

# Report on visit to Afghanistan from 15 to 22 January 2007

By

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*The author writes in a personal capacity and wishes to make clear that his views do not necessarily represent those of any of his present or previous employers.*

## **Executive Summary**

1. My brief was to look at how civil/military co-operation in Afghanistan can be improved. It is impossible to do this without considering the aims of the NATO/ISAF mission and the way it has been set up. NATO has taken on a massively complex task in Afghanistan, of which winning the war against the Taliban is only one element. Recognition of this has led to a push for an “integrated” approach involving relief, reconstruction, and development as well as military activity. This is not as easy as it sounds. Development can only take place where the rule of law is respected and people have confidence in the ability of government to protect their interests. Neither applies in current day Afghanistan; Government is weak, especially outside Kabul, and ISAF is left filling the vacuum. In turn, this leads to unrealistic expectations of non-NATO civilian actors, which they cannot meet. But more could be done if people talked to each other better, understood the limitations and constraints of each others’ approaches, committed the right level of resources and the right calibre of people, and combined to help drive improved performance from the Afghan government and its agencies.

## **Introduction**

2. This is a report of a short visit to Afghanistan I made in my capacity as a Senior Concept Developer for NATO/ACT. I am grateful to General David Richards, Commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF) for his readiness to host me, and to Mr Terence Jagger, Senior Political Adviser, ISAF, for sponsoring my visit. My particular thanks go to Dr Imogen Parsons of the PRISM Group, ISAF HQ, who organised my programme, accompanied me throughout the visit, and helped me through several drafts of this report; and to Sergeant Chris Taylor, who dealt with all the administrative arrangements.
3. I am very aware that I have barely skimmed the surface of a hugely complex and difficult situation. In thanking my hosts and also everyone who took the time to talk to me I would like to make it clear that the views expressed are mine alone. This is therefore an entirely independent, as

well as of necessity a somewhat impressionistic, report; it does not reflect the views either of ISAF or of NATO/ACT.

## The Brief

4. The context for my visit was twofold. First, NATO's attempts to move to a more holistic approach in delivering its security mission, as expressed in the following extract from the November 2006 RIGA Summit communiqué:
5. *"Experience in Afghanistan and Kosovo demonstrates that today's challenges require a comprehensive approach by the international community involving a wide spectrum of civil and military instruments, while fully respecting mandates and autonomy of decisions of all actors, and provides precedents for this approach. To that end, while recognising that NATO has no requirement to develop capabilities strictly for civilian purposes, we have tasked today the Council in Permanent Session to develop pragmatic proposals in time for the meeting of Foreign Ministers in April 2007 and Defence Ministers in June 2007 to improve coherent application of NATO's own crisis management instruments as well as practical cooperation at all levels with partners, the UN and other relevant international organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations and local actors in the planning and conduct of ongoing and future operations wherever appropriate.<sup>1</sup>"*
6. Second, the particular situation in Afghanistan, where, in the view of many, NATO has "bet the Alliance" and cannot afford to fail. It was therefore of particular relevance to see how the Riga issues play out on the ground in Afghanistan.
7. In asking to visit I proposed 3 broad areas for investigation:
  - a) An assessment of the overall co-ordination structures for the international effort in Afghanistan, and how to address any doctrinal/philosophical issues that are getting in the way of effective civil/military co-operation;
  - b) NGO and other civilian perceptions of ISAF's role, with particular reference to PRTs, and what can be done to improve mutual understanding/channels of communication;
  - c) What is needed for the civilian side to contribute to a more comprehensive approach.
8. My programme comprised (a) discussions in Kabul with Government, the UN, the NGO community, and ISAF, and (b) a visit to a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) outside Kabul (Herat). In the event extreme weather conditions obliged me to spend an extra night in Herat, which in turn meant that many of the planned meetings in Kabul could not take place.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2006/p06-150e.htm>

## Overall co-ordination structures and doctrinal/philosophical issues

### *Philosophy and Doctrine*

9. Within NATO there is much discussion about how to improve co-operation between the military and civilian actors. However, in my general experience most of the barriers are not caused by people on the ground but rather by the political framework within which they are asked to operate. Therefore my first priority on this visit was to look at the overall framework for international intervention in Afghanistan, and to understand how it impacts on civil/military cooperation.
10. The rights and wrongs of this intervention, and any detailed analysis of the problems it is trying to address, are beyond the scope of this report<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, some general points are worth making.
11. First, from the start of the Afghanistan campaign in 2001 there were claims that there would be an “integrated approach”, covering all dimensions of the situation: military, diplomatic, and humanitarian<sup>3</sup>. To humanitarian and development organisations, who rely for their effectiveness in large measure on being perceived as impartial, neutral, and independent of governments, this set loud alarm bells ringing. Fears were deepened by the creation in 2002/3 of PRTs. Although these were intended as a means to help coordinate and leverage to best effect both military and civilian crisis management tools to create long-lasting security and stability, they were seen as blurring the distinction between political, military, and humanitarian action. This was partly because civilian assets were collocated alongside military ones in PRTs under military command – leading to a perceived militarisation of the relief effort – and partly because of mistakes that were made, especially in the early days, by the PRTs themselves<sup>4</sup>.
12. Second, it needs to be said that what NATO is attempting in Afghanistan is a hugely ambitious project, which has arguably never been attempted anywhere in the world on this scale and in this social and economic context<sup>5</sup>. The international community, with ISAF as its vanguard, is not simply trying to repair a broken state, but to build one that has never really existed before in any meaningful sense.

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<sup>2</sup> For a good examination of these broader issues see the November 2006 report of the International Crisis Group: “Countering Afghanistan’s Insurgency: No Quick Fixes”.

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4485&l=1>

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Prime Minister Tony Blair’s statement, 7 October 2001 at

<http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page1615.asp>

<sup>4</sup> See for example “Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Military/Humanitarian Relations in Afghanistan”: Save the Children UK September 2004:

[http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk\\_cache/scuk/cache/cmsattach/2029\\_PRTs\\_in\\_Afghanistan\\_Sep04.pdf](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk_cache/scuk/cache/cmsattach/2029_PRTs_in_Afghanistan_Sep04.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> For example, the Marshall Plan at the end of WW II, although on a massive scale, was carried out in an essentially permissive environment. Other, more recent, interventions in conflict situations – apart from Iraq – have had more modest ambitions.

13. Therefore, although it is perhaps easy to define at a high level an end-state that everyone would sign up to – for example, peace and security for all Afghan citizens– it is clear that there is little consensus among the different external agencies as to how best to bring this about. The debate is about the very nature of the development process, and the power of external agencies to make it happen. The assumptions about nation-building accompanying the increasingly muscular interventionism practised by the US and her allies since the Cold War ended are being put to the test in Afghanistan.

#### *A Huge Footprint*

14. Turning now to the way the international community is organised in Afghanistan, the most exceptional feature is of course the co-existence not only of a UNSC-mandated “integrated mission”, UNAMA, but also the UNSC-mandated, NATO-led, ISAF. (I do not go into the separate issue of the US forces outside the NATO structure.) Then there is the additional co-existence of a NATO Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) alongside the Commander of ISAF (COMISAF). As if this were not enough, there is not only a conventional European Commission (EC) office, with a Head of Mission, but also a European Union (EU) Special Representative (again, I do not pursue this in this report).

15. All this is on top of the usual array of embassies, UN agencies, other international organisations, and NGOs that one sees in poor countries around the world. It adds up to a very dense structure and, not surprisingly, has spawned a mass of co-ordination bodies, often with overlapping remits. This consumes time and effort, not only for the internationals, but also for the Government of Afghanistan. We outsiders make a huge footprint in Afghanistan, very visible to the Afghan people. They are entitled to – and do – ask whether we are managing ourselves as effectively as we could be.

#### *Does NATO have its act together?*

16. Given my brief, it seemed appropriate to try to define the complementarity between the SCR and COMISAF, and also between NATO/ISAF and UNAMA. This is especially important because, whereas civilian agencies traditionally find it easier to relate to non-military structures, it is obvious that a good mutual understanding - at least – between civilians and military is essential if NATO is to succeed in Afghanistan.

17. The SCR was on leave during my visit, and I did not therefore get the chance to talk to him. From conversations I had it would seem that there is some debate about what the role should be (beyond managing the non-ISAF aspects of the NATO relationship with Afghanistan, e.g. the Partnership for Peace dimension). Yet one thing that came through strongly from many discussions I had was that many of ISAF’s internal challenges can be tracked back to a lack of consistency of approach

between the contributing NATO Nations, and to me this seems an obvious area for the SCR's involvement.

18. For example, and critically for the success of its mission, although ISAF IX has organised itself effectively at HQ level to integrate "reconstruction and development" ("R+D"<sup>6</sup>) requirements into overall planning, this is much less well supported at Regional Command and PRT levels. Here, different national approaches/constraints predominate and as a result RCs/PRTs are often inadequately resourced, lacking staff in numbers and with the skill sets needed to support "R+D". Nations also impose widely differing security constraints on their personnel – civilian and military. These affect how those personnel are perceived by the local population and the lack of consistency and coherence hampers the achievement of the Commander's Intent.
19. As these kinds of problems can usually only be resolved at the political, as opposed to the purely military, level it would seem to me that COMISAF really needs a powerful advocate with direct access to the NAC, through the NATO SG, who can put the Nations on the spot and help unblock the system to deliver greater coherence and effectiveness.
20. More controversially, perhaps, it can be argued that COMISAF needs similar support in managing relationships with local stakeholders, particularly the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan. This would not in any way diminish COMISAF's existing relationships with these stakeholders, but it would give them more political "cover". (As it happens, General Richards was quite prepared to take on this more political role, but it may not be sustainable now that he has left at the conclusion of ISAF IX on 4 February.)
21. My own analogy here is that of non-executive chairman and chief executive; COMISAF is NATO's chief executive in Afghanistan, while the SCR is the non-executive chairman. Like any other chief executive, COMISAF controls the troops, but his chairman can secure the political space that allows him to get on with his job. Standing back to back, they jointly provide strong leadership to the ISAF mission. In this context, "Senior Civilian Representative" does not seem an adequate job title: "Special Representative" (of the NATO SG) would perhaps seem more appropriate.

*Does UNAMA play the leadership role it should?*

22. Turning to the relationship between ISAF and UNAMA, what struck me is how much ISAF has moved in to fill the space the UN would normally occupy. Although it is true that the UNSC has given the security role to

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<sup>6</sup> I put this in inverted commas because I do not believe that the process of development lends itself to the kind of planning that military organisations can do. ISAF documents discuss "S+R" (stabilisation and reconstruction) and "R+D" (reconstruction and development) as if these naturally followed each other - but they are very different. However, my point here is about the lack of NATO synergy and applies equally well even if one only talks about "S+R".

NATO/ISAF, “security” in this context can be so broadly defined that ISAF takes virtually everything upon itself. This, I would suggest, is not in the interest of the mission, and certainly makes it more difficult to secure the engagement of the non-NATO civilian actors, especially the NGOs.

23. For example, ISAF has done an excellent job of mapping the various activities contributing to “security” in the broader sense, including civilian-delivered “R+D” projects, through a tool named the Afghan Comprehensive Stability Picture (ACSP). This shows what is being done, and the critical gaps<sup>7</sup>. However, this information naturally belongs within the government machine, and traditionally UNDP helps national and provincial government develop the required capacity to generate it on a sustainable basis. To the extent that there has been a lack of capacity within government and UNAMA to fulfil this function, one can hardly blame ISAF for picking up the ball and running with it. But a consistent cry, both from within ISAF and on the civilian side, was for UNAMA to play a stronger leadership role in the development area. UNAMA has clearly got some very good people, and on the face of it could do a lot more.
24. There are in fact many good examples of UNAMA and ISAF collaborating on this, and of UNAMA’s trying to use its convening power to bring the various actors together. But there are also some powerful obstacles in the way of a greater UNAMA role. First, security: there are still a number of provinces where UNAMA does not consider it safe to be at present. Second, it is impossible to exaggerate the extent to which the PRT concept has alienated the development community and thrown normal models of co-ordination into disarray; it will take a lot to get this back on track. Third, UN member states need to put more effort into strengthening UNAMA and giving it the best possible tools to do its job. Fourth, western donor nations should ask themselves whether they acknowledge sufficiently the UN’s proven track record in certain areas, for example recruitment of international civilian police officers/advisers<sup>8</sup>.

### **Perceptions of ISAF’s role and how to improve channels of communication**

*How ISAF is perceived by civilian agencies and vice versa*

25. This brings me to the vexed question of the role of PRTs in “S+R” and “R+D”, and the implications for what is generally known as “humanitarian space”. As the PRT concept has developed and the number of PRTs has expanded most of the development community has watched with dismay, and many have decided to have as little as possible to do with them.

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<sup>7</sup> It also shows a lack of correlation between “assets” and security; the inference is that good governance is the vital missing ingredient. I return to this at the end of the report.

<sup>8</sup> It was put to me that the UN has a proven track record in sourcing and deploying civilian police, including from non-NATO (including Muslim) countries and that the donors who are leading in this area under the Bonn Agreement should ask it to do more. Given that the international community is struggling here this would seem to be worth pursuing.

26. It is as well for all parties to acknowledge that the perceived militarisation of relief and reconstruction in Afghanistan through the adoption of the PRT concept by the US, UK, and now ISAF as a whole has made co-operation with non-NATO civilian agencies, at least, very difficult. On the civilian side, the concerns I heard ranged from:

- a) Concern about “blurring” of roles, with consequential damage to perceived impartiality, and a knock-on effect on security of operations and staff;
- b) The difficulty of engaging with military personnel who are on shorter rotations and barely have time to understand the country before it is time to move on;
- c) “Cherry-picking” by the military; taking the easy projects and ignoring the rest, accompanied by poor co-ordination in some areas;
- d) The frustration of being invited to advise on project proposals only to see one’s advice systematically ignored;
- e) The deep concern at the skewing of the allocation of development resources to support political/military objectives (where a Nation’s troops are engaged in a particular part of the country there is an expectation that development resources will follow, even if this runs counter to the Nation’s overall development strategy for the country).

27. On the other hand, there is a palpable sense of frustration among the military that the civilian agencies do not move faster to exploit the space won by hard-fought military activity. They see themselves as creating a brief window of opportunity in which superficial security (the cessation or absence of active fighting) can be converted into deeper rooted stability with international & Afghan Government civilian support - if the latter doesn't happen they are locked into a cycle of clearing the Taliban out of one valley and watching them spill into the next or come back, and having to re-engage in fighting. It is clear from talking to people within NATO/ISAF how genuine is the desire of the military to co-operate more effectively with the civilians. The latter need to be more ready than they are now to meet them half way.

*Everyone agrees PRTs need more coherence*

28. One theme that is shared by both military and civilian players is the need for much greater coherence within and between PRTs. Although they are part of ISAF, they only report to it in a partial sense; the military side reports through the ISAF chain of command, but the civilian side does not. Thus the modus operandi of the civilian side is shaped as much by individual national considerations as by the requirements of the overall mission. In the (Italian) PRT I visited, the Commander had to be very sensitive to the different interests of his principal funders, the Italian Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs/International Co-Operation. These each had their own requirements, with the Commander (who of course also had to satisfy his Regional Commander in RC West) to a considerable extent caught in the middle.

29. In turn this makes it much harder for agencies to engage with PRTs, as the rules are so different from one to another. In response to this, ISAF IX has done a sterling job in trying to bring about greater coherence across the PRTs. The new PRT Handbook<sup>9</sup>, the regular PRT Newsletter, standardised reporting requirements, and much greater investment in common training and induction for PRT staff, are notable examples. But there is a limit to how much ISAF can achieve without greater political will and coherence at the level of the contributing Nations; this links back to the previous point about the need for a greater role in this regard for the NATO SCR/SRSG.

*The PRT role must be better defined*

30. In addition, and after all this time, there is still a fundamental lack of clarity about the role of PRTs. Are they the main vehicle for relief, reconstruction, and development in Afghanistan, or is their role to create a permissive security environment within which those activities can be undertaken by other agencies? The PRT mission statement, as agreed by the Executive Steering Committee in Kabul in January 2005, suggests the latter interpretation:

31. *"PRTs will assist the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to extend its authority, in order to facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment (underlined in the original) in the identified area of operations, and enable Security Sector Reform (SSR) and reconstruction efforts."*<sup>10</sup>

32. However, it was put to me that the PRT model was never intended to support the aggressive counter-insurgency role that is now required in the South and East. In these Regions neither the Government nor the non-NATO civilian agencies are able to operate freely, and even the civilian components of the PRTs struggle to leave their heavily guarded base camps. Thus the idea of combining military and civilian assets in pursuit of a common objective does not really work.

33. Some critics would go further and say that from the start PRTs were an attempt to do peacekeeping on the cheap, and that it was naïve to think that by digging a few wells and rebuilding some schools enough hearts and minds could be won to counter the power wielded by those who for a variety of reasons were fundamentally opposed to the authority of central government. What was needed instead was a more robust security presence, which – until quite recently, with the Taliban staging a comeback - the international community was unwilling to provide. On this interpretation PRTs were a gamble that did not pay off, and the model is stretched to the limit now that ISAF is fighting a major counter-insurgency campaign in the South and East.

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<sup>9</sup> The ISAF Provincial Reconstruction Team Handbook: Kabul, October 2006.

<sup>10</sup> PRT Handbook p2.

34. Putting this to one side, one can define the key elements that amount to the achievement of the PRT mission:
- a) Superiority, backed by military force, over insurgents and visible, effective, policing of the rule of law;
  - b) Provincial authorities providing leadership and control and being democratically accountable to their people;
  - c) Effective co-ordination of internal and external resource inputs, delivering tangible improvements to people's lives.
35. Supporting all this is a major challenge, requiring different capabilities, knowledge, and skill sets. The question is how much the PRT should be trying to deliver itself, and how much it should be helping to build the capacity of others, particularly the local authorities – especially when there are other bodies like the UN for whom this is core business.
36. The answer is complicated by the fact that the security situation varies from one area to another, but it is nevertheless important to try to define some principles. Given the concerns about the military taking on too much, it would help to build confidence with other agencies if there were an explicit policy statement, perhaps from the PRT Executive Steering Committee, saying that PRTs will only aim to carry out those tasks that for security reasons cannot be carried out by other actors (e.g. the Afghan Government, Army, and Police; the UN, NGOs, and others). Where a lack of security means they have to do it themselves they will take care to avoid falling into the trap of filling the vacuum on a permanent basis and creating an unnecessary dependency.
37. Such an approach could also be turned to advantage in security terms. Instead of saying to the local population that because of lack of security the military are going to step in and do civilian projects, the line would be that without security the civilian agencies will not be able to operate. The former approach gives the community no incentive to deny the insurgents; the latter puts the onus on them to do just that and offers a better carrot. It also helps to reduce the dependency on external actors, which is counter-productive to government and civil society taking more responsibility.
38. Some people I spoke to within ISAF said that the objective over time was for PRTs to come under civilian command (a few already do). This raises the question of whom they would report to; some said it would still have to be the Regional Commander, others were happy for it to be the relevant Embassy. To me this seems a muddle. Either the security situation calls for something that has to be under military command because its primary function is to achieve superiority over the insurgency, or there could indeed be a non-military "PRT" supporting the local Provincial Development Committee but divorced from any residual military structure.

### *A more focused and restricted role for ISAF*

39. If the PRT role were focused and clarified in this way ISAF could concentrate on its core function of progressively developing the capability of the Afghan security forces (Army and Police), leaving to a strengthened UNAMA the role of harnessing and co-ordinating the international development community's efforts in support of the provincial authorities, including the "softer" aspects of the Security Sector Reform agenda (issues of good governance beyond strengthening the coercive power of the security forces). For example, UNDP should be supporting the development of indigenous planning capacity at both national and provincial levels; this is one of its core functions<sup>11</sup>. As indigenous capacity grew the PRT role would shrink even further. A clear statement of intent agreed jointly by the Government, UNAMA, and ISAF would make it easier for civilian agencies to engage with this process rather than stay at arms length as they are at present.

### *A key role for development and civilian actor advisers*

40. It would also help if the role of development advisers were clarified. These occur at all levels (ISAF HQ, Regional Commands, and (some) PRTs) and seem to operate in very different ways. In my opinion the core DevAd role should be helping commanders to understand better the development context in which they are operating; this will be achieved in large part by maintaining good channels of communication with the development community, combined with the relevant background – preferably as a member of that community. In this way military activity can be supportive, rather than disruptive, of the development process<sup>12</sup>. However, that is not the same as advising the Commander how to do development; as stated above I do not see this as an appropriate role for the military. What commanders really need are "civilian actor advisers"<sup>13</sup>: people who can effectively engage with the development community, offer assistance to the latter where appropriate, and ensure that the military side knows what is going on. That is a very different concept from the much more problematic one of trying to "co-ordinate" the work of all actors.

### **A more comprehensive approach?**

#### *More honesty and mutual understanding needed about security*

41. If the above were implemented, it would go a long way to giving traditional development agencies more confidence that they could with comfort

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<sup>11</sup> See also the earlier comment about civilian police deployment.

<sup>12</sup> ISAF HQ gave me a good example. A PRT commander was asked by the local governor to build schools; however the Minister in Kabul told ISAF HQ that the last thing he needed was more schools without trained teachers to work in them – what he wanted built was a teacher training college. A good development adviser would be able to head off such well-meaning but misguided interventions by the PRT, and would also be able to support the Commander in encouraging the appropriate civilian actors to engage with the issue.

<sup>13</sup> This term was coined by Paul LaRose Edwards, a fellow Senior Concept Developer for NATO/ACT, and is currently being developed by ACT. They will "CIVADs" for short.

engage with the military. However, a key barrier to closer collaboration is that civilians and the military have of necessity a completely different approach to security. As a guest of ISAF I lived in a world of armed convoys, bullet-proof vehicles, body armour and helmet, and electronic counter-measures. As an NGO staff member, I would depend for my security on (a) doing a good job and being trusted by the local community, (b) being perceived as impartial, neutral, and independent, and (c) using good judgement and being ready to withdraw if needed. But I would, essentially, be defenceless against a determined enemy<sup>14</sup>.

42. These different approaches get in the way of dialogue at the practical level as well as the conceptual one. On the one hand it is very hard for military and civilian personnel even to meet when the former can go nowhere without security and the latter do not want to be seen anywhere near it. The UN can – and to an increasing extent does – provide a middle ground and in Kabul UNAMA has been able to convene meetings involving Government, NGOs, and the military. But in the provinces UNAMA's presence is weaker, and it is harder to be discreet.
43. On the other hand NGOs and the military disagree as to the current security status. The official ISAF view (January 2007) is that the “security situation is stable in 3 of 5 Regions”, and that the “incident trend in the other 2 has declined”. Yet a November 2006 briefing prepared by the main international NGO consortium, ACBAR, talks about “rapidly growing insecurity” in various parts of the country and says that “the country faces the worst crisis since the outing of the Taliban in 2001” – as of January 2007 this was still their view. NGOs particularly resent being accused by some members of the military of being risk averse, when over 30 aid workers were killed in Afghanistan during 2006. In return, they argue that in many places the military could lower its security profile and send a positive message to the local population, but that, as one person put it to me “there is no tolerance for the calculated risk”.

*NGOs et al. can't afford not to engage with the military in the policy debate*

44. Both these perspectives are valid, but there needs to be better dialogue to try to reach mutual understanding. To its credit, the military understands very well the importance of lines of operation other than the security one. It still has a long way to go in understanding how the development community sees the links between security and development, and what other issues need to be addressed before development can take place. For example there is deep unhappiness about the issue of Security Sector Reform – highlighted in the PRT mission statement – and how it is being undertaken<sup>15</sup>. As ICG point out:

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<sup>14</sup> In places like Afghanistan, where the “enemy” increasingly does not distinguish between international military and civilians, this becomes an even more acute problem.

<sup>15</sup> See “European Approaches to Security Sector Reform: Examining Trends through the Lens of Afghanistan”; “European Security” Vol 15, No 3, 323-338, September 2006.

45. *“While military action is a vital part of counter insurgency, it is worrying that it appears to be the predominant element in Afghanistan. It is already evident that without police to hold the area and clearly sequenced political strategies, it often takes only a few weeks for insurgents to appear in areas that have been “cleared”. To fill the void, there is increasing emphasis on “development”, or building things – preferably quickly – but the political component is missing<sup>16</sup>.”* (My underlining.)
46. For their part, the NGOs and others need to appreciate that there is sophisticated and sensitive thinking in the military on these matters, and a determination to press ahead with a new doctrine of civil/military co-operation that factors in other actors’ perspectives as well as their contribution. From an ISAF IX perspective, the most pressing requirement for ACT is the need to focus on a new NATO CIMIC doctrine that includes a counter-insurgency element. NGOs can either sit on the sidelines and let this doctrine be shaped without their input, or they can try to have some influence on it by engaging in the debate. But on the evidence of what I saw and was told on this trip, no-one should underestimate the challenge of getting this dialogue going.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

47. The understandable attempt to coordinate and leverage to best effect both military and civilian crisis management tools in Afghanistan since 2001 has had unintended consequences for relations between military and civilian actors. This has to be seen in the context of the international community’s overall response, which has underestimated the level of troops needed to stabilise the country, but has also over-emphasised the “harder” elements of security at the expense of some of the “softer” ones. Neither the true nature of Afghanistan’s development needs, nor the nature of the development process itself, nor the respective roles of the different actors have been adequately reflected in the overall framework employed. With the resurgence of violence in the South and East over the last couple of years, the limitations of the model are more vividly exposed, and the situation is now acute. Key elements in turning this around include:
- a) Greater recognition by the NATO nations of the imperatives on the ground, and willingness to subordinate national preferences to the need to give COMISAF the tools to do the job.
  - b) A similar commitment from the UN Security Council to strengthen UNAMA and give it the appropriate resources to play a more leading role.

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<sup>16</sup> ICG report, op. cit. Page 14. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4485&l=1> This is also exemplified by the lack of correlation between “assets” and security as recorded by ISAF and noted above.

- c) A more focused and restricted definition of ISAF's role in "security and reconstruction" or "reconstruction and development" vis-à-vis non-NATO civilian actors.
- d) A continued drive to greater coherence across PRTs and a clearer statement of direction for them.
- e) Creativity at all levels in finding new ways of getting people to talk to each other, based on a recognition that no-one has a monopoly of the moral high ground.
- f) Leadership at all levels coming from the best people we can send.

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