

# **AN "AFGHAN" COORDINATION UNIT IS A MANDATORY STRUCTURE FOR NATO SUCCESS**

## **Executive Summart**

Lessons learned in the stabilizing of Afghanistan will extend to many of the global problems facing us today. For this reason the expertise gained in Afghanistan will not just become lost in NATO operational strategies but they will become major opportunities within all of the participating NATO countries.

All operations **especially military** of a sophisticated manner require the full identification and analysis of each of the problems affecting the given theatre of operations. Detailed planning to address each of the problems must cover the full range of required resources through to the proposed actions. The proposed actions must be conducted and monitored in a manner that any one will not conflict with any other and reduce the effectiveness of the whole. Full flexibility is required to enable alterations and compensations to be made without disruption of the final objectives.

Therefore the first step towards this planning must be taken in the context of the overall NATO Operations. **The author recommends that the Afghan Unit be an integral component within NATO operations in Afghanistan. This must be clearly communicated to the Afghan partners early on and must be an essential part of the plan.** The necessary expertise and commitments must first be structured within NATO. However, if the operations are to be successful, Afghanistan must be able to carry on the total functions within the final solutions that are obtained.

**A Coordination and Information Agency, with an Afghan Coordination Unit as an integral part of it, is essential if the NATO Comprehensive Approach for Afghanistan is to be successful.**

NATO's "Comprehensive Approach" for Afghanistan takes on board all attributes – military, political, social etc. – of a plan to bring peace and development to the country and region. But it is not assured of acceptance by the general public.

To address the shortfall, a Coordination and Information Agency for Afghanistan should be set up, in parallel with or overlapping the Comprehensive Approach. The Agency would include all the international and foreign national interests involved in the Approach, as well as representation

of all influential Afghan bodies. As such it will have high level intelligence assessment and planning capability in respect of every aspect and every problem important to the people of Afghanistan. It must be so structured as to be able to "Obtain, Commit and Command" resources when and as needed without delay.

The Afghan Coordination Unit should be set up as an integral part of the Agency.

The committed involvement of the UN Agencies, NATO, and the European Commission, as well as the regional organizations, in the creation of the Afghan Coordination Unit is the most important measure to insure the application of the Comprehensive Approach.

The Unit would be ideally placed to serve as the centre for coordination of data and modelling efforts, which can then best guarantee the acceptability of the Comprehensive Approach process. The Unit should be established with the mandate to coordinate both ongoing and new programs concerning security, corruption, narcotics, poverty, education, environmental issues ... etc.

The Afghan Coordination Unit should also establish the social groundwork for confidence building in order to enable the Comprehensive Approach to evolve into an Afghan approach... as the international military presence diminishes and is eventually withdrawn. **The ownership should be Afghan, not Western.** As such, it will be most easily adopted and adapted within the Afghan culture. This is the prerequisite to enable it to grow and become successful. It is mandatory to have an Afghan approach to solving the Afghan problems as they are perceived by the Afghan people.

First of all, the expertise to identify and obtain the needed financial and other resources is needed. The development and building of many of the resources, especially the Technological and Educational Resources, could be best performed in a secure environment within a dedicated and competent country first. Then it embodies necessary to "crash courses" for the implementers and users of the resources. It would be very easy and flexible to gradually train and replace the non-nationals with Afghans as conditions improve.

Within the Afghan Coordination Unit, the first step in planning will be the recognition, identification, and quantification of all the problems. The proposed solutions and infrastructures necessary to address each can then be developed. This is the hard battle that will also involve the military and security personnel. Procedures and actions will then follow. The needs of the Afghan people cannot be ignored within each of the areas/zones. Both of these require a battle plan for all aspects of the forces affecting Afghanistan, inside and out. The appropriate personnel then need to be placed into that matrix. Otherwise, conditions can easily deteriorate as they will be constantly changing.

Taking into account that Afghanistan has an excellent chance to become a "Play Ground" for some foreign interests to train a few troops and gain some needed expertise, we need to give continual **priority** attention to long-term agendas and not ignore either the seriousness or complexity of the problems.

The Comprehensive Approach requires recognizing what is required for the "Total Package", rather than solutions aimed at a single class of problems. Educational Resources, suitable for broad applications, will address many of the needs of the Afghan people as well as others' needs. Broad applications of the newest technologies will facilitate significant changes in personnel and positions if the need is required. The Military and Security needs are another class of problems. To be successful, a third category - cross-border and other third-party problems - must be integrated into the planning. This last can require serious inputs and actions from the intelligence agencies of many countries.

But there is also one additional problem which we should discuss.

**That is NATO itself.** As NATO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero – at the GLOBSEC Conference in Bratislava, Slovakia 17 Jan 08 - identified in his presentation, there are "the great differences" among the participating nations.

Within this are many problems:

1. There is always the tendency to have to change personnel. This inevitably breaks both the chain of thought and the ongoing action, and can undermine the entire effort across a broad theater.

2. This may be mitigated by interactive technology that can provide an infrastructure and methodology to maintain the organization and function across many types of problems that otherwise would disrupt the system.
3. Each individual nation and its team will be functioning with its own languages and operation procedures (even though many of these procedures will be within NATO guidelines and standards). Each of the functions must therefore be monitored to such a level that as individuals are moved new personnel can immediately resume the function. The records should be easily translatable into other languages so that there is complete uniformity across the entire operation.
4. The next most important requirement will be to have competent staff in remote locations who can provide supporting expertise. These individuals will have been involved in planning and review of the ongoing operations.

Provided the documentation describing the specific operation and the individual responsibility is full and up-to-date, the interactive technology used will enable the entire theater of operations, within and outside of Afghanistan, to be immediately available for review at several levels; and even major impacts to any one of the activities will not disrupt either the operation or the system.

### **Local communities:**

The Comprehensive Approach requires that Afghan local communities should be used to the fullest possible extent. Major public entities such as mosques, madrasas, universities, civil society institutions and industry groups are often better suited than government to suggest innovative measures, carry out analyses, and implement elements of the Afghan Coordination Unit.

Forums should be established as a way for modellers to gather periodically to discuss and criticize each other's work. Such forums would provide a means for good work to be recognized, as well as an avenue for advancement of the modelling process; these Forums can supplement and strengthen the government's capabilities to make meaningful projections.

## **Public Awareness:**

Promoting better understanding of the problem (including the environmental problems) among the Afghan public can help build the necessary public climate for NATO to work. But, important as it is to inform the public of what NATO is trying to do over the long term, information alone is not enough. The public must also take an active part in the process of finding solutions. This participation is also important to the global community.

The solutions found for Afghanistan are important to all nations in both maintaining their stability and recognizing the problems that can threaten that stability. It is essential to maintain the level of public interest and support for the far-reaching and long-term actions, which are needed, to alter present trends.

An additional effective means of increasing public awareness and expanding thought and discussion on the Comprehensive Approach would be to plan for a series of major international and national conferences devoted to the issues of security, corruption, narcotics, poverty, and societal development towards a sustainable Future. Population issues and family planning, within the context of resources, must not be ignored. Development should improve everyone's position and quality of life.

The Afghan "Conferences" should involve comprehensive national participation of:

1. All relevant government agencies;
2. Members of Afghan parliament;
3. Representatives from local Communities;
4. Jehadi leaders and Commanders;
5. Mullahs and religious Scholars;
6. Other Prominent Society Leaders

The Afghan conferences could be prepared by the Afghan Coordination Unit under the guidance of the Afghan government, NATO, UN, EU, and other international bodies.

The Conferences could arrange first hand reports, conduct hearings through the local representatives around the country, and engage in other appropriate activities to stimulate debate on the many different but connected issues.

## **Conclusion:**

The active, effective involvement of UN agencies, NATO and EU Commission as well as the regional organizations in creation of the Afghan Coordinating Unit is certainly the most important measure to insure the application of the Comprehensive Approach.

The Afghan Coordination Unit will provide support and, finally, solution for NATO to carry out its mission in shaping both Afghanistan's future and the future of the region.

What the Comprehensive Plan and **Coordination and Information Agency with an Afghan Coordination Unit develops and implements** for Afghanistan can be applicable to many other NATO missions in the future.

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