

WORKSHOP REPORT

COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION IN PEACE OPERATIONS: ASSESSING CANADA'S INTEGRATED APPROACH IN AFGHANISTAN

November 12 and 13, 2008 (Montreal, Canada)

I. Objectives

In all but the earliest stages of the war that began in 2001, Canadian involvement in Afghanistan has included a mix of military, political, and development assistance. Combined, these efforts represent the first Canadian test for a new integrated approach to foreign policy in conflict regions: 3D (Diplomacy, Defence, and Development), 'Whole-of Government,' or Integrated Peace Operations.

Recognizing the challenges that these changes pose to Canadian, as well as NATO, policy in Afghanistan, the aim of this two day workshop was to serve as an opening discussion on the evolving nature of peace operations in Afghanistan and the implications for future peace operations. The workshop convened researchers and policy makers working on Afghanistan, along with experts from the region, to assess the prospects of Canada's integrated approach and what it means for the evolving best practices of peace operations. The following core questions were posed to workshop participants and panelists:

- What does the “Whole-of-Government” strategy in Afghanistan mean to you and how has it impacted your work/organization?
- How integrated do you think policymaking with respect to Afghanistan is (imagine a spectrum ranging from information sharing to fully integrated cooperation)?
- What are the biggest challenges to continued integration?

II. Workshop Report

INTRODUCTION

The closed door workshop entitled “Coordinating and Collaboration in Peace Operations: Assessing Canada’s Integrated Approach in Afghanistan” took place over two days at the Montreal offices of Rights and Democracy. The first day consisted of an opening dinner presentation followed by remarks by the workshop organizers where they presented the findings of their participant questionnaire and preliminary interviews as a way to focus the workshop. The following day entailed three chaired panels, a lunchtime presentation and a concluding discussion. The workshop had roughly 45 participants from academia, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, various Canadian and international government departments, and the military. The workshop was funded by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), Rights and Democracy, the Liu Institute for Global Issues, and the Pierre Elliot Trudeau Foundation.

DAY ONE

Introduction - The Concept of Integrated Peace Operations

The opening presentation, entitled “The Concept of Integrated Peace Operations”, offered a background perspective on peacebuilding and assisted in providing the broader context in which the mission in Afghanistan is situated. Drawing on extensive experience working on the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the speaker laid out the principles of the concept of peacebuilding, stating that 1) it is not another stage of peacemaking insofar as it must be overarching and integrate all operations under its umbrella, and 2) it is integral to the evolution of peacekeeping and is most visible in the period immediately following the cessation of armed hostilities, when peace is at its most vulnerable. The speaker provided background on how the concept developed within the United Nations, noting that it first emerged in Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali’s *Agenda For Peace*, and then grew with the increasing effectiveness of peacekeeping and humanitarian responses throughout the 1990s. Despite these improvements, the speaker contended that there still remains a gap in countries such as Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo where cessations in conflict have proved short lived.

The presenter opened with an introduction to the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). The Peacebuilding Commission was established in December 2005 by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council in response Kofi Annan’s High Level Panel on Threats Challenges and Change. The Commission is an inter-governmental advisory body that is designed to help countries in post-conflict peace building, recovery, reconstruction and development.

Drawing on the lessons learned from two of the PBC’s notable successes – Burundi and Sierra Leone – the speaker emphasized that peacebuilding must be internally driven (ie. PBC must have the consent of the country), but with strong international

support; and that it is best conducted in a context where there is a stable and legitimate government to act in partnership with the international community. In the two cases discussed, the value added by the PBC was the ability to bring all of the players to the table to craft a common diagnosis of both the problem and the best approach to addressing that problem. The speaker noted that often the very fact that a country was before the PBC altered behavior as it “brought the spotlight of the world on them” and involved the various members of civil society working on the ground.

During the Q&A several other key points were raised. Among them was the recognition that peacebuilding must first and foremost be a bottom-up process, although questions were raised as to how local perspectives are to be incorporated into the peacebuilding process, particularly as it moves from the local to the international level. Another participant argued that the pre-conditions for peacebuilding in Afghanistan are sorely missing. He argued that since 2005 what we have seen is a steady “war building process” – one in which governments and international institutions, particularly the UN, lack transparency and credibility. There was also discussion of the financing of peacebuilding, with the speaker noting that the PBC does not have the same capacity to raise funds as the UN Security Council has for peacekeeping operations.

The two key questions which emerged from the discussion which informed the following day of the workshop were:

1. How can integrated peace operations function in a context where stabilization and legitimization are still on-going (as opposed to established)?
2. Can international actors working in Afghanistan learn from the PBC’s approach to engaging with local actors?

Pre-Workshop Research Findings

Following the opening presentation and dinner, the co-organizers of the workshop took stock of perceptions about Canada’s engagement in Afghanistan and the Whole of Government (WOG) approach, drawing heavily on data collected from interviews in Ottawa in September and from a questionnaire pre-circulated to all participants of the workshop. Specifically highlighted were the divergence of opinions over the degree of current integration in Canada’s approach to Afghanistan, where integration is or is not taking place (field, national headquarters, and international), and what the drivers of integration are (theory driven, practice driven, the result of resources, training and relationships).

The co-organizers spoke of the international dimension of integration, highlighting what several respondents saw as a lack of coordination between countries in NATO. They noted the perceived differences between certain NATO countries in their approaches to integration and how, in the context of a larger mission, numerous respondents noted the counter-productive and conflicting strategies of various countries (poppy eradication, air strikes, incursions into Pakistan). Focused was then placed on one of the central issues to emerge from the questionnaire and interview

responses – the impact that a WOG approach has on humanitarian actors and development practices more broadly. They relayed the concerns of several respondents about the loss of humanitarian space in Afghanistan, the co-option of development by the military, lack of clarity as to what CIDA does (assistance, development, or reconstruction), and the long-term implications for the stability and development of Afghanistan (ex. the effect of WOG on state institutions). The co-organizers concluded by raising several overarching questions intended to stimulate discussion on day two of the workshop:

- How is the approach being taken in Afghanistan likely to affect future Canadian and NATO peace operations? Is integration now the new mantra for complex peace operations?
- If integration is seen as fundamental for success, what are the implications of countries adopting conflicting strategies and processes for integration?

DAY TWO

Panel I – “The Challenges Facing NATO Countries in Afghanistan”

On the first panel the three speakers – an American security expert, a former Afghan cabinet minister, and an NGO worker – addressed the following question: “What are the central challenges in Afghanistan that an integrated strategy must be able to address?”

The first panelist, an American security expert, gave a detailed, empirical assessment of the current security dynamic in Afghanistan. His talk focused on five central points. First, there is a clear lack of data about the security situation on the ground which poses a real challenge to accurate discussion and analysis. However, it is clear that violence has escalated and the area of Taliban influence has increased nearly 80 percent between 2005-06. These facts show that the Taliban have considerable influence in Afghanistan, but not that they are in control of the entire country. It is likewise difficult to tie this expansion of violence to the presence of Afghan and Coalition forces and efforts to expand governance.

Second, the speaker asserted that there should be no doubt that NATO is fighting an actual war, and that the situation is deteriorating. To this end, the US General in charge of Afghanistan, McKiernan, is likely to ask for 25,000-35,000 more troops in the near future. NATO may receive more UK troops but it is unlikely that other countries will contribute additional forces. There are, the speaker contended, only seven or so useful members of the NATO/ISAF contingent; the presence of the other smaller deployments who are not engaged in active combat operations is costly and vastly complicates command and control.

Third, on integration, it was argued that the success of the mission stands or falls on the ability to first get enough military forces on the ground to win tactically, and then to bring in aid workers and governance experts. The panelist asserted that every country has its own strategy but that overall, forces should win an area and *then* bring in humanitarian assistance. However, the speaker contended that in such situations “we’re not talking about development, but immediate efforts to get people enough

money and resources to survive, but we can't get to development until we have secured the area." Within NATO/ISAF there is tremendous resistance to providing information on integration, although Britain and Canada have done this locally. The panelist argued that "we are years away from a central government structure that can actually provide the level of activity in the field necessary to provide adequate security, aid and reconstruction."

Fourth, regarding air strikes, the speaker noted that there have been more in Afghanistan than in Iraq, and that there is no way to avoid civilian casualties with air strikes as the Taliban embed themselves within communities. He emphasized that this is a tactical reality that needs to be considered, stating that the "less forces we have on the ground, the more likely we are to require air support but without the intelligence and support necessary." Also, the further away command is from troops, the more difficult it is to use technical assets. Risky air strikes are more likely to be called in.

Finally in the near future, the speaker emphasized that General Lukes' new strategy will involve more troops. He stated that "whatever we do, it isn't what comes out of Kabul. You win counterinsurgency at a local level. You're not going to have a strong enough central government in the near future. There will not be an effective Afghan army until at least 2011, maybe not until 2013. In the end, there is a 50% chance that building an ANP will fail. Historically, setting up a rule of law and police before there is peace has not happened this century."

The second panelist, a former cabinet minister from Afghanistan, returned the discussion to the priorities for the country from an Afghan government perspective. He reminded participants that the 2001 mission had largely succeeded in disrupting the Al Qaeda network and removing the Taliban that hosted them, but that statebuilding itself had been an afterthought.

He began his analysis by emphasizing that the establishment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) contributed to fragmentation, since each country developed its own 'map' and set of priorities. In terms of integration, he argued that the main challenge is that the international community is trying to do three things at once: counterinsurgency, counterterrorism and state building, all of which intimately impact each other: "If you bomb an area, or arrest someone you think is Taliban, then you are complicating the statebuilding and counterinsurgency effort. So those who feel alienated by some of the policies, now fight alongside the Taliban (e.g., the Noorzai in Panjwao)." Moreover, he saw the balance between these three objectives as fluid. The Afghanistan Compact, for example, included social, economic, and political elements, but in 2006, when violence increased, Coalition members rushed in with tactical responses which undermined the mission's broader objectives. As such, the panelist asserted that there are three missions happening together but they are not coordinated with one another.

The panelist reiterated that this problem was fundamentally one of fragmentation. There is a cost to seeing the various components as isolated from one other. Some of the countries involved are more concerned with force protection, for example, than engaging the enemy and increasing security. Right from the start, these tensions have been present. The mission started with efforts to root out Al Qaeda and get rid of the

Taliban - statebuilding came second. Everything since has been reactive and the necessary resources are simply not there.

According to the panelist, statebuilding in Afghanistan is about building *national* capacity. This is less about infrastructure and more about establishing legitimate governance. The challenge is that NATO efforts sometimes undermine this larger goal, as they involve 'deal-making' with local actors.

In his view, the five priorities facing Afghanistan are clear: 1) defeating the insurgency; 2) reducing violence in the Pakistan region; 3) rebuilding Afghanistan's national governance capacity (particularly in the realm of security); 4) building up the national economy; and 5) improving rule of law and fighting corruption. None of these will be easy. As the speaker noted there are numerous hurdles: while resources are available, a considerable portion is wasted and duplicated; there is little long-term strategy; there is no unified counterinsurgency strategy; and NATO countries are politically vulnerable at home. On this final point, the speaker argued that the "Taliban are fighting in the minds of people not only in Afghanistan but in the capitals of the NATO countries." In other words, he was suggesting that it was not always clear that international actors *want* to be coordinated and integrated in their efforts.

Lastly, the speaker argued that talking to the Taliban has caused an increase in violence because of a lack of preparedness and a position of relative weakness. According to the speaker, there have to be incentives for the Taliban to come to the table.

The third Panelist spoke about the challenges facing NATO in Afghanistan from the perspective of an NGO operating in Kabul.

The focus of the presentation was on the deteriorating security situation in Kabul and Kandahar, and the far reaching implications this has for the NGO sector. Criminality has increased dramatically, and it has forced the NGO community as well as the local business community to seek new security arrangements. Currently, Kabul is being squeezed from three surrounding provinces, Logar, Wardak and Nangahar. Armed opposition groups are up in numbers and attacks have increased 15% from peak times of violence. In addition, a series of kidnappings and killings of aid workers and small business owners have decreased the delivery of services.

On the issue of peacebuilding, the speaker argued that proponents of integration should not lose sight of the diversity of actors involved, stating that "this is not just a government run exercise. Decisions made by coalition actors have implications for a wide range of groups and organizations working in Afghanistan." As such, the speaker argued that coordinated policy must do a better job at involving all of the actors so as to avoid conflicting practices. For example, in using white vehicles, which are traditionally reserved for NGOs and the United Nations, the military has put the lives of aid workers in danger.

On a more positive note, the final speaker offered that there are indeed signs of hope, including a double-digit rise in employment, significantly lower infant mortality rates, and unprecedented enrollment of young girls in school. These positive developments should be recognized, but the speaker concluded by reiterating the need for urgent action in the aforementioned areas.

Four interesting themes emerged during the Q&A for the first panel.

First, the issue of whether the ‘modern state’ is the most appropriate model for Afghanistan was raised. One panelist argued that we are never going to build a modern state per se, but that this does not negate the building of local security and institutions. Another argued that Afghans primarily want human security, not a state.

Second, comparisons were drawn to the Sunni awakening in Iraq, and it was asked whether a similar tribal mobilization might be possible in Afghanistan. The answer by the panelists was clear: the two cannot be compared. It was insisted that we must resist the temptation to generalize from the Iraq experience, given the unique evolution of tribes in Afghanistan. Despite warning against generalization, the second speaker offered that such a policy would likely work better in the East where the use of intact, re-empowered, and/or reconstituted tribal structures might be effective. The speaker did not see any possibility for tribal mobilization in the South due to the widespread presence of disrupting militias.

Third, on the lessons to be learned, one of the speakers maintained that the central issue is not about arriving at a perfect agreement in the Afghan state, but rather the need to focus on credible planning for the future. According to the speaker, the current models are fledgling, at best. It was also suggested that early lost opportunities surrounding the Bonn Agreement added to today’s grim situation. The degree of cooperation seen in 2002-2004 no longer exists and people have distanced themselves from the Afghan state and the international community’s efforts. Finally, the second speaker urged us to take seriously the question of what kind of state Afghans want. While the term ‘modern state’ might not be applicable, his strong contention was that Afghans want more than just human security; they also want representative and accountable government. He lamented the lack of Afghan voices around the table and warned that any response to the challenges facing the Afghan state would be unsuccessful without the incorporation of Afghan perspectives.

Finally, one of the participants asked whether there is any room for international actors to stand back and change strategy – primarily in a direction that would put local actors ‘more in the driver’s seat’. This led to an interesting discussion about who ‘holds the pen’ on the international community’s strategy for Afghanistan at the moment.

Panel II – The Reality of Integration at National Headquarters?

The second panel consisted of a Canadian government representative and two American officials. Their presentations were designed to show how the directive of ‘more integration’ has affected the practices and procedures of officials at national headquarters.

The Canadian representative spoke of integration as a positive evolutionary process, noting several important events in moving from “cooperation to coherence.” He argued that the idea of 3D (an integrated approach to diplomacy, defence, and development) commenced in 2006 with a twinge of caution and concern. Specifically,

he spoke of integration in the context of Operation Medusa where there was a lack of understanding as to the operating conditions that civilians would face, and following the operation, a clear vacuum of development and diplomacy capacity which the Canadian Forces filled out of necessity. He argued that in 2007, Canada began to move from 3D to inter-departmental coordination propelled by both the Manley Report which provided a “shock to the system” and the detainee issue which brought people together in Ottawa. The result was a shift in thinking and the creation of the position of Representative of Canada in Kandahar (ROCK). These developments progressed such that WOG coherence has emerged in 2008. According to the speaker, the key to successful integration (echoing the comments of the speaker from the previous evening) was a common definition/diagnosis of the ‘problem’ to be solved. Once all departments had a collective sense of the problem, an integrated strategy could be crafted.

The first of the two American officials started by outlining the three key determinants of successful policy implementation (people, process, and money) and asserted that integration speaks to all three determinants. In her view, integration was ultimately about joint decision-making (not just coordination of implementation). The speaker contended that the integration of the civilian and military sectors is unproblematic, and that development is integral to national security. However, the speaker stressed the challenges of resource imbalance noting that in comparison to the military, both development and diplomacy have fewer resources available to them. Given these constraints, the speaker noted that WOG can thus often be viewed as a way to access resources previously unavailable or as a way to insert a department into the policy formation process so as to avoid a mess which they may be tasked with mopping up further on down the line. The speaker spoke specifically of the American experience with the SCR/S (Senior Civilian Representative) which, using a lead agency model, was designed as an institution aimed specifically at facilitating integrated planning, resources and capacities, as well as lessons learned. However, in doing so the State Department faced several difficulties: the authority for the SCR/S was derived from the Secretary of State (and not statutory or budgetary); the SCR/S was placed at the service of the regional bureau leadership; and, the SCR/S lacked its own resources and personnel. Improvements on the last have commenced with an increase in resources for the office, as well as the development of the civilian response corps.

The second American official spoke of the failure of the US’s initial approach in Afghanistan: “we arrived with a western vision of the political state and civil society that was to be created.” In doing so, he asserted that the US had failed to see the limitations of their concepts and existing structures. As a result, a majority of tasks tended to fall to the military given its speed, structured decision-making processes, and resources. The results of this initial approach were mixed: “1) Our Afghan counterparts were forced into inappropriate structures for what they wanted to accomplish 2) Accommodations were made with unsavory people and, 3) The focus wasn’t on assisting the Afghan government to assert its own control.” Given these shortcomings, the job of the State Department is now to bring country experts together with experts on such issues as reconstruction, elections, etc. However, these individuals are short in numbers. In addition to personnel, the panelist highlighted the importance of institutional structure to facilitate these sorts of operations, as integration at the tactical level breaks down at the higher levels. More specifically, the speaker viewed the middle level areas between the two highly integrated cores –

tactical PRTs and the Embassy – as being the source of problems surrounding integration.

In the discussion several important points were made. First, a panelist pointed out that the shift in the military's thinking away from kinetic actions and towards the provision of development and diplomacy is important and quite dramatic. The speaker found that some of the best allies for diplomats working in the political context were in the military, particularly in making the case for an integrated approach. Civilians, the speaker argued, lack the doctrine found in existing military manuals. They lack the people to develop these concepts and doctrine, stating that “we rely on people that have been in the field. And there is a sharp contrast with military resources, which are plentiful.”

Another panelist continued that, while he was impressed by the military's role in Afghanistan, and in participating in whole of government operations, he worried that military officials had overly ambitious expectations – that integration could be quickly perfected. He was concerned that the military will begin to lose confidence in light of the learning process for civilian integration. He argued that this joint learning will only happen if we “move away from framing civilian engagement as a matter of being an advisor, to instead being a counterpart.”

The issue of broader regional politics and how it factors into coordination was raised. One panelist responded that people make too much out of the need for a regional approach. The main outcomes are driven by the political realm and the kinds of commitments that were made in the early stages of NATO's involvement.

A participant questioned the notion that our development objectives will necessarily be motivated by the same kinds of concerns as the military (ie, pure national interests). The panelist responded by stating that the components of the mission (development, diplomacy and defence) are not designed to operate in isolation. She argued that there is no conflict between long-term development goals and national security, particularly in countries that are a threat.

One strategic issue which resurfaced in the discussion was the tension between support for or bypassing the Afghan state. Should international actors be working more with societal groups?

Lunchtime Presentation – Integrated Peace Operations and International Institutions

The speaker began by placing the previous panel discussions in a broader global context where, since the end of the Cold War, the issue of failed and fragile states has been at the fore of international concerns. She argued that the crux of this issue is a sovereignty gap in which roughly 40-60 countries cannot serve their citizens in terms of security and basic needs, and where the bond of accountability between citizen and the state is broken. However, according the speaker, the international institutions in place to address these countries and the problems they face, are founded on a 20th Century model that assumes functioning sovereign states. In addition, where the state doesn't fit this model, international institutions are misled on how to assist. The norm, the speaker argued, is for external actors to identify the gaps in, for example governance, and attempt to fill them. In doing so, the international community tends

to overlook existing institutions and capabilities, and in some instances, leeches local assets for their own purposes. The speaker contended that external actors must take stock of the specific context, assets and tools already available on the ground before assisting in the design of a strategy. More broadly, what is needed is a citizen-centered approach that rethinks the relationship between citizens, the state, and the market for the 21st Century, one that harnesses the potential of globalization (capital, cumulative knowledge, new technologies).

To begin thinking about a different approach, the speaker suggested that we look to examples of past successes. She asserted that several key ingredients can be observed in cases of success (e.g., South Korea, Singapore, Japan): 1) the presence of an elite group that can guide a long-term process; 2) a commitment to expand the middle class (including skill and vocational training); 3) the creation of a competitive domestic market; and 4) focus on the institutions in need of building. Furthermore, the speaker argued that questions of ownership and design have to be locally driven in what she labels the double (citizen-state) and triple (citizen-state- business) compact.

Turning to the case of Afghanistan, the speaker considered the period of relative stability from 2001-2005 emphasizing the partnerships set up in the Bonn Agreement (as well as the recognition that those signing were the illegitimate representatives of the people), the careful sequencing of the levels and functions of governance, a focus on implementation vehicles for key national programs (telecoms, ANA, currency, customs, health, etc) and the recognition that they should be Afghan-led with accountability measures.

According to the speaker, many things went wrong with this approach and there are continuing real challenges: severe under-resourcing, especially in core costs; security financing; lack of investment in Afghan skills (i.e., conflict with Millennium Development goals led to little investment in secondary and tertiary education); catastrophic aid mismanagement; failure to understand context and citizen aspiration; and collapse of the center, just as countries were beginning to align to support government with an all costs strategy.

In addition, the development framework's design put UN agencies in competition with government departments for valuable resources. The support for the actual Afghan government came too late. Moreover, billions of dollars of resources were not connected to the public agenda. The basic desire of most Afghans is for justice, fairness, law and order. The Taliban has capitalized on the international community and Afghan government's inability to deliver those goals. The Speaker also spoke to a lack of accountability at the international level. International actors can be getting it wrong, but there are no mechanisms for local populations to hold them to account. This needs to be addressed in any successful statebuilding effort.

In the conclusion, the speaker outlined some possible next steps. First, the US reviews of the troop strength likely in the transition from the Bush to Obama administration will open the possibility for a re-examination of the various challenges in Afghanistan and the current strategy in place to address them. Second, the international community should focus on developing a greater measure of trust at various levels—center, province, district, and village. Third, the international community needs to focus on investing in Afghan skills. Fourth, we cannot be afraid to ask for greater transparency and accountability. And finally, we must have a

willingness to ask for a fundamental revision of instruments and strategies in the face of a lack of imagination about potential options.

Panel Three: Reality of Integration on the Ground - Conflicting Tactics and Objectives?

The third panel consisted of representatives from CIDA, DFAIT, DND and a major Canadian NGO.

The first panelist, the CEO of a major Canadian NGO, highlighted the distinction between ‘humanitarian’ and ‘development’ agencies in discussions about peacebuilding. He started by arguing that we, Canada, are at war, and that the public is largely in denial about this fact. Linked to this point, he turned to the issue of the neutrality of Canadian NGOs working in Afghanistan. He brought up the case of MSF, an organizations which believed that its provision of services would protect it from local opposition and potential attack. They did not work with the PRTs and they did not take money from CIDA, yet five workers were assassinated. The speaker asked, “What does this mean for the concept of neutrality?” Conversely, Save the Children does take money from the Canadian government, and works closely with the international community in Afghanistan focusing on education and the plight of women. The speaker noted how these two NGOS have adopted markedly different approaches to the delivery of assistance.

According to the speaker, however, the bigger question at play is whether the NGO community can actually distance itself from the government apparatus, or if NGOs are now fundamentally a part of the apparatus? “We are part of a culture war because we believe (as western NGOs) in key things within the framework of liberal democracy and are missionaries of that paradigm. Save the Children is a missionary of children’s rights, MSF are missionaries of liberal internationalism. It is hard to claim neutrality where we are delivering activities that promote a certain position and ideology.”

Further, the panelist explored the costs of using humanitarianism as a military tactic, asking whether such practices signal the end of humanitarian space? He argued that there is no question that the military wants to do good things, such as build schools, but when they do both military and development tasks at the same time, it shuts down the space humanitarians used to occupy.

The blame for this, however, is not solely on the governments. In some ways, NGOs do it to themselves, he argued. When NGOs are in conflict zones, they act as a diaspora – they collect and converge as a Western entity which reinforces the sense that they are part of the ‘other’.

Concluding, the first panelist argued that peacebuilding cannot be imposed from the outside, whether it is the military or an NGO who is doing the peacebuilding. “The country has to want it.” He argued that many people in Afghanistan want peace but we, the international community, don’t yet know how to listen. “We’re not making room for humanitarian voices because we’re not listening to the Afghan voices. The harsh lesson from Vietnam is not that it would have been good to try to do 3D, but that the right thing would have been to have more dialogue more with local people.”

The second panelist raised three key issues. First, he argued that we have to situate integration in international perspective, as it is easy to become consumed with the national side of things. The speaker noted that if we look at the relative size of the Canadian contribution in relation to other countries, the importance of international integration becomes more apparent. Moreover, he argued that it is also a question of the desire for coordination, asking whether the Special Representative of the Secretary General has really been empowered to oversee integration. “We have to ask the difficult questions about whether there is a real will for these kinds of processes.” Integration can become too fixated on the right machinery, when the deeper problem is the lack of incentives to coordinate.

Second, the speaker urged the workshop participants to consider the Afghan voices in our discussion about integration. He observed that in donor coordination circles, “we often get stuck in what we know how to do. We abstract the conflict away so that we can manage with our normal development processes (i.e., in Canada, we can’t plan for what you can’t measure). The result is that the longer-term agenda (i.e., creating capacity) tends to get crowded out in this debate. Western countries return to the familiar, to what we can manage and control at the expense of the more important objectives. Whether we like it or not, the Afghan government has adopted a very centralized structure.”

Third, the panelist pointed out the asymmetry in security needs across actors and the tasks falling under the Afghan mission. While working with the PRT he was struck by how divergent individual understandings of security were. This asymmetry also exists on the capacity side. The military has more means at its disposal than, say CIDA, (i.e., if a road is to be built, the military has far more options on how to execute this than CIDA). These differences are compounded by the way in which different countries involved view things differently, such that the Dutch approach will be different than the American model etc.

The third panelist spoke about his experiences in Afghanistan from the perspective of the military. He argued that established peacekeeping terminology is inadequate for our contemporary operational context and engagement. In the face of missing terminology soldiers end up falling back on experience and training.

He argued that the challenge of the mission must be considered. When leaving for the field his superior asked him “to go and build him a country in Afghanistan.” During his deployment he was responsible for nine nations and everyone had equal voice, including Afghanistan. They started with the Afghan National Defense Strategy. However, the situation was further complicated by India, Iran, Pakistan, China, Russia, insurgents, and terrorism. He needed a political advisor, and a development advisor. He needed governance, security, and development, in that order. However, 90% of the civilians he needed did not have security clearance. As such, classified information was initially a real block to integrated communication.

More specifically on integration and its long-term implication, the speaker offered several observations. First, he noted that part of the problem is that the overall duration of the international mission will likely be very long (approx. 30-40 years). Second, he emphasized that Afghanistan is not *the* conflict, it is *a* conflict. We need to recognize that there is a cost to us devoting resources to Afghanistan and not to a host of other conflicts. Third, he reiterated the need for civilian direction of the

military. Finally, he argued that the division between civilian and military capabilities is unfair, as each bring different skills to the table.

On humanitarian space, the panelist argued that ICRC is the only NGO which has maintained neutrality in the true sense of the word.

The fourth panelist spoke about his experiences within DFAIT. He began by outlining the lessons from the mission in Afghanistan thus far. Integration, at its core, is in his view mechanical and bureaucratic. He argued that the more urgent question is how to organize so as to integrate efforts with local actors and leaders. According to the speaker, this must move beyond mere cliché. In Kosovo, for example, the mission was defined by developing a degree of local ownership. The level of cooperation, integration, common planning in Afghanistan, however, is a sharp contrast from Kosovo and the experience of splendid isolation. Integration just wasn't seen as imperative.

He then laid out a series of requirements for integrated planning to be successful, including:

- Access and proximity to other partners
- A set of agreed objectives that are clear and transparent
- The creation of an honest process built around shared objectives
- Commitment to an effective coordination process
- A credible presence on the ground, particularly with the civilians
- The reclaiming of civilian space taken up by Canadian Forces
- An increase in key enablers and funds
- Cooperation with local officials based on their need for our support; and, logistical support, which becomes increasingly more complex with more civilians.

Finally, he spelled out three limitations of integration: First, the security environment is an obvious constraint, but it does not kill the operation. Second, security hinders the potential to recruit senior level diplomats to the field. And third, asymmetrical capabilities pose a challenge to the balance of integration.

During the question period a heated discussion was had on a number of fronts.

It was suggested by one participant that humanitarian principles are not Western specific, but rather universal. The same participant argued that respect for ICRC comes from their interaction and assistance to prisoners, not their humanitarian credentials. The participant argued that this balance of humanitarian principles should be aspired to by all NGOs. In addition, he argued that “we are also focusing too much on our state actions, when our own problems are coming from our own states who are selling a lie when we suggest that this is a generational issue. If you send in a whole fleet of civil servants you are going to reproduce a complexity, and all the while jettisoning our greatest accomplishment, international humanitarian law.” He observed that we are not talking about this in Canada because our commentary is dominated by state-sponsored commentators, but that as time has passed we have begun to realize how costly this project really has been.

Two questions addressed the role of the Canadian public in the discussion of integration, particularly in light of the Manley report, which called for greater information sharing with the public.

Another person spoke about the initial political context of the invasion, and the ties to the US Global War on Terror. The participant argued that WOG is therefore problematic as a process in light of the responsibility that follows and that integration has seemingly no end goal insight. In addition, it was asked if there was danger that there would be a fad like movement surrounding the notion of integrated peacebuilding. If we focus solely on process rather than helping individuals that are suffering, we may end up with a situation where peacebuilders are left to clean up after a series of wars not motivated by humanitarian interest.

In response, one panelist expressed concern that peacebuilding was *not* a fad. Another argued that opportunity costs are an academic discussion; we're there, and what's at stake is how will the Muslim world will or will not engage? Another argued that decisions of where we put our aid are never divorced from our national issues. Peacebuilding is the future and we must harness our machinery to work better; and that this is not a bad thing at all, in fact it's a good thing, as it doesn't perpetuate a colonial mentality. Finally, it was said that we have to be careful to treat integration as a tool appropriate for certain situations. We shouldn't allow it to draw us into difficult situations where we mistakenly assume the architecture can allow us to meaningfully cope will highly challenging environments.

Concluding Remarks by Workshop Facilitator followed by group discussion

The Workshop Facilitator provided the summation remarks for the workshop.

First, she pointed to the origins of the notion of integration. Drawing on the workshop panels she observed that the concept stems largely from the gap in the immediate post-conflict phase based on experience in international institutions and national governments in the 1990s. In addition, she highlighted how the concept has been institutionalized into bureaucracies. Related, she questioned whether the development of the concept of integration has been pro-active or reactive. (Was it a solution waiting for a problem?)

Second, she suggested that we consider how the Afghan mission has fundamentally challenged the concept. The complexity of the mission is obvious, particularly compared to the cases of the Peacebuilding Commission. As such, an interesting question arises as to what stage and type of conflict is best suited to a peacebuilding approach guided by the principle of integration. She also reiterated a theme that emerged from early discussion – namely, the wisdom of a peacebuilding approach that is designed to strengthen *central* government capacity. (Is this desirable in all cases?)

Third, drawing on the two days of workshop panels and presentations, the facilitator outlined what integration seems to mean for the participants. First, it refers to the involvement of many more actors in the mission (an array of government departments, and the Afghan and Canadian national publics). Second, it involves coordination in terms of how information is collected, shared, and assessed. However,

real integration should involve joint decision-making, not simply increased communication between relevant actors. In addition, she highlighted the various calls for unity of purpose and agreed that this would constitute true integration, but asked what the obstacles are to achieving that unity of purpose. She noted that this also raises questions about accountability to domestic constituencies. If governments are seeking to reflect the priorities of their own publics, this may create disincentives for coordination. For example, it may demand that a country prioritize a high-profile reconstruction project that bears the ‘national flag’, rather than participation in a coordinated approach to long-term development.

Fourth, she asked where foreign policy, and diplomacy, ‘fit’ in the integration agenda. Her perception of the day’s discussion was that it was not always clear how diplomatic priorities mapped onto the general goal of ‘good governance’. While the development and defence objectives and tasks seemed reasonably clear, demonstrating the Foreign Service’s ‘value-add’ appeared more challenging – particularly for countries such as Canada, which do not have clout with important regional players such as Pakistan. Moreover, what is the role of the State Department and DFAIT in a dangerous context where the traditional practices of diplomacy are so difficult to carry out?

Fifth, the facilitator pointed out some of the potential negative implications or effects of the concept of integrated peace operations. She noted the clear debate on the loss of humanitarian space, and asked whether this is inevitable or whether agencies themselves may have contributed to their own ‘crowding out’. She also asked whether WOG approaches have bred an overly statist approach to reconstruction, propping up the government at the expense of other actors in civil society?

Finally, she suggested that the focus on perfecting processes of integration may have taken ‘our eyes off the ball’ in terms of the larger strategy of the mission – and the need for honest assessment of its overall wisdom. She then asked about the possibility of a moment for strategic review. And in such a review, perhaps the goal would not be about creating the perfect situation, but about getting actors “to do better”. She suggested that perhaps we need to do this in a larger context which engages with the opportunity costs being incurred through the Afghan mission (i.e., the inability of countries such as Canada to be engaged in other important missions). But regardless of whether Afghanistan constitutes the highest strategic or humanitarian priority, we are now in a situation where past actions have created consequences. What responsibilities does the international community have by virtue of being in Afghanistan and what responsibilities follow from the decisions that we have already made?

In the wrap-up of the conversation, the following concluding remarks were made:

- How do you get over ‘donor sovereignty’? We have been focused on how Canada integrates for itself, and not how it integrates better with/for Afghans—are there opportunities for a more integrated approach with Afghans and with other players in integrated peace operations?
- What is missing from the overall plan is how to identify the *next* failed state. Can Afghanistan jolt the international community into paying attention to the link between conflict and development? Where is the problem of 2025? Are we prepared to invest

in neighboring countries to prevent backsliding in countries where gains were realized in the 1990s?

- There has been a devaluation of diplomacy in this discussion. Most of the focus has been on the military and humanitarian/development roles in Afghanistan, with little attention to the importance of local, national and regional diplomacy.

- There has been good done, and there are real opportunity costs to leaving. Issues like child mortality rates, primary education, and the legacy of war should keep Canada in Afghanistan. There is also the question of Canada's legacy and leadership.

- This is not about diverting resources from one horrible situation, development circus into another; lots of tittering countries that are on the brink, where a minor but judicious investment would go a long way. Are Canada and NATO willing to make the sacrifices necessary to ensure the mission is completed?

- Integrated peacebuilding is a model. We took a statist approach before integration; the question of integration is whether the approach is correct, not whether we are doing the right thing—bad ideas in good machinery will still produce bad outcomes. There is a certain pessimism about Afghanistan, but there is some optimism in the potential to win another battle.

- Afghanistan wasn't a failed state at the time of the intervention. The only people who didn't think that it was a government are the ones that didn't like that government. Integration is the wrong analytic framework. The challenge is what are the right objectives and how to integrate more Afghan voices into the discussion.