

THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE APPROACH: ADDING STRUCTURE TO INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN AFGHANISTAN

BY

COLONEL WILLIAM C. BUTCHER
United States Army

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**THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE APPROACH: ADDING STRUCTURE TO
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN AFGHANISTAN**

by

Colonel William C. Butcher
United States Army

Mr. Jim Townsend
The Atlantic Council of the United States Project Adviser

Colonel (Retired) Al Stolberg
U.S. Army War College Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

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Over the past several years the International Community, led by the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and their respective member nations and have actively supported the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) in their pursuit of a stable and prosperous nation. Despite their involvement the stability situation in Afghanistan remains bleak. While a determined enemy explains some of the reasons for the present impasse, the **incomprehensible** lack of cooperation on the behalf of the aforementioned stakeholders bares an ever-increasing portion of the responsibility for the unsustainable situation in Afghanistan. Through case study this paper examines the status of cooperation in Afghanistan and makes recommendations for enhancing effectiveness through application of shared principles, norms, rules and procedures.

THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE APPROACH: ADDING STRUCTURE TO INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN AFGHANISTAN

“If the individual members of the organizations were of the same mind, if every organization worked according to a standard pattern, the problems would be solved. Is this not precisely what a coherent, well-understood, and accepted doctrine would tend to achieve?”

David Galulal

Introduction.

The International Community (IC) has actively supported the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) in the pursuit of a stable and prosperous nation for more than seven years; however, despite their efforts stability in Afghanistan remains bleak. While a determined enemy, with popular support and near uninterrupted sanctuary can explain some of the reasons for the current ominous situation, the incomprehensible lack of consistent international cooperation bares an ever-increasing portion of the responsibility. The failure of the international community to cooperate in Afghanistan has garnered the concern of some for many years; yet not until recently have the alarms been so ominous. In January 2008 the Atlantic Council released a report entitled *“Saving Afghanistan: An Appeal and Plan for Urgent Action”* in which it abruptly warned that “the international community was not winning in Afghanistan.” Among their chief concerns was that “little cooperation existed amongst the disparate actors involved in the country.”² The Atlantic Council’s report called for the appointment of a High Commissioner to “cajole, convince, or even coerce³” coordination and integration of the international effort. But the alarm bells and warning didn’t stop there.

Lord Paddy Ashdown, the former frontrunner for the High Commissioner position commented recently that the international community in Afghanistan remains “dangerously fractured” and that “there is no coordination between them that is worthy

of the name.”⁴ While Lord Ashdown’s comments could be taken as excessive, his analysis is shared by countless contributors to the Afghan cause. In fact, most recently Richard Holbrooke, the new U.S. Special Envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan commented on the poor coordination in Afghanistan stating “I’ve never seen anything remotely resembling the mess we’ve inherited.”⁵ Yet, probably the most insightful comment of late comes from an International Crisis Group report in which the author remarked that “disunity in Afghanistan is about not just structural issues or coordination but also priorities and preferences, goals, means, and increasingly, endgames, exit strategies and perhaps most importantly, the reasons for being in the country at all.”⁶ Ultimately our failure to coordinate is the result of a lack of common purpose and common vision among the stakeholders charged with administering the ingredients for stability in an integrated manner.

The U.S. Stability Operations manual, FM 3-07 states that the process of uniting the diverse capabilities necessary to achieve success in stability operations requires both “collaborative and cooperative paradigms” that provide disparate actors a framework with which to produce a “unity of effort” towards common objectives.⁷ However, within Afghanistan the overarching paradigms for cooperation and coherence, including the UN’s Integrated Approach (IA) and NATO’s Comprehensive Approach (CA) are yet to move significantly beyond conceptual definitions and recognition of need and are not sufficiently structured to permit the level of integration required to achieve the stated vision and objectives of the stakeholders in Afghanistan.

For this reason the GoA and the IC presently rely on national level fora to coordinate security, governance and reconstruction and development. In some sense,

these multi-national/multi-organizational coordination bodies are Afghanistan's last best hope. While they are not the panacea for changing all of the ills of the current Afghan condition; they contain powerful nations, organizations and regional actors; and if properly supported, these fora offer a substantial framework with which to better integrate the vast capabilities of Afghanistan's stakeholders. Yet, despite their importance, the effectiveness of these bodies is challenged by a lack of structured mechanisms for coordination, standards for participation among the various actors, rules of conduct; and agreed methodologies for achieving unified objectives. This paper will focus on demonstrating through case study how cooperation among the national level fora in Afghanistan can be enhanced through the application of shared principles, norms, rules and decision making procedures.

Approaches to Conflict Management Cooperation

Following the end of the Cold War the vast majority of countries in the West anticipated prolonged peace, but as the bipolar world faded away, a new era characterized by intra-state conflicts and complex emergencies arrived. During the first 10 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the United States alone participated in 15 separate stability operations throughout the globe.⁸ In 1998 the UN had approximately 14,000 Peacekeepers deployed throughout the world, but as the conflicts continued, the numbers increased and by 2008 more than 90,000 Peacekeepers were engaged in 16 separate UN missions.⁹ Many involved in these early operations encountered sources of instability, for which they were unprepared.

Over a very short period of time, in places such as Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda, conventional force on force fighting, gave way to vastly more complex system

characterized by ethnic violence, corruption, poverty, religious fanaticism and other drivers of conflict. This dramatic change in the nature of conflict created a threat to human security the likes of which no single agency, government or organization were able to manage on its own.¹⁰ Quickly, a world typified by “order of battle” gave way to a more anarchic system state, which demanded resources, personnel and capabilities from across the spectrum of crisis responders including International and non-governmental organizations, nations, agencies, military forces, civil society groups, and a variety of others. Early on it was assumed that these multi-disciplined actors would conduct non-integrated, but parallel activities, however it didn't take long for organization and nations alike to realize the value in harmonizing their responses to conflict management. Though, despite the newly formed desires for integration, international conflict management doctrine such as the UN's Integrated Approach and NATO's Comprehensive Approach have yet to effectively bare fruit.

The integrated Approach (IA) concept can be traced back to 1997, when then Secretary General Kofi Annan announced it as a priority for the UN. However until January 2008, when the United Nations Department of Peace Keeping Operations (UN DPKO) published its *Peace Keeping: Guidelines and Principles* manual there was no unified definition of the IA concept, nor were there set templates for its integration.¹¹ This still remains questionable as the new guidelines and principles manual simply devote only a few pages to the concept which leaves much to the imagination. The UN's stated purpose for integration is to create coherence between their political, military, humanitarian, and development elements in close collaboration with other partners.¹² As such, the UN concept envisages “processes, mechanisms and

structures” to be in place to orchestrate a common strategic objective.¹³ Yet in reality there are numerous caveats within the doctrinal guidelines, which act contrary to their structural desires.

Despite the doctrine within DPKO manual charging the Senior Civilian Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) with “coordinating the activities of the entire United Nations system in the field” the same manual states in the next paragraph that “integration does not mean that all United Nations actors on the ground should be physically integrated or subsumed under a single structure.”¹⁴ This is somewhat a dichotomy in that while the SRSG is mandated to coordinate the entire UN mission, there are no demands on the subordinate structure to ensure compliance. But where there is cause for even greater concern with the UN integrated concept is regarding its process for synchronizing efforts. A recent study entitled “Multi-Dimensional and Integrated Peace Operations” stated that “the UN still struggles with integrated planning due to its huge institutional and bureaucratic decision-making system.”¹⁵ Furthermore, while the UN DPKO manual states that “integrated planning is at the heart of the United Nations efforts” to develop a UN system-wide response, there is presently no approved guidance for what is referred to as the Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP).¹⁶ Although development of an implementation process began over two-years ago, the UN has failed to produce an agreed IMPP. While the UN’s doctrinal manual states that “every effort should be made to ensure that planning is conducted in close coordination with relevant United Nations system partners and other key stakeholders,”¹⁷ there is no agreed framework or process, with which to ensure integration. This is clearly a deficit which has a severe impact on the ability of a given UN mission to synchronize its

effects. Unfortunately, the UN is not alone with regard to establishing concrete structure for its integration desires.

The genesis of NATO's Comprehensive Approach is credited to a Danish initiative which was introduced into the NATO agenda in late 2004.¹⁸ Like the UN concept, NATO's CA is based on the ideal that in order to effectively stabilize war ravaged societies, security, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and development, governance and rule of law must all be delivered in a concentrated and coordinated manner. NATO formally recognized the concept of CA at the Riga Summit in November 2006 and to its credit, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) understood that its operations in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan demonstrated the need for greater collaboration with other actors in the field, which in turn led to their tasking for the development of an Action Plan focused on how NATO could incorporate CA into its functions.¹⁹ However, even as the security situation began to turn for the worse in Afghanistan, the Action Plan development crawled along in Brussels.

After a laborious 16 month process, the Action Plan was ultimately endorsed at the Bucharest Summit in April 2008:"comprising of a set of pragmatic proposals to develop and implement NATO's contribution to the comprehensive approach."²⁰ The Summit specifically addressed planning and conduct of operations; training and education; and enhancing cooperation with external actors as key areas needed to improve the "coherent application of NATO's own crisis management instruments and enhance practical cooperation."²¹ But this too, is proving to be woefully inadequate. In a recent comparative study between Effects Based Approach to Operations (EBAO) and CA, Brooke Smith-Windsor noted that compared to the voluminous EBAO

handbook, NATO's Action Plan and its "CA discourse is general and malleable with text numbering just a few pages without a single graph or explanatory figure."²² So now after three years of development, the CA concept has yet to be translated for practical employment which inevitably impacts the ability of NATO to apply integrated and comprehensive effects to its operational missions.

Within Afghanistan, while many have turned to these emerging concepts to demonstrate their desire for increased harmonization and unity, their dogma has yet to match their intent. The words "comprehensive approach" or "integrated approach" are now common vernacular throughout Kabul and its surroundings. In some cases the terms have become interchangeable and even taken on lives of their own. Political pundits, military commanders' and ambassadors use them regularly to describe the need for increased integration. In fact the concepts are so prevalent that the GoA even adopted the term integrated approach (the overarching UN concept) to help describe their desired implementation framework for the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS).²³ The problem is that both CA and IA are thrown around so often that they have become, in a sense, doctrinal concepts, but regardless of their popularity neither is prepared for fully achieving that level of significance. Establishing conflict management doctrine remains an absolute necessity. But in fact, the current multi-national and multi-organizational dogma lacks the level of inculcation and agreement required to ensure its intended affect among those supporting the Afghan cause.

National Level Coordination Fora

While the architects of the Integrated Approach and Comprehensive Approach continue to develop the implementation plans for their divergent processes, the mission

of stabilizing Afghanistan remains exclusively in the purview of national level fora. Two of the most prominent of these bodies are the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) and the PRT Executive Steering Committee (ESC). To differing degrees, each of these structures is responsible for coordination of security, governance, and reconstruction and development related support to Afghanistan. In fact, truth be told, these forum might well be the most important substructures in Afghanistan. For example, the JCMB is responsible for coordination of Afghanistan Compact (AC), which is the only UN endorsed strategic framework document for cooperation between the Government of Afghanistan, the United Nations and the international community, for programmatic delivery along three inter-related pillars of activity including: (1). Security, (2). Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights; and (3). Economic and Social Development.²⁴ On the other hand, the PRT ESC is responsible for providing guidance and oversight for all existing and proposed PRTs and is the single most important tool for ensuring PRT coherence across Afghanistan.²⁵ Yet neither of these structures is effectively accomplishing its coordination role.

Early last year the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) led an international coordination conference in which they developed a problem statement relative to the AC. As a result, more than 50 participants agreed that the “realization of the vision of the Afghanistan Compact through the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS)²⁶ is threatened by incomplete synchronization, weak institutions, and a lack of coordination within the international community, between military and civilian actors and between the international community and the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) itself, and that the result is incoherent and ineffective

implementation— where wasted effort is measured in lives, money and lost time.”²⁷

While these multi-national/multi-organizational coordination bodies might well hold the key to successful delivery of a stable Afghanistan, their effectiveness remains a problem due to poorly developed procedures and mechanism with which to coordinate the divergent interests of their members. The question is how voluntary cooperation can be effectively enhanced?

The reality is that cooperation in complex emergency environments like Afghanistan is certainly not black and white. While there are numerous stakeholders and donors contributing to the Afghan cause, there is no entity amongst them, which supra-nationally directs the orchestra of divergent resources and capabilities towards a common direction. Some look to the UNAMA for this function, due to their enhanced coordination role in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1806.”²⁸ However, regardless of mandate, UNAMA is no “leviathan,” therefore nations and organizations continue to act within their own interests. The bottom line is that there are few, if any coercive means for cooperation, which leaves voluntary unification toward a common objective the only option. The U.S. Stability Operations manual, FM 3-07 states that the process of uniting the diverse capabilities necessary to achieve success in stability operations requires both “collaborative and cooperative paradigms” that provide disparate actors a framework with which to produce a “unity of effort” towards common objectives.²⁹ In other words, in order to achieve the level of cooperation anticipated among voluntary parties to stability, an agreed structure of some kind is required.

In the 1980s political scientists began explaining the structure of organized “voluntary” cooperation among nations and organizations through the concept of International Regimes. Steven Krasner defined regimes as “implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations.”³⁰ Although this is the first formal definition, international relations theorists refined the concept over a period of years. For example in his 1984 book entitled “*After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*” Robert Keohane further defined regimes as “sets of governing relationships that include networks of rules, norms, and procedures that regularize behavior and control its effects.”³¹ The important nuance to Keohane’s interpretation is his recognition of how structure impacts the “regime” by providing it with the agreed to components which voluntarily bind the stakeholders to actions aimed at managing the associated problem for which the regime was formed.

In 1989 Oran Young took the theory even further asserting that regimes were “specialized arrangements that pertain to well-defined activities, resources, or geographical areas and often involve only some subset of the members of international society.”³² Young’s interpretation is useful in that he recognizes that “regimes” are interest-based entities which form their identities based on the problem sets which they encounter. In a sense they become an amalgamation of institutions and/or actors with authorities not only granted from their varied superior structures (nations and organizations) but from the agreed methodologies for interaction within “regime” itself. As such, a regime is formed when groups, organizations, institutions and nations, apply sets of agreements to their behavior in order to create and maintain a state of order.

The common denominator in these formal and informal relationships is the shared principles, norms, rules and procedures. When these structural variables exist, they can provide a sense of governance, without authority. When they don't exist or when they are poorly defined, outdated, or confusing they can lead to ineffective cooperation.

This is certainly the case regarding the national level coordination fora within Afghanistan. Despite their prominent membership, ample capacity and funding, fora such as the JCMB, the PRT ESC are facing decay and require a renewed sense of structural integrity with which to facilitate the level of order and stability required to coordinate among their divergent stakeholders and facilitate order and stability into the Afghan cause.

Case Study Analysis

In the two case studies below a model of analysis based on the regime concept is used to analyze the existence and effectiveness of principles, norms, rules and decision making procedures within these national level coordinating structures using the four step analysis process below:

1. Do agreed principles exist among stakeholders? Is there an agreed common vision which binds them through fact, cause, and relevance to the problem?
2. Do norms, standards and obligations exist among the stakeholders and are they adhered to within the given institution?
3. Are there existing rules for behavior among the relevant actors including instructions and exclusions for action? Are the rules agreed, followed and adhered to within the institution?

4. Do procedures exist among the stakeholders and are they habitual, effective and agreed to within the institution? ³³

At the conclusion of the case studies, a summary of recommendations is provided in order to offer a way ahead for restructuring national level coordination bodies within Afghanistan.

CASE STUDY I- Joint Coordinating and Monitoring Board (JCMB).

Constituted three years ago, the JCMB is the main forum for strategic coordination, joint policy formulation, and problem solving among the various parties to the Afghan Compact.³⁴ The JCMB is Co-chaired by a senior government representative of the President and UN SRSG, Ambassador Kai Eide. The Board consists of 7 ministerial representatives of the Government of Afghanistan, which form the JCMB's Oversight Committee (OSC); and an additional 25 delegates from the International Community including UNAMA, ISAF, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank; and member nations like the US, UK, Japan, Pakistan, India, China, Iran, Turkey Russian and several others.³⁵ These same entities, coupled with GoA ministries, form its subcomponent structures of 28 Technical Working Groups (TWG), 8 Consultative Groups (CG) and 5 Cross Cutting Consultative Groups (CCCG) all responsible for quarterly reporting on the Security, Governance and Development related Pillars of ANDS.³⁶ As the JCMB is only designed to meet quarterly, its Co-Chairmen recently agreed to establish three standing committees, focused on the three pillars of the Compact and ANDS and led by an Afghan government and international co-chair.³⁷ While the membership and the process are seemingly impressive, there remains a lack of structure with which to align these vast players.

Analysis. The JCMB might well be the most important coordinating body in all of Afghanistan. In fact, it could be the key to achieving the elusive strategic integration often cited by commanders, politicians and pundits alike. Its membership includes all of the most influential and powerful stakeholders in the region and across the globe. Yet, despite the potential of the JCMB, it has yet to function in the coordinated and integrated manner in which it was envisioned. For example, in the November 2009 UNSC Mission Report on the Afghanistan, Ambassador Kia Eide, reported that coordination remained limited by “the continued unwillingness of some donors to fully back the existing coordination mechanisms, especially the JCMB.”³⁸ Undoubtedly, some of the reason for the impasse in cooperation is due to a lack of shared vision and principles among the members of the JCMB.

There presently is no vision statement or specific principled terminology within the JCMB Terms of Reference (TOR) with which to bind its 32 members by fact or cause. Although the sole purpose of the JCMB is to enable the security, governance and development components of the Afghan Compact through effective coordination, implementation and monitoring; the JCMB charter fails to characterize the importance of its mission in relation to success or failure in Afghanistan. Despite the large membership of the JCMB, the Co-Chairmen have an obligation to ensure the Board’s members agree to some form of shared principles, which describe the consequence of coordination failure. The mission of the JCMB is far too important to remain malleable and without a common vision it is exceedingly difficult to fully obligate the stakeholders to norms, rules and decision making procedures, which effectively enhance coordination of the Compact.

At first glance, in terms of norms (standards and obligations) among its national, ministerial and organizational members, the JCMB TOR seems relatively effective. The TOR provides the required sense of oversight, monitoring and reporting for which the JCMB was established, but based on the recent Afghan Compact review conducted by the JCMB Co-Chairs; the JCMB requires strengthening in joint policy formulation, problem solving and strategic coordination, which are not adequately addressed within the existing TOR.³⁹ More importantly, there are other obligations of the JCMB, which are noticeably absent. For example, during the Paris Conference in June 2008, a number of priority challenges were identified and agreed to among the attending stakeholders including: governance, policing, rule of law, corruption, agriculture, energy, and private sector development.⁴⁰ Yet, presently there is no existing obligation among the same members to ensure that strategic priorities take precedence over other competing interests. The JCMB's role should be to make sure that donor money and resources are coordinated and delivered in support of these priorities.

Regarding rules, there are few among the members of the JCMB, less those focused on meeting frequency, quorum consistency and the function of the JCMB Secretariat. Yet, even these are in need of updating and strengthening. The JCMB is designed to meet quarterly in its full membership forum to fulfill its monitoring and coordinating role, but to date, the process has remained ineffective. The TOR states that the JCMB will meet four times a year, but since its inception it only met three times in, 2006, 2007, and 2008, which is 75% of its requirement. On two of those occasions, meetings were conducted outside of Afghanistan leading some to refer to it as a "traveling Jamboree."⁴¹ The JCMB manages the most important process in stabilizing

Afghanistan today, yet it has only met nine times in its three year history. A process of this nature must be nurtured more frequently in order to remain effective.

In terms of decision making procedures, the JCMB's current 32 member configuration makes it near "unwieldy" and prevents the level of efficiency required for effective implementation. While it is certainly true that within an organization of this nature "pressure for inclusion creates sometimes irreconcilable tension,"⁴² the efficiency of the process must take precedence over its membership. Unfortunately, despite some cosmetic changes to the JCMB structure, including the newly established standing committees, there are presently no further efficiencies in the works for decision making. For example, while the new standing committees were originally set up to make decisions and support delivery related to their three specific pillars; they in reality only have the authority to "prepare policy papers and make recommendations" for discussion in the JCMB.⁴³ This inevitably removes any efficiency gained by establishing standing committees in the first place.

Recommendations. The Co-Chairman should immediately call for a revision of the JCMB TOR in order to redefine its overarching purpose, enhance its authorities and responsibilities and streamline its decision making procedures in support of the three components of the Afghanistan Compact and the ANDS. The JCMB as a coordinating mechanism should establish within its TOR a vision statement and principles for its overarching function including coordination, monitoring and prioritization. Rules should be applied to the JCMB members, which obligate them to support their political commitments to the Afghan Compact and ANDS. Furthermore, the subordinate structures of the JCMB should be empowered to make decisions on a habitual basis, in

order to prevent the level of stagnation the JCMB's current quarterly process engenders. This means that rules should be applied, which not only empower the working groups, consultative groups, and standing committees; but ensure their effectiveness through manning, resourcing and habitual engagement. Finally, the JCMB should address some form of recrimination for failure to adhere to the norms and rules agreed within the TOR. The JCMB's role must be strengthened within the international community and the Afghan government. Afghanistan can ill afford for this vital body to continue on life support.

CASE STUDY II- PRT Executive Steering Committee (ESC)

The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) is a tactical level entity led by 14 separate nations in 26 of Afghanistan 34 provinces. According to the NATO PRT Handbook, "a PRT is a civil-military institution that is able to penetrate the more unstable and insecure areas because of its military component and is able to stabilize these areas because of the combined capabilities of its diplomacy, military, and economic components."⁴⁴ The PRT Executive Steering Committee (ESC) is the overarching coordinating body in Afghanistan and it has "authority" based on its multinational and multi-organizational membership to provide guidance for all existing and future PRTs.⁴⁵ Its consists of some, if not all of the most powerful representatives involved in the Afghan cause. The Committee is led by the Director of the Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) and Co-Chaired by the UN SRSG, the NATO Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) and ISAF (Commander or Deputy Chief of Staff Stability).⁴⁶ It members include the ambassadors of all the PRT Troop-Contributing Nations (TCNs), potential contributing nations; Deputy Ministers from the ministries of Finance, Foreign Affairs, Public Works, Rural Rehabilitation and Development and

Urban Development; the European Union Special Representative (EUSR); as well as World Bank, European Commission, US Forces Afghanistan, and EU Police representatives.⁴⁷ Despite the ESC's esteemed cast of supporters and its "authority" the Committee has accomplished little since its inception.

Analysis. Although there are new initiatives forming to revive the PRT ESC, the body itself remains stagnant and requires substantial changes to its Charter, its authority and its international support in order to accomplish its role as the policy coordinating body for 26 PRTs as well as their lead and contributing nations. Within the current ESC Charter here are no principles directly related to the purpose of the ESC. The closest statement of fact or cause is the PRT mission statement, which was approved by the ESC in January 2005 and states "Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) will assist the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to extend its authority, in order to facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment in the identified area of operations, and enable Security Sector Reform (SSR) and reconstruction efforts."⁴⁸ While the mission statement serves as direction for PRTs, it fails to reflect the actual vision and purpose of the ESC's coordinating role among its member nations and organizations. Furthermore, the ESC's charter presently fails to account for the committees obligations to coordination within the overarching purview of the JCMB. There is an inevitable linkage between the stability related mission of PRTs and the ANDS, which needs to be monitored and accounted for, within the framework of the nation's strategy for development. Finally regarding the ESC principles, unlike the JCMB, there is no specific international accord or resolution, which establishes the authority of the PRT ESC. The ESC boast co-chairmanship from the UN, ISAF, NATO

and the Afghan Government, as well as ambassadorial members from both lead and contributing PRT nations, the EUSR, Afghan Ministers and other important representatives; but it has no authoritative vision statement or endorsement from any overarching international governing body. Not only should the TOR be modified to establish a set of principles for the ESC's member conduct, its authority and purpose must be reflected and endorsed within the Security Council under the existing ISAF resolution. A mandate of this nature would strengthen the authority of the ESC and heighten its legitimacy among the lead and contributing nations to PRT operations. Unfortunately, its legitimacy is equally challenged by its present ineffectiveness.

The ESC charter states that “the Committee has the authority, based upon its multinational and interagency membership, to provide guidance for all existing and future PRTs.”⁴⁹ Their consolidated tasks consist of:

- Developing policy and guidelines for implementation, operation and expansion of the PRT concept;
- Determining verifiable measures of progress and periodically assess the situation;
- Assessing the success of PRTs in achieving measurable goals; and
- Conducting semi-annual review of their Charter to ensure Committee goals and actions evolve concurrent with the strategic and operational goals.⁵⁰

Of these arguably the most important is the mission of the ESC to “develop policy, guidelines and priorities for all PRTs. Yet to date the ESC has only issued three policy notes including: *PRT Engagement in Provincial Development*, Dec. 2006; *PRT*

Engagement in Disbandment of Illegally Armed Groups, Dec. 2006; *PRT Coordination and Intervention in Humanitarian Assistance*, Feb 2007.⁵¹ Therefore the only organization charged with directing policy to the 26 PRTs currently conducting divergent operations in Afghanistan, has only provided guidance on 3 occasions in the past 3 years. More to the point, during the past 36 months, while Afghanistan has literally fought for its survival, the PRT ESC has failed to provide guidance on necessary support to development of the Afghan National Police, implementation of the five-year plan for local governance, support and assistance to the Afghan National Army (ANA), implementation of NATO's recent guidance on Counter Narcotics⁵² and countless other new initiatives, which could have supported an increased level of integration within Afghanistan.

Yet another obligation of the ESC is to provide a sense of overarching analysis of how PRTs are impacting their Operational environment. While ISAF, and in particular the CJ9 (CIMIC) section has supported PRTs with an information forum over the past couple of years, the ESC has provided virtually no input to the metrics of analysis tracked by the CJ9. Further to the point, although the CJ9 PRT section edits, synthesizes and reports on the activities of PRTs, the ESC neither uses the information for analysis nor directs the information theme, focus or frequency in accordance with its charter. By not fulfilling this specific aspect of their responsibility, Ambassadors, Ministers, and the leadership within international community are left individually analyzing the impact of PRTs on Afghanistan. This inevitably leads to nations and organizations providing their own interpretation of the effect, which PRTs are, or are not having on their surrounds. If however the PRT ESC were to fulfill this analytical

component of their charter by establishing well-defined PRT metrics and periodically assessing their overarching impact; the consolidated committee could more effectively inform the international community and the general public of the actual impact (good and bad) which PRTs provide to stability.

Recommendations. The ESC is billed by NATO as the single most important tool for ensuring PRT coherence across Afghanistan and though there are some ongoing efforts to correct its deficiencies, over recent years the ESC has suffered considerably from insufficient terms of reference, limited support from its members, and infrequent meetings. As a result the ESC has practically provided no guidance in over two-years, leaving international cooperation on PRT Operations at a near standstill. Achieving coherence among all 26 PRTs remains a challenge, if for no other reason than the fact that there are 14 different nations leading PRTs. A consistent and coherent approach to PRT operations in support of Afghan stability remains a constant concern for both friends and foes of its concept. The provision of guidance, direction and information to those nations leading and working in PRTs across Afghanistan is paramount to the accomplishment of its integrated effect on the nation. The ESC Charter must be modified sufficiently to accomplish its intended function and endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution to add emphasis to this ever-important necessity in Afghanistan. The PRT ESC must be strengthened within the international community and fulfill its obligations to provide policy guidance, modify the PRT concept and assess PRT performance. However, more importantly, the ESC must become an integrated coordinating structure to the JCMB in support of its obligations to the Afghan government's development strategy. NATO, UNAMA and the Government of

Afghanistan need an effective body to coordinate both the civil and military components of PRTs. The ESC will only be able to fulfill that obligation when its purpose, method and intent are agreed and supported by its member nations and organizations.

Summary.

Voluntary cooperation among the stakeholders in Afghanistan requires a strategic approach. For too long, political pundits, military commanders and a host of others have bemoaned the lack of cooperation within Afghanistan, but have done little to ensure its success. As publically recognized now more than ever, there is no solution to Afghanistan (and the region) which doesn't include the application of security, governance and development in an integrated and synchronized manner. Emerging doctrine such as the Integrated Approach and the Comprehensive Approach are clearly steps in the right direction, towards the integration of stakeholders involved in complex emergency environments. However, to differing degrees the current dogma lacks the structure and implementation required to effectively change the current impasse on cooperation in Afghanistan. For this reason, the last best hope for security, governance, and development related cooperation among the stakeholders is to create greater efficiencies within the existing national level structures for coordination. In order to turn the tide on the current incomprehensible situation, the international community and the GoA must seek to establish within these national level coordinating bodies, shared principles, norms, rules and decision making procedures which effectively create the level of convergence demanded of this complex mission.

The people of Afghanistan, plagued by decades of violence, as well as the thousands of men and women supporting this mission deserve the full attention of the

international community and the Afghan government in stabilizing the nation. Yet, the consequence of failure is far greater than just one state or one mission. In reality, the future of international cooperation in complex emergencies might well depend upon the outcome in Afghanistan. The UN's reputation, NATO's future role in security and the trust and confidence in international institutions in general, are all at stake. These organizations and their member nations have cooperated on numerous complex issues in the past; but in order to ensure their future, Afghanistan can be no different.

Conclusion.

While in the process of writing this project, UNAMA and others have taken steps in the right direction towards revitalizing the JCMB and the PRT ESC, continued efforts within these and other national level fora are required. Coordination among the vast range of international actors in Afghanistan is not only critical to achieving stability, it's paramount. The key to cooperation lies in the structural integrity of the existing multi-national and multi-organizational coordination bodies within Afghanistan. Without it, the overarching mission is certain to fail. As Ambassador Holbrooke, General Petraeus and others analyze the present impasse to stability in Afghanistan, they would be remiss to not apply an equal amount of attention to solving the current coordination crisis among its stakeholders. More troops, more civilians and more money are all likely ingredients for turning the tide on the current situation; however none of these remedies will effectively cure the present malady without better international cooperation.

Endnotes

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- ³ Ibid
- ⁴ Lord Paddy Ashdown “What I Told Gordon Brown About Afghanistan,” 15 September 2008, linked from Spectator.Co.UK <http://www.spectator.co.uk/coffeehouse/2083801/ashdown-what-i-told-gordon-brown-about-afghanistan.html> (accessed 5 January 2009)
- ⁵ Craig Whitlock, “National Security Team Delivers Grim Appraisal of Afghanistan War,” *The Washington Post*, 09 February 2009
- ⁶ International Crisis Group “Afghanistan: The Need for International Resolve,” (Asia Study 145, International Crisis Group), 2008: 12.
- ⁷ U.S. Department of the Army, *Stability Operations*, Field Manual 3-07 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, October 2008), 1-3.
- ⁸ Ibid.,1-2
- ⁹ “Side by Side Together? Working for Security, Development & Peace in Afghanistan and Liberia,” (Centre for Military and Strategic Studies), October 2007: 3.
- ¹⁰ Cedric de Coning, “The United Nations and the Comprehensive Approach,”*Danish Institute for International Studies*, no 14 (2008):14.
- ¹¹ Kristiina Rintakoski and Mikko Autti. *Comprehensive Approach: Trends, Challenges, and Possibilities for Cooperation in Crisis Prevention and Management*. (Helsinki, Finland., 2008) 13.
- ¹² United Nations Department of Peace keeping Operations, *United Nations Peace Keeping Operations: Principles and Guideline*, (New York, NY: United Nations Department of Peace Keeping Operations, 18 January 2008), 54.
- ¹³ De Coning, “United Nations Comprehensive Approach,”3.
- ¹⁴ UN, Peace keeping Operations Guidelines, 69.
- ¹⁵ Niels Nagelhus Schia and Ståle Ulriksen, “The UN, EU and NATO: Common Challenges in Multidimensional Peace Operations,” *Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt No 728* (2007): 44.
- ¹⁶ The UN Peace Keeping: Principles and Guidelines Manual (Pages 53-57) address the Integrated Approach concept in general terms including a brief discussion on the Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP), however the manual points out that while the IMPP was formally endorsed through a decision by the Secretary-General’s Policy Committee, a comprehensive set of implementation guidelines are currently under development. Additionally in pages 69-74 the manual addresses the challenge of mission integration, citing the overall responsibility for the integrated mission with the SRSG; some components of an integrated mission and a brief summary on coordination with external partners.
- ¹⁷ UN, Peace Keeping Operations Guidelines, 55.

¹⁸ Friis Arne Peterson and Hans Binnendijk, "The Comprehensive Approach Initiative: Future Options for NATO," *Defense Horizons* 58 (Sep 2008): 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Bucharest Summit. *Public Declaration* (Bucharest, Romania., 2008), 1.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Brooke Smith-Windsor, "Hasten Slowly NATO's Effects Based and Comprehensive Approach to Operations," *Research Paper* No 38 (July 2008): 4.

²³ Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA), *Afghan National Development Strategy* (Kabul, Afghanistan, GIROA May, 2008):167.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 177-179

²⁵ International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), *Provincial Reconstruction Team Handbook* (Kabul, Afghanistan, ISAF, 2008): 2.

²⁶ The Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) will be the central framework for Afghanistan's development, aiming to promote pro-poor growth, support the development of democratic processes and institutions, and reduce poverty and vulnerability. It will lay out the strategic priorities and mechanisms for achieving the government's overall development vision and will serve as the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP, p. 43) a key document used by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in assessing a country's creditworthiness. The development of the ANDS was first proposed at the 2005 Afghanistan Development

Forum (ADF, p. 11), and the final ANDS is scheduled be completed by March 2008.
http://www.arei.org.af/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=17

²⁷ (United Nations Assistance Mission Afghanistan and Allied Joint Forces Command Brunssum 2008)

²⁸ (United Nations Security Council 2008)

²⁹ U.S. Army, *Stability Operations*, 1-3

³⁰ Eric Brahm, "International Regimes," September 2005,
http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/international_regimes/?nid=6584 (accessed 6 January 2009)

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³³ The process for analysis is based off of Stephan D. Krasner's Rationalist definition of Regimes, which is the most widely used definition. It is derived from his work entitled "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables" 1989, p2.

³⁴ United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), *Strengthening the JCMB*, (Kabul, Afghanistan, Unpublished 2008): 2.

³⁵ (Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) 2008)

- ³⁶ (Joint Coordinating and Monitoring Board (JCMB) June 2008)
- ³⁷ UNAMA, Strengthening the JCMB, 2.
- ³⁸ (United Nations Security Council 2008)
- ³⁹ Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board Co-Chairs, “Report on the Implementation of the Afghanistan Compact,” The International Conference in Support of Afghanistan (Paris, France 12 June 2008): 1-8.
- ⁴⁰ (United Nations Assistance Mission Afghanistan (UNAMA) 2008)
- ⁴¹ International Crisis Group, International Resolve, 14.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board Co-Chairs, “Report on the Implementation of the Afghanistan Compact,” The International Conference in Support of Afghanistan (Paris, France 12 June 2008): 1-8.
- ⁴⁴ International Security Assistance Force, PRT Handbook, 5.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., B-1-2.
- ⁴⁶ Joint Forces Command Brunssum, PRT Annex to OPLAN 30302 rev 4 (NATO Unclassified), December 2008, 2.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 2.
- ⁴⁸ International Security Assistance Force, PRT Handbook, 5.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 2.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., B-1-3.
- ⁵¹ Provincial Reconstruction Team Secretariat
- ⁵² According to the NATO Website: Based on the request of the Afghan government, consistent with the appropriate United Nations Security Council resolutions, under the existing operational plan, ISAF can act in concert with the Afghans against facilities and facilitators supporting the insurgency, in the context of counternarcotics, subject to authorization of respective nations.

