a haven for international terrorists. Global security would reduce and terrorists everywhere would see that democracies have no stomach for a long fight. All of the involved government websites should carry the same message. An emphasis on the benefits for the UK from success in Afghanistan, along with the military involvement couched in terms of reconstruction efforts, would probably have a reasonable chance of success. A modern media approach, including pod casts, Utube and other contemporary media, will be essential to reach all of the voting public. However, the current Blair government has lost credibility and the distribution of more intelligence dossiers may not work. The changeover of PM this year may offer an opportunity for the new PM to re-engage with the public over the UK's missions abroad. Some political capital must be expended making the case for the operation, and in forcing the OGDs to support the CA at the strategic level.

---

<sup>159</sup> King, Anthony, *Most voters want overstretched Britain to scale down world role*, The Daily Telegraph, 3 April 2007.

## Conclusion

The situation in Afghanistan is serious but we have not lost yet. There is much to do and it is essential that the IC provides the required resources to ensure success. This essay argues that the key to recovery in Afghanistan lies in reconstruction. Reconstruction will build human capacity and infrastructure, and allow the GoA to govern successfully; it will also set the conditions for economic recovery. However, for reconstruction to be successful a minimum level of security must be provided. The military cannot solve the problems of Afghanistan alone but it can shape the security environment to enable recovery to take place. Reconstruction teams must be ready to exploit military success and commence reconstruction as soon as an acceptable level of security has been delivered. The rate of reconstruction is crucial as it must keep pace with people's expectations; if we lose the support of the local Afghan people then we will lose in Afghanistan. Poppy is one of the most serious issues in Afghanistan and its cultivation for illegal use must be stopped. However, taking down the poppy trade without alternative employment for the farmers will be counter-productive and will lose their support. Furthermore, the impact on the economy of the loss of income from poppy must be mitigated and subsidies and alternative employment for the farmers will be crucial. Serious consideration should be given to buying the poppy and using the opiates for legal use. The Taliban must be dealt with, and the Pakistan border must be closed to them. However, more emphasis should be put on dealing with the criminality in Afghanistan. Successful SSR will underpin the fight against criminality, and the IC should now concentrate on forming an effective ANP, and reforming the judiciary and MOI.

The most fundamental target for reconstruction is the raising up of an effective government. Consideration should be given to decentralising the governance of the country and empowering the tribal elders to lead the provinces while answering to Kabul. This might increase support for the GoA as the people would feel that they have a role in the running of the country and it may offer a way to appease the NA and the Taliban in time. Foreign aid underpins much of the reconstruction and it must be increased and delivered more effectively. The GoA should set the priorities for the disbursement of the funds, and be seen to do so, until the corruption in government is dealt with. Afghanistan must be integrated into the regional economy if it is to prosper. The construction of an electricity grid, and the building of roads and railways, will help to encourage international trade to go through, rather than bypass, Afghanistan.

Regional integration will go a long way to helping the Afghan economy grow; a lead international investment project like the pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan should be pursued. The IC would have to underwrite its security for now until the GoA can police its own country, but the IC will be there for some years to come. The successful completion of the pipeline would bring in revenue and could act as a catalyst for further foreign investment by showing that projects in Afghanistan can be profitable. Pakistan should be encouraged to get involved in reconstruction in

the south; economic interest in the reconstruction might complement efforts to deny the border to the Taliban. Finally, Russia appears to offer opportunities for Afghanistan and the IC should attempt to secure Russian help.

The implementation of the CA in Afghanistan requires scrutiny. Contemporary threats require the application of all of the levers of power and, to be efficient, unity of purpose and command is essential. A strategic level cross-government transformation will be required to successfully implement the CA and the lessons from the American experiences should be examined. The doctrinal lessons for the CA must be identified and applied, and the role of friction should be considered. Furthermore, the UK should strive to set strategy more clearly and formally plan at the strategic level. Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq cost the lives of our young servicemen and women, and the taxpayer foots the financial bill. It is unacceptable not to formally plan at the strategic level before committing blood and treasure to a campaign. The support of the British public must be ensured; the government must make more effort to explain what we are doing in Afghanistan, and why. If we lose public support the operation will fail.

It is essential that we succeed in our mission in Afghanistan. This is the first operation that NATO has undertaken since the Cold War and its credibility may be at stake.<sup>160</sup> If we give up on Afghanistan and allow it to remain a failed state it would only be a matter of time before another terrorist atrocity was launched from within its borders. Equally, the credibility of the UK's forces is inextricably linked to the fate of Afghanistan, and UK public opinion would probably judge failure harshly. It could have a profound effect on the future of our armed forces. Finally, it is important to succeed for the people of Afghanistan; they have faced conflict and poverty for decades and they deserve a better life. It is within our power to give it to them. A prosperous, democratic, stable and terrorist-free Afghanistan is in the global interest. We must avoid never quite succeeding in Afghanistan, giving up on the basis that 'Afghans fight anyway' and abandoning them, and us, to their fate.

---

<sup>160</sup> *The future of NATO: The test in Afghanistan*, The Economist, 25 November 2006,p.10.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **BOOKS**

- Clausewitz, Carl von, *On War* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1997).
- Coll, Steve, *Ghost Wars* (London: Penguin Books, 2005).
- Courtney, Morgan L, *In the Balance, Measuring Progress in Afghanistan*, (CSIS 2005).
- Kleveman, Lutz, *The New Great Game* (London: Atlantic Books, 2003).
- Maley, William, *Rescuing Afghanistan* (London: Hurst and Co. Ltd, 2006).
- Rashid, Ahmed, *Taliban* (London: Pan Books, 2001).
- The Comprehensive Approach, Joint Discussion Note 4/05

### **GOVERNMENT PAPERS**

- Building on Progress: Britain in the World*, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, April 2007.
- Ministry of Defence, *Delivering Security in a Changing World Defence White Paper*, December 2003.
- The Comprehensive Approach, JDN 4/05.

### **ARTICLES**

- Bollen, Myriame, T.I.B, Linssen, Col Eric T and Rietjens, IR. Sebastiaan J.H., 'Are PRTs Supposed to Compete with Terrorists?', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol 17, No. 4, December 2006, pp.437-448.
- Browne, Des, 'Afghanistan, A Comprehensive Approach to Current Challenges', *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 151, No. 5, October 2006, pp.8-12.
- Clark, Kate, 'The Real Afghan War', *Newstatesman*, November 2006, pp.12-15.
- Jalali, Ali A, 'The Future of Afghanistan', *Parameters*, Vol 36, No. 1, Spring 2006, pp.4-19.
- Lok, Joris Janssen, 'Afghanistan mission 'could end in failure', NATO board warns', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, Vol 43, Issue 47, 22 November 2006, pp.5.
- McNerney, Michael J, 'Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?', *Parameters*, Vol 35, No 4, Winter 2005/2006, pp.32-46.
- Pant, Harsh V, 'Growing Instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan's Role', *RUSI Newsbrief*, Vol 26, No.11, November 2006, pp.124-126.
- Rubin, Barnett R, 'Saving Afghanistan', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2007, pp.58-78.
- Schnaubelt, Christopher M, 'After the Fight: Interagency Operations', *Parameters*, Winter 2005-06, pp.47-61.
- Wright, Joanna, 'Police Reform in Afghanistan', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol 18, No. 11, November 2006, pp.39-43.

## **CONFLICT STUDIES RESEARCH CENTRE ARTICLES**

Paramonov, Dr Vladimir and Stokov, Dr Alexey, *The Economic Reconstruction of Afghanistan and the Role of Uzbekistan*, CSRC, June 2006.

Smith, Ben, *Afghanistan, Where are we?*, CSRC June 2005.

## **ESSAYS IN BOOKS**

Vaishnav, Milan, *Afghanistan, The Chimera of the Light Footprint*, in Orr, Robert C, (ed.), *Winning the Peace, An American Strategy for Post-Conflict Resolution* (Washington D.C.: CSIS, 2004).

## **PAPERS**

Jones, Ann, *How US Dollars disappear in Afghanistan: Quickly and thoroughly*, San Francisco Chronicle, 5 September 2006.

Rubin, Barnett R, *Afghanistan's Uncertain Transition from Turmoil to Normalcy*, Council on Foreign Relations, 12 March 2006.

Rubin, Barnett R, *Making Aid to Afghanistan Effective*, Testimony to the House Committee on International Relations, 9 March 2006.

Rubin, Barnett R, *Still Ours to Lose: Afghanistan on the Brink*, Written Testimony to Senate Foreign Relations Committee 21 September 2006.

Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Afghanistan National Development Strategy*.

DFID Interim Strategy for Afghanistan 2005/6.

The Afghanistan Compact 1 February 2006.

## **NEWSPAPER ARTICLES**

*A bad father of the Turkmen*, The Economist, 6-12 January 2007, p.47.

*A double spring offensive*, The Economist, 24 February 2007, p.26.

*Go West, young Chinaman*, The Economist, 6-12 January 2007, p.46.

*Heroin Dominates Afghanistan's Economy*, The Economist, 2-8 December 2006, p.67.

*Loveless brothers*, The Economist, 13-19 January 2007, pp.33-34.

*The future of NATO: The test in Afghanistan*, The Economist, 25 November 2006, p.10.

*They walk the line*, The Economist, 20-26 January 2007, p.68.

*Up Sir Creek*, The Economist, 20-26 January 2007, p.69.

Harding, Thomas, *Do your fair share in Afghanistan, NATO told*, The Daily Telegraph, 10 March 2007.

King, Anthony, *Most voters want overstretched Britain to scale down world role*, The Daily Telegraph, 3 April 2007.

Lamb, Christina, *Job Done: The Taliban are 'on the Run'*, The Sunday Times, 4 February 2007.

Morarjee, Rachel, *To a Second Front? How Afghanistan could again be engulfed by civil war*, Financial Times, 22 November 2006.

Norton-Taylor, Richard, *Full Interview: General David Richards*, The Guardian, 22 January 2007.

Putin, Vladimir, *From Russia with love*, The Sunday Times, 25 March 2007.

Rashid, Ahmed, *Deals with the Taliban put Britain 'out of step' with NATO allies*, The Daily Telegraph, 6 January 2007.

Smith, Michael, *Doubts grow as sprayers target Afghan poppies*, The Sunday Times, 31 December 2006.

Wilkinson, Isambard, *NATO forces in rush to rebuild war damage*, The Daily Telegraph, 29 December 2006.

### **WEB ARTICLES**

Applebaum, Anne, *Legalize it. How to solve Afghanistan's drug problem*, <http://www.slate.com/id/2157644/> , accessed 18 January 2007.

Blank, Stephen, *Afghanistan's Energy Future and its Potential Implications*, [http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav090306\\_pr.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav090306_pr.shtml) , accessed 10 January 2007.

BBC News, Des Browne Statement, *UK to boost Afghan force by 1,400*, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/6396001.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6396001.stm) , accessed 4 March 2007.

De Young, Karen, *Afghanistan Opium Crop Sets Record*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/01/AR2006120101654.html> , accessed 18 January 2007.

Hanks, Reuel and Gleason, Gregory, *Regional Electrical Integration: Panacea for Central Asia's Economic Woes?*, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav> accessed 8 January 2007.

Lobjakas, Ahto, *Afghanistan: NATO Summit Stresses Progress*, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp120306.shtml> , accessed 12 December 2006.

Pincus, Walter, *Pakistan Will Have to Reckon With Tribal Leaders, Negroponte Says*, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/14/AR2006121401565.html?nav=rss\\_world/asia](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/14/AR2006121401565.html?nav=rss_world/asia) , accessed 17 January 2007.

Rashid, Ahmed, *Pashtuns in Pakistan Speak out Against the Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*, [http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav112706b\\_pr.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav112706b_pr.shtml) , accessed 10 January 2007.

Rashid, Ahmed, *Taliban Takeover of Town Could Mark Start of Military Offensive*, [online], <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav020507.shtml> , accessed 21 February 2007.

Weitz, Richard, *The Other War: The US Gears Up for Spring Offensive in Afghanistan*, [online], <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav021607.shtml> , accessed 21 February 2007.

*Afghanistan Opium Crop Sets Record*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/01/AR2006120101654.html> , accessed 18 January 2007.

*Focus: In the Line of Fire*, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2087-2404819,00.html> , accessed 17 January 2007.

*Karzai meets with Putin, other Russian officials*, [http://www.jamestown.org/publications\\_details.php?volume\\_id=25&&issue\\_id=2219](http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=25&&issue_id=2219) , accessed 24 April 2007.

*Russian Drug Control Service to Open Foreign Offices in 2007*, <http://www.interfax.ru/e/C/0/28.html?menu=1> , accessed 10 January 2007.

UK and Pakistan Forge Terror Pact, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/6161500.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6161500.stm) , accessed 18 January 2007.

US Army.mil/News, <http://www.army.mil/-news/2007/05/10/3060-4500-101st-airborne-division-soldiers-slated-for-afghanistan-deployment/> ,accessed 19 May 2007.

[www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)

[www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)

[www.mod.uk](http://www.mod.uk)

## **ELECTRONIC ARTICLES**

Rubin, Barnett R and Siddique, Abubakar, *Resolving the Pakistan-Afghanistan Stalemate*, <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr176.pdf>, accessed 16 January 2007.

Save the Children, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Humanitarian-Military Relations in Afghanistan*, <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk> , accessed 15 January 2007.

## **SPEECHES**

Ingram, Adam, Min AF, Ministry of Defence, *UK Military Operations in Afghanistan*, <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/People/Speeches/MinAF> , accessed 20 November 2006.

Browne, Des, Secretary of State for Defence, RUSI Speech 19 September 2006.

## **LECTURES**

*Peak Oil and International Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, lecture to ACSC 10, 24 January 2007.

## **INTERVIEWS**

Interview with Lt Col I Rigden, Royal Gurkha Rifles, 14 March 2007.