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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
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**Afghanistan: Security Integration and Organization**

**By**

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**A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**06 March 2004**

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**The current security strategy in Afghanistan is part of an integrated reconstruction effort that blurs the dividing lines between security, humanitarian assistance, and establishment of government. In Afghanistan, the organization created to help support security integration is the Provincial Reconstruction Team. Lessons from the Marines' Combined Action Program in Vietnam provide useful insights on how to better implement the Provincial Reconstruction Team model in Afghanistan.**

This paper will examine the interaction of security with economic and political development by analyzing the goal of security and the complexity of creating a comprehensive security strategy that is flexible and lends itself to an integrated reconstruction plan. Findings in these areas will buttress the conclusion and recommendations of how security should integrate with the other primary reconstruction tasks in Afghanistan.

Secondly, the paper will analyze the US Marines Combined Action Program (CAP) from Vietnam to garner lessons that are applicable to the security mission in Afghanistan. It will subsequently examine the Combined Joint Task Force 180 (CJTF-180) model of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). Currently, with minimum combat forces deployed outside Kabul for security operations, PRT's are being deployed and are in place to establish a visible presence to support stability and security.<sup>1</sup> Finally the paper will make a few recommendations for changes to the PRT model.

## THE FOUR PILLARS OF RECONSTRUCTION

A relatively new term used to describe operations in Afghanistan is postconflict reconstruction. This differs from another familiar term ‘nationbuilding’ in that post conflict reconstruction “sets objectives in the near and midterm time periods to create a minimally capable state, not to build a nation or address all the root causes that imperil peace.”<sup>ii</sup>

Postconflict reconstruction emphasizes surmounting the legacy of conflict.<sup>iii</sup> “Maof the rebuilding activities can, and in fact do, occur while conflict is still taking place in other parts of the nation. Postconflict does not mean that conflict is concluded in all parts of a given territory at the same time.”<sup>iv</sup> The international community recognizes four tasks as key to successful reconstruction efforts: security, justice and legal system, social and economic well being, and governance and participation.<sup>v</sup> These are interlinked and require a comprehensive strategy to achieve their final aim of a minimally capable state. Of these four pillars, security is the first one that must be achieved and the one that enables the other three.

Consistent, effective long-term security, as critical as it is, must be achieved quickly, integrated with indigenous forces, and eventually become transparent to the reconstruction effort. Foreign affairs experts agree that the military cannot be the main effort in a large-scale reconstruction effort.<sup>vi</sup>

## THE SECURITY PILLAR

The goal of security is simple. Establish a minimally secure environment that enables the other pillars of reconstruction to implement their plans with a minimum of interference.

Planners must find new solutions to the seemingly intractable problems of nationwide minimum security in Afghanistan. Words like trust, hearts and minds, and enforcement are ambiguous and do little to assist operational level planners in finding solutions to complex security problems.

First a thorough analysis must be conducted to identify the root cause of the security problem in that area. Then an effective long-term solution must be designed.<sup>vii</sup> Just as the conflict itself requires detailed planning to achieve its objectives, reconstruction security planners must identify the unique features and tailor a plan to address them.<sup>viii</sup> The analysis (by province) of geography, culture, religion, and local history will greatly aid in tailoring specific solutions to each area where a security force will be established. Security solutions for Afghanistan are not a “one size fits all” proposition. For example, in a province that contains an international border, especially one that is a recognized route for terrorists or insurgency forces exploiting a porous border, the army is the obvious choice to provide the primary security mission. In another province, the threat might come from bandits, criminals, or organized crime. A strong police presence would be a better solution to establish the security presence in this area. A third area may have a warlord with a private militia that aims not to overthrow the central government but to just retain control of his area and income. In Afghanistan, a regional problem of opium production drives many of these phenomena. As pointed out

in the USMC Small Wars Manual, “Seizure or destruction of such sources of supply is an important factor in reducing their means of resistance.”

The solution may not be a military one but a diplomatic or economic one. This was the case last fall in an Afghan province that contained a British PRT. The province contained two warlords that were in conflict for power. The British solution brought in an Afghan government team to broker a truce and separate the warlords. Whatever the solution, planners should strive for the correct long-term solution, not the most expedient one.<sup>ix</sup>

Another critical factor in this equation is reevaluation and refocusing of this mission (if necessary). Threats, missions, tasks, and resources will change over time and a plan that works this month might fall apart if the nature of the threat changes and corresponding changes in the plan are not made.

A comprehensive security strategy must also sequentially plan for security throughout the country. The plan should be sequential because rarely are there enough forces available to establish security throughout the country simultaneously. During the planning period, detailed plans should be drawn up for training police and army forces. This plan should be integrated with the sequential expansion of security to facilitate the eventual assumption of all security operations by host nation agencies.

Accomplishing the transition to host nation provided security is the vital first step toward returning control of the country to the established government.<sup>x</sup> If precautions are not taken, once international forces withdrawal, a government that is unable to provide security to its citizens is in danger of having to fight an organized insurgency or civil war. Establishment of government security throughout the country is paramount to

long term stabilization, as safety and security of the civilian population is the primary reason for the conduct of security operations. But security must become the concern of all citizens. Through establishment of a permanent host government security presence, the nation's people will be encouraged to take the initiative and work with the security force to help maintain their own safety. In turn, this will encourage the population's loyalty to lie with their government, and not with the temporary international security force.<sup>xi</sup>

As security stabilizes by region, the other tasks of reconstruction can proceed. As many of these other tasks are performed by the United Nations, Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's), and Other Governmental Organizations (OGO's) their neutrality must be maintained to retain legitimacy. How then are security requirements reconciled with the necessity of retaining OGO and NGO neutrality?

The Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) security force headquarters should establish a cell in the J34 that coordinates security functions with other planned government reconstruction tasks. Unlike a Civilian – Military Operations Center (CMOC) that serves to deconflict operations and marry-up resources and requirements, the J34 cell should function to identify and prioritize reconstruction projects that take place in the security force's area. Specifically, during a Non Governmental Organization's humanitarian assistance (HA) operation, security forces at the village or province may determine that their most effective role is to depart the village and undertake a period of mobile patrolling outside the immediate project area. Or the security force may establish a series of counter ambush patrols on the route in the days leading up to the arrival of the NGO to discourage bandits.

The security force (SF) can also arrange meetings with the local officials or simply deconflict operating areas to ensure the perception of neutrality. What is most important is that coordination is done at the higher headquarters so neutral NGO's have minimum interaction with SF's once they arrive in the SF's area of operation. If NGO's arrive in the AO unannounced and without prior coordination, SF's must make a concerted effort to minimize confrontation and allow their HHQ to resolve any issues.

Forces provided by the US or its coalition partners for the initial phase of security force operations should be prepared to immediately assume the security mission when activated. The SF will not have the luxury of time to create detailed standard operating procedures and a mission essential task list (METL). Additionally, these essential tasks must not overreach into areas of reconstruction not suited for military intervention. Recent operations require a guide to create a METL that is realistic and achievable for a security force. One model that offers several valuable lessons for security operations in Afghanistan is the US Marines Combined Action Program.

#### US MARINES CAP LESSONS FOR PRT

When searching for solutions to difficult problems, reviewing historical examples is one method to help frame a plan and isolate key tasks. One example that is often referred to as a successful example of improving security, reducing enemy threat, protecting civilians, and integrating humanitarian assistance is the US Marines Combined Action Program (CAP) in Vietnam. Several lessons from the Marine's Combined Action Program provide useful insight to how small integrated military forces can be instrumental in providing tactical level security and show the limits of their capability.

The integration of South Vietnamese Army Popular Forces and US Marines as a combined force for village protection worked at the tactical level. CAP units significantly reduced enemy action in their assigned areas.<sup>xii</sup> Although higher kill ratios and weapons captured were statistics often cited to bolster CAP effectiveness claims, it was also their force restraint that was one of the greatest contributions to the CAP's success with the villagers.<sup>xiii</sup>

CAP's were extremely well received by village and district government officials. Local officials often fought to keep a CAP in their area even if enemy activity was minimal.<sup>xiv</sup> CAP units fully integrated into their villages and contributed significantly to economic growth through security and stable government in their districts. CAP's also served as an excellent means for gathering enemy information. CAP intelligence gathering was effective because of their close relationship with their village and the units also maintained a higher operational tempo that resulted in greater enemy contact. But to truly appreciate the success of the Combined Action Program, it must be understood in context to the entire Vietnam war effort.

Excellent analysis has been written on the US Marines Combined Action Program (CAP) in Vietnam (1965-71). This analysis provides some key observations that lead to lessons learned that can be used in Afghanistan. These observations are points about the CAP that multiple sources have arrived at the same conclusion. They are:

- The program was a success at the tactical level.
- Rarely did a village that contained a CAP platoon ever revert back to Viet Cong control.
- Marines that served in the program were pre-screened, and individually selected to serve in the CAP.
- Once the program matured, selected personnel underwent 2-4 weeks of specialized training.

- At its zenith, the entire program including the overhead command structure numbered about 2,000. This number comprised about 1% of overall troop strength in Vietnam.
- A CAP platoon consisted on a Marine infantry squad and a platoon of South Vietnamese Army Popular Forces.
- Popular Forces (PF's) were poorly trained and poorly armed citizen soldiers with a wide disparity of leadership quality.
- By 1967, PF's went through the same formal training with the Marines.
- The command structure held the Marine squad leader and PF platoon leader as coequals in the unit.
- At the higher level, PF's were limited OPCON to the Marines and ADCON to the South Vietnamese Army. PF's received their logistics through their own army.
- The small CAP and its higher headquarters at III MEF operated under a much larger US Army command structure. Indifferent and sometimes even hostile to the Marines' efforts, the US Army's Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) headquarters left the Marines to plan and execute CAP with little operational integration.
- From 1965 until the Tet Offensive in 1968, CAP's occupied static positions in villages and conducted patrols from this base of operations. After Tet, the units scrapped the static concept for a mobile concept in a defined area of operations.
- The draw down of US forces required CAP's to be pulled out mostly in 1970. The ARVN left the defense of the villages back with PF's. The PF's were not supported by the ARVN in the manner they had been by the Marines. Their appeared to be no substantive turnover plan with ARVN to support the PF's.

During the Vietnam War, village pacification came from establishing permanent local security to the villages as a means to facilitate resurrection of government control. One of the main objectives of the program was to permanently drive out the insurgents. This was done by implementing CAPs in an 'oil spot strategy,' spreading out slowly from three coastal enclaves in the Marine's area of responsibility, establishing presence at the village level, and pacifying areas as they moved inland.<sup>xv</sup> The oil spot strategy used by the US Marines in their Combined Action Program focused on the population as a means of separating the enemy from their resource base (recruitment, supplies).<sup>xvi</sup>

The CAP provided the Marines an organization with which to target an enemy key strength or some might argue, the Viet Cong's center of gravity, the civilian

population. The CAP was designed as an offensive capability to combat the widespread insurgency in South Vietnam. The Marines assessed an insurgent critical strength as the civilian population. From the population, the enemy garnered safe haven, recruits, supplies, and intelligence. The Marines calculated that denying the enemy access to the population would cause the insurgents to wither on the vine. Vietnamese Popular Forces, already located in the villages, would be the means to integrate the fight with the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN), establish trust and loyalty with the villagers, and eventually provide a mechanism to turn over security of the village. Much like the CAP in Vietnam, the PRT model is being used in Afghanistan to support security, civil affairs, humanitarian assistance, and other primary reconstruction efforts.

#### THE PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM MODEL

In Afghanistan, a similar concept to CAP is taking shape but there are many important differences. Afghanistan is divided into eight major provinces. PRT's will be established initially in the major town in that province. Over time, additional PRT's will be established in villages within the same province. This is called the 'Hub and Spoke' concept.<sup>xvii</sup> The major difference between the PRT and CAP models is that the PRT is not a security force. The PRT is designed to establish a visible presence to support stability and security.<sup>xviii</sup>

The PRT organization is comprised of a robust civil affairs section, information operations section, security section, and headquarters that include a small cadre of linguists. The PRT will be collocated and share information with USAID and DOS teams. The stated PRT purpose is to facilitate the removal of causes of instability within

Afghanistan in order to establish a stable and secure environment that promotes the emergence of a competent central government of Afghanistan able to deter terrorist and extremist group activities within its national boundaries.<sup>xix</sup> It is designed to interact with pro Islamic Transitional Government of Afghanistan (ITGA) community leaders, government authorities, international organizations, and NGO's. "It is designed to monitor and assess military, political, and civilian reform efforts through community engagement, and facilitating reconstruction efforts."<sup>xx</sup>

The PRT plan provides a distinct and integrated chain of command through Combined Joint Civil Military Operations Task Force (CJCMOTF) at the tactical-operational level and Combined Joint Task Force 180 (CJTF-180) at the operational level.<sup>xxi</sup> At the highest level, PRT headquarters staff sits on a committee comprised of the representatives of the Afghan government, DOS, the UN, and others to identify, prioritize, and coordinate activities prior to execution.<sup>xxii</sup> In fact, most of the PRT's humanitarian assistance and security priorities come from the Afghan government.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Unlike the CAP higher headquarters, the CJTF HQ, Afghan government, and US State Department (DOS) are deeply involved with identifying and coordinating a wide range of humanitarian assistance projects and international resources.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRT MODEL

The PRT is a superb organization to integrate security with the other three pillars of reconstruction. At the operational level, the mechanism created to identify, coordinate, and integrate priorities of reconstruction with security will no doubt prove effective as long as international organizations and states remain committed to reconstruction. With

that said, there are weaknesses in the PRT model that should be addressed to allow the PRT to succeed in its mission of ‘facilitating the removal of causes of instability within Afghanistan.’<sup>xxiv</sup>

Mission. The PRT mission and resources should be changed to include establishing and maintaining security. The mission statement is too ambiguous as it relates to the mission of security. Additionally, the PRT should ‘facilitate or enable’ other efforts as required. But the ‘facilitate and enable’ mission should be secondary to providing security. Humanitarian assistance is a responsibility best led, coordinated, and executed by an international organization that will remain in country after the PRT leaves. At the tactical level, PRT humanitarian operations will only blur the perception by civilians of humanitarian assistance neutrality and may draw much needed loyalty of the population away from their government and to the PRT.

Offensive Capability. Central to establishing and providing security to a province is the ability to face and remove a potential security threat if required. In the case of Afghanistan, most provinces and villages are not encountering a widespread, well-organized insurgent threat.<sup>xxv</sup> Although the freedom of action required when conducting a counterinsurgency operation is not required in many areas in Afghanistan, a complete lack of offensive operations by the PRT will only serve to reduce their effectiveness.

First, as the local opposition ascertains that the PRT is a limited threat to them, the opposition will gain more confidence to conduct operations that reduce security. A purely defensive force will become a target for those adversaries that choose to disrupt

security and reconstruction efforts. Finally, the PRT does not maintain security simply because it is established in an area and is armed. Everyone in Afghanistan is armed. Limited offensive operations and the mere threat of the same will keep a courageous and proud enemy from executing attacks. The PRT should be able to conduct, with HHQ approval, limited offensive operations in their area against specific threats. The chain of command must be quick and responsive to these requests so local insurgents equate an action-reaction response.

This offensive mentality will also be a long term benefit to PRT morale as soldiers are empowered to take limited action in pursuit of their objective instead of being limited to a self-defense and observation role. Finally, the local population will gain increased respect to a force that actively seeks to defend the civilians' security instead of only protecting itself and solving security problems with meetings and talk. Another capability that must be given to the PRT is police powers of arrest and detainment. PRT commanders must be given some limited legal authority.

The establishment of legal authority is a critical pillar in the reconstruction effort. But during the critical period when security is established but the legal system is not, the PRT must have mechanism to detain, question, and even hold personnel until that person can be addressed by the legal system.<sup>xxvi</sup> An important technique for reducing organized resistance while improving ITGA effectiveness is to handle adversaries within a legal judicial framework. This brings legitimacy to the government and improves security. Provincial intelligence interrogator-translator teams should be created with Afghan government police to vet suspected criminals and insurgents and forward them for judicial prosecution if required.

Training. The adoption of the PRT as a primary means to support security requires a much larger force than the CAP model. Unlike the CAP model, it is unfeasible to create a hand selected force to carry out a task of this size. Currently CJTF-180 is creating a short training program for their PRT soldiers, but it is limited in scope.<sup>xxvii</sup>

A comprehensive training program for incoming personnel is a must. This training cannot be a three-day ‘hand wave’ of current issues. The training should include a brief history of insurgency/counter insurgency/ security operations, successes and failures, and lessons learned. Culture and Afghan history should be tailored to the province the soldier will operate in. Along with language training, cultural training should make up the majority of the training program.<sup>xxviii</sup> Other topics should include the organization at CJCMTF/CJTF-180 level and how problems are solved and tasks are assigned to his unit. This will assist the soldier in his understanding of his roles, responsibilities, and limitations in providing security. A December 1969 report on the Marines’ Combined Action Program funded by the Office of Naval Research provides an excellent summary of the CAP school, the syllabus, and questionnaire responses from the students while in school and after they reported to the field.

Security Plan. The current comprehensive security strategy for Afghanistan drawn up by CJTF-180 does not address solutions for some of the major security problems that threaten the country.<sup>xxix</sup> The major security threats are being left unchecked and will be left to the ITGA to solve. These threats include the tremendous rise in opium production and trafficking and porous borders that currently allow terrorists, insurgents, and drugs to

move unmolested. Additionally, the CJTF security plan does not adequately address a growing Taliban insurgency in certain provinces and the remaining warlords and their associated militias controlling certain regions of the country. It is these threats that are likely to expand and threaten to unravel the ITGA later. Although by its nature reconstruction takes a short to midterm approach, corrective action should be taken now to reduce the influence of these threats. The CJTF and international forces will likely not be able to extinguish these threats, but their threat to the ITGA must be reduced to a level that the Afghan government has a hope of controlling once its security forces are in place.

Transition. At the beginning of the security mission, once government police or army forces are trained, they should immediately be integrated with international forces at the local level. At this point, government forces can continue cross training with the PRT to gain additional proficiency. Serious consideration should be given to initially establishing a government force under OPCON or TACON of the PRT. This will simplify command procedures and eventually the government unit can be assigned primary responsibility for that area. Historical examples from the Marines CAP in Vietnam and in operations in Central America in the 1920's and 1930's speak to the success of this relationship. Also, due consideration must be given to initial assignment of that government force to a specific province. The Afghan government must be willing to keep that unit in that area for the long term. It is critical that the Afghan unit, local leaders, and citizens develop trust and loyalty for each other. These steps will provide better initial security, build on initial training of the Afghan forces, and enable a smoother transition to Afghan forces at a later date. Also, once Afghan forces have the minimal capability necessary to provide

security, PRT security forces can be reduced and integrated into mobile training teams that provide additional instruction to Afghan security forces outside the province center.

## CONCLUSION

Security is only one part of the reconstruction effort. But at the beginning it is the most important part. Good security enables the other pillars of reconstruction to maximize their efforts without interference. Effective security acts as a force multiplier to the reconstruction plan.

In recent years, as the US military searches for ways to reduce its size but retain its capabilities, in many areas it has shifted capabilities and resources to maximize the core competency of its units. Also widely used in business, focusing on core competencies allows an organization to improve on the fundamental tasks it does well and pass on less efficient capabilities to another organization to execute as part of an integrated system. The military should keep this idea in mind as it coordinates and assigns missions to its security force. Naturally the security force mission is going to be assigned to a military unit. Military units are aligned to perform certain tasks well. When considering the role and mission of the PRT, the military would be wise to consider the recommendations put forward by several NGO's and the UN. Many in the international community recommend limiting the military role's role in postconflict reconstruction to security only. Coordination with the CJTF surely has its place but the execution of humanitarian assistance should be retained with those organizations best suited for the task – the UN, NGO's and OGO's in coordination with ITGA and CJTF-180.

The Provincial Reconstruction Team is a tool, an instrument like the military. If the wrong tool is used for the wrong job you get undesirable results. PRT's have to have limited, feasible mission buttressed by a cohesive reconstruction plan.

## NOTES

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- <sup>i</sup> Lindsay H. Gudridge, phone interview by author, 8 January 2004.
- <sup>ii</sup> John J. Hambre and Gordon R. Sullivan "Toward Postconflict Reconstruction." The Washington Quarterly, 25:4 (Autumn 2002) 90.
- <sup>iii</sup> Kimberly Zisk Marten, "Defending Against Anarchy: From War to Peacekeeping in Afghanistan." The Washington Quarterly, 26:1 (Winter 2002-03) 35.
- <sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.
- <sup>v</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-92.
- <sup>vi</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.
- <sup>vii</sup> Michael D. Shafer, 81.
- <sup>viii</sup> Hambre and Sullivan, 92.
- <sup>ix</sup> Gudridge, phone interview.
- <sup>x</sup> Michael D. Shafer, Deadly Paradigms The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy (Princeton University Press 1988), 79.
- <sup>xi</sup> William Colby, interview by Martin Russ. 4 Aug 1976, Washington DC, Oral History Collection, Marine Corps History Center. Quoted in Eric P. Liu, "Speaking the Truth: The History and Mythology of the U.S. Marine Combined Action Program." History senior essay. (Timothy Dwight College, April 1990) 50-51.
- <sup>xii</sup> Bruce C. Allnut, "Marine Combined Action Capabilities: The Vietnam Experience." Interim Technical Report. (McLean: Human Sciences Research, Inc., 1969), 54.
- <sup>xiii</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.
- <sup>xiv</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.
- <sup>xv</sup> Eric P. Liu, "Speaking the Truth: The History and Mythology of the U.S. Marine Combined Action Program." History senior essay. (Timothy Dwight College, April 1990), 13.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Victor C. Krulak quoted from Edward Doyle, ed., America Takes Over, (Boston: Boston Publishing Co., 1982), 61-65.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Gudridge, phone interview.

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xviii Ibid.

xix Linsay H.Gudridge, “Provincial Reconstruction Teams” Microsoft Powerpoint presentation, January 2004

xx Ibid.

xxi Ibid.

xxii Ibid.

xxiii Gudridge, phone interview.

xxiv Gudridge, Microsoft Powerpoint presentation.

xxv Kimberly Zisk Marten, “Defending Against Anarchy: From War to Peacekeeping in Afghanistan.” The Washington Quarterly, 26:1 (Winter 2002-03) 37.

xxvi United States Marine Corps. Small Wars Manual. United States Government Printing Office, 1940. Reprint: (Headquarters United States Marine Corps. NAVMC 2890, 1 April 1987), 7.

xxvii Gudridge, phone interview.

xxviii Luis and Sumner, 304.

xxix Gudridge, phone interview.

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