



NATO Peacekeeping in Afghanistan: Expanding the Role to Counterinsurgency or Limiting it to Security Assistance

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Abstract: *Afghanistan, with its reputation as the “graveyard of empires”, has become the world’s most important security zone since the 9/11 attacks. This incident not only brought Al-Qaeda to the forefront of the international agenda but also made Afghanistan a central theatre in the fight against terrorism. This process also coincided with NATO’s attempts to adjust and adapt itself to the new circumstances and challenges of the post-Cold War era. By deploying its forces to Afghanistan, NATO assumed a serious responsibility. NATO not only went “out of area”, but also expanded the features of its involvement to an increasingly offensive role. International involvement in Afghanistan aims to help the country survive, stabilise and develop. The existence of a Janus-headed international military structure and involvement – in the form of the US-led Coalition Forces and the NATO-led ISAF – make the international efforts more complicated though not necessarily effective.*

Keywords: NATO, Afghanistan, peacekeeping, counterinsurgency, terrorism.

Introduction

The attacks of September 11, 2001 constituted an important turning point in the already transforming state of international security problems and international politics in general. This incident not only brought Al-Qaeda to the forefront of the international agenda but also made Afghanistan a central theatre in the fight against terrorism. This process also coincided with attempts by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to adjust and adapt itself to the new

circumstances and challenges of the post-Cold War era. As the nature and intensity of conflicts that could jeopardise international peace and security change, methods of coping with new threats also have to change. Stabilisation efforts consisting of peacekeeping became less adequate in dealing with international and destabilising intra-state conflicts, thus paving the way for deeper international involvement that supersedes the limited features of peacekeeping operations.

This article focuses on changes in methods of managing conflicts, in particular the evolution of peacekeeping and how the international community and particular states have toughened their stances and moved their approaches closer to counterinsurgency. Afghanistan has been one of the few hot spots that got worse over time and thus required new approaches. International involvement with its Janus-headed presence in Afghanistan in the form of the Coalition Forces doing the actual fighting and the United Nations-led stabilisation presence, responsibility for which was later transferred to NATO, has proven to be quite ineffective. The article will also evaluate the international involvement in Afghanistan, in particular that of NATO.

The Evolution of Peacekeeping from its Innovation to Afghanistan

At the dawn of the twentieth century, thoughts about how to define “war” and “peace” were different from those in mid-century. With the foundation of the United Nations in 1945, the definition of peace changed to the opposite of that of war, in essence. Ironically, UN attempts to help prevent war in the international system moved the concept of peace closer to the use of force. After that period, in addition to diplomats, peace became more and more the job of the military due to the innovation of peacekeeping.

After the Second World War, the new international system, which was created by foundation of the United Nations, aimed to avoid wars between states and create an environment conducive to sustaining peace and stability. According to the rules of the new international system laid out in the United Nations Charter, disputes between members of the UN should be settled through negotiation, enquiry, mediation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of the members’ own choice.¹ Basically, there are two main methods of settling disputes in the international arena. The first is diplomacy, and the other is war. In fact, in the UN Charter, the term “use of force” is preferred to the term “war”. During the post-war establishment of international mechanisms, these methods were placed in Chapters VI and VII of the Charter. In addition to these chapters, there are also other articles related to peace in Chapters IV and V. Chapter IV, on the General Assembly, contains Articles 11 and 14 under the “Functions and Powers” sub-heading. The first article has to do with maintaining international peace and security, and the second is focused on “the peaceful adjustment of any situation”. Additionally, Articles 22 and 29 state that the General Assembly and the Security Council “may establish such subsidiary organs as they deem necessary for the performance of its functions”.

There are two main chapters in the Charter on settling disputes between parties: Chapter VI, entitled “Pacific Settlement of Disputes”, and Chapter VII, entitled “Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression”. Chapter VI covers

¹ Charter of the United Nations, Chapter VI, accessed 14 May 2009 (<http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/>).

diplomatic efforts including negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, and other peaceful means of the parties' own choice. On the other hand, Chapter VII covers use of force with the authorization of the UN Security Council and as an exceptional self-defence. Thus, Chapters VI and VII are the two methods of the UN system for dispute settlements; diplomacy on one side of the coin, and the use of force on the other. The lack of any other methods for settling disputes is regarded as a shortcoming of the UN system.

There have been several discussions on reorganize the UN Charter, some of which would involve adding peacekeeping operations to the document.² In fact, the main reason for these discussions is the lack of any possibility of settling disputes only with the procedures shown in Chapters VI and VII. Basically, peacekeeping was an innovation for settling disputes at the beginning of the Cold War due to the insufficiency of the UN Charter's limited definitions and procedures for responding to the security threats of the new era.

There are various approaches to peacekeeping. Wiseman defines peacekeeping as "...not an end but a means to an end".³ According to Evans, it is the "mechanism to assist the ongoing peace making process".⁴ In fact, the objective of traditional peacekeeping is to create a chance for conflict resolution and diplomacy by showing a presence in conflict areas during armistices. On the other hand, during the Cold War, "peacekeeping operations symbolise[d] the international community's will for peace and represent the impartial, practical expression of that will", according to then UN Secretary-General Perez De Cuellar, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988 for the UN's peacekeeping operations.⁵

Essentially, after the Second World War, the collective security system should have functioned in line with Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Due to the failure to establish a Military Staff Committee⁶, peace operations⁷ were co-spearheaded in 1956 by then UN Secretary-General Dag

² For more information on discussions about UN reform, see <http://www.un.org/reform/>, accessed 10 March 2009.

³ Henry Wiseman, *Peacekeeping: Appraisals and Proposals*, Pergamon Press, New York, 1983, p. 210.

⁴ Gareth Evans, *Cooperating for Peace: The Global Agenda for the 1990s and Beyond*, Australian Print Group Evans, Australia, 1993, p. 100.

⁵ Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, "Acceptance Speech of the Award of the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize" Oslo, accessed 18 May 2009 (http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1988/un-acceptance.html).

⁶ Article 43 defines the Military Staff Committee as follows "1. All Members of the United Nations, in order to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, undertake to make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces, assistance, and facilities, including rights of passage, necessary for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security.

"2. Such agreement or agreements shall govern the numbers and types of forces, their degree of readiness and general location, and the nature of the facilities and assistance to be provided.

"3. The agreement or agreements shall be negotiated as soon as possible on the initiative of the Security Council. They shall be concluded between the Security Council and Members or between the Security Council and groups of Members and shall be subject to ratification by the signatory states in accordance with their respective constitutional processes."

Hammarskjöld and Canadian Foreign Minister Lester Pearson.⁸ This innovation was also useful for protecting the balance of power in the bipolar world.⁹ During the Cold War, the superpowers' face-off was the most significant threat to peace and security in the global arena. At that time, the main purpose of traditional peacekeeping was to prevent the status quo from descending into war. In short, the innovation of peacekeeping helped to preserve the balance of power.

In 1956, during the Suez Crisis, a resolution¹⁰ called "Uniting for Peace" was passed by the UN General Assembly, rather than the Security Council, due to the presence of two of the crisis' actors as permanent members of the Council. The UN Emergency Force (UNEF) was deployed soon after the resolution, and it was not only the first peacekeeping force but also the model for all other peacekeeping missions. The main principles of peacekeeping were laid out by Hammarskjöld in his report for UNEF in 1958.¹¹

During the Cold War, there were thirteen UN peacekeeping operations around the world.¹² The main principles of traditional peacekeeping are: consent, impartiality and the non-use of force, except for self-defence. In more detail, the first principle is that UN peacekeeping forces need the consent of the host state to ensure that the operation is not coercive. According to the second principle, the mission must not favour one side over the other. And the third is that the military units are not allowed to use force, except in self-defence. Consequently, peacekeeping forces do not have regular military missions. But in the 1990s, these principles became inadequate to cope with new challenges. With the end of the Cold War, new wars became more internal, and in these wars, parties were not divided into separate camps or blocs. This made getting consent from legitimate governments harder. The cases of Congo, Bosnia and Somalia were typical examples of confronting problems through traditional peacekeeping. Since the end of the Cold War, UN forces have struggled with the traditional principles of peacekeeping, as increasing violence and massacres in conflict zones damaged the principle of non-use of force. The principle of impartiality was likewise damaged. At the same time, the problem of the legitimacy of governments in such conflict areas also made the principle of consent problematic.

Patrolling, observing, buffering, interpositioning, monitoring, and protecting are missions of peace operations, which exclude war missions. Since peacekeepers were "soldiers without

⁷ In this article, "peace operation" is used as a general term designating such activities as peace support, peacekeeping, peace-making, peace building, peace forcing, etc.

⁸ John W. Holmes, "The Political and Philosophical Aspects of UN Security Forces", *Peacekeeping: Experience and Evaluation*, ed. Per Frydenberg, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo, 1964, p. 285.

⁹ Inis L. Claude, *Power and International Relations*, Random House, New York, 1962, pp. 283-284.

¹⁰ "Uniting For Peace", *United Nations General Assembly Resolution 377A*.

¹¹ United Nations General Assembly Document A/3943, New York, 1958.

¹² For a detailed history of past and ongoing UN peacekeeping operations, see the website of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, accessed 14 May 2009 (<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/list/list.pdf>).

enemies”, they used to carry only light weapons.¹³ The main characteristic of peacekeeping during the Cold War was conflict management, not conflict resolution.¹⁴ In the 1990s, while the number of wars between states as main actors began to fall, the number of conflicts among non-state actors rose.¹⁵ On the one hand, these changes forced peacekeeping operations to change due to traditional peacekeeping principles’ lack of effectiveness. On the other hand, the number of peacekeeping operations increased due to the disappearance of bipolarity in the international system. The main difficulty for peace operations during the post-Cold War era has been governments’ reluctance to consent to participation in missions dealing with domestic disputes.

Basically, the UN Operation in Congo (ONUC¹⁶, 1960-1964) was the unique example of a Cold War era peacekeeping mission that departed from the traditional principles. Soon after Belgian colonial administration ceased in Congo, the new Congo government asked the UN Security Council to set up a UN mission to assist it until law and order were established in the country.¹⁷ ONUC began as a peacekeeping mission and continued as a peace enforcement mission. This was the first peacekeeping mission which later transformed into a peace enforcement mission, deviating from UN principles and transferring the scope of the mission from Chapters VI and VII. The second example of such a mission was the UN Mission to Somalia (UNOSOM), the first such mission in the post-Cold War era.¹⁸ In the same vein, the UN Security Council decided to protect civilians in Sierra Leone and gave “use of force” authorization to the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in 1999.¹⁹ UNAMSIL showed the uncertainty that post-Cold War armed conflicts cause civilian victims in internal conflicts, thus bringing human rights to the fore of peacekeeping forces’ concerns. Furthermore, the definition of humanitarian aid also changed because the peace missions’ forces had to wage armed confrontations with combatant parties.

The collapse of states as a result of domestic conflicts constitutes another difficulty for peace operations. The increase in the number and intensity of internal conflicts in the post-Cold War era pushed peace operations to become more and more complex.²⁰ In fact, the problems created by

¹³ Oliver Richmond, “UN Peace Operations and the Dilemmas of the Peacebuilding Consensus”, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2004, pp. 83-101.

¹⁴ Conflict management and conflict resolution are closely interrelated, but at the same time they differ from each other on some points. Conflict management’s objective is to facilitate dispute or conflict without necessarily solving it, whereas conflict resolution’s objective is to resolve it. On the other hand, conflict management is focused at a state level, whereas conflict resolution is on an individual level.

¹⁵ Haldun Yalçinkaya, *Savaş: Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güç Kullanımı (War: The Use of Force in International Relations)* İmge Kitabevi, Ankara, 2008, pp. 353-357.

¹⁶ Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC), United Nations Operation in the Congo.

¹⁷ Nigel D. White, “UN Peacekeeping - Development or Destruction?”, *International Relations*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1994, p. 149.

¹⁸ Thomas R. Mockaitis, “From Counterinsurgency to Peace Enforcement: New Games for Old Games?”, *Peace Operations between War and Peace*, Erwin Schmidl, ed., Frank Cass, London, 2000, pp. 25-26.

¹⁹ UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). SC Res. 1270 of 22 October 1999, accessed 7 March 2009 (<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/315/02/PDF/N9931502.pdf?OpenElement>).

²⁰ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*, United Nations, New York, 1992, pp. 7-9.

failed states and state-built processes led to an expansion of peace operations' scope and content. Basically, second-generation peacekeeping evolved as peace-building, while discussions on third-generation peacekeeping, including peace enforcement, followed the course of the agenda of world politics.²¹ The complexity of peacekeeping during the post-Cold War era also led to the establishment of a new position for peacekeeping command within the UN, as special representatives to the secretary-general replaced military commanders at the helm of such operations.²² As a result of this process, the conduct of second-generation peacekeeping actually moved the contents of the missions from the "virtual" Chapter VI ½ closer to Chapter VII. This is why arms and the presence of peace operations in the field have been in transition from light to heavy.

If the attention is focused on the classification of peacekeeping, two different approaches come to the fore via two prominent international institutions: the UN and NATO. The UN offers four areas for action towards securing peace: preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peacemaking and post-conflict peace building.²³ That is to say, the UN puts these four areas under the umbrella rubric of "peacekeeping". NATO calls peacekeeping a peace support operation, unlike UN terminology. NATO's peace support operations are classified into six types: conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peace building and humanitarian relief.²⁴ The case of the former Yugoslavia, we should note, was the threshold for NATO peace support operations. Due to the necessity for a coercive approach in that situation, NATO, in order to implement the diplomatic wishes of the USA, handed over UNPROFOR as an Implementation Force (IFOR), so that NATO transformed its strategy into one suitable for peacemaking.²⁵

In his 1992 report *An Agenda for Peace*, written after the experiences of Somalia and Bosnia, then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali pointed to the need to improve peacekeeping. Basically, the classification of the UN represents the second generation of peacekeeping. On the other hand, NATO's classification covers peace enforcement, which is closer to the UN Charter's Chapter VII than first- and second-generation peacekeeping operations, which are relatively closer to Chapter VI. It must be noted that peace enforcement has more military objectives than either

²¹ Uğur Güngör, *The Analysis of Turkey's Approach to Peace Operations*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Bilkent University, Ankara, February 2007, p. 77.

²² During the Cold War era, peacekeeping missions used to be mainly military operations, so they were led by military commanders. These commanders received political directions indirectly from UN headquarters. Then when the special representative of the secretary-general (SRSG) position was created, the new generation of peacekeeping missions were placed under their leadership. This move made operations more effective. Alvaro de Soto in Central America, Iqbal Riza in el Salvador, Aldo Ajello in Mozambique and Lakhdar Brahimi in a couple of missions became the first UN personnel to serve in the SRSG posts. Malone, David M and Karin Wermester. 2000. "Boom and Bust? The Changing Nature of United Nations Peacekeeping", *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 7, No. 4, p. 40.

²³ Ghali, *ibid.*

²⁴ *Peace Support Operations*, Allied Joint Publication 3.4.1, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Brussels, 2001.

²⁵ Hilaire McCoubrey and Justin Morris, *Regional Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era*, Kluwer Law International, The Hague, 2000, p. 67-76.

traditional or second-generation peacekeeping. Indeed, peacekeeping and peace enforcement are two different operations. The nature of peacekeeping requires obtaining consent, impartiality and the non-use of force, except for self-defence. Thus it must be emphasized that in the absence of law and order, peacekeeping can be very dangerous not only for the success of the mission but also for the safety of the troops. The changing character of war in the post-Cold War era pushed peacekeeping to transform itself in the 1990s to peace enforcement. In his *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*, Boutros-Ghali recommended keeping the main principles of peacekeeping and also recommended, in case they were needed for enforcement, the establishment of coalitions composed of member states and regional organizations eager to participate.²⁶ His successor at the UN helm, Kofi A. Annan, also reaffirmed this approach in his “Programme for Reform”.²⁷

Counterinsurgency and the New International Environment

The nature of the incidents in the post-Cold War era introduced a new phase in the understanding of conflicts and warfare for states. Although traditional inter-state conflicts and wars have kept their prominent place in states’ security conceptions, counterinsurgency has figured increasingly in states’ agendas. This has been especially true since the 9/11 attacks, as the United States began to wage the so-called “war on terror” and became involved in counterinsurgency operations while tracking down the sources of the terrorist attacks. Although counterinsurgency is not an unfamiliar concept for states and their armed forces, in the historical perspective not all states have relevant experience, and whoever was involved in such warfare had diverse experiences in various forms and levels of intensity with insurgencies that took place in different regions of the world.

Both insurgency and counterinsurgency have gained prominence in contemporary academic studies on international security. Insurgency has been described as an important part of unconventional war or a form of “irregular conflict”²⁸ where conventional government armed forces are confronted with organized weaker adversaries that seek to challenge the security of a state with the aim of taking control of the country.²⁹ In a recent effort to develop a uniform approach for different departments and agencies within its structures, the United States government has defined an insurgency as “the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify or challenge political control of a region”.³⁰ The concept is also defined in the US Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms as “an organized movement

²⁶ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*, 3 January 1995, New York, p. 33, accessed 7 March 2009 (<http://www.un.org/Docs/SG/agsupp.html>).

²⁷ Kofi A. Annan, *Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform*, 14 July 1997, New York, para. 107, accessed 7 March 2009 (<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N97/189/79/IMG/N9718979.pdf?OpenElement>).

²⁸ Harald Havåll, *COIN Revisited: Lessons of the Classical Literature on Counterinsurgency and Its Applicability to the Afghan Hybrid Insurgency*, NUPI Report Security in Practice No. 13, 2008, p. 6.

²⁹ Thomas R. Mockaitis, *Iraq and the Challenge of Counterinsurgency*, Praeger Security International, Westport, 2008, p. 16.

³⁰ *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide*, United States Government Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative, January 2009, p. 6.

aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict”.³¹ In the newly developed common counterinsurgency manual for the US Army and Marine Corps, this definition is referred to and further clarified as “an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control”.³² The British Army’s understanding of the term is “the actions of a minority group within a state, the intent of which is to force political change by means of a mixture of subversion, propaganda and military pressure, aiming to persuade or intimidate the broad mass of people to accept such a change”.³³ From a broader perspective, insurgencies could also be subdivided into those that aim to seize power – revolutionary insurgencies – versus those with more specific aims of separation, autonomy, forcing a policy change, or obtaining concessions.³⁴ Most recently in the conceptualization of insurgency, its scope has been broadened to the widest level through the inclusion of “global insurgency”, a term used to define insurgencies that supersede the national level and have global reach and influence beyond domestic borders. In this context, the existence of external actors and their involvement in the insurgencies also constitute important elements in the course of the insurgencies as well as the shaping of counterinsurgency activities.

Within the scope of insurgency, insurgents may adopt and apply various approaches and methods to achieve their goals, such as terrorism, subversion and irregular warfare. Governments, on the other hand, develop and apply measures to prevent insurgents from succeeding by countering insurgencies. Counterinsurgency involves coping with all types of actors and defeating them before they attain their goals. Government forces’ efforts to keep the insurgents out of power have to cover a wide range of political, social and military grounds. As is apparent from reflections on many counterinsurgency experiences, any monolithic approach that neglects essential parts of the totality of this endeavour will eventually end in failure. It is also important that the decision-makers and implementers of counterinsurgency strategies are aware of their local insurgency’s distinct environmental and population characteristics – features that its members constantly try to exploit to their advantage – and thus they must adopt an approach that takes into account social structures, culture, national values, and state-society relations.³⁵

³¹ US Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, Joint Publication JP1-02, April 2001 (Amended October 2008).

³² *U.S. Army Field Manual FM 3-24 / Marine Corps Warfighting Publication MCWP 3-33.5*, December 2006, 1-1.

³³ *Army Field Manual Vol. 1 Combined Arms Operations: Part 10 Counter Insurgency Operations Strategic and Operational Guidelines*, Army Code 71749, July 2001, A-1-1.

³⁴ Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response*, Strategic Studies Institute, November 2004, p. 2, and *Army Field Manual Vol. 1 Combined Arms Operation*, A-1-1.

³⁵ John Mackinlay and Alison Al-Baddawy, *Rethinking Counterinsurgency*, RAND Counterinsurgency Study, Vol. 5, pp. 7-8.

In the historical context, insurgencies have always been countered by states; however they are defined using different terminologies. Small wars³⁶, Operations Other Than War³⁷, low-intensity conflict, asymmetric wars,³⁸ and revolutionary wars are all part of the language used to define similar phenomenon. Insurgencies came to the forefront in world affairs especially with the emergence of decolonisation and the bipolar Cold War competition in the wake of the Second World War. Old colonial states began to face challenges to their rule in various parts of the world. These challenges and revolutionary movements made use of the Cold War environment, which was conducive to transforming them into insurgencies.

Major Western powers began to encounter major insurgencies in their colonial areas such as the French in Indochina and Algeria or the British in Palestine, Malaya, Cyprus, Aden, Oman and then Northern Ireland, while the Americans were getting involved in Vietnam. The success of Mao Zedong and the communist insurgency in seizing power in China in 1949 and then the changing of the regime in Cuba 10 years later led to an escalation of nationalist and revolutionary movements against colonial rulers that in time became more and more central in international relations. As the insurgencies intensified, governments simply reacted to the circumstances in the field rather than acting in an organised, planned way in blocking the development of insurgencies.

Counterinsurgency operations at that time were performed by regular army personnel who were trained and equipped to fight in conventional wars and often resorted to excessive force in order to succeed. In the post-Second World War period, except for the clear instance of British success in Malaya, in various cases of insurgency, the insurgents in fact accomplished their goals and seized power or were able to continue their efforts. When the Western powers began adapting to the new way of fighting, it was too late to turn back the wave and most engagements ended badly. During this period, a number of Western scholars, many with extensive field experience in dealing with insurgencies, laid the groundwork for counterinsurgency strategies and literature. French army officer David Galula's case studies of counterinsurgency strategies³⁹ as well as

³⁶ The early US armed forces term for the equivalent of today's insurgency operations was "small wars". The collective experiences of the interventions and expeditions of the American Army and Marines in Latin America and the Philippines from 1898 to 1940 can be found in the US Marine Corps' Small Wars Manual. The manual defines "small wars" from the US perspective as "operations undertaken under executive authority, wherein military force is combined with diplomatic pressure in the internal and external affairs of another state whose government is unstable, inadequate or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life and of such interests as are determined by the foreign policy of our Nation". *Small Wars Manual*, US Marine Corps NAVMC 2890, Reprint of 1940 Edition, p. 1. For further analysis of this period and the contents of the manual, see Mockaitis, 2008, pp. 27-34.

³⁷ The British Army uses this term to cover counterinsurgency as well as peacekeeping operations, which in their doctrine evolved to peace-support operations. *The Tactical Handbook for Operations Other Than War*, Army Code 71658, December 1998.

³⁸ The nature of the relationship between governments and insurgents contains an asymmetry, as the insurgents, the weaker side, try to balance their disadvantage by avoiding classical forms of armed conflict with regular armed forces.

³⁹ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, Praeger Security International, Westport, CT, [1964] 2006, and David Galula, *Pacification in Algeria: 1956-1958*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, [1963] 2006.

theoretical work and accounts of insurgencies by British officers such as Frank Kitson⁴⁰ and Robert G. Thomson⁴¹ made important early contributions to the field. The writings and analyses of those authors about the successes and failures of military campaigns against the insurgencies are still considered valuable and continue to be sources of reference in understanding contemporary insurgencies as well as inspiration for developing new counterinsurgency strategies.⁴² In particular, the British success in Malaya against the communist insurgents set an important example showing the need to develop specific strategies including winning over the people, applying effective amounts of force, and means besides military ones.⁴³ Despite the accumulation of experience on the part of Western countries that were involved in counterinsurgencies especially against revolutionary insurgencies⁴⁴, the transfer of these “classical insurgency” experiences to the theatres of modern insurgency was not easily accomplished. The classical environment for insurgencies was relatively plain in comparison to complex contemporary insurgencies. The slowdown of decolonisation and the decrease in revolutionary activities led to a relative decrease in the new insurgencies. Despite the continuation of some longstanding insurgencies, the focus on counterinsurgency approaches was limited and the experience gained from various counterinsurgency campaigns was transferred to new military staff in only a limited fashion.

The post-Second World War era also paved the way for the development and application of the peacekeeping concept in the international arena. Strictly neutral and codified peacekeeping operations with very restricted authorisation to use force had little in common with the counterinsurgency operations of individual states. Despite this divergence, as time passed and the Cold War came to an end, the new international environment led traditional peacekeeping to lose ground in comparison to a peacemaking approach embracing a less limited use of force by international forces under UN mandate. Particularly under circumstances that involve international interventions only to face hostile local reactions, the counterinsurgency experience became more and more relevant as the gap between peacemaking and counterinsurgency rapidly narrowed.

⁴⁰ Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency and Peacekeeping*, Faber and Faber, London, 1971.

⁴¹ Robert Grainget Ker Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*, Hailer Publication, Florida, [1966] 2005.

⁴² Frank Hoffman argues that the most recent version of the US armed forces’ field manual (*FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5, December 2006*) is written in light of the above-mentioned classical counterinsurgency writers, and thus that it merges traditional approaches with contemporary realities which he describes as “neo-classical counterinsurgency”. Frank Hoffman, “Neo-Classical Counterinsurgency?”, *Parameters*, Summer 2007.

⁴³ Mackinlay and Al-Baddawy, pp. 10-12.

⁴⁴ About the learning curve of the US and British armies during their counterinsurgency operations in Malaya and Vietnam, see John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2005.

Afghanistan: Rebuilding the State and the International Involvement

Alexander the Great, the British Empire, and the Soviet Union all fought to win Afghanistan and failed. Thus, Afghanistan earned a reputation as the “graveyard of empires”.⁴⁵ Moreover, although Afghanistan attempted modernization at the beginning of the twentieth century, by the end of it this effort had also failed. Thus, the key word in the history of Afghanistan is “failure”, not only for empires but also for the country itself. Hence, the history of Afghanistan is a dramatic lesson for all actors. This record makes the current situation more critical for the international community – mainly the UN, the West (in particular the US), the NATO allies, as well as Pakistan and other regional actors. The word “failure” has become the nightmare of all the actors that have been working to “build up” the state of Afghanistan since 2001.

Although Afghanistan had suffered from violence since the 1970s, with the beginning of the twenty-first century a new episode began both for Afghanistan and the international community. The 9/11 attacks in the US caused Afghanistan to become the centre of gravity for efforts against global terrorism, as it was a base of the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization, which was responsible for the attacks. This is why, soon after 9/11, the international community unanimously responded to that crisis. On 12 September 2001, the United Nations Security Council expressed “*support for the efforts of the Afghan people to replace the Taliban regime, while condemning for allowing Afghanistan to be used as a base for terrorism and for providing safe haven to Osama bin Laden, and authorized the UN member states -under Chapter VII of the Charter of United Nations- to take appropriate measures to tackle with international terrorism*”.⁴⁶ Resolutions 1373 (28 September 2001) and 1377 (12 November 2001), followed by resolution 1386 (20 December 2001), continued to give support to international efforts to change the situation in Afghanistan.⁴⁷

In addition to the UN, NATO invoked Article 5 for the first time and “declared its solidarity with the United States and pledged its support and assistance” within twenty-four hours of the terrorist attacks.⁴⁸ Besides broad international efforts, the United States led an international coalition that was established to overthrow the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. This coalition cooperated with local opposition forces and entered Kabul with the support of the main opposition Northern Alliance’s militia forces within eight weeks of the start of attacks. Those attempts provoked the dual faces of the Afghanistan effort, including war and the country’s post-Taliban administration. The Coalition Forces waged war against the Taliban under the umbrella of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and an international effort was also simultaneously activated to ensure Afghanistan’s security and development.

On 27 November 2001, the international community and all parties, including Afghan groups opposing the Taliban, gathered in Bonn under UN leadership. At the end of the meeting,

⁴⁵ Milton Bearden, “Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires”, *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2001.

⁴⁶ UNSC Resolution 1368, accessed 14 May 2009 (<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N01/708/55/PDF/N0170855.pdf?OpenElement>).

⁴⁷ Cited on the UN Security Council website; access 14 May 2006 (<http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/2001/sc2001.htm>).

⁴⁸ Adgar Buckley, “Invocation of Article 5: Five years on”, *NATO Review*, Summer 2006 (<http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2006/issue2/english/art2.html>).

participants agreed on the “*Agreement on Provisional Arrangements Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions*” that led to the start of the so-called “Bonn Process”. The Bonn Agreement was endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 1383 on 6 December 2001.

Basically, the document was built on three pillars: political reform, securing the environment, and reconstruction of the country. Under the Bonn Agreement, the Afghan Interim Authority (AIA) was founded and it was decided also that an Emergency Loya Jirga⁴⁹ would be convened within six months in order to establish the Afghan Transitional Authority. As part of the process, the Emergency Loya Jirga would eventually elect a president for the country. Besides that, a Constitutional Loya Jirga would be convened and a new constitution would be adopted within the following eighteen months. At the end of that period, elections were planned to be held in order to establish a relatively stable political environment. All this post-conflict process led by the Bonn Agreement was based on Lakhdar Brahimi’s “light footprint”⁵⁰ approach, as pointed out in his report on “United Nations Peace Operations”.⁵¹

The Bonn Agreement largely consisted of a political framework that stressed the need for security. Initially, Hamid Karzai was designated chairman of the Afghan Interim Authority. Following this appointment, Karzai requested that the UN send forces to Afghanistan on behalf of the authority. In addition to political efforts, security concerns led to the initiation of a Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan as well.

As of December 2001, expectations in Afghanistan were relatively positive. The Taliban regime collapsed and a road map for reconstruction was drawn up. The international community was committed to providing assistance for political reconstruction and security through the UN. As the US-led Coalition Forces were waging war in the field, the efforts of the international community produced the Bonn Agreement. Therefore the Afghan Interim Authority and Karzai gave consent and led the post-conflict operations. In the first phase of the Bonn Process, the Afghan Interim Authority, Emergency Loya Jirga, and Constitutional Loya Jirga worked together and produced a constitutional National Council, a president, and a provincial administration.⁵² This was the political fruit of the Bonn Process in 2001-2005.

⁴⁹ The Pashto phrase “Loya Jirga” means “grand council”. In Afghanistan, the Loya Jirga was originally a Pashtun tradition. Later it spread and was adopted by other ethnic groups. Its function was used to cover the settling of disputes and decision-making on important matters, especially political ones. After the Bonn Process, the Emergency Loya Jirga functioned as the parliament of Afghanistan.

⁵⁰ Lakhdar Brahimi, in his report, pointed to the importance of consent, will and participation of local factions for the domestic and international legitimacy of intervention, so that the international presence could be justified.

⁵¹ For details of the United Nations Peace Operations, see (http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/).

⁵² Moreover, the international community pledged US\$4.7 billion for the first three years of reconstruction at a donors’ conference in Tokyo in January 2002. At the second donors’ conference held in Berlin in March 2003, an additional US\$8.2 billion was pledged for the next three years. At the next major international conference for Afghanistan in London in January 2006, international leaders and donors agreed on a new programme called the “Afghanistan Compact” for the next five years. The compact set

The other pillar of the Bonn Process was security. Security Sector Reform (SSR) was to perform the mission of securing the environment. The SSR process was divided into five areas which would be led by a lead-donor nation; the US would be responsible for military reform, Germany for police reform, the UK for counter-narcotics, Italy for judicial reform, and Japan for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of ex-combatants (DDR) reform.

It could be inferred from the Bonn Agreement that the main goal of the process was the rebuilding of the institutions of the Afghan state. The political and security pillars were planned to help to create the main body of the reconstruction process in Afghanistan. At the end of the Bonn Process, the president was elected; parliament was established and its members were elected; Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees were returned to their homes; and the DDR process advanced and state services had resumed, up to a point.⁵³ The parliamentary elections of 2005 were a milestone in fulfilling the Bonn Process. Therefore it could be argued that the political pillar was in progress while the security sector reform had almost failed. Essentially, soon after the Bonn Process, international military forces (Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan or CFC-A, and the International Security Assistance Force or ISAF) and Afghan security partners (National Directorate of Security, Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police) were dealing with security issues in Afghanistan. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan⁵⁴ (UNAMA) and the lead country, Japan, were dealing with the DDR process, while the US and its partners were working on the establishment of the Afghan National Army (ANA). The international community through its involvement was supposed to create a secure environment in Afghanistan. Its involvement included the DDR activities of the Afghan Militant Forces, i.e. ANA, securing environment by the CFC-A, and security assistance by ISAF with the UN mandate. It should also be noted that the CFC-A has been carrying out Operation Enduring Freedom, whose goal has been to destroy Al-Qaeda, the remnants of the Taliban regime, and the insurgents against the Afghan Interim Authority. The critical point about the operations is that the CFC-A has not been subject to an agreement with the Afghan government.

out benchmarks in areas such as security, economic development and good governance. A further US\$10.5 billion was pledged to assist this programme.

⁵³ Christopher Freeman, "Introduction: Security, Governance and Statebuilding in Afghanistan", *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 2007, p. 1.

⁵⁴ The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) was established by Security Council Resolution 1401 on 28 March 2002. The UNAMA is responsible for fulfilling the UN's obligations in Afghanistan for managing UN humanitarian relief, recovery and reconstruction activities in coordination with the Afghan administration. UNAMA's mandate has been extended several times by the UN Security Council. UNAMA is conceived as an opportunity for the international community to put lessons learned from previous peacekeeping operations into practice. UNAMA is led by the special representative of the secretary-general (SRSG).

ISAF deployed in Afghanistan after the Bonn Agreement under UN Security Council mandate⁵⁵ and under UN command. ISAF I was under British military leadership, and the UN secretary-general appointed Lakhdar Brahimi his senior representative to Afghanistan. The principal tasks of ISAF I were aiding the interim government in developing a security structure, aiding the country's reconstruction, and assisting in developing and training future Afghan security forces. As could be interpreted from its principal tasks, ISAF's mission was planned under the jurisdiction of Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Moreover, the ISAF mission was limited to Kabul and the Bagram Air Base. The reason for limiting the Area of Operation (AoO) was that the US-led military campaign was still ongoing throughout Afghanistan. With the impact of the initial achievements of the Bonn Process, the UNSC in October 2003 gave ISAF the authorization to expand its operations beyond Kabul.⁵⁶ In August 2003 the command of ISAF was also handed over to NATO. It should be pointed out that ISAF is a non-Article 5 operation of the NATO allies. Canada had taken over command as the first NATO ISAF COM. The NATO-led ISAF fulfilled the expansion as of 2006. Therefore the NATO-led ISAF AoO covered all of Afghanistan with around 50,000 troops from 42 countries, including all NATO members and 26 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs).⁵⁷

The innovation of PRTs in Afghanistan made NATO's expansion easier. PRTs are basically small teams of civilian and military units to provide security for aid workers and help reconstruction. PRTs play a key role in supporting the Bonn Agreement in Afghanistan's provinces in three respects: security, reconstruction and political stability. UNAMA and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) constitute the other key actors supporting Afghanistan's reconstruction.

Although the Bonn Process ended with the inauguration of the Constitutional Loya Jirga on 19 December 2005, Afghanistan had a long way to go in terms of establishing governance with all necessary institutions, so the Afghan authorities prepared the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) for this purpose.⁵⁸ Actually, the ANDS was a response to the lack of a specific national plan for reconstruction during the Bonn Process.⁵⁹ On 31 January-1 February 2006, during the Afghan-led London Conference, the ANDS turned into the Afghanistan Compact with the approval of the international community, mainly the donor countries. The Afghanistan Compact entailed the mutual commitment of both Afghanistan and the international community

⁵⁵ As of this writing the UN Security Council has passed nine resolutions related to ISAF, as follows: 1386, 1413, 1444, 1510, 1563, 1623, 1707, 1776 and 1833, accessed 18 May 2009, (http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions.html).

⁵⁶ UNSC Resolution 1510.

⁵⁷ "NATO's Role in Afghanistan", accessed 18 May 2009, (http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_8189.htm). As of May 2009, ISAF consists of around 58,000 troops from 42 countries. (http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/isaf_placemat.pdf).

⁵⁸ Barnett Rubin and Humayun Hamidzada, "From Bonn to London: Governance Challenges and the Future of Statebuilding in Afghanistan", *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 2007, pp. 8-10.

⁵⁹ Sean M. Maloney, "Afghanistan: Perceptions from the Front, 2001-2006", *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 33.

comprising approximately 60 countries.⁶⁰ The Afghanistan Compact had three major pillars: security, governance and development. Ending the lead-nation concept, the compact made it so all efforts in Afghanistan should be implemented by a joint board co-chaired by the UN and the Afghan government.

After the Madrid attacks by Al-Qaeda on 11 March 2004, Spain withdrew from Iraq. This lesson was well received by opposition forces in Afghanistan and affected global resistance to terrorism.⁶¹ In 2006, the counterinsurgency in southern Afghanistan grew due to Pakistan's lack of control of Balochistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA).⁶²

NATO in Afghanistan: Peacekeeping, Stabilization and Counterinsurgency

In the post-Cold War era, with the disappearance of the imminent Soviet threat, NATO's role and relevance began to be questioned. NATO's *raison d'être* as a collective security organisation was based on the existence of a solid source of threats to the safety of the West in particular. As circumstances changed, the Alliance felt the need to adopt and develop strategies to remain the core source of security for its members. However, this process has been long and incomplete. The evolving international environment basically changed the character of the sources of threats to international peace and security. The strategies and means to cope with conventional sources of threats have become inadequate and irrelevant. The possibility of massive warfare between two major Cold War blocs disappeared, and this made NATO's massive conventional defensive capabilities less relevant in the contemporary security environment. The new sources of instability and threats to international security emerged and necessitated new approaches and strategies for NATO members in facing challenges. The sources of those threats became geographically broadened and encompassed the wider North Atlantic area. This brought together discussions about the future of the Alliance on whether it should "go out of area or go out of business" in line with NATO's transformation, which has yet to be agreed on by all its members, including the issue of the scope of international involvement such as stability operations and wider peacekeeping missions.⁶³ In this sense, Afghanistan became the decisive test case for the Alliance, paving the way for NATO members to participate in an international mission definitely "out of area" and beyond a simple defensive role. It has also been further argued that the Alliance's credibility is at stake, taking into account that NATO is extending and deepening its responsibility in order to respond to the new security threats to its members as well as the global international order.

For NATO, deployment in Afghanistan means dealing with a different kind of conflict, one apparently much more complicated than it seems. Executing a stabilisation operation in Afghanistan and getting even more involved by participating in actual fighting on the ground is

⁶⁰ For the full text of the "Afghanistan Compact", UNAMA official website, accessed 18 May 2009, see <http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/AfghanistanCompact-English.pdf>.

⁶¹ Maloney, *ibid*, p. 36.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 40.

⁶³ Mats Berdal and David Ucko, "NATO at 60", *Survival*, Vol. 51, No. 2, pp. 59-65. For the "go out of area or go out of business" quote, see the end note no. 7, p. 74.

different than NATO's previous experiences in the Balkans.⁶⁴ It is the insurgency in the field that is challenging the Allies, as they were ready to fight conventional wars in the North Atlantic area.

It is also different in that US involvement in Afghanistan is an important factor for the Allies being in the field. It was the attacks that were aimed at the US that brought the Alliance to the region. Although the US initially succeeded in toppling Afghanistan's Taliban administration by gathering and leading a coalition for this purpose within the framework of Operation Enduring Freedom, over time, with the worsening of the country's security situation, NATO forces became more and more indispensable to the Americans. Stability could not be sustained in Afghanistan after the changing of the regime, due to the lag in channelling necessary financial means to build a viable state and the lack of security forces to ensure safety in all parts of the country. Both were basically caused by the changes in US priorities when Iraq replaced Afghanistan as the most urgent issue American leaders felt they had to deal with. Iraq took up almost all the necessary funding and US forces which were essential to help stabilise Afghanistan. At this point, NATO Allies' increasing contributions to the ongoing mission in Afghanistan became essential for the US, while the security situation was getting worse, as Taliban forces increased and widened their insurgency activities. By 2006, the US wanted to share the burden of fighting the insurgency with other NATO members. This would necessitate the expansion of NATO's role in Afghanistan, which concentrated on stabilisation through reconstruction and development activities in selected areas of the country within the ISAF framework, to the counterinsurgency, a change which narrowed the gap between the NATO mission and Operation Enduring Freedom.

By October 2006 ISAF's expansion throughout Afghanistan ended and the military command structure of international military forces in Afghanistan substantially changed. Under NATO's new operation plan, the command of Operation Enduring Freedom and NATO ISAF merged, while both of them continued to have separate mandates and missions. The mission of Operation Enduring Freedom is counterterrorism, whereas ISAF's is a non-Article 5 operation. In fact, ISAF's mission is to assist and support the Afghan government in creating a secure environment in the country for stability and development. At the end of 2005, ISAF had a larger footprint in Afghanistan with new PRTs, new regional commands, enhanced training support, and additional troops throughout the country. Hence, ISAF expanded to the entire country in 2006.

On the other hand, the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police (ANP) have been emerging since SSR was in process. As of 2009, the ANA reached 80,000 troops and ANP also reached 80,000 policemen with the mentor support of the international community. Both the ANA and ANP have weaknesses that they must address in order to take over the security burden from ISAF. These weaknesses include the corruption of the ANP, lack of ANA troops, and a shortage of trainers and mentors for both.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ While all NATO members participate in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, not all NATO members participated in the NATO operations in the Balkans, as during Operation Allied Force towards Kosovo in March 1999. For more information on Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia, see Burak Tangör, *Avrupa Güvenlik Yönetişimi (European Security Governance)*, Ankara, Seçkin Yayınevi, 2008, pp. 112-114, 128-131, and 147-149.

⁶⁵ Jason Campbell, Michael O'Hanlon and Jeremy Shapiro, "Assessing Counterinsurgency and Stabilization Missions", *Policy Paper No. 14*, April 2009, p. 21.

Despite ISAF's expansion, merging the command of the international military forces in Afghanistan, as well as the evolving Afghan security partners, the security environment has been worsening since 2006. 2008 was the worst year for operations. In 2008 both ISAF force strength and security incidents increased respectively by 37% and 33%. Moreover, civilian casualties increased by some 40-56%, while ISAF/OEF casualties also rose 37%. It must be noted that the 28% increase in Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) also resulted in an increase of ANSF deaths of up to 6%.⁶⁶ It must also be mentioned that 70% of security incidents occurred in the south and south-eastern parts of country that border Pakistan.

In line with its increasing role and activities in Afghanistan, NATO has been facing some problems. First, despite the necessities of the expanding role, there was no clear consensus among the Allies over what role NATO should play in Afghanistan and which responsibilities it should assume within the ISAF mandate. This reflects a "strategic ambiguity" due to apparent differences over either, on one hand, limiting NATO activities to wider peacekeeping based on stabilisation efforts through reconstruction and development or, on the other hand, to counterinsurgency activities by doing the actual fighting, which actually signified a "two-tier alliance".⁶⁷ The differences among the Allies concerning NATO responsibilities in Afghanistan led to a "coalition of the willing"-type of support within the Alliance itself. NATO members that support the idea of an ever-expanding role of NATO and ISAF in Afghanistan began to increase their presence and get involved in counterinsurgency operations. In contrast, some NATO members are reluctant in their approach to changing the character of NATO's involvement, as their understanding is shaped by the idea of a limited role to play. This mainly results from public balking at the prospect of fallen soldiers as well as the image of fighting wars for American global ambitions rather than helping the stabilisation of a failed state that otherwise could jeopardise international peace and security and eventually threaten their security. Each NATO member that sends troops to the field in Afghanistan stipulates the roles and extent of their contribution as well as under which circumstances they take responsibility. Through specific caveats, the various Allies define the limits of their deployment and involvement, and basically specify their "don'ts". Who will hunt down terrorists, or trace opium producers, or sweep for mines or not, is up to individual NATO members taking part in the ISAF mission. In this sense, there is no unity in the contents or scale of the responsibilities that Allies take within the ISAF mandate.

In addition to the differences in the Allies' commitments, there is also the fact that not all NATO members have the experience and the capacity to fight insurgencies. A limited number of ISAF contributors have previous counterinsurgency experience, and the experience they have has to be adapted to the new and transforming circumstance in the field in Afghanistan. NATO countries have experience in peacekeeping from previous missions, which helps them apply the strategy of ensuring security along with reconstruction and development, but fighting an insurgency in most cases is not what their forces trained, or are ready, for. ISAF forces try to achieve stability and development in Afghanistan though utilising PRTs in the field by enabling security and development (including governance and reconstruction) in a wider peace enforcement

⁶⁶ Afghanistan Report 2009, NATO, p. 9.

⁶⁷ Julianne Smith and Michael Williams, "What Lies Beneath: The Future of NATO through the ISAF Prism", RUSI, 31 March 2008, pp. 1-2.

perspective. The relationship between security and reconstruction is mutual and considered essential for success, similar to the counterinsurgency strategy that adopts a clear-hold-build approach to be successful in the field. However, direct confrontation and the scope of the use of force as part of combat against insurgents draws a difference between stabilisation-oriented wider peace enforcement and counterinsurgency missions. Thus, besides commitment, capable, equipped and trained forces are necessary for counterinsurgency operations in a theatre as difficult and dangerous as Afghanistan. The experience of Afghanistan shows the need to develop a coordinated institutional capability if NATO is to continue to focus its attention on dealing with insurgencies.

NATO clearly identifies Afghanistan as its “key priority”⁶⁸ and establishes a direct link between the stability and security of Afghanistan and the surrounding region and its members’ security.⁶⁹ The ever-more-complex insurgency necessitates a comprehensive, well-organised and implemented NATO strategy towards Afghanistan. In this context, NATO defines its guiding principles in its approach towards Afghanistan as: long-term commitment, support for the Afghan leadership, a comprehensive approach that brings together civil and military approaches, and regional engagement.⁷⁰ Despite the references to supporting each other in sharing the burden in Afghanistan and providing maximum possibility of use of their forces by the ISAF commander as parts of ISAF’s Strategic Vision, the stability-related challenges in Afghanistan illustrate the necessity for NATO members to develop a more harmonious and integrated strategy in order to cope with the challenges.

Counterinsurgency is a multidimensional phenomenon. In this context, ensuring security and sustaining it with military means along with providing the basic needs of the people would pave the way for winning the “hearts and minds” of the people. Without the support of the people, neither foreign forces nor international aid can be successful alone. The legitimacy of the foreign presence in the eyes of the locals and the support of local actors in countering the insurgency are crucial components of successful counterinsurgency. Accordingly, especially in the case of Afghanistan, where a strong scepticism towards the presence of foreigners – in particular foreign military forces – exists, it is essential to establish some form of legitimacy in the country. The role that local forces play in the counterinsurgency engenders less hostility and more support from the locals. In this sense, the role that the ANA and the Afghan National Police Force play in counterinsurgency emerges as just as vital as the NATO and ISAF contribution in the formation of those forces to help the country create the capability to ensure stability through local means.

The insurgency in Afghanistan is closely tied to the state of affairs of the region, and in particular Pakistan. Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants use the harsh conditions and difficult terrain in the border areas between Afghanistan and Pakistan to their advantage. They also use adjacent Pakistani areas which fall outside the direct control of the Pakistani state (the Federally Administered Tribal Areas) as sanctuaries where they get protection, material supplies, and new militants. Border security is a very important part of the counterinsurgency in terms of the

⁶⁸ NATO, ISAF’s Strategic Vision, 3 April 2008.

⁶⁹ North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg / Kehl, “Summit Declaration on Afghanistan”, 4 April 2009.

⁷⁰ NATO, ISAF’s Strategic Vision, 3 April 2008.

infiltration of militants, illegal arms and drug trafficking, and the functioning of NATO supply lines that are vital for the continuation of the ISAF mission and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Conclusion

Changes in the sources and nature of the threats in the post-Cold War environment have created new challenges for states. Traditional approaches and conventional strategies that were designed or invented after the Second World War kept their relevance with relatively limited revisions and adjustments until the end of the Cold War. In this process, individual states as well as international organisations had to face new challenges.

The concept of peacekeeping, though it maintained prominence in longstanding unresolved conflicts, grew inadequate in its conventional form and existing features in coping with ever-more-complex threats to international peace and security. Parties in international conflicts became diversified as more and more non-state actors began to gain influence within national borders and make their impact felt beyond those borders. During this period, the circumstances that necessitated peacekeeping operations influenced the way such operations were formed and used as a response to contingencies. Peace operations had to be more aggressive in terms of resorting to force in order to respond to new security threats. Furthermore, ensuring stability began to require being involved in actions against insurgencies as well. In this context, elements of counterinsurgency and a wider use of force came to be seen as more relevant in peace operations, along with reconstruction and development activities. As conflicts grew more complex, the contribution of counterinsurgency methods along with more traditional features of peacekeeping operations began to be applied as part of wider stabilisation efforts in the field.

Today Afghanistan represents one of the world's most complex conflict zones. International involvement in Afghanistan aims to help the country survive, stabilise and develop. The presence of two military structures, the US-led Coalition Forces and the NATO-led ISAF, makes international efforts more complicated though not necessarily more effective. Despite the merging of the military command structures of the two forces, the security situation has not drastically improved. On the contrary, the constantly deteriorating situation since 2003 has not presented a hopeful picture. The international commitment to Afghanistan represented by the NATO-led ISAF operations thus focused its attention particularly on building up the security sector. The Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police have been the central bodies in security planning, but these institutions have been unable to ensure peace and security in Afghanistan without the international military presence. As local contributors to security remained relatively limited in comparison to the Coalition Forces and ISAF, the chances of successfully countering the insurgency also remain miniscule. NATO is not losing a war in Afghanistan, as it is not engaged in war in the classical sense. However, NATO should not lose the peace that it trying to help to build and sustain there.

By deploying its forces in Afghanistan, NATO has assumed a serious responsibility. NATO not only went "out of area", but also expanded the features of its involvement to an increasingly offensive role. However, as NATO has not revised its Strategic Concept since 1999, the approach to issues such as Afghanistan and strategies for dealing with insurgencies has not been directly addressed by the Alliance. As the result of the ambiguity in NATO's approach to Afghanistan due

to the divergences among the Allies, NATO projects an image of both indecisiveness and diversity. As the situation in the field gets worse in line with the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan as well as neighbouring Pakistan, which itself has been vexed by an emerging insurgency, NATO has to develop a firm strategy to follow, one agreed upon by all its members.

At this critical juncture, the Allies should decide whether NATO will get more involved with peace support operations or retain a position of limited engagement in “out of area” crises and conflicts. If NATO members opt for further commitments to deal with international security problems, then there will be a need to create crucial tools to deal with various armed conflicts and extending counterinsurgency operations with a full commitment to the use of force. In this context, NATO should also harmonise the members’ approaches and capacities when they agree to get involved, as peace operations edge closer to counterinsurgency operations, as in Afghanistan. If NATO members fail to come to common terms with this, then they should at least draw clear boundaries for any NATO involvement and stick to them in order to get support for NATO operations and maintain credibility in the eyes of potential adversaries.

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