



Swedish Committee  
for Afghanistan

CONFERENCE DOCUMENTATION

# AFGHANISTAN'S ROAD TO **SELF-RELIANCE**

What has been done and what can be done better?

**STOCKHOLM DECEMBER 8-9 2016**

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

**THIS REPORT IS MEANT TO PROVIDE** the reader with a full description of the subjects and topics presented and discussed at the International Conference of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan that took place in Stockholm on December 8–9, 2016, with the title “Afghanistan’s Road to Self-Reliance: What has been done and would can be done better?”

This report includes the text of every speaker, either as per their manuscript or as per a transcription of their video recording. The transcriptions have been supplemented with carefully checking the notes taken by the assigned rapporteurs if there were any ambiguities con-

cerning the recording. The panel debate is reflected by themes, based on transcribed recordings. The round table discussions were not recorded on tape, as they were under Chatham House Rule. Instead, they are based on careful notes taken by rapporteurs, and subsequently reviewed by the moderators. The question and answer sessions were recorded on video and have been edited when needed to be more reader-friendly.

*February 2017*

Editor: Bengt Kristiansson

Assistant editors: Viktor Johansson and Lena Lindberg

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**THE SWEDISH COMMITTEE** for Afghanistan would like to thank all participants for making this conference a success, no one mentioned and no one forgotten. We are grateful for all contributions to discussions in plenary, in round table groups, and in the corridors. We trust that you found the conference constructive, providing ideas for new perspectives in the future.

Our special thanks go to the moderators of the round table discussions, who volunteered to take charge of this task.

We appreciate the funding from the Folke Bernadotte Academy and the Swedish Postcode Lottery that made the conference possible.

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ANNA-KARIN JOHANSSON &amp; KRISTER HOLM

# PREFACE

**DURING THE LAST 40 YEARS**, the actions of the outside world, including both Afghanistan's neighbouring countries and the wider international community, have had an enormous impact on the development of the country. This has particularly been the case since 2001, when a massive international operation was launched, which included politics/diplomacy, military operations and development cooperation.

We know that the policies of donor countries such as Sweden and other OECD countries have a great and significant impact on the development and poverty reduction of countries such as Afghanistan. We also know that coherence between actions in different policy areas, such as security and aid, are necessary for avoiding making things worse instead of making things better. But just how widespread has this type of knowledge been among actors in Afghanistan? And how has it been used in practice?

This was one of many questions SCA wanted to discuss and analyse at the international conference held in Stockholm in December of 2016. SCA wanted to examine which lessons may be learned from this 15-year-long presence, both for future operations in Afghanistan as well as in other countries. Could the experiences from Afghanistan contribute to creating policies that lead to more effective operations with regard to preventing ongoing conflicts from escalating and instead strengthening people's security and increasing their quality of life?

In order to include as much experience and knowledge as possible, SCA invited experts, decision-makers, opinion leaders and other knowledgeable individuals, as well as

representatives from the studies carried out in Denmark and Norway in 2016. The plan was that the experiences of the Swedish government's Afghanistan Inquiry<sup>1</sup> were also to be presented at the conference. As the report of this inquiry has been postponed, however, the conclusions reached could not be integrated into the conference. Nevertheless, various Swedish actors were present at the conference and presented their experiences.

Prior to the conference, SCA had also released the documents "Concerning the Swedish and International Operations in Afghanistan 2001–2014: An SCA Perspective"<sup>2</sup> and "Beyond Incidents: SCA's Experience on Civilian-Military Interaction and Consequences of the Military Intervention on Aid Delivery"<sup>3</sup>, which were submitted to the Swedish inquiry.

So, did the two days of round table discussions, panel debates and presentations at the conference result in ideas as to how future operations are to become better at promoting peace and preventing conflicts?

According to a decision in the Swedish Parliament, if achieving an equitable and sustainable development is to be possible, it is fundamental that political decisions are made on the basis of a rights perspective and from a perspective of poor people. These two perspectives and the importance of coherence between different policy areas should form the basis of all policies and activities. The Swedish Parliament made this decision already in 2003<sup>4</sup>, namely on May 15, 2003, when it adopted the Swedish Policy for Global Development. A parliamentary commission, which was appointed in December 1999, drafted the proposal.<sup>5</sup>

1. Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2015:02

2. [https://daif2gzpdpb6l.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/media/slutgiltig\\_oversattning\\_-\\_utvardering\\_av\\_sv\\_insatser\\_i\\_afghanistan\\_sak\\_2016-03-11.pdf](https://daif2gzpdpb6l.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/media/slutgiltig_oversattning_-_utvardering_av_sv_insatser_i_afghanistan_sak_2016-03-11.pdf)

3. [sak.se/sites/default/files/sca\\_study\\_on\\_attitudes\\_to\\_imf.pdf](http://sak.se/sites/default/files/sca_study_on_attitudes_to_imf.pdf)

4. Shared Responsibility: Sweden's Policy for Global Development (PGU prop. 2002/2003:122).

5. Dir. 1999:80

In December 2001, a letter from the United Kingdom was sent to the Swedish government with a request to send troops and participate in the International Force in Afghanistan (ISAF). On January 18, 2002, the Swedish government decided to send troops for a maximum period of 6 months. The two parties praised one another for the quick process. Later that same year, on November 14, a new proposal<sup>6</sup> was issued, requesting that Parliament should vote in favour of a further extension. This urgent process took place only five months before Parliament decided on the Policy for Global Development.

But did the fast process really deserve praise? Is it not possible that the billions of kronor later used in Afghanistan could have been put to better use had the continuing decision-making process been based on the newly acquired knowledge that resulted in the decision concerning the Policy for Global Development? Would it not have been suitable to make the process more in-depth and ask what the problems and the needs of the Afghan people really looked like? Which national, concrete and measurable objectives should have guided the operation?

Or were the objectives already set, even though they were not publicly stated, as that would have been too sensitive? The Norwegian evaluation points in this direction. It notes that the first and primary objective of Norway was to support the American operation and contribute to securing the continued relevance of NATO. All in all, the commission found that Norway achieved this goal. Norway was a good ally.

The second objective of the Norwegian operation was to help combat international terrorism by preventing Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for international terrorism. According to the Norwegian evaluation, this was only partially achieved. The Taliban in 2016 control large parts of Afghanistan and violent groups acting at the international level are making headlines throughout the world.

The third objective was to help build a stable and democratic Afghan state through long-term development cooperation and peace diplomacy. This objective has not been achieved. And it was never at the centre stage of the operation. A general experience from the operation in Afghanistan is that development activities had to be adapted according to diplomatic, political and military considerations. It was for instance stated by one of the keynote speakers at the conference that the United States never intended for the hundreds of billions of dollars spent to be used for supporting Afghanistan in becoming

a well-governed and prosperous state. The only reason why the United States got engaged was to prevent terrorists from attacking the United States, and this objective took precedence over every other objective.

The conference participants confirmed this in different ways. Many comments and statements, in presentations and in round table discussions, argued that the Norwegian evaluation had shown something important. If the international community had wanted to promote peace and development in Afghanistan, it would have needed to base this on clear goals, consistency, coordination and adapting to the Afghan context. Instead, security interests above all came to set the development agenda, and this was reflected in the results. High-ranking participants argued that Afghanistan has been one of the most twisted and distorted aid economies in the world.

Despite these distortions and international security interests setting the development agenda, the Afghan people have worked hard and, with support from foreign aid that has actually been effective, have managed to get 8.7 million pupils enrolled in school. This is to be compared to 2001, when an estimated 1 million children attended school. Women and girls were almost completely excluded from educational opportunities. Today 36 percent are girls.<sup>7</sup> The maternal mortality rate has also fallen drastically. A lot has also been achieved by the Afghan people regarding health and education.

However, in many ways, the conference's overall assessment of the 15-year-long operation was very critical. There are many lessons to be learned. The question now is how these experiences may be used constructively in the future. The conference, and this report, is an attempt to openly and systematically account for both progress and setbacks.

The conference documentation shows that the conference participants helped increase our knowledge of what was lacking in Afghanistan. Now is the time to go forward and find methods ensuring that decision processes concerning similar operations, and concerning future operations in Afghanistan, are based on and guided by the vision of the Global Goals (Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030) that address the root causes of poverty and the universal need for development that works for all people.<sup>8</sup> If all of us involved in development work in Afghanistan get better at this, we will definitely be one step closer to SCA's vision of an Afghanistan free from poverty, violence and discrimination, and where the Afghan people have control over their own development and over their own lives. •

6. 2002/2003:21

7. [www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan/overview](http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan/overview)

8. [www.af.undp.org/content/afghanistan/en/home/post-2015/sdg-overview.html](http://www.af.undp.org/content/afghanistan/en/home/post-2015/sdg-overview.html)

MAP OF

# AFGHANISTAN

PROVINCES AND MAJOR CITIES



Full name	<b>Islamic Republic of Afghanistan</b>
Regime	<b>Constitutional democracy with National Unity Government</b>
Head of State	<b>President Ashraf Ghani &amp; Chief Executive Officer Abdallah Abdallah</b>
Population	<b>31.3 million</b>
Area	<b>652,230 sq. km</b>
GNI per capita	<b>1,885</b>
Median age	<b>17.0</b>
National poverty line	<b>35.8%</b>
Human Development Index ranking (2015)	<b>171 out of 188</b>
People in need of humanitarian aid (2017)	<b>9.3 million</b>

BENGT KRISTIANSSON

# A SUMMARIZING SURVEY

## THE SCA 2016 CONFERENCE

**SCA AIMED AT TAKING STOCK** of the ongoing studies and evaluations by three Scandinavian governments in countries that had participated in various interventions in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014. A conference requires time for preparation and circumstances change in the meantime. One of the countries, Sweden, decided to delay the evaluation (called the Inquiry) and, accordingly, it had not been published at the time of the conference. However, four contributors to the inquiry presented their respective view, namely the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Armed Forces, Sida and SCA. The “Collection of Experiences” commissioned by the government of Denmark was reported, as was the full-fledged evaluation by the government of Norway. Could “lessons to be learnt from these 15 years” be discerned, as it was hoped by SCA? And could any conclusions be drawn and recommendations made for the future?

Certainly, many will agree with Paal Hilde’s description on where we are for the time being: “Despite over 15 years of international effort, the situation in Afghanistan remains discouraging. Militant Islamist groups still have a foothold in parts of the country and the Taliban are stronger than at any time since 2001. Ongoing hostilities continue to undermine the potential for economic and

social development, threaten to reverse whatever progress has been achieved, and weaken the opportunity to build a stable, functioning, democratic government.”

However, substantial progress was also recalled. Fahim Hakim reported that “For the last 15 years, Afghanistan has experienced various achievements in terms of people’s civil and political rights, access to education and health, economic growth and development schemes. In particular statistics on girls’ access to education (around 4 out of 9 million) and access to health (between 70–80%) and a quite significant decrease in the number of maternal and child mortality rates are promising.” And Afghanistan “conducted 8 rounds of presidential, parliamentary, and provincial council elections. Women’s participation in all elections was quite unique, displaying active roles and an interest of women in support of democratic processes.”

And Habiba Sarabi specifically expressed progress concerning women: “Since the establishment of an elected democratic government, women have been appointed and elected as ministers, governors, mayors and parliamentarians. Our progress in the military and police has been modest. As I am talking to you today, we have 4



female ministers, 9 female deputy ministers, 4 female ambassadors, with one more to be appointed soon and one female governor, 69 MPs out of 249, 22 senators, and 296 provincial council members, one deputy and two female advisors to the High Peace Council out of 17 on the Executive Board.”

### **TAKING STOCK OF THE EVALUATIONS**

It was emphasized that each of the three Scandinavian countries with recent or ongoing studies represented at the conference was a small marginal contributor to the entire intervention. “The Norwegian engagement was a very small piece in a very large puzzle. ... The US was by far the largest, both militarily and in amount of aid”, reported Hilde, and continued “The Norwegian forces were part of an international effort and international military strategy. Norway’s primary strategic objective was to contribute.”

Similar statements were expressed from the Danish and Swedish counterparts. No Scandinavian country thought that either of them by themselves could change the situation or developments in Afghanistan. The US dominance, with ISAF and NATO as tools for the intervention, clearly appeared in the Norwegian evaluation. Norway had three overarching objectives in Afghanistan: to support the United States and NATO, to help combat international terror, and to help build a stable and democratic Afghan state. By and large, the evaluators found that Norway had achieved the first goal. Norway had been a good ally – to the US and to NATO. The second objective had only been partially achieved. While the Taliban have a national agenda, the “War on Terror” was not only controversial, but failed to rid Afghanistan of international groups such as al-Qaida and the so-called Islamic State. And the third objective had not been reached. Afghanistan’s formal democratic institutions are fragile and the war continues. “The Commission draws a number of conclusions as to why Norway – and the international community – failed to reach these objectives. The conclusions include that the objectives and approaches employed were at times internally inconsistent or contradictory. Security considerations drove the agenda for state-building and development aid. The international coalition’s strategy for combatting terror and insurgency prioritized short-term security goals. The choice to include former warlords in the new Afghan regime undermined the state-building project. International actors often became part of local power struggles they did not understand and could not influence, and thus contributed to abuse of power and corruption. [...] The emphasis placed on democratic elections was important for the international legitimacy of the state-building project. However, the increasing and extensive fraud that neither local nor international actors were able to prevent undermined the confidence in elections among the local population. Moreover, the extensive international military presence generated a sense of occupation among some segments

of the Afghan population, thereby strengthening the very groups that the military forces were fighting.”

One of the researchers of the Danish study (“Collection of Experiences”), Nicole Ball in response to the Norwegian presentation commented: “I was struck by the parallels between their lessons and those identified by Denmark in this study. The importance of Afghan ownership, of understanding context, of the need to accept a long timeframe for promoting change, of the potential benefits of an integrated approach, of the need for a strategic approach, and of the importance and challenges of capacity building were among the themes identified. ... And these are all key lessons and conclusions from the current study on Danish development assistance.”

### **CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION (CIMIC), PEACE AND SECURITY**

A prevailing perception, at least in the NGO community and civil society, is that the military takes another view on armed interventions and civil-military cooperation than representatives of “aid and development”. It may be so, but this perception was not really corroborated at this conference, largely because both military and civilian participants chose a humble approach with regard to their achievements.

On the issue of civil-military cooperation, there was no one expressing unequivocal support for mixing military and civilian activities. The round table group on CIMIC wrote “While there is little evidence of serious positive impact from this [civil-military cooperation], the risks of negative impact are incredibly large. If this does indeed blur the lines between civilian and military actors and ruins the so called humanitarian space there is no way to replace it.” Both Sida and SCA made their stance clear that military and development staff should not be mixed, as have been the case in many PRTs. “Let security competent authorities work with security and let development agencies work with development efforts. That way, the respective competencies are used to best effects.” And “regarding synergy effects of civil and military activities, it can be concluded that it is easy to express the synergy objective at a high level in strategy formulation, but if not followed up by concrete instructions, it will just not happen”, Bengt Ekman of Sida concluded.

Norway instituted a clear separation between civilian and military activities in its interventions and has included both in its evaluation; unlike Denmark, which has omitted the military intervention from the “collection of experiences” reported at this conference. In the field, the Danish military and civilian staff were mixed, which resulted in considerable problems, as reported by Niels Vistisen. “We found that the cooperation with stabilization advisers deployed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was close, but often difficult. [...] Mobility and transportation was another key issue. Some of our military units were in high-tech armoured vehicles, and these were not available for CIMIC. CIMIC staff was unable to get around and drive



around in the same way as some in the military. This was a hindrance for getting out and interacting with local Afghans and projects. [ ... ] Integration with intelligence was insufficient, particularly in the beginning. This is yet another key issue. It is not necessarily intelligence in a military sense, but rather about understanding the Afghan society, in terms of mapping local society, tribes, power brokers, civil companies and construction companies, for example. There could have been a much better interaction..."

In the round table discussion on civil-military cooperation "It was recognized that there was very little strategic rationale behind the CIMIC concept in Afghanistan and no doctrines on how to do it, beyond traditions and assumptions. So, commanders arrived on the ground and were told to run a PRT and to conduct all kinds of CIMIC operations, but for what purpose? And with what goals? No one was quite told. In addition, there was very little academic support for the notion that increased cooperation leads to increased effectiveness, or that military service delivery would lead to increased popular support and subsequent stability." However, one of the conclusions was : "To say that civil-military coordination and cooperation is a failure and that we will never do it again would be too simplistic!"

The complexity of the question of civil-military cooperation was also highlighted in a passage of Paal Hilde, who told that "Norway instituted a clear separation between civilian and military activities. This at times led to an intense debate in Norway. On the one side were those who emphasised the importance of keeping the military out of development work they did not understand. On the other were those who claimed that many NGOs stressed their need of a humanitarian space, while they in reality, as development actors, were a part of the same state-building project as the military."

And concerning the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) model, praised for so long by supporters, Michael Claesson of the Swedish Armed Forces regretted the lack of coherence between the strategic, operational and tactical levels and explained that without a balance between these, there will be friction. Also, the way a PRT was shaped was left as a national issue for each donor country (only to a small extent coordinated by NATO and ISAF), which is why, again, coherence was lacking. A common strategy was not in place. The PRT concept was nevertheless generalized (based on experiences from Iraq) and transferred to Afghanistan. In the four provinces where the Swedish PRT operated, there were NGOs present and working perfectly well and in harmony with the civil administration and local society already from the beginning. There was no need for the PRT concept. So in that regard, "one size does not fit all". The approach must be based on analysing each region and its specifics. And in the round table discussion on peace and security an often forgotten cost was

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brought to light: "Billions of dollars poured into the PRT and security forces to contribute to security in Afghanistan. However, the situation on the ground was that the international forces had actually relied more on the local Afghan provision of security instead of the opposite. For every one Swedish patrol, there were two Afghan patrols following to protect them and ensure their security."

#### US PREDOMINANCE

The only country under the impression of making a definite difference on its own was the US. In his keynote address, Barnett Rubin emphasized the complete predominance of the US in Afghanistan: "The only reason why the US became involved in that was to prevent terrorists from attacking the US" and he reminded us about "The US is of course the largest donor and troop contributor." Furthermore: "The US launched this operation and decided to bring in the UN under certain terms. Since the US is by far the greatest funder, Afghanistan depends on the vote in the US congress to appropriate money. If the US congress does not assign appropriate funds to pay for the US military presence, the US aid mission, the Afghan government and the Afghan national army, then Sweden will not be able to stay there. The counterterrorism priority shapes the priorities and how the mission is structured." A statement by a number of influential people was cited: "Even today, Afghanistan is central to what has been called the war on terror or the war against Islamic terrorism," and "It provides a location and an ally for watching and if necessary attacking extremists across the region." He then warned that Iran, Russia, Pakistan and China may have no reason to believe that the US will limit attacks to "extremists" as defined by international consensus.

The round table group on peace and security reported that "After 9/11, the global security environment changed abruptly, and the international community was faced with an imminent choice – to either be with the US or against it ... The Western countries depended on the US for military defence and national security, and after

**... despite** the many progress reports on women, many voices were raised as a reminder of the remaining problems of discrimination against women.

9/11 the peer pressure meant that there was no other alternative than to engage in Afghanistan militarily.”

But despite the predominant role of the US, the interventions lacked a coherent long-term strategy; not only for development and reconstruction, but even for the “war on terror” itself. But since the main goal of the US was counterterrorism, the civilian objectives were sidelined with problematic consequences.

## **INTERVENTIONS: DEVELOPMENT, DIPLOMACY, MILITARY**

### **1. Interventions in development**

Generally speaking, with regard to development cooperation, considerable criticism was expressed by the speakers and self-criticism was often uttered. Many of the speakers representing the donor countries and the UN were frank about the insufficient coordination between the donors, the short-term perspectives applied, the donor-driven mechanisms that weakened Afghan ownership and the failure to take actions against corruption. Also, despite the many progress reports on women, many voices were raised as a reminder of the remaining problems of discrimination against women.

SCA chose six themes to be elucidated in round table discussions. Four of these are largely within development and will be discussed in this chapter by theme, while two (civil-military cooperation and peace and security) are discussed in other chapters.

**Poverty reduction** is a central goal for the Swedish government, Sida and SCA. In the round table discussion on poverty reduction, the question whether poverty reduction is a realistic aim was addressed. Yes, it is not only realistic, but a must to resolve the critical situation in Afghanistan. And the discussion continued: Poverty reduction is a critical component to get peace. Poverty and an unjust society are key drivers of conflict. There

needs to be a recognition of the need for a good security situation to see gains in poverty reduction, and any gains can be easily reversed. It was pointed out that by working more intensely with the most vulnerable and poor, we can make the largest gain in reducing poverty and create a foundation for sustainable development. This is especially important in remote rural areas. Poverty reduction needs to be seen in a long-term perspective. There are too many short-term project approaches that are not really owned by the target groups but by development actors. In his speech, B Ekman from Sida pointed out that the poverty level is not decreasing, but rather the opposite, as is inequality. He regretted that Sweden had not used its goodwill more strategically in the policy dialogue to promote priority issues in regard to, for instance, poverty reduction. Poverty is an immense problem, said Fahim Hakim and pointed to Afghanistan's position as 171 out of 188 countries, and that 42% of the Afghan people live under the poverty line and that 30% of the population (7.6 m) is under direct threat of food insecurity. Female-headed families are 50% more vulnerable to food insecurity and absolute poverty. Nicole Ball also mentioned poverty reduction as part of the Danish support. UNAMA's man at the conference, Mark Bowden, believed that there have been various mistakes on the development aspects of the transition. “My major concern is that the various donor pledging conferences have been more concerned with immediate political issues ... and I have argued for many years that there needs to be a stronger development agenda and in particular a stronger focus on poverty reduction.” Overall, he said that “there has been very little interest in addressing poverty reduction and it was not really until the Brussels Conference that there was a stronger interest in poverty reduction that was reflected in the Afghan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF). ... Key issues will be to develop a more poverty-focused agenda that is able to address growing impoverishment and social inequality.” He also warned about the risks caused by the numerous returnees from the neighbouring countries: “Not only will the numbers returning increase the population, but they will increase the vulnerability to poverty and set back many development achievements.” The group in the round table discussion on peace and security also raised the issue of poverty and referred to a US-based review of its strategies at the end of the Bush era, which brought up the strategic failure to understand “even the basic economic and poverty picture in Afghanistan”.

**Service delivery.** The round table discussion group on service delivery thought that the three most important contributions of the international community's engagement during 2001–2014 took place in the sectors of health, education and water and sanitation. It was concluded that both health and education were at the top of this agenda. Education for girls and health services in the field of maternal and child health have received increa-

sing focus. Certain opportunities during this period were missed, such as prioritizing quality over quantity. This is crucial for the international community to address in the future. Generally speaking, progress has really been noticed, but huge problems remain in the field. According to the World Bank, over 8 million children are attending schools today. The maternal mortality rate has fallen from 1,600 to 327 (per 100,000 live births). A lot has been done regarding health and education. But there are still 3.5 million children who do not attend school and one million children are enrolled, but remain absent. Only some make it to grade 6, 18% make it to grade 12 and even fewer students make it to university. But the quality of education is still low, as are parts of the health services.

Many civil society organizations (CSOs) were mainly delivering services outside the formal structures, which meant a low level of coordination and less development effectiveness. In the model where the Ministry of Health took the lead, it used a tendering system for actors to make bids to provide the services.

Several models for service delivery were identified: the model of capacity building in the government, service delivery in parallel structures, service delivery upon request from the government in a tendering system and service delivery through filling gaps where the government cannot deliver (such as children with disabilities in remote areas).

**Justice.** Jöran Bjällerstedt opened the conference on the theme of justice by stating that among the remaining challenges in Afghanistan, there is “the absence of effective legitimate and well-resourced justice institutions”. The civil society has an important role to play here, to ensure “that justice and social peace between individuals and groups is promoted in the future”, as formulated by one participant in the panel debate. Barnett Rubin explained part of the reason for the limited focus on this issue as “The US was not interested in police, justice, or counter-narcotics, let alone in building an administration, but it wanted the Afghan army to help it fight terrorism.” The round table discussion on “Justice for All” concluded that “The Bonn conference failed to address the need for attention to justice and rule-of-law” and also that “Early on, after 2001, there was a struggle to discuss justice reform. There was little interest in the importance of justice in order to build peace.”

On transitional justice, Fahim Hakim reminded the participants that “the people’s voice for justice, ending impunity, good governance, enhanced efforts for peace and development has frequently been echoed in various studies and national consultation initiatives by national and international civil society and human rights institutions. Based on these efforts, the Afghan government approved a three-year action plan (2005–2008) on transitional justice based on a national consultation conducted by the

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. The action plan suggested various practical measures as a holistic approach to transitional justice.....” The round table discussion group were the ones who most elaborately dealt with this subject, and the relationship and interdependency between justice (for all) and peace and the necessity for transitional justice. Concern was expressed about how human rights can be promoted and ensured in the ongoing justice reform process. The international community had been reluctant to promote the publication of AIHRC’s crime mapping report, just like the Afghan government. A warning was stated concerning international support for informal justice mechanisms (traditional/tribal or based on religion). Traditional justice actors may occasionally be trusted with conflict mediation, but never with criminal justice and application of the law, as they are not under state guidance. Many instruments are in place to promote both “rule of law” and a form of transitional justice, but these are not utilised. On the widespread problem of corruption the round table group suggested that the international community could give better support for anti-corruption by supporting the new legal framework for anti-corruption (Anti-Corruption & Justice Center, ACJC) and put the spotlight on corruption affecting the ordinary citizen, not only when it hits donor funded programs. Furthermore the group recommended provision of support to the Afghanistan Bar Association for its work with victims of corruption.

**Gender and UNSCR 1325.** Kai Eide made a vigorous and telling summary of the issue of women in his concluding remarks: “The participation of women has been a prominent theme over the last two days – as it should. And the figures that we all refer to are promising, since they demonstrate that there is an increase in the number of girls at school, women in parliament, women in government, etc. But these figures only tell us a part of the story! Afghanistan is still suffering from massive discrimination against women.”

On the need of women in the peace process, Jöran Bjällerstedt said: “Because we also know that if we do not include women, youth and civil society in the peace process, there will be no lasting peace, and without peace there will be no development.” Habiba Sarabi from the High Peace Council thoroughly reported on this relationship, but also about progress seen, notwithstanding that “Afghan women have suffered more than anyone else in the past 15 years and it is therefore necessary that they are now entitled to basic human rights and equal participation in political, economic and social life and also in decision-making.” She called for effective implementation and coordination of Afghanistan’s National Action plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP) and a coordination and funding mechanism to be established as soon as possible to ensure that efforts between government departments, donors and civil society complement one

another. Furthermore, Habiba Sarabi requested a quota of women of at least 30 percent of the leadership positions in Afghanistan's political process and further commitment and action through the support of international partners.

From official Swedish actors, strong commitments were expressed. Jöran Bjällerstedt mentioned "the Women's Dialogue and Mediation Programme that was initiated by our Foreign Minister Margot Wallström, and directly linked to our government's feminist foreign policy and to the National Action Plan on Implementing the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security", and continued "to support a legitimate and sustainable Afghan peace process, both by working with the High Peace Council and by empowering women peace activists who engage in conflict prevention and conflict-resolution at the provincial level in Afghanistan." Anna-Karin Eneström from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs made it clear that the "Priorities of the Swedish government are women and girls and their participation, and that they are made a part of the solution in Afghanistan. This is key for a sustainable peace and development in the country. Of course, that their rights are respected is just as important." Likewise, Bengt Ekman from Sida promised continued priority in this field: "Due to Sweden's and a few other donor's strong focus in the policy dialogue on gender equality, women's rights are now much at the centre of the international community's agenda and Sweden continues to make this its highest priority."

The situation of women in Afghanistan featured in practically every round table discussion and in many speeches, but most of all, of course, in the discussion group entitled "Gender & UNSCR 1325". This group reported that there is no shortage of official documents in terms of laws and governmental policies on the rights of women. The problem is how to implement and enforce these governmental policies. The National Action Plan to the UN Resolution 1325, which is an elaborate and good working document built on five pillars; participation, prevention, protection, relief and recovery in conflict and post-conflict situations. However, a lack of a direct relation between the progress of women's rights and the NAP 1325 has been noticed and perhaps seemed disconnected from the practical work with women's rights. One would like to see that the Afghan government adequately enforces and implements the plan and other policies, and that the international community should also do more to promote the process. The general gap in implementing and enforcing the policies at the local grassroots level is clearly a pressing issue, which has not been helped by the international community mainly designing short-term interventions/solutions. Moreover, the lack of Afghan ownership and the wide gap between the local population and the elite have not helped closing this gap. How to approach gender issues inclusively – for all women from all levels of society – is still a looming issue. Very

critical voices were heard in this group, although mixed and not unitary, on the role of the international community and its preparedness to be long-term, coordinating, allowing Afghan ownership, including young women and youth, etc.

The round table group "Justice for All" also dealt considerably with issues related to women and expressed appreciation for the law for the elimination of violence against women (EVAW) and noted that an increasing number of related cases are registered in special family courts, but mainly only in the cities. A lot of work has gone into raising awareness about justice, including women's rights. There are women working in the justice system, although more women are needed throughout the system. Specialized EVAW prosecution units have already been established. In the formal system, some progress has been seen, although women mainly remain subordinate. But still, in the informal justice courts, the rights of women and children are regularly reported as being violated. All in all, the group saw challenges regarding justice for women and women in the justice system, and felt that the general situation remains very alarming.

## 2. Interventions with diplomacy

Diplomacy has been specifically mentioned in both the Norwegian and Danish studies. N Ball stated that Denmark understood that its development, security and political/diplomatic tools were all necessary for combatting terrorism and supporting the transition from Taliban rule, but nothing further was reported. The Norwegian evaluation dealt with this at some length. The Commission considered peace diplomacy being one of three particularly important areas (the others were Norway's engagement in Faryab and the role of Norwegian special forces and intelligence service). Peace diplomacy was in fact part of the third objective. Norway's engagement in the area of peace diplomacy helped putting dialogue between the parties on the agenda and led to close contacts with Afghan authorities and the US. Already by 2007, Norway began paving the way for negotiations between Afghan authorities and the Taliban, in consultation with President Hamid Karzai. Norway actively sought to influence the internal processes in Washington until 2011, when the US first opened up for the possibility of negotiations. Neither Norwegian nor other attempts to negotiate a settlement were successful. Peace diplomacy was nonetheless an important Norwegian contribution. The Commission finds that the high-level dialogue between Norwegian authorities and their Afghan and US partners likely helped influence their view of the potential for negotiations with the Taliban. Together with others, Norway sought to influence the Taliban's thinking as to what a political solution must and would entail. Norway at an early stage established a dialogue with the Taliban on the need for the movement to change its political views, including on the role of women in society, if the



movement wished to return to a place in Afghanistan's political life.

Diplomacy was also mentioned in the speeches of the representatives of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Both speakers stated that the Swedish efforts in Afghanistan have been made in the areas of diplomacy, military and development, involving a broad and multi-sectoral engagement. "Dialogue is of course central to the Swedish diplomatic and political efforts, which revolve around striving for democratic development, rule of law and human rights. It also aims at promoting reforms that strengthen Afghanistan's long-term ability to cope with security challenges."

In the panel debate, peace diplomacy was described as failed.

### 3. Military interventions

Although both Denmark and Norway participated in the US-led warfare from an early stage, the OEF (Operation Enduring Freedom) military intervention was at this conference largely understood and presented in terms of delivering within the PRT system under NATO.

"The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Faryab was Norway's largest and most visible military contribution in Afghanistan. The province also received extensive Norwegian development assistance. The intention of the PRT model was to strengthen the Afghan central government's control in the provinces and to promote state-building and development. This task proved to be difficult, if not impossible. It was very difficult for external actors to build confidence among the local population in an Afghan state that lacked legitimacy", Paal Hilde explained.

The Swedish Armed Forces' mission in Afghanistan started from a very small-scale multinational operation in Kabul 2001. The engagement grew substantially from 2004 and onwards, with Sweden leading the PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif in 2006 together with Finland. The gender perspective was highlighted by Magnus Lüning, who also touched upon the issue of media. The experience in Afghanistan has brought a gender perspective in planning, execution and evaluation of operations to the Swedish Armed Forces. In his presentation, the impact on stabilization, peace and security was not mentioned, nor were these perspectives elaborated upon by the second speaker representing the Swedish Armed Forces. Michael Claesson indicated that the region where the Swedish PRT was established was not really in need of it as far as the civil-military part was concerned, because NGOs were already present and delivering. This was still another illustration of "one size does not fit all" as far as PRTs are concerned, and he wanted more regional and local analytic homework to be carried out. He also emphasized the drawback with the very short ro-

tation period of the PRT-staff, being exchanged every six months, which "caused considerable frustration, not least for the Afghans".

Barnett Rubin dealt clearly with the US-led warfare, originally conducted by OEF, later with participation of ISAF under NATO. Besides, it was only mainly touched upon by SCA: "On a more principal level, SCA also stated that development priorities almost never agree with military priorities, and that 'winning hearts and minds,' and building peace, cannot be done by warfare." SCA also expressed that "US bombings in Afghanistan illustrate the impossible mission in fighting terror with war" and claimed that the warfare has facilitated the Taliban return and strengthened militant Islamism.

SCA's extensive presence in Afghanistan with almost 6,000 employees in more than half of the provinces has given SCA staff many contacts with military actors of different national backgrounds, but has also been a crucial source of information about the national mood in most parts of the country. At no point has SCA asked for, or felt a need for, military protection. Quite the opposite: SCA has experienced several violations and abuses by the military; for instance, schools and clinics have been used as checkpoints and launchers, intrusions into schools, clinics and offices by troops have occurred, and interference in our projects have taken place. As ISAF gradually came to merge with the warfare, SCA ceased its previous verbal support to the troops.

### THE ROAD TO SELF-RELIANCE

Surprisingly, self-reliance was rarely mentioned (likely synonyms, however, were mentioned) except for Mark Bowden's important contribution, when formulating the following: "Looking at the ... title of the conference; are we clear in what we understand by Afghanistan's road to 'self-reliance'? I ask this because I think there has been confusion ... as to the meaning of 'self-reliance'. Does self-reliance refer to making economic progress, achieving more sustainable development? Or, does it refer to minimising Afghanistan's dependence on the international community and foreign forces for its internal security and ability to address the insurgency? My first reflection is to stress that in a mutually interdependent world, we should be looking for a better quality partnership and stronger and more equal relationships rather than promoting 'self-reliance' as a goal. We live in a mutually interdependent world. The challenge we face is to ensure that our interdependence reinforces and helps us achieve our mutual goals."

On the same theme, but rather in terms of sustainability, Barnett Rubin also highlighted the question: "How can the Afghan state and army become sustainable? A long-term commitment by the US, no matter how sustained, cannot do it. As a landlocked country, Afghanistan's economic development depends upon access to the world



## There is a long way to go on the road to self-reliance for Afghanistan.

through its neighbours. The neighbours will not agree to such cooperation, however, if Afghanistan become a US military base.” And he continued: “Right now, the cost of the army is the biggest obstacle to sustainability. It is still not large and effective enough. It is slowly losing territory and has taken a very high number of casualties. It is almost entirely funded by the US, but is not part of a balanced state-building project including all aspects of security, including those needed for economic development and budgeting. Instead, in 2002 when the US-led coalition started building new security forces, the US did not want to be involved in ‘nation’-building. There was no comprehensive plan. Instead under US leadership, the donors chose a framework of lead nations for each sector of assistance. The US was not interested in police, justice, or counter-narcotics, let alone in building an administration, but it wanted the Afghan army to help it fight terrorism.” And Barnett Rubin explained that “Sustainability means that the Afghan state would be the primary funder of its own activities, including the provision of security. It is quite a stretch to say that Afghanistan is a democracy, because the elected representatives of the people have no jurisdiction over the security forces. They do not vote on the budget for the Afghan army. The US congress votes on the budget of the Afghan army and makes its decision on the basis of the interest of the US. Afghans have no way to change that, at this point. To be democratic and sustainable, Afghanistan would have to have an economy that enables it to pay for the army.”

On the issue of sustainability fears were also uttered on the dependence of imported goods. Humira Saqeb said that “Afghanistan is a consumer country of products mainly originating from Pakistan, Iran and China. Our industries will not be allowed to be established unless the international community intervenes and ensures that Afghanistan will be independent when it comes to establishing a sustainable and self-reliant economy that creates jobs for Afghans. Our recommendation here is for the international

community to invest money with our government and private sector through public private partnerships and establish factories in order to produce goods for domestic consumption and to create jobs.” and she suggested that “The government should have a clear policy, on a long-term basis, to remove barriers for domestic production [. . . . .]. There is no clear policy to support domestic production. There should be investments in economic strategies that must support domestic production. A policy for public-private partnership was recently signed between the government and partners, preparing for several hundred jobs. This is a good strategy for the future.” And Manizha Wafeq brought up a related perspective on the road to self-reliance when saying in the panel debate: “Despite the difficulties facing women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan today, there are 700 licensed women in business, all around the country, with investments of an overall total equivalent to 5.8 million US\$, creating 4000 jobs, half of them for men. With the right support, this can multiply! But support has to be long-term, not the fragmented short-term programs often seen.”

These statements indicate that there is a long way to go on the road to self-reliance for Afghanistan.

### LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In his closing reflections, Kai Eide expressed that “the most serious mistake of all – of course – is to engage in a country without proper knowledge and understanding of this country – and without respect for the people of that country”, and continued “It is right to criticize the international community. But I think the Afghans also have to say to themselves ‘we really have to do certain things differently from what we have done in the past.’ The most important, of course, is a readiness to work together in a unified way – to combat corruption, stand up against violations of human rights – even if they are committed by powerful people.”

Answering a question to what extent the Norwegian evaluator Paal Hilde and colleagues were satisfied with the efforts of Norway and the international community, in view of today’s situation his reply was comprehensive and clear: “... the commission is very critical of both the Norwegian and the overall international effort. Large parts of it, though very well-intended, had goals that were contradictory at times. In the war against terror, and in the US Operation Enduring Freedom, deals were made with local warlords. This was good from a security point of view, but not from a state-building point of view. There have been a lot of contradictions, a lot of mistakes from the international side in this engagement. Norway tries to draw lessons from this. If you go into a conflict, you really have to think hard about where you want to go and what you want to achieve. That is very hard, because decisions like that must be taken

very quickly. But a minimum effort has to be made to chart out a plan, and no such plan existed in Afghanistan. And the goals kept shifting and escalating.”

Striking criticism was indeed heard concerning the international community (including the UN and civil society, in addition to the international military) for its lack of both coordination and unified strategies. But many participants and contributors expressed one common lesson learnt for the future, and that was to bring in the Afghan youth on the scene of development. In his opening address, the chairperson of SCA mentioned that “The young generation has seen little but conflict in their lives.” The Swedish Ambassador Bjällerstedt said: “Because we also know that if we do not include women, youth and civil society in the peace process, there will be no lasting peace, and without peace there will be no development.” The round table group on gender remarked that the international community should be prepared to be long-term, coordinating, allowing Afghan ownership and to include young women and youth in this work. In the panel debate, we were told about the many young people in Afghanistan who are now frustrated as peace diplomacy has so far produced no results, and they are asking for transitional justice. In his recommendations for measures to be taken in the future professor Safi concluded that “With the above support from donors, Afghanistan can prevent the young from emigrating to other countries in the world.”

The turn to the young generation gives hope for the future. And the young generation deserves to be allowed access. The old generations have not established peace, security, and sufficient social progress, despite massive support by the international community. This support may be part of the reasons for failing. All parties need to conduct profound self-critical reviews of what could have been done better.

The speakers and the round table groups identified several lessons to be learnt during this conference. These

are reflected in their different contributions. Margareta Wahlström (former employee of UNAMA) in a comment brought up another important type of lesson for all of us: the fact that lessons are not only learnt, but also too often forgotten, if not outright neglected. This report from the conference offers the descriptive substance on which further analyses may be based. A tentative list of the various lessons learnt might be the following:

#### **Lessons forgotten**

- Small countries - small contributions. Do not exaggerate the contributions. Aggregated figures reflect the reality.
- The true reason for the US intervention (fighting terrorism) was forgotten after a short while

#### **Lessons neglected**

- Goals must be set and strategies formulated both short-term and long-term
- The theory of the civil-military cooperation proved fruitless in reality despite several attempts to implement its assumed benefits

#### **Lessons to implement**

- Promoting formal justice (rule of law) should be done from day one of any intervention
- Women's and children's rights should come high on the agenda
- Premeditated interventions should have extensive preparations in the fields of culture, geopolitics, raw material, social contracts, ethnicity, trade, demography etc
- Bring youth to the table, women and men. The new generation is eager to develop but has not been given the possibility to do so.

The hope is that in the future all lessons learnt are going to be applied and used, and neither neglected nor forgotten. •

**CHAPTER 1**CONFERENCE OPENING  
AND KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

PEDER JONSSON

**WELCOME  
ADDRESS**

**GOOD MORNING** and most welcome to Stockholm and our international conference – “Afghanistan’s Road to Self-Reliance – what has been done and what can be done better?”

A special welcome to Her Excellency Doctor Habiba Sarabi and other Afghan participants who have travelled from Afghanistan and other faraway places to attend.

Afghanistan’s Ambassador to Sweden, Dr Hameed Haami, sends his regrets and wishes the conference success. He has to attend to his Deputy Foreign Minister visit to Stockholm.

It is an honour to be in the position, as the chairperson of Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, addressing all of you distinguished knowledgeable delegates and experts covering the many challenging subjects we are gathered to discuss and master.

I am also most grateful for your generosity for setting aside these two days in your calendars, thereby making it possible to advance our common knowledge and leverage our different experiences.

In a moment, I will introduce Ambassador Jöran Bjälkerstedt and our moderator during these two days, my

predecessor Lotta Hedström, but first let me try to set the scene from the side of the Committee.

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan has been engaged with the people of Afghanistan for 35 years. We provide education, health services, rural development and support to persons with disabilities, while supporting local good governance.

The context of this conference is both wide and deep and looks at the future using the lessons learned, including our own. Agenda 2030 with its sustainable development goal, if not in all seventeen goals, is the foundation and backdrop of our coming conversations and thoughts. I am sure we will touch upon the five first goals, no poverty, zero hunger, good health, quality in education, gender equality, and we will most likely do so many times.

But as an opening, I would like to set the lime light on “peace and justice institutions”, which constitutes goal number 16. Let me cite it: “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.”

Adding the Stockholm Declaration, adopted by the International Dialogue for Peace-Building & State-Buil-



ding at the global ministerial meeting in April, we have the subject setting and the goal framework of our coming workshops and presentations.

We have high ambitions for this conference and we hope that you will help us to fulfil these.

Afghanistan has been the scene of armed conflict with foreign involvement since 1979.

The young generation has seen little but conflict in their lives. During the last fifteen years, the international community has intervened with roughly one trillion USD in military operations. Compared to development aid the ratio is 20 to 1. Both figures are of a magnitude where we normally have lost all sense of size and reality, they just become figures, incommensurable abstractions.

But now we are in the favourable situation that the International Security Assistance Force countries are evaluating their respective efforts. The figures I mentioned will become concrete.

Thus our purpose for these two days is fourfold:

1. We can and will analyse the lessons accumulated during the 15 years of operations
2. We can and will from that draw conclusions and give recommendations
3. We can and will highlight and provide understanding

to the options of a fragile state like Afghanistan

4. And last, but not least, we will document the ideas and suggestions of conflict prevention efforts in Afghanistan and disseminate them to relevant stakeholders

To us it is important that politicians, decision-makers, diplomats, military, researchers and correspondents specialized on Afghanistan and the region come together and share competences, whether you are here in person or participating over the Internet.

We are convinced that you can contribute to improving international involvement in a fragile state like Afghanistan and the present conflict situations it is burdened by.

Making this conference a leap forward puts pressure on all of us. But I believe that it is possible to make it, if we embrace and enact candour and usefulness. And work hard.

Therefore, we need to undertake the practical and leave the usual comfortable phrases behind. We are here to comprehend, to digest and most certainly look forward.

Thank you for joining us and once again most welcome to Afghanistan's Road to Self-Reliance in Stockholm.

And now without further ado, let me give the floor to Ambassador-at-large for Peace-Building and State-Building at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Mr Jöran Bjällerstedt, who will open the conference. •

JÖRAN BJÄLLERSTEDT

# OPENING ADDRESS

**IT IS A TRUE HONOUR** to be here today and to open this important and timely conference on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Afghanistan and Sweden enjoy a long and in many ways unique relationship. It is not an exaggeration to say that our support to Afghanistan stands out among our international commitments, and it has been like that for many years. It also involves a broad and multi-sectoral engagement: diplomacy, military support and development cooperation. These engagements are well known, and they will be further developed during the days ahead.

It also involves a close cooperation regarding peace- and state-building and conflict prevention, because Afghanistan is a founding member of the G7+ group of fragile states and a founding member of the International Dialogue on Peace-Building and State-Building. For two years, Sweden has been co-chairing the International Dialogue on Peace-Building and State-Building together with G7+. We also have a close relationship with each other in this field. Afghanistan is a very appreciated and active partner in this high-level forum where the New Deal principles for building peace and preventing conflict are at the top of the agenda. These are principles that also are promoted and used in the implementation of the important 2030 Agenda with its Global Goals, and especially in fragile and conflict-affected countries like Afghanistan.

The 2030 Agenda aims to leave no country behind! The fragile and conflict-affected countries were the ones left behind by the Millennium Goals, fifteen years ago! The 2030 Agenda will hopefully change that through the substantial and sustainable Development Goals, especially number 16, which aims for peaceful and inclusive societies.

The Tokyo Mutability Framework of 2012 was to a large extent inspired by the New Deal and the Self-Reliance Through Mutual Accountability Framework and contains several important principles, such as country ownership, transparency and the request for accountability expected by both the government and its development partners. It focuses on governance, economic development, rule of law and security.

The situation in Afghanistan shows that the interlinkages between security and development are now as clear as ever, as is the relationship between financial support and political commitment. For us as donors and development partners, this means that development aid must be designed to support the political process.

The political side must work hand in glove with the development side. The present Swedish development cooperation strategy for Afghanistan aims at backing up Afghanistan's efforts for building peace and preventing conflict. It has four areas: state-building/democracy, human rights, education and inclusive economic develop-

ment, and, of course, is in full alignment with Afghanistan's own plans as expressed in Afghanistan's peace and development framework.

Country ownership is very important in this context. Sweden's financial commitment to Afghanistan is long-term, the longest we have committed, and covers the transformation decade of 2015–2024.

Afghanistan has made considerable political, economic and developmental progress over the last ten fifteen year or so. It is indeed encouraging to see the efforts made by the Afghan National Unity Government to achieve sustainable peace.

Nonetheless, challenges remain: an increased number of attacks on civilian, an increased number of internally displaced people, the absence of effective legitimate and well-resourced justice institutions, the growing number of returnees and limitations in humanitarian access are just a few examples. Unfortunately, Afghanistan is not alone!

We live in times of great uncertainty and unrest! The tragedy in Syria is mirrored in countries like Iraq, South Sudan and Yemen. Extremism and violence remain a threat in the region of Sahel, on the horn of Africa and in the Middle East. Currently 130 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. This year (2016) may remain one of the bloodiest years since the end of the Cold War.

It is against this backdrop that Sweden enters the Security Council in less than a month. We do so with a clear focus on conflict prevention, peace-building and inclusivity.

An important part of our broader peace-building agenda will be to strengthen our mediation capabilities before, during and after conflicts. Pending parliamentary approval, we plan to establish a dialogue and peace process support function at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Stockholm and this will be strengthening our embassies in conflict-affected and fragile states. I would also in this context like to mention the Women's Dialogue and Mediation Programme initiated by our Foreign Minister Margot Wallström, which is directly linked to our government's feminist foreign policy and to the National Action Plan on Implementing the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

One of its most important tasks will be to support a legitimate and sustainable Afghan peace process, both by working with the High Peace Council and by empowering women peace activists who engage in conflict prevention and conflict-resolution at the provincial level in Afghanistan.

To conclude, we all know that a long-term perspective and commitment remains necessary and that lasting peace is achieved through political solutions and not through military and technical operations alone. We also know that peace has to come from below. We have learned that to make a difference in Afghanistan, financial contributions need to support the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political solutions. As we steadily move towards Afghanistan's full potential, let us build on the inclusive engagement of women, youth and civil society. Because we also know that if we do not include women, youth and civil society in the peace process, there will be no lasting peace. And without peace, there will be no development. •

HABIBA SARABI | KEYNOTE SPEAKER

# AN OVERVIEW OF **THE ROLES OF AFGHAN WOMEN**

**EXCELLENCES, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,** ladies and gentlemen, I am so pleased to be part of such a distinguished gathering and I thank you for inviting me. I will also avail this opportunity to thank the Swedish Committee for their long and continued support to the people of Afghanistan.

Today, I will be talking about peace but also about women in Afghanistan. I will not only talk about our challenges, but also about what the Afghan government has to offer to facilitate international support in this area. I will be talking about our achievements and our way forward.

Afghan women suffered more than anyone else during the past 15 years and it is therefore necessary that they are now entitled to basic human rights and equal participation in political, economic and social life, and also in decision-making. The achievements of the last decade were measurable, but these achievements have been fragile due to political, social, economic and security-related changes.

Since the establishment of an elected democratic government, women have been appointed and elected as ministers, governors, mayors and parliamentarians.

Our progress in the military and police have been modest. As I am talking to you today, we have 4 female ministers, 9 female deputy ministers, 4 female ambassadors, with one more to be appointed soon, and one female governor, 69 MPs out of 249 members, 22 senators, and 296 provincial council members, one deputy and two female advisors to the High Peace Council out of 17 on the executive board.

National policies and international commitments under CEDAW<sup>1</sup>, UNSCR 1325<sup>2</sup> and international human rights resolutions are the tools that guarantee a role of women in decision-making and in leading issues and supporting advocacy for their participation in society. Afghanistan is the 49th country in the world that finalized the UNSRC 1325 National Action Plan draft. The first Action Plan of the implementation of UNSRC 1325 was launched in June 30, 2015 by the Afghan president. This action plan continues to serve as a benchmark for the government and civil society in furthering the role of women.

Bringing peace and stability is one of the nation's priorities, which is why the role of women in peace talks and their advocacy for meaningful participation in decision-making initiatives have been emphasized in the 2010 national

1. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

2. United Nations Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.



**As I am talking** to you today, we have **4** female ministers, **9** female deputy ministers, **4** female ambassadors, with **1** more to be appointed soon and **1** female governor, **69** MPs out of 249, **22** senators, and **296** provincial council members, **1** deputy and **2** female advisors to the High Peace Council out of 17 on the Executive Board.

traditional consultative Jirga. This was actualized with the establishment of the High Peace Council.

Afghanistan has seen remarkable advances in girls' education. Currently, 39% of the 9.4 million students in school are girls, whereas there were only 900,000 students in 2002, nearly all of them boys. Also, the number of women teachers in schools has increased to 34%. Thanks again to our development partners for their support. However, indicators still remain worse for women and girls compared to men. Seventeen percent of the women are literate compared to nearly half of the men. Actions need to be fostered to empower women and girls so that they can both contribute to their well-being and economic development.

Despite the above gains, our path to tackling existing challenges still remains.

The advancement of women is still restrained by culture barriers, lack of education and awareness, weak enforcement of the rule of law and, above all, insecurity.

The national unity government has emphasized the importance of women's participation and their role in peace talks. Women are appointed in key positions, including a female deputy and advisor to the High Peace Council. Women's participation and views during consultations have been remarkable. However, work needs to be done for more extensive participation and different platforms, such as the quadrilateral peace talks between Afghanistan, Pakistan, the US and China. International support in this area remains crucial. A stu-

dy by Oxfam shows that when women are included in peace-building processes, the prospect for an end to violence increases by 24 percent. Peace cannot be secured when over half of the population is excluded from the table, and peace cannot be sustained without women at its core. Women's strong role in peace talks may be facilitated by enhancing women's capacity in peace-building and conflict resolution skills.

The current status of success and our achievements remain fragile and progress can be reversed if more concrete steps are not taken.

- To ensure the effective implementation and coordination of Afghanistan's National Action plan on women, peace and security (NAP), a coordination and funding mechanism must be established as soon as possible to ensure that the efforts of government departments, donors and civil society complement one another.
- Women must make up at least 30 percent of the leadership positions in Afghanistan's political process. Further commitment and action is required in this area, complemented by the support of our international partners.
- Effective measures need to be taken concerning violence against women. Reporting system related to incidents of violence need to be strengthened and perpetrators need to be punished.
- Involvement of women at all levels of decision-making in both formal and informal peace talks, including meaningful participation of women in high-level political negotiations with the Taliban, and upholding their constitutional rights should not be negotiable.
- A 30 percent minimum threshold should be established for women's membership in all Afghan government peace-making bodies, including the High Peace Council and provincial peace councils.
- As the UN member states have adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, we need to educate more girls and end early and forced marriage in order to achieve these goals.
- Afghanistan's development agenda cannot be fully realized if a path to a sustainable and just peace is not created. Women's active and meaningful participation in political and social peace-making will ensure that this journey is successful. •

## Q&A | HABIBA SARABI

**Q1:** What is the state of affairs of the NAP 1325? Can you elaborate on the implementation of that? What are the stumbling blocks?

**A1:** The Ministry of Women's Affairs is in the lead. Relevant ministries are in the loop. The only problem was the funding mechanism. In November there was a meeting with EU to discuss the funding with our Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**Q2:** What does the political commitment look like [with regard to NAP 1325]? We know that the president and his wife are supporting it, but what is going on? Is civil society involved? Is it done in the right manner, according to you?

**A2:** The commitment is there. One female is appointed to the High Peace Council as deputy and one to the executive board to include women to the peace process and peace talks. I was also a delegate in the peace process with Hezb-e-Islami.

**Q3:** Can you tell us more about the women's process in the negotiations with Hezb-e-Islami?

**A3:** We are satisfied with the negotiations. When the negotiations started two years ago, it was no problem. We are less happy with the implementation of the peace agreement. During the peace negotiations, we were satisfied with female participation. With the implementation of the peace agreement, we are not satisfied. Some talks are going on and we are not fully aware of the whole picture.

**Q4:** Can you comment on whether the peace agreement with Hezb-e-Islami can serve as a model or template for a peace agreement with the Taliban. What differences do you see?

**A4:** The Taliban are very extreme and do not want to negotiate with women, but this was a breakthrough. They should be shown that women have a place in peace negotiations and that this is not negotiable. Women's rights and human rights are crucial and they are not negotiable for the High Peace Council.

**Q5:** Did Hezb-e-Islami put the participation of women on the negotiating table?

**A5:** Verbally, they want to show that they respect women's rights, but we know they have been cruel to women before. But when I started to talk to them, they were very respectful. I will share a story. The president invited all delegates to lunch. There were 50 men, and I was the only woman. Some of them were very educated and I started to discuss with them and I wondered how they can talk for women when there is not a single woman in their delegation. They promised to bring along women for negotiations the next time around.

**Q6:** Do you think that the peace agreement will influence the Taliban at all?

**A6:** I think it will be a model for the Taliban as well. Especially the implementation of the agreement will be important. They are carefully watching the implementation.

AHMAD FAHIM HAKIM | KEYNOTE SPEAKER

# AFGHANISTAN'S ROAD TO SELF- RELIANCE – **WHAT HAS BEEN DONE AND WHAT CAN BE DONE BETTER?**

**IT IS MY ULTIMATE PLEASURE** to attend this appealing event and talk about developments in Afghanistan. I will start with a brief introduction on the overall situation of the country, followed by addressing opportunities and challenges, ending with indicating some ways forward and concluding remarks.

Afghanistan is known as a country in conflict during the last four decades. However, over the past 15 years, Afghanistan has been experiencing various achievements in terms of people's civil and political rights, access to education and health, economic growth and development schemes. In particular statistics on girls' access to education (around 4 out of 9 million) and access to health (between 70–80%) and a quite significant decrease in the number of maternal and child mortality rates are promising and in line with the MDGs and SDGs<sup>1</sup>. Even though MDGs are, globally, replaced by SDGs, due to a five year delay in joining MDGs, Afghanistan has to complete its commitments towards the MDGs in 2020 while simultaneously continuing its struggle to achieve SDGs in 2030.

Despite growing security challenges, since 2004 Afghanistan has conducted 8 rounds of presidential, parliamentary, and provincial council elections. Women's partici-

pation in all elections was quite unique showing active roles and the interest of women in support of democratic processes.

As a matter of fact, all of these achievements and developments in Afghanistan would not be possible if the country was lacking the political, financial, and military support of the international community.

For sure, there is still a long haul for the institutionalisation of democratic values and principles, consolidation of democracy, and periodic inclusive elections in a war-torn country like Afghanistan, where growing threats to civilians and terrorist attacks disrupt people's normal lives. Civilian casualties remain a serious cause of concern in recent years. The UN recently released a report on civilian casualties showing that there were over 63,000 casualties (around 23,000 deaths)<sup>2</sup> in the period from 1 January 2009 to 30 June 2016.

Nonetheless, people's voice for justice, ending impunity, good governance, enhanced efforts for peace, and development have frequently been echoed in various studies and national consultation initiatives by national and international civil society and human rights institu-

1. Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals. Statistics are based on reports from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Public Health

2. <http://unama.unmissions.org/afghanistan-record-level-civilian-casualties-sustained-first-half-2016-un-report>

**Afghanistan** conducted 8 rounds of presidential, parliamentary, and provincial council elections. Women's participation in all elections was quite unique, displaying active roles and an **interest of women** in support of **democratic processes**.

tions. Based on these efforts, the Afghan government approved a three-year action plan (2005–2008) on transitional justice based on a national consultation conducted by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC). The action plan suggested various practical measures as a holistic approach to transitional justice: 1) to acknowledge victims suffering through memorials and erection of monuments; 2) to have a vetting mechanism for the appointment of government officials; 3) to have a truth-seeking and documentation process; 4) to consider non-judiciary initiatives such as compensation, public apologies, and reparation, and; 5) to consider criminal justice for perpetrators. As a symbolic move, in 2006, the Afghan government named 10 December, the Human Rights Universal Day, as the national solidarity day for victims of war crimes in the country.

The Afghan government, with support from the international community, initiated the National Solidarity Program (NSP) to empower local communities and improve local governance through effective reach out to rural and remote areas.

Meanwhile to enhance development projects and programs, various donor countries extended their developmental aid through their Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in the provinces in which they were operating. Initially PRTs were to support and empower local governments to effectively serve their people through delivery of basic services, while improving the security situation. In some instances, the PRTs became the de facto local government!<sup>3</sup>

Generally, there have been lots of efforts and initiatives to build the capacity of the government, to enhance patterns of administrative and judicial reforms, and to speed up the implementation of rehabilitation and development programs throughout the country. As a result, and based on the statistics coming from the government (Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development) and the World Bank, over 42,000 villages (around 1.5 m people) directly benefited from NSP, and the country's GDP increased from USD 2.4 billion in 2001 to USD 19 billion in 2015.<sup>4</sup>

There have been many pros and cons since 2001, when the international community was engaged in the process of state-building and nation-building efforts in Afghanistan. The intention was noble, but the lack of a comprehensive strategy or clear policy by the international community resulted in the very new interim administration's efforts and investments not delivering the expected results in the initial years<sup>5</sup>. Many things went wrong and quite significant resources have been wasted, while the expectations at various levels remained high and unrealistic!

Various pledges, commitments, and ways of engagement were made at international conferences such as London (2010), Bonn-II (2011), Tokyo (2014), and Brussels (2016) by both the international community and the Afghan government with regard to more aid effectiveness and enhanced patterns of administrative reforms, measures on curbing corruptions, and strengthening good governance and economic growth.

Besides all these promises and commitments, the reports coming from credible international institutions such as Legatum and Transparency International highlight various pitfalls and shortcomings in the Afghan government performance in achieving its targets and fulfilling its promises to its people. The Legatum Prosperity Index ranks Afghanistan 147 among 148 countries under its review. In its report for 2015, Transparency International ranked Afghanistan 166 among 168 countries reviewed. Similarly, the United Nations Development Program development index shows Afghanistan's position as 171 among 188 countries in 2015, where 42% of the people live under the poverty line and 30% of the population (7.6 m) is under a direct threat of food insecurity. Female-headed families are 50% more vulnerable to food insecurity and absolute poverty.

Despite these less promising statistics, following the engagement of the international community in Afghanistan since 2001, significant improvements have been achieved:

3. For NGOs involved in implementing development projects, it was quite challenging to project their civilian aspects of work, as local and national NGOs in most cases were contracted by PRTs. This is why many NGOs became soft targets by Taliban and other terrorist gangs.

4. Similarly, the GNI per capita increased from USD 220 in 2004 to USD 630 in 2015.

5. It is a known notion that even if you have all the needed resources (financial and technical) and human capacity, but you do not have a comprehensive strategy and a clear policy, you achieve nothing: waste of time and resources!



- Afghan national security forces are able to carry out combat missions independently, while NATO under its Resolute Support Mission continues to train, advise, and support ANSF,
- Free media and freedom of expression are promoted. Based on statistics from the BBC and Reporters without Borders, more than 120 radio stations and 70 TV outlets are functioning at the local and national levels. In 2006 there were only 6 national TV channels,
- Women's active roles in legislation and their presence in the parliament (69 seats out of 249 is allocated for women). The new electoral law insists on at least 25% of seats as a quota for women at the provincial councils,
- Interconnectedness of Afghans through mobile communication facilities has increased. Based on the findings of a survey conducted by Afghan women's access to mobile technology, there are now around 20 m mobile phone subscriptions (the population is estimated to be over 30 m), and 80% of women, either through their own or their family members, have access to mobile phones. Similarly, the number of internet users increased from 300,000 in 2006 to over 4 million in 2016,<sup>6</sup>
- Human and women's rights are no longer taboos, as both become part of national discourses, through dedicated and committed rights defenders and civil society advocates. There is now a law on the elimination of violence against women and a national action plan for its implementation at the national level,
- Peaceful transfer of power, though challenging, is now accepted by Afghans, in which they are to cast their votes every 5 years.

### OPPORTUNITIES

The following highlights, if effectively utilized, are seen as opportunities for Afghanistan to lead the country to peace and prosperity:

- Sustained international support and funding through the Transformation Decade for Afghanistan (2015–2024), as highlighted in the Brussels conference, and the Afghan government's commitments to implement the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) emphasizing five main prioritised programs: 1) the Citizens' Charter, 2) Women's economic empowerment, 3) Urban development, 4) Comprehensive agriculture and 5) National infrastructures

- The Afghan Government's commitment to MDGs and SDGs would widen the level of cooperation and assistance by the UN, in particular in its efforts to eliminate poverty and hunger, and enhance its capacity for service delivery and electoral and administrative reforms (e.g., fighting corruption)
- People's reluctance towards the continuation of violence and conflict gives the Afghan government and the international community synergy effects to further boost their efforts for peace and reconciliation
- Good lessons learned by both the Afghan government and the international community on how to fulfil their commitments for a better and peaceful Afghanistan, while enhancing their 'Partnership for Prosperity', as emphasised at the recent conference in Brussels.

### CHALLENGES

There is no doubt that a country like Afghanistan faces many challenges with regard to its full recovery from years of instability and scars of war. I would, however, like to highlight the main challenges directly impacting the Afghan government's and the international community's joint efforts for peace, development, and stability:

- The current situation clearly shows that both the Afghan national security forces and its international allies have failed to provide a satisfactory level of security, in particular human security, to all citizens. Growing insecurity and unemployment are main concerns of people frequently highlighted in various studies and consultations conducted by national and international civil society institutions.
- The absence of reliable statistics on the basic demographics and population of the country is one of the key challenges for measuring further successes and achievements of the country on development fronts, on the one hand, and aid effectiveness on the other.
- Over-emphasis on the notion of 'Afghan-led and Afghan-owned' process for peace and reconciliation has systematically overshadowed the UN mediatory role, while speeding up 'piecemeal' efforts by various actors.<sup>7</sup>
- Growing religious extremism and radicalising of the young generation requires the Afghan government and its international allies to enhance their efforts for quality education throughout the country.
- Continuation of political rifts and tension at the stra-

6. <http://www.internetworldstats.com/asia/af.htm>

7. Such efforts like facilitating meetings in Qatar, Dubai, Berlin, Paris, and Oslo would give further legitimacy to opposition armed groups such as the Taliban, while sidelining the mandatory roles of credible international organizations such as the UN.

tegic apex of the National Unity Government would further nurture corruption, bad governance, and instability.

### WAYS FORWARD

The Afghan government has taken various promising steps towards consolidation of regional partnership and enhancement of economic cooperation with neighbouring and regional countries (the Chabahar port, the Silk-Road China-Afghanistan connectivity, and the Turkmenistan and Afghanistan transit train route are good examples) vital for Afghanistan's economic development and growth.

Just before the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, a peace deal was signed with Hezb-e-Islami, demonstrating the government's commitment and will to engage in political negotiations and ending ongoing conflict. Lessons learned from Colombia's peace deal

with FARC's fighters and the involvement of civil society institutions and victims' families, as well as an active engagement of the UN, would further enrich such initiatives.

Sustained and long-term international support and funding through the transformation decade would enable Afghans to turn their war-torn country to a peaceful, developed, and prosperous country.

To conclude, there is 'no meaningful exit strategy' in Afghanistan except joining hands on 'victory over insurgency' as expressed by former Secretary of State Dr Henry Kissinger. If not, the situation in the country may turn to the worse, which means threats and challenges to regional and global stability and peace<sup>8</sup>. To stop this from happening, it is necessary to chalk out a common and unified strategy and inclusive policies for a country like Afghanistan. •

## Q&A | AHMAD FAHIM HAKIM

**Q1:** The transitional justice plan is over since 2008. What does the situation look like right now? Where are the memorials for the war victims? There is no vetting of high officials, as there are no charges against human rights.

**A1:** In rural areas they want blanket amnesty. In the cities they want processes. Now, in the absence of strong political will from the government, it is very difficult to work for transitional justice. We need to work on the political will in order to launch such an initiative today. There has been no political will to launch any report on human rights abuses since 1979.

There are a few monuments. In Badakshan there is [one], and in Herat there are negotiations [going on].

It is very difficult to work on justice on human rights violations, as there is no system for the protection of witnesses and victims. People who stand up risk their lives, even in the high-level commissions. In 2004, just before the presidential election, the commission was very critical of the candidate in Herat. The AIHRC condemned the governors' unwillingness to allow opposition and the next day the commission's office was raided.

**Q2:** You stressed that focus on Afghan-led processes may undermine the UN-led processes. Do you believe that the Afghan-led processes are weaker?

**A2:** To overemphasize the Afghan-led processes will not lead to sustained peace as regional actors are playing a role. UN is the only credible body to lead regional processes. The UN processes must be seen as complementary to the Afghan processes. With respect to the peace agreement with Hezb-i-Islami, the dividing line between negotiations that lead to political solutions may not be the same as those for peace. There are not very good indicators on who did what and when and transitional justice due to lack of evidence.

**Q3:** Hekmatyar claimed responsibility in the media for a bomb killing civilians some years ago. After the peace deal in September 2016, a special representative again claimed responsibility for the bombing. There might be twisted political reasons to not to bring Hekmatyar to court for this crime, but should we not do that as a nation when it is all in the open?

**A3:** There are available options (e.g. a truth-seeking commission). This can only be done with the political will of all parties, including the government. There is a need to agree on a process and documentation. Afghanistan joined the ICC. It may be a possibility, but the Afghan government must show political will to deal with those cases before anything can happen.

8. Highlighted in Henry Kissinger's book entitled 'World Order', published in 2014.

**CHAPTER 2**SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES  
OF EXPERIENCES

PAAL HILDE

# THE NORWEGIAN EVALUATION

**THE COMMISSION APPOINTED** for the evaluation worked for 18 months until June 2016. The mandate was broad: to evaluate and to draw lessons from all parts of the Norwegian engagement in Afghanistan during the years 2001–2014. The Commission was composed of ten members: Chairperson B T Godal, Lt. Gen Hagen and eight academic experts. A secretariat of five to six members, led by me, supported the Commission in its work. The Commission held 21 meetings, including travels to Brussels, Kabul, New York, Washington DC, and London – representing a total of about 50 days of meetings – and interviewed a total of over 330 persons, among them Afghan president Ashraf Ghani and first lady Rula Ghani, CEO Abdullah Abdullah, former president Hamid Karzai and several other prominent Afghans, general David Petraeus and ambassador Douglas Lute from the U.S., and of course a number of Norwegians – including two former prime ministers, three former defence ministers, three foreign ministers, four chiefs of defence, but also next of kind to fallen soldiers, aid workers, rank and file soldiers, journalists, etc.

The Commission had access to extensive archival materials from the National Archives, the Norwegian parliament, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Norwegian Intelligence Service, as well as NATO and the UN.

The report is 213 pages long and divided into 14 chapters. After a summary and a short introduction, part

one gives an overall historical overview of the 13 years of engagement from 11 September 2001 until 31 December 2014. Part 2 contains the topics the Commission considered the most important, which include the Norwegian military engagement, the Norwegian development aid, the Norwegian engagement in Faryab Province, where Norway led a PRT from 2005 to 2012, and, finally, the Norwegian peace diplomacy. One chapter has been dedicated to international law. In part 3, the Commission spells out its conclusions and draws a range of conclusions.

Before moving on to the findings, I want to underline that the Commission was very clear about the fact that the Norwegian engagement was a very small piece in a very large puzzle. The Norwegian engagement thus made very little overall difference in Afghanistan; in and of itself, it changed very little. In total, Norway spent about 20 billion Norwegian kronor on its engagement during 2001–2014, where the military accounted for about 11.5 billion and civilian aid for about 8.4 billion. This amounted to a mere 0.26% of the estimated total military effort and 2.3% of the total international aid in the period. Norway was thus a relatively much larger civilian contributor than a military. The US was the by far largest, both militarily and in terms of aid.

So, on to the Commission's overall conclusions. The most fundamental conclusion is found in the first paragraph of the summary:

“Despite over 15 years of international effort, the situation in Afghanistan remains discouraging. Militant Islamist groups still have a foothold in parts of the country and the Taliban are stronger than at any time since 2001. Ongoing hostilities continue to undermine the potential for economic and social development, threaten to reverse whatever progress has been achieved, and weaken the opportunity to build a stable, functioning, democratic government.”

It is in the context of this disheartening conclusion that the Commission evaluates the Norwegian effort. Overall, the Commission found that Norway had three overarching objectives in Afghanistan. These were: to support the United States and NATO, to help combat international terror, and to help build a stable and democratic Afghan state.

In addition to assessing the Norwegian engagement based on these three objectives, the Commission emphasised three areas it considered particularly important: the Norwegian engagement in Faryab, the role of Norwegian special forces and the intelligence service, and Norwegian peace diplomacy.

The Commission's overall conclusions as to the extent to which Norway achieved its objectives are as follows:

The first and most important objective was to support the US and help secure the continued relevance of NATO. By and large, the Commission finds that Norway achieved this goal. Norway was a good ally.

The second objective was to help combat international terror by preventing Afghanistan from once again becoming a safe haven for international terrorist activities. This has only been partially achieved. While the Taliban have a national agenda, the “War on Terror” was not only controversial, but failed to rid Afghanistan of international groups such as al-Qaida and the so-called Islamic State.

The third objective was to help to build a stable and democratic Afghan state through long-term development cooperation and peace diplomacy. This objective has not been reached. Afghanistan's formally democratic institutions are fragile and the war continues. International and Norwegian aid has produced results in certain areas, such as health and education. However, Afghanistan has become one of the world's most aid-dependent countries, and the influx of aid has contributed to widespread corruption.

The Commission draws a number of conclusions as to why Norway – and the international community – failed to reach these objectives. The conclusions include that the objectives and approaches employed at times

were internally inconsistent or contradictory. Security considerations drove the agenda for state-building and development aid. The international coalition's strategy for combatting terror and insurgency prioritised short-term security goals. The choice to include former warlords in new Afghan regime undermined the state-building project. International actors often became part of local power struggles they did not understand and could not influence, and thus contributed to abuse of power and corruption.

The emphasis placed on democratic elections was important for the international legitimacy of the state-building project. However, the increasing and extensive fraud that neither local nor international actors were able to prevent undermined the confidence in elections among the local population. Moreover, the extensive international military presence generated a sense of occupation among some segments of the Afghan population, thereby strengthening the very groups that the military forces were fighting.

The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Faryab was Norway's largest and most visible military contribution in Afghanistan. The province also received extensive Norwegian development assistance. The intention of the PRT model was to strengthen the Afghan central government's control in the provinces and to promote state-building and development. This task proved to be difficult, if not impossible. It was very difficult for external actors to build confidence among the local population in an Afghan state lacking legitimacy.

The Norwegian presence was insignificant in comparison to the size of the province, and no cohesive Norwegian strategy was developed. The Norwegian efforts therefore made little difference for the overall developments in the province. It should be noted, however, that there were allies that invested greater resources in other provinces, and they were no more successful.

**... the extensive** international military presence generated a sense of occupation among some segments of the **Afghan population**, thereby strengthening the very groups that the **military forces** were fighting.



Norway instituted a clear separation between civilian and military activities. This at times led to an intense debate in Norway. On the one side were those who emphasised the importance of keeping the military out of development work they did not understand. On the other were those who claimed that many NGOs stressed their need of a humanitarian space, while they in reality, as development actors, were a part of the same state-building project as the military.

Furthermore, the civilian-military separation was not consistent with the strategy of counterinsurgency (COIN) operations that from 2008 guided ISAF's approach to military and civilian cooperation. The absence of clear guidelines on how to bridge this gap led to misunderstandings and frustration among the Norwegian civilian and military personnel on the ground. The so-called Faryab Strategy published by the Norwegian government in 2009 represented an attempt at clarification, but had little practical value.

The Norwegian Special Forces and the Intelligence Service developed close cooperation in Afghanistan. So close that it garnered international attention. They developed a concept where the full resources of the Norwegian Intelligence Service were directly available to the special forces in the field. The concept was named "National Intelligence Support Team" or NIST.

Their joint activities in Kabul from 2007 were particularly important. The special forces, supported by the intelligence service, had a clearly defined mission that focused on safeguarding Kabul and building up the Afghan police's Crisis Response Unit (CRU) 222. Both represented important contributions to building an Afghan state. CRU 222, which Norway still supports, represents one of very few lasting results of the Norwegian military engagement.

Norway's engagement in the area of peace diplomacy helped create a dialogue between the parties regarding the agenda and led to close contacts with Afghan authorities and the US. Norway was one of the first countries to develop contacts with the Taliban. Already by 2007, Norway began paving the way for negotiations between Afghan authorities and the Taliban, in consultation with President Hamid Karzai. Norway also actively sought to influence the internal processes in Washington until 2011, when the US first opened up for the possibility of negotiations. The Norwegian engagement may be divided into two phases or tracks. The first track stretches from 2007–2010 and involves direct contacts with the Taliban leadership in Quetta in Pakistan. The main effort here was to establish a dialogue between Afghan authorities and the Taliban. It took two years before Norway informed US authorities about these contacts. The second track stretches from 2010 to 2014 and beyond. Contacts were here established with the Taliban's Political

**Ongoing hostilities** continue to undermine the potential for economic and social development, threaten to reverse whatever progress has been achieved, and weaken the opportunity to build a stable, functioning, democratic government.

Commission in Doha, Qatar, and were primarily directed towards facilitating contacts between the Taliban, on the one hand, and US and Afghan authorities on the other.

Neither Norwegian nor other attempts to negotiate a settlement were successful. Peace diplomacy was nonetheless an important Norwegian contribution. The Commission finds that the high-level dialogue between the Norwegian authorities and their Afghan and US partners likely helped to influence their view on the potential for negotiations with the Taliban. Together with others, Norway sought to influence the Taliban's thinking as to what a political solution must and would entail. Norway established a dialogue with the Taliban at an early stage concerning the need for the movement to change its political views, including on women's role in society, if the movement wished to return to a place in Afghanistan's political life.

The Norwegian engagement naturally involved more than the three key areas I have covered so far. While small in overall terms, the military involvement in Afghanistan was extensive and posed challenges for the Norwegian Armed Forces. Parts of the Norwegian military struggled to maintain the committed level of forces, which indicates the high priority of the Norwegian authorities with regard to participation in Afghanistan. All in all, over 9,000 Norwegian women and men served with the military in Afghanistan. 10 lost their lives and 19 were seriously injured.

With the partial exception of the activities in Faryab Province, Norway had no illusions that Norwegian forces alone could change the situation or developments in Afghanistan. The Norwegian forces were part of an international effort and international military strategy. Norway's primary strategic objective was to contribute.

Like other national contributions to Afghanistan, the core objective of Norway's development assistance was

to contribute to building a democratic and, in the long run, well-functioning and economically independent Afghan state. At the end of 2014, the international and Norwegian state-building efforts had achieved some results compared to the situation in 2001, when much of Afghanistan lay in ruins after decades of civil war. However, compared to the most ambitious goals to achieve a peaceful, democratic development, the results were nevertheless disappointing, not least in light of the significant resources invested in the project.

From an early stage, Norway's goal was for the Afghan authorities to take responsibility for development and state-building to the greatest extent possible. From a development point of view, this was a sound policy objective, but it proved unrealistic. Norway also emphasised that development aid should be needs-based, not security-driven. The Norwegian government channelled funding to the Afghan national budget via the World Bank Multi-Donor Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and supported the authorities through various UN-led programmes. Yet roughly 35 per cent of Norwegian civilian aid still went to non-governmental organisations. Wider dispersal of funding was a step in spreading risk and reaching out to areas with weak local authorities.

As requested by the Afghan authorities and based on traditional Norwegian development assistance practices, the Norwegian authorities distributed the funds across several areas. Chief among these were education, rural development and good governance, with women's rights and gender equality as a cross-cutting theme. In some of these

areas, Norwegian-funded projects achieved good and important results. Flexibility and optimal coordination with Afghan authorities and other donors were stressed.

The gradually worsening security situation made monitoring and evaluation of projects in the field difficult. Even considering security, the Norwegian performance assessment was too weak. Norwegian aid was part and parcel of the overall international framework of extensive aid and inadequate follow-up and control. The aid thus contributed to the growing problem of corruption.

The significant volume of Norwegian aid must in part be regarded as a reflection of Norwegian domestic politics, and in part as adherence to the Norwegian government's objective to be a good ally and a generous donor. The centre-left government's decision to spend equal amounts on civilian and military activities, leading to the December 2007 decision to commit 750 million NOK annually, should be understood, at least partially, as an expression of these aims.

In increasing the civilian aid, Norwegian authorities did not adequately consider the low absorptive capacity in the Afghan state administration and the limited administrative capacity in the Norwegian embassy in Kabul and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The conditions for properly following up such an extensive aid contribution were not in place. Norway partially addressed this by channelling the funding to multi-donor funds of the World Bank and to the UN, which assumed responsibility for the administration. •

## Q&A | PAAL HILDE

**Q1:** Are those lessons and the report already a part of the Norwegian political process?

**A1:** Normally, upon the presentation of this kind of report, it is subject to a green paper, which means a government report to the parliament. This time there will be no government report to the parliament, but on 10 January next year there will be a hearing in the parliament when the prime minister and the defence minister will report on the situation in Afghanistan and on this evaluation. From there, the parliament will take it further.

**Q2:** How has it been received so far? Has it caused a lot of debate in Norway?

**A2:** Yes it did, initially, in the press. But the press has

a very short attention span, so it quickly disappeared from the public view. But generally, the report has been received very favourably. And, yes, it is very critical, and it is considered an important milestone in the Norwegian engagement, especially by those who work on Afghanistan.

**Q3:** You referred to three objectives: to support the US and NATO, to combat international terror, and to support the development of a stable and democratic Afghanistan. Two of these are means of reaching the goal, which is a stable and democratic Afghanistan. If you think of Afghanistan as a whole, to what extent are you satisfied with the efforts of Norway and the international community, in view of today's situation: We were going up, but now we are going down?

Link to the Norwegian evaluation: [www.cmi.no/news/1711-a-good-ally-norway-in-afghanistan](http://www.cmi.no/news/1711-a-good-ally-norway-in-afghanistan).

**A3:** As I tried to show in my presentation, the commission is very critical of both the Norwegian and the overall international effort. Large parts of it, though very well-intended, had goals that were contradictory at times. In the war against terror, and in the US operation Enduring Freedom, deals were made with local warlords. This was good from a security point of view, but not from a state-building point of view. There have been a lot of contradictions, a lot of mistakes from the international side in this engagement. Norway tries to draw lessons from this. If you go into a conflict, you really have to think hard about where you want to go and what you want to achieve. That is very hard, because decisions like that must be taken very quickly. But a minimum effort has to be made to chart out a plan, and no such plan existed in Afghanistan. And the goals kept shifting and escalating.

**Q4:** How was Norway dragged into this facilitation process to contact the Taliban? Who asked the Norwegians? Secondly, you had the Quetta and the Doha tracks. And the meetings in Oslo. Can you mention something more about them?

**A4:** A little about the peace process. Norway has a

long history of activism in this field. Colombia is one example. The first publicly known big thing was obviously the Oslo channels in the Middle East. And this also plays a role in the case of Afghanistan. The origin of the Norwegian engagement, which was written about in the report, is in Pakistan and the religious madrassas in Balochistan, where Norway in 2006/2007 developed contacts with religious leaders who in turn were in contact with the Taliban. The offer came from the Taliban to Norway: 'Would you be willing to facilitate contacts with the Afghan government?' From there it went and developed. Then those contacts failed to result in a meeting. There were several attempts to get a meeting. For example, in December 2008, there was an Afghan official delegation and a Taliban delegation in Oslo, in the same hotel.

But then, at the very last moment, the Taliban delegation withdrew from the meeting. There were a few more attempts. Until 2010, when Norway more or less abandoned this track and the contacts in Quetta following a final attempt in August to have a delegation come to Norway. And slowly, there was a shift to the then German-led contacts with the Taliban in Doha.

NICOLE BALL

# EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS FROM THE **DANISH** DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

**FROM THE OUTSET** of the international engagement in Afghanistan post-2001, Denmark understood that its development, security and political/diplomatic tools were all necessary to combat terrorism and support the transition from Taliban rule. As part of this effort, Denmark provided some 4.3 billion Danish kroner in development assistance to Afghanistan between 2002 and 2014 to support national, regional and global security and poverty reduction in Afghanistan.

The 2012 evaluation of Danish development co-operation found that Denmark had made a difference with its development assistance. Support was relevant, aligned to Afghan needs and delivered in accordance with Afghan priorities and plans. Denmark has actively promoted agreed international principles for development co-operation including ownership, state-building, gender equality, human rights protection and recognition of linkages between political, security and development objectives. Danish development co-operation has also reflected the belief in multilateral organisations as a means of promoting Danish development objectives by delivering a substantial amount of assistance through multilateral channels.

At the same time, delivering development assistance in Afghanistan was highly challenging. Denmark, in common with other members of the international community, had to navigate the difficult waters of intense strategic interest, limited capacity and reach of state institutions, increasingly entrenched corruption, multiple lines of conflict domestically and regionally, a profound lack of trust between state and citizen and a deteriorating security environment. This process has produced a number of lessons concerning, first of all, the integration of politics, development, stability, security and secondly, how to deliver development assistance under these conditions.

I am going to briefly discuss the nine lessons we identi-

fied and summarise the five key conclusions that emerged from these lessons.

Starting with the three lessons on integrating politics, development, stability and security we identified:

First, an integrated approach requires clear and shared strategic objectives. Engaging in fragile and conflict affected states such as Afghanistan requires a multifaceted approach based on an understanding of the complexities of the environment, in particular its political aspects. In order to deliver the most effective integrated response possible, international partners such as Denmark need to bring all relevant actors – political, development and security – to the table to establish a shared contextual understanding and to determine how each set of actors can contribute to the integrated effort. Specifically with regard to development co-operation, it is essential to understand the complete integrated effort in order to deliver development effectively.

Second, integrated implementation of these shared strategic objectives requires that all tools are used to their best advantage. While Denmark's capacity for joint strategy development and joint planning has improved over time, joint implementation remains challenging. There is some evidence of productive collaboration between Danish and the development, political and security tools other partners in Afghanistan. Questions remain about the most appropriate mix of tools and approaches to use in areas where the dominant activities are war-fighting and stabilisation and where international financing risks exacerbating or creating social and political divisions. Experience suggests that the use of development tools in this context must be carefully assessed for potential impact on security, corruption and political relationships.

Third, a broad political consensus on engagement creates space for an adaptive and flexible development approach. Proactively engaging Denmark's political leadership in



discussions on strategic objectives proved to be an effective tool for generating broad political consensus and protecting development assistance from political brokering unrelated to the Afghanistan engagement. At the same time, the trade-offs needed to achieve such consensus had consequences for the scope of the development programme, notably in Helmand Province.

We identified six lessons relating to the delivery of development assistance

First, developing ownership of state-building is fundamentally a political process, requiring donors to have a deep understanding of the particular context and to be prepared to provide support over the long term. In fragile and conflict-affected states, power is continually contested. Power struggles take place within and between all levels of government as well as between state and non-state actors. Ownership of change processes is affected by the political and economic interests of multiple stakeholders. For example, co-operation between authorities at the national and provincial levels was often weak due to mutual mistrust. This complicates the application of the foundational principle of the Paris Declaration – ownership – which commits donors to respect the leadership of the partner country and to help strengthen both the state's capacity to deliver and the civil society's capacity to demand development and human rights. Experience shows that donors need to understand the context in which they operate, to continually adapt to change and to be realistic about the length of time required for ownership to develop and take root.

Second, providing assistance in fragile and conflict-affected states requires careful balancing between promoting principles of aid effectiveness and ensuring adequate oversight of the use of funds. Developing the kind of ownership envisaged by the principles of donor engagement, in which a process originated by outsiders becomes owned by domestic actors with the political will to carry forward the same agenda, inevitably represented a challenge. Afghanistan continues to be a very fragile state which, by definition, means that it is not yet capable of assuring basic security, rule of law, basic services or economic opportunities for all citizens and has not yet established public confidence and trust. With corruption deeply affecting the legitimacy of the state, Denmark and other donors have been reminded that the promotion of country-led processes can result in both positive and negative development outcomes. Therefore, at the same time as promoting principles of aid effectiveness such as ownership and demonstrating the necessary strategic patience, it is important that the monitoring mechanisms of bilateral and multilateral channels are strong enough to prevent abuse of donor funds undermining state legitimacy.

Third, when decisions are made to add substantial capacity through technical assistance (TA), it is important to actively address sustainability in order to avoid creating a parallel civil service. Donors including Denmark have funded tens of thousands of technical advisers to address profound

capacity weaknesses that characterised the line ministries from 2001 onward. Donors' strong belief that improved service delivery would convince Afghans that it was in their best interests to support the government rather than the armed opposition and that this technical assistance would enable this to occur rapidly led to support for high levels of advisers. Unfortunately, in many ministries, technical assistance became a vehicle for patronage and graft. Although it was assumed that technical advisers would be a temporary means of developing the capacity of the core civil service, for over a decade no plans were put in place to phase them out and advisers became entrenched as a parallel civil service. While lessons about the limitations of the technical adviser model were identified globally decades ago, donors in Afghanistan were slow to demand that these advisers focus on capacity transfer instead of doing-the-job.

The fourth lesson on delivering development assistance is that while the type and size of projects need to be tailored to context, including Danish strategic priorities, and can be expected to change over time, minimising the number of projects in the portfolio and focusing on large interventions that support the delivery of results at scale can create space for deeper engagement with partners, including policy and political work to improve donor understanding of the context. In a high stakes context the pressure to deliver results quickly tends to produce a large number of projects. In Afghanistan at the time when Denmark was increasing funding, a large portfolio compromised Denmark's ability to engage with multilateral partners and the government during the design of new programmes that were better able to deliver results at scale. There are compelling reasons in an initial phase to fund a variety of partners and issues, and certain themes such as human rights and gender will always be a high political priority for Denmark. And this approach can require funding of smaller interventions. At the same time, the decision in the 2014/15-2017 Country Programme to focus development co-operation resources on a small number of larger multilateral projects has meant that Denmark can deliver greater impact through its portfolio, including through policy dialogue.

Sixth, Denmark's 'risk willing' approach is appropriate for a context where there are many serious risks. It can best be supported by strong monitoring and evaluation arrangements that are adjusted as the context changes. Time and experience have demonstrated that strong monitoring arrangements are essential to manage risk effectively and that these arrangements need to be established in the early stages of an engagement. This is challenging when Danish policy gives responsibility to implementing partners to monitor the results they are responsible for creating. It is even more challenging when these partners are unable to visit insecure areas to verify what is being reported. Approaches to monitoring have adapted to changes in the context but they have done so slowly. In future engagements it is crucial to minimise the risks by allocating time and financial resources to ensuring that

monitoring arrangements are the best possible in the context and are adjusted rapidly as the context changes so that programmes can be adjusted as necessary.

And the last lesson regarding the delivery of development assistance is that for Denmark to be an influential voice in aid coordination, staff need sufficient seniority, strong country knowledge, relevant technical expertise and a consistent presence. In a context as political as Afghanistan, where the multiple agendas of the largest donors dominate, and where there are a multitude of coordination forums and actors, participating in aid coordination is challenging. For a small donor to have influence is extremely challenging. In spite of the inherent disadvantage, there is some evidence that small donors can have a degree of influence if, depending on the forum, they have strong country knowledge, relevant technical experience and sufficient seniority. Alliances such as Nordic Plus can also be beneficial in strengthening influence.

Now I briefly want to mention the five main conclusions emerging from the lessons that arise out of this study.

The first is: Context matters. Denmark's experience in Afghanistan underscores the validity of the first principle for good international engagement in fragile states: Take context as the starting point. It also demonstrates the complexities of applying this principle. To maximise the ability to understand context and mitigate aggravating conflict through development assistance, the Danish experience suggests the importance of cross government co-operation at the strategic and planning levels, an integrated Embassy, staff with appropriate specialisations (area, development and political) both at headquarters and the Embassy, strong working relations with country/regional specialists, postings of adequate length and a system for developing and utilising institutional memory. Providing optimal amounts of these inputs is challenging, especially in the early phases of a transition process or when security deteriorates significantly, but contextual understanding benefits from efforts to maximise these.

The second conclusion is that as the context is complex and evolves over time, it is essential to be flexible and to adapt programming as donors become more familiar with the environment. Understanding of context deepens over time as international actors become more familiar with the environment, but programming cannot wait for this knowledge to mature. Even when donors and implementers are relatively familiar with the context, it is impossible to foresee all consequences – positive and negative – of development interventions or the way in which the context will evolve. Programming decisions inevitably have to be made based on imperfect information and progressively adapted as more information becomes available.

The third conclusion is that it is important to try to do what is right. Denmark's development co-operation with

Afghanistan has strongly reflected its support for internationally agreed principles governing the delivery of development assistance. While delivering against these principles has confronted a number of obstacles, Danish officials generally agreed that it is important to maintain a principled approach, as this may help lay the foundation for a more positive outcome in the future.

Fourth, integrated strategies, planning and implementation are all important. During the course of the engagement in Afghanistan, Denmark laid the groundwork for applying an integrated approach in fragile and conflict-affected states (building in part on its engagement in Iraq). Progress was greatest at the strategic level at headquarters and that facilitated the development of the Helmand Plans. The record on integrated implementation of these strategies and plans has been mixed and has raised questions about the viability of joint working. In particular, evidence is unclear about the degree to which development activities (as distinct from stabilisation activities financed through development co-operation) are feasible in highly insecure environments.

Our last conclusion is that when working in fragile and conflict-affected states where development occurs alongside a stabilising military presence, it is important to make every effort to learn from experience. The process of undertaking this study has highlighted the importance of being willing and able to learn from experience. While this conclusion is by no means unique to Afghanistan or even other fragile states, learning from experience is more challenging in these environments because of the multiple players involved, the complexity of the operating context and the high political stakes. The Danish experience in Afghanistan, in common with that of other members of the international community, underscores the importance of systems that promote critical reflection to enable organisations, not just individuals, to learn even in environments where the political pressure for positive results is strong.

## A FINAL WORD

In April of this year, the Office of the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) held a meeting in Washington DC on learning lessons from the experience of the coalition in Afghanistan. During the opening session, senior diplomats from Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany who had served in Afghanistan or were currently serving in Afghanistan discussed the key lessons that they had taken from their experiences. I was struck very much by the parallels between their lessons and those identified for Denmark in this study. The importance of Afghan ownership, of understanding context, of the need to accept a long timeframe for promoting change, of the potential benefits of an integrated approach, of the need for a strategic approach and of the importance and challenges of capacity building were among the themes identified by these current and former ambassadors. And these are all key lessons and conclusions from the current study of Danish development assistance. •

NIELS K VISTISEN

# DANISH LESSONS FROM STABILIZATION & CIMIC PROJECTS

**WITH REFERENCE** to what was said earlier about lessons learned and lessons neglected, I want to acknowledge the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan for trying to learn lessons. I will mainly talk about lessons identified.

There are three reports explaining the Danish lessons. Here, I present the result on “Lessons on Stabilization and CIMIC projects”. My agenda mainly falls into two parts. There are lessons from Afghanistan and lessons on collecting lessons. You can call them lessons on learning. I am going to cover the key findings of the study.

Denmark’s contribution to Afghanistan was dispersed both in terms of geography and time of the interventions. The main efforts relate to the battle group in Helmand, where we had about 700 soldiers from 2006 to 2014, but even that effort was very diverse. The first two years were spent on combat operations and patrols in the desert. Then we had an area of operations around Gereshk in the Nahri Saraj district for a number of years. For the last couple of years, we built capacity with the Afghanistan National Army. So, it was not a continuous effort, which makes it hard both to compile and compare lessons.

Our part of the study is about funds spent on stabilization efforts and on civil-military cooperation (CIMIC). We are talking about 16 million Danish kronor (2.5–3 million USD) in stabilization funds and 7 million in CIMIC funds over the entire time period. But it is not just about money. Forty-three Danish soldiers lost their lives in this effort, and then I am not even counting Afghan or allied lives.

The task to “collect experiences” from Afghanistan was decided by Parliament in 2014. The job in our specific part was to collect lessons from CIMIC and stabilization projects, funded from either defence or foreign affairs, to assess whether and to what extent stabilization operations were comprehensive. The study was to draw upon existing material and not create new studies. It was to be short, realistic and applicable. The other two parts of the study were “collected experiences” on development aid by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and on international approaches by the Danish Institute for International Studies. When we translated this into English, we opted to call it lessons rather than experiences.

Touching upon the source material and archives, we searched through official archives from all institutions concerned. Certain secret material was not available to us. Then, there were interviews with key personnel. From the army unit and the Ministry of Defence, we had full access in our search. However, some of the documentation was lacking or inadequate. From the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we could request what we wanted, but information was severely lacking and we could not carry out necessary verification. From the Police, there were no files. Since we had a strong working relationship with United Kingdom in the Helmand PRT, we early realised that we needed access to their mission archive as well. However, we were unable to gain access within the time limit of the study. This is just a reminder of how difficult it is to compile experiences and identify the lessons, and that is a lesson in itself for the future. Certain documentation of missions was kept in specific systems that were

not brought back afterwards. As a historian, I think that much information was lost that way for practical rather than deliberate reasons.

Turning to some of the key finding, particularly concerning CIMIC, we found that recruitment and training of CIMIC personnel was difficult. We needed CIMIC operators who were mature people with communication skills, but also with the basic physical skills as an infantry soldier, and those people were difficult to find.

The flexibility of our CIMIC funds was good. The money they brought along for Quick Impact Projects (QIP) had a flexible chain of approval, which turned out to be very good.

We found that CIMIC was not sufficiently integrated into military planning. It was sometimes an afterthought to operations. CIMIC did not always have a seat at the planning table when operations were planned.

We found that the cooperation with stabilization advisers deployed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was close, but often difficult. The advisers had different rotation timings, they came from different background, they often met each other only in relation to missions and they did not have any pre-deployment training. CIMIC personnel often felt that they were sort of secretaries for the stabilization advisers.

Mobility and transportation was another key issue. Some of our military units were in high-tech armoured vehicles, and these were not available for CIMIC. CIMIC staff was unable to get around and drive around in the same way as some in the military. This was a hindrance for getting out and interacting with local Afghans and projects.

The time allowed for handover and takeover for the CIMIC teams was often extremely short. They had 1–2 weeks, which was most often reduced in time due to internal air transport and other things. Sometimes, it was just 1–2 days for the handover from one CIMIC team to the next.

Integration with intelligence was insufficient, particularly in the beginning. This is yet another key issue. It is not necessarily intelligence in a military sense, but rather about understanding the Afghan society, in terms of mapping local society, tribes, power brokers, civil companies and construction companies, for example. There could have been a much better interaction between the intelligence section and the CIMIC operator's unit actually going out and working with the people.

The Danish CIMIC was highly appreciated by our international partners, but they were still generalists. They did not have particular technical skills. Female CIMIC

operators were useful and had no issues with the male population out there. Processes and contacts were more important than the final product and project. I have a quote from one CIMIC officer who said, "projects could not overtake security".

The deployment of stabilization advisers was a useful contribution, and they were well integrated. However, stabilization advisers were also difficult to recruit and with a much varying background, which gave mixed results.

The district stabilization teams were leaderless in a multinational environment. There was no assigned leader, so they had to work together and to make it work, and that was difficult. The stabilization advisers also lacked technical expertise and administrative capacity, which had to be provided by the military units.

At the central PRT level, we found that representation must be at a high enough level to exert some influence. In the beginning, the stabilization advisers were at a level that was too low, so they could not exert any influence.

There are also certain key areas that should have been filled; for example, within the political department of the PRT, to gain insight in the areas we were working with. The integration of policemen training came too late, in 2010. The training was useful, but not fully integrated with the military and civilian effort.

Some of the joint findings that cut across the comprehensive approach is that the pre-deployment training between CIMIC and stabilization advisers resulted in a much improved working environment in mission.

The national plan – the Helmand plan – outlined the strategy, the plans and the goals. However, these were not operational tactical plans. Such plans were expected to be provided by a British brigade headquarters, but they never materialized. Danish military units lacked operational plans or planning capacity to do this over a time horizon longer than the 6-month rotation.

The difference of purpose between CIMIC and stabilization funds was very clear in the steering documents. In missions, on the other hand, these boundaries were blurred. On the ground, in a village, it did not matter if it was CIMIC funds or stabilization funds.

There was also a lack of continued appropriate monitoring of the projects, which likely contributed to corruption and substandard projects. Part of this was because CIMIC was not able to go out to monitor due to the security situation.

There was a need for functional experts, construction engineers, road engineers, electricians, agricultural experts. However, we did not act on it and did not



provide those. We had the capacity to identify, but not to deliver.

The international approach clearly influenced the Danish approach. When you are a small nation contributing in a larger international framework, you are driven by the

strategy in that framework. You cannot go beyond.

We also concluded that experiences were not collected and used systematically. We found that very few people with experience from Afghanistan have used it afterwards, somewhere relevant, after they returned from their mission. •

## Q&A | NICOLE BALL & NIELS K VISTISEN

**Q1:** Is there something that [the two of] you disagree on? Have you jumped to any conclusions that you disagree on?

**A1 (by N Ball):** If I can just say that there are three studies, and there is not one point where these three were really integrated. It was done consensually and it had nothing to do with us. Our communication was rather limited. We were looking at quite different things. I was just nodding when Niels was speaking because there were issues that I certainly came across. That did not get in to the report but supports the point made by Niels.

**Q2:** My first question: was the main part, the military one, left out of this exercise? The second question: each of the three reports was an exercise in lessons learned. That differs from a proper evaluation where original objectives are traced, and then you see to what extent these objective have been met, etc. I suppose that this is what the politicians who commissioned it decided to do. But has there been any discussion among you people about this question?

**A2 (by N Vistisen):** On your first question on the military effort: one of the stated reasons for not putting it [the military part] in was because the military had already conducted one. So it is available. I do not know if it is translated to English. It was done by the army itself. On the evaluation versus the lessons learned exercise, it is the same. It was a parliamentary discussion, so the decision to not evaluate but to call it lessons learned is political.

**A2 (by N Ball):** In 2012, there was an independent evaluation of Danish aid.

**Q3:** I like the conclusion, to do what is right. Could you give a couple of key examples of what could have been right in Afghanistan?

**A3 (by N Ball):** Well, knowledge. I am not sure that people entirely lack knowledge. The problem is translating that up the political chain, which I think is a part of all of our systems.

What did I mean with 'do the right thing'? This, from a Danish perspective, is adhering to the notion that there are certain evolving international principles of good donorship in conflict-affected states. So, ownership is very important, and how do you foster ownership. Yes, they could have done better. State-building was very important, as this was identified as key. We could talk about how you go about building a state, whether focusing on the central part of the state versus if a decentralized approach might have been more useful. Again our study was on lessons, but that was something that did come up as a question. So, it is in this context that Denmark was attempting to do the right thing. And also emphasising issues such as human rights and gender equality. I talked to someone from USAID who said that 'we are so grateful that Denmark focused a lot on the gender issue, because it is very difficult for us. We were really happy to have it on the table.' As a small donor, you know Norway and Denmark, small donors relatively speaking; however, focusing on critical issues can make a difference.

**Q4:** If one asks you to make some correlations between peace and development, will peace lead to development or development to peace?

**A4 (by N Vistisen):** This is very low level and very tactical, and I think that the lessons from CIMIC and stabilization work around a city or around a village in the countryside say that development will not lead to peace. I think that the quote is about this. Development cannot overtake security on the inside. There are a number of reasons for this. Peace may be political and not driven by projects. I think that we found that the Danish CIMIC, as well as stabilization advisors, were very project-focused – how many wells we have drilled, numbers and statistics. That cannot lead to peace. We saw areas where we invested in development that did not lead to peace. It is relatively clear that from a tactical perspective, development in an area does not lead to peace in itself.

**A4 (by N Ball):** If I can just complement that. It obviously depends on what levels you are talking about. I think



that there are ways of promoting development that may simultaneously contribute to peace. Why did we start talking about peace diplomacy in 2007? We may certainly think about this approach and the approach that followed after 2001. I am now taking off my Danish hat and taking on the hat of the independent researcher. We can think about how the approach that was adopted there was neither helpful for peace nor for development. Whereas if we had seen more peace diplomacy and more focus on political settlements at all levels, maybe we could have seen different outcomes concerning peace and development.

**A4 (by N Vistisen):** I think that may be substantiated at a very low level as well. Because you can do peace diplomacy at very low levels as well, rather than building wells and projects. You can also have political engagement at very low levels. That also came in very late, and I do not know if it is part of the overall strategy. It is very difficult to come in as a small nation if you want to do peace diplomacy and the whole machinery wants you to do counterterrorism. We can talk about why this came to Afghanistan rather late, but is certainly a lesson learned.

**Q5:** There was quite some debate in Norway about integrating the military and civilian sphere, whereas in Denmark the integrated approach in Helmand was there from the beginning. Can you comment on the impact of that and maybe compare it to the Norwegian experience?

**A5 (by N Vistisen):** Two considerations. Maybe we were smarter than the Norwegians. I do not know. Maybe it was a realisation that you could not separate military and civilian spheres in that sense; it was impossible at least when you came to Helmand. It was more or less one big mess, and everything was sort of acting together. It might also be because we were working with the British and they had a clear idea that the civilians were at the head, the leaders of the PRT. That was the British approach and we adhered to that, so we also inherited that. But it was a quite close cooperation at the departmental level in the ministries in Copenhagen between the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning being comprehensive. I mean a comprehensive approach plan came in very early, from 2004–2005. Where we see it lacking, sort of its lesson, is in the field. That is where it need to be operationalised. The military units need to pre-train with stabilizations advisors. They did not, and for the areas perhaps the planning capacity was lacking when it came to integrated plans. Between the ministries, where you had civil servants that could work together, maybe you lacked an operational headquarter with a comprehensive approach that could actually turn it into realistic operational plans and get people working together. We found, we have lots of evidence, that a lot of the work in the mission was more based on personalities and good will to work and listen to each other rather than being a result of deliberate planning of working together.

TONE TINGSGÅRD

# MESSAGE ON THE **SWEDISH** **INQUIRY**

**JUST A FEW WORDS** on the status of the inquiry. In July 2015, I was appointed as chair of the inquiry to evaluate Sweden's engagement in Afghanistan during 2002–2014. To my help I have the principle secretary Michael Frühling and the inquiry secretary Vilhelm Rundquist.

We began our work in September last year, and we will present our findings by the end of February 2017. The terms of reference for the inquiry puts emphasis on the Swedish engagement in Northern Afghanistan.

The inquiry shall describe and analyse relevant aspects of the engagement like: national and international contexts and conditions governing the engagement, how the engagement was conducted with emphasis on civilian-military cooperation and coordination, coordination and cooperation with other countries, international organisations and Afghan authorities. We are to account for the objectives of the engagement and its results, including budgetary results. We will also account for the effects on Afghanistan, including the effect on women's role in the Afghan society. From our findings, we are to present recommendations for the Swedish government and relevant agencies for future international engagements.

We have up to now conducted more than 200 interviews with political and military decision-makers, civil society representatives and researchers. We have read all the reports from

Afghanistan from our civilian and military personnel, including the military mission reports. We have had access to all documents we could possibly think of, and we still do. We have participated in seminars in Sweden and abroad. We have been in constant contact with the Swedish defence research agency and we have studied their many reports on Afghanistan. We have visited Oslo, Copenhagen, The Hague, London, Washington, New York and of course Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif, and we have met with relevant people in all these places.

In short, we are gathering the facts, assessments and viewpoints we believe are needed, and we are now in the process of writing the report. So, for us it is of great value to be present here today and tomorrow. Even if we are not in the position to speak our minds freely, we are free to listen! So, thank you for the invitation! •

BENGT EKMAN

# REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS FROM SWEDISH DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

**THIS PRESENTATION WILL CONSIST** of broad, and maybe sweeping, reflections on development perspectives, both overall on the development efforts by the international community in Afghanistan, and specifically on the Swedish development interventions. When looking back, we need to see where Afghanistan is now and where it was some 15 years ago. During this period, some 63 billion dollars (not inflation adjusted) have been spent in development cooperation according to the OECD Development Assistance Committee DAC, one of the highest amount per capita, except some small island states.

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

15 years ago:

- Afghanistan was lacking most of the structures and institutions needed for building a state. No elections had been held for many years
- Afghanistan did not have any proper public system for social services, education, health, etc.
- Afghanistan's economy was ruined after more than 20 years of armed conflict, with a GNP per capita 2001 that was less than half of that of 1980

- The task ahead was formidable – to build a state out of almost nothing, coming from decades of conflict, without any substantial revenue streams

Now, Afghanistan has institutions and structures. Strategies, priorities, policies, and plans are being put forward. The basics of a state at the central level have been built. Many, but far from all, girls and boys go to school, and most citizens have access to basic health facilities. Gender equality has a stronger platform than previously.

However, it is a very long way ahead. Security is deteriorating. Peace is elusive. Still, literacy levels stand at some 31% and only 18% for women. The level of poverty is not decreasing, but rather the opposite, the same as inequality. Self-reliance, in the sense that Afghanistan is not totally dependent on international support, is decades away. The implementation of strategies is far from achieving set objectives, due to low capacity and underdeveloped structures. Citizens' trust and confidence in the government has shrunk further according to the latest Asia Foundation Survey and its legitimacy is low. Corruption is endemic and permeates the whole society. The economy is doing very poorly, following the

**Let security** competent authorities work with security and let development agencies work with development efforts.

withdrawal of the international security forces that provided an artificial boost to the economy. The GNP per capita is negative and will at best increase at a very moderate level, and the levels of domestic and foreign investments has further shrunk, as investors' confidence has decreased.

#### **WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR THIS AND WHAT ARE LESSONS LEARNT?**

First: It has been a unique situation. No blue print existed, neither for the new government nor for the international community.

Second: A real long-term approach was not adopted. Actually, according to AREU, since 2001, the international community has consistently incentivised political and economic "short-termism".

Third: Knowledge of Afghanistan's society, history, and ethnic diversity was to a large extent missing in the international community.

Fourth: Not nearly enough focus on the development of the economy being the basis for developing the country and improving people's lives.

Fifth: No understanding of the consequences of vast sums of military and development funding coming into the country. Far too weak control mechanisms have contributed to a culture of corruption. As a former US ambassador to Afghanistan concluded: "the ultimate point of failure for our efforts ... wasn't an insurgency. It was the weight of endemic corruption."

Sixth: Sustainability has not been in the forefront; the focus of donors has been to get the money out of the door. The establishment of the second civil service, amounting to many thousands of people, who are much better paid, undermines the public sector, especially since no clear exits of it were set.

#### **SWEDISH DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION – HOW HAS IT PERFORMED?**

We had already been present in Afghanistan for some 20 years, through the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan's (SCA) long-term engagement and funding from Sida, during the long tough years and meeting primarily the very strong need for humanitarian support, not least in operating schools and health clinics. Sweden thus had knowledge of the situation to build upon. We could build upon this knowledge and all the contacts that had been established, not least in the exile environment in Peshawar, when Sweden shifted from humanitarian support to development cooperation.

An evaluation of the cooperation 2001–2004 concluded that the cooperation had quickly responded to needs and had resulted in positive achievements in support of stability and state-building. The evaluation also concluded that Sweden has had more influence on policy than could be expected due to the SCA's experience and close contacts. The early years saw thus some real progress.

For the next period, 2006–2009, Sida reported that part of the cooperation had to be phased out, due to limited ownership and capacity at government institutions. An outcome assessment concluded that the policy dialogue on education could have been stronger. The limitations started to be seen. For the period 2009–2014, Sida reported that projects many times performed well at activity level, but that less of an impact could be seen at the sector level. This implies that project support was frequently not based on sector policies and was not aligned with national priorities. Another conclusion was that development strategies have had very ambitious goals for their 3–4 year timespans. Sida concluded that the time horizon must be considerably longer and that results must be set at realistic levels. Sida concluded in 2013 that objectives have not been achieved.

Due to Sweden's and few other donors' strong focus on gender equality in the policy dialogue, women's rights are now much in the centre of the international community's agenda, and Sweden continues to make this its highest priority.

During the last couple of years, the deteriorating security situation has resulted in Sida staff facing more difficulties when it comes to visiting project activities and monitoring progress. This is a challenging situation for us, and we need to develop new mechanisms for reality checks.

#### **CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION**

Sida was instructed by the Swedish government to first post development advisors to the PRT, later followed by earmarking development allocations geographically to the four northern provinces where Sweden led the PRT.

The proportion that was earmarked increased to 1/3. Other donors had similar mechanisms. One perhaps little understood effect of this earmarking was donors dividing up the country in development efforts, diminishing Afghan ownership and involvement from the national level and contributing to an unbalance in provincial allocations. Regarding synergy effects of civil and military activities, it may be concluded that it is easy to express the synergy objective at a high level in strategy formulation. However, if not followed up by concrete how-instructions, it will just not happen. This is not my own reflection, but one put forward by the Auditor General of Sweden, in its investigation of state support to international operations.

One could also see from the records that Sida and the Armed Forces did not know the objectives, methods and organisations of one another. It took considerable time to develop relations. The ambiguity also created expectations at the Afghan side that were not met.

One lesson is clear: Drop the synergy objective! Let security authorities work with security and let development agencies work with development efforts. That way, the respective competencies are used to best effects. Fo-

cus cooperation on information-sharing and context analysis.

## **ORGANISATION AND RESOURCES**

It took considerable time for Sweden to organise itself in Afghanistan and ensure that the organisation had the proper resources. It was only in 2008 that a Swedish embassy was established in Kabul and it also took considerable time to set up the organisation in Mazar. Compared to other countries where Sweden work with development cooperation, a short-term focus has prevailed, the staff resources have slowly been increasing, and a very limited number of national programme officers have been built up.

Sweden has had clear problems with continuity. Also here – think long-term!

Sweden has had, and still has, a strong brand name in Afghanistan, due to SCA's long-term and neutral work to support the Afghan population. Sweden could have used this more strategically in the policy dialogue for promoting priority issues in regard to gender equality, poverty reduction, etc. However, any objective to take a strong role in policy dialogue must be backed up by adequate resources, a clear strategy, and a sustained effort. •



ANNA-KARIN ENESTRÖM

# REFLECTIONS FROM **SWEDISH** **INTERVENTIONS**

**I AM REALLY HONORED** to be invited to this conference. Not only because Afghanistan is very special to Sweden and many Swedes have been committed and engaged in Afghanistan's struggle for freedom, democracy, security and development over the years. Afghanistan also has a special place in my own heart.

I also want to thank the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) for their dedicated and long-term work in Afghanistan. So, a tribute from the government side to SCA. As you know, the Swedish commitment for Afghanistan is longstanding. Last year marked 45 years since the friendship treaty was signed, and the Swedish development cooperation began in 1970. Over the years, strong and wide-ranging relations have developed. The Swedish efforts in Afghanistan have been made in the diplomatic, military and development areas.

The proposal behind Sweden's contribution is to strengthen Afghanistan's own capability to maintain stability, security, democracy, human rights and development.

The outcome of the Brussels Conference in October sig-

naled a very strong commitment from the international community when it comes to political and financial support for Afghanistan over the next four years, based on the driving principle of mutual accountability between Afghanistan and the international community. As part of that mutual accountability, we encourage the Afghan government and authorities to reinforce their efforts to implement their reform agenda. A crucial part of this agenda is the fight for anti-corruption, rule-of-law, good governance and human rights.

A bilateral agreement on development cooperation between Sweden and Afghanistan was signed in 2015, manifesting the importance of our relationship. It confirms Sweden's continued support to Afghanistan, and the agreement establishes a platform for consultations and continued political dialogue.

Already in 2012, a very substantial and long-term commitment was made, which was extended at the Brussel Conference. Sweden will contribute with about 900 million US dollar over the period of 2015–2024. Afghanistan, as we have already heard, is the largest recipient of Swedish development assistance.

The Swedish government prioritizes women and girls and their participation, and also that they are made a part of the solution in Afghanistan. This is key for sustainable peace and development in the country. Of course, equally important is that their rights are respected.

Sweden's participation in ISAF was guided by the objective of supporting the Afghan government in maintaining security in the country in order to enable political reforms and reconstruction. Throughout the years 2002–2014 around ten thousand men and women have contributed to that effort.

After 2014, the Swedish contribution continues in the Resolution Support Mission with about 30 advisors. This bill has been presented to the parliament to seek authorization for continuing the support also in 2017.

We are extremely worried and concerned about the attacks on civilian populations in Afghanistan, and equally worried about limited humanitarian space and access for humanitarian actors. There are also worrying signs about increasing numbers of internally displaced people in Afghanistan, in addition to many people returning to Afghanistan, which has to take place in an orderly manner. Civilians must be protected by all parties of the conflict and the work of humanitarian organizations must be respected and humanitarian laws must be upheld.

The Afghan people deserve peace, and an inclusive peace leading to a political settlement is the only viable option. Sweden is engaged in capacity building; one example is training in mediation. In collaboration with the Folk Bernadotte Academy, our embassy in Kabul will later this month organize “peace and mediation training” for women from all provinces. Dialogue is of course central to the Swedish diplomatic and political efforts, which revolve around striving for democratic development, rule of law and human rights. It also aims at promoting reforms that strengthen Afghanistan's long-term ability to cope with security challenges.

**Priorities** of the Swedish government are women and girls and their participation, and that they are made a part of the solution in Afghanistan. This is key for a sustainable peace and development in the country. Of course, that their rights are respected is just as important.

Sweden will continue to support the presence of the UN on the ground in Afghanistan. The presence of the UN is of course key for the development of Afghanistan. Sweden is entering the Security Council starting on 1 January, and I can assure you that we will be a strong voice for the continued comprehensive presence of the UN on the ground.

During the initial years following 2001, we saw a very fragmented international community. We are very pleased to see that the coordination within the international community has improved substantially since then. So has the Afghans' own leadership and ownership of the development agenda. This is an important step, resulting from the Tokyo Declaration of 2012, the Afghanistan Conference in London 2014 as well as the recent Brussels Conference.

Just to conclude, I emphasize the long-term engagement from the Swedish government in very close cooperation with Sida, and we will continue to support security, democratic development and economic development in Afghanistan. We are also very keen to take part of the Swedish Inquiry that will be presented in the spring. •

MAGNUS LÜNING

# LESSONS FROM AFGHANISTAN

**THE MISSION** of the Swedish Armed Forces in Afghanistan started from a very small-scale multinational operation in Kabul in 2001. The engagement grew substantially from 2004 and onwards, with Sweden being in the lead of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Mazar-e-Sharif in 2006 together with Finland. By area, the PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif was the largest PRT in Afghanistan and about 8,000 soldiers and sailors have been engaged in it. Many have returned several times.

I will now go through a short version of 14 years of reports, and these are focused on very narrow subjects. My department has worked hard with them, and my assessment is that they are actually lessons learned. I will highlight some of those I find especially important.

The mission in Afghanistan has contributed to developing the gender perspective within the Swedish Armed Forces. Over the last decade, the Swedish Armed Forces have integrated a gender perspective in planning, execution and in the evaluation of operations with support from gender field advisors and gender advisors. In order to interact with all people – men, women, girls and boys in Afghanistan – and to conduct operations, it was necessary to understand the concept of gender. The lesson from Afghanistan shows that a gender perspective helps improve awareness and the situation. It also provides more comprehensive knowledge about the Af-

ghan society. Let me tell you that the gender perspective is now an integral part of the Swedish Armed Forces, it is a part of the way we think, how we plan our operations and how we evaluate them. It is something that we are very proud of.

The mission in Afghanistan had pretty low media coverage during the first period. This increased as we ended up in more combat situations. As soon as there had been contact, an incident or maybe fighting, the soldiers were keen to call home and tell their loved ones that they were ok. Therefore, the news spread to the media. This has opened up for a new strategy of ours, where we try to be faster and more open. But of course, in our line of business, there is information that is classified, so we try to adapt to that situation, but still be very fast with information and to be as clear as possible.

It is in the DNA of every sailor and soldier to learn. Looking at Afghanistan, it was completely necessary to have a structural way of handling this knowledge. Especially since we have a tendency to be deployed for 6 only months when a new team comes in, so we are rotating pretty quickly. Therefore, there is a need for robust and structured lessons learned.

The Afghanistan operation has helped us to go forward and improve this. •

BENGT KRISTIANSSON

# SCA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SWEDISH INQUIRY

**SCA SUBMITTED** its perspectives to the authority in charge of the Inquiry on Sweden's Engagement in Afghanistan during the years 2001–2014 in the form of two documents: one report based on a thorough review of SCA's positions, documented in writing at different critical points in time, and another report in the form of a recently conducted interview study to be reported at the end of this address. SCA was able to build on its previous 20 years of presence, and from 2001 it expanded its programmes of service delivery, increased its support to the civil society, and increasingly engaged in the advocacy of human rights, democracy, and equality and in work for governance.

The budget has more than doubled during the 14 years, and SCA from the start expressed a willingness to extend and expand, in order to reach its target groups: rural and vulnerable children, women and men.

At the request of Sida, in 2008 SCA expanded with the "Norther Development Project" within its area of competencies in three out of the four northern provinces where the Swedish military had engaged in establishing a PRT. SCA established midwifery schools, supported people with disabilities with training and entrepreneurship and the like, and engaged in NSP-like projects, besides service delivery.

Later, a stronger political pressure was exerted on Sida

to expand development assistance in the same provinces where the Swedish PRT was located. This was the intensified hunt for "visibility", or "synergies", or "comprehensive approach" or COIN strategy – whatever it was called – aiming at districts with a presence of armed opposition groups in need of stabilisation. Sida wanted to see an implementing agency setting up development projects and it approached SCA. After a thorough exploration by SCA with feasibility studies, risk analysis, etc., SCA opted to expand its already existing activities there and, in some areas, set up new ones. And SCA did so successfully and also independently of the military. SCA had by then, 2010–2011, developed a consistent position not to accept any project, cooperation, or even appearance together with the military. Essentially because any such move would undermine the trust in our field staff and make us seem as one party in the ongoing conflict, especially in the rural areas.

On a more principal level, SCA also stated that development priorities almost never agree with military priorities, and that "winning hearts and minds" and building peace cannot be done through warfare.

Initially, though, the SCA leadership remained quiet during the first 6 months after the US bombing started in October 2001. In mid-2002, SCA expressed its support for the initial military US-led intervention as an expres-

sion of self-defence, but saw that justification already at that time as overdue.

However, SCA was hopeful that the ISAF intervention with its peacekeeping mission, as per UN mandate, would turn out well.

The broad support in Afghanistan for foreign intervention to overthrow the Taliban regime soon turned into frustration with the horrors of war and many civilian victims. But starting with the foreign invasion in Iraq, there was an obvious change in attitude. SCA documented these circumstances quite carefully in an effort to keep up with developments.

SCA, at this point in time, took to strongly criticizing the war, and repeatedly stated that “US bombings in Afghanistan illustrate the impossible mission in fighting terror with war.”

SCA also indicated that the warfare has facilitated the return of the Taliban and strengthened militant Islamism.

SCA's extensive presence in Afghanistan with almost 6,000 employees in half of the provinces has given us plenty of contacts with military actors of different national backgrounds, but has also been a crucial source of information about the national mood.

At no point has SCA asked for, or felt need for, military protection. Quite the opposite: SCA has experienced several violations and abuses by the military; for instance, schools and clinics have been used as checkpoints and launchers, intrusions into schools, intrusions into clinics and offices by troops have occurred, and interference in our projects have taken place. (For the sake of clarity: this has not been seen in the areas of the Swedish PRT, but in several others.)

As ISAF gradually came to merge with the fighting OEF, SCA ceased its previous verbal support to the troops.

In order to ensure an Afghan voice to the Inquiry, during the spring of this year (2016) SCA commissioned a scholar to conduct a study “on civilian-military interaction and

**US bombings** in Afghanistan illustrate the impossible mission in fighting terror with war and claimed that the warfare has facilitated the Taliban return and strengthened militant Islamism.

consequences of the military intervention on aid delivery” where partner organizations and target groups were interviewed.

The results (i.e. the opinions expressed) may briefly be summarized as: The interviewees thought that

- the grey zone between different actors – blurred lines – was problematic with confusing approaches between civilian and military projects
- long-term effects of the short-term “quick fixes” soon turned into corruption and a loss of trust in the state, besides worries about what this will mean long-term
- there were difficulties separating between different national PRTs and the fighting OEF
- the whole idea was basically odd and they asked: Can foreign military troops bring security to local village populations in Afghanistan? They did not think so.

And, in summary, they thought that the military presence and its civilian-military ambitions had by and large weakened people's confidence in the state. •

## Q&A | SWEDISH PRESENTERS

**Q1:** What prevented Sweden from playing a role in peace diplomacy, given its social capital in many areas of Afghanistan? I also learnt that the Taliban even asked Sweden to get involved. What prevented Sweden from playing a role in peace diplomacy?

**A1 (by AK Eneström):** We have actually contribu-

ted to peace diplomacy in collaboration with the UN, when it comes to the humanitarian field and the gender perspective. These are areas where we feel that we have competence and experience. And we are of course very supportive of the peace process, which is the only way of achieving peace and security for the Afghan people.



**Q2:** Concerning the gender perspective in general and the clear commitment, has it been possible to fulfil every goal with regard to gender equality within the SCA?

**A2 (by B Kristiansson):** Our goals have never been achieved. The goals have been floating around and been redefined and with increasing ambition. Though there has been clear progress, the number of girls in schools, women in decision-making, and so on. But we are far from our set goals. So it is a problematic road, but so far it is not closed. We hope that we can continue to make progress on it.

**A2 (by AK Eneström):** This concerns the question about the peace process. We need to look at the statistics on the peace processes and the engagement, contribution and involvement of women in peace processes and also in development. There is evidence on the need to involve women to achieve sustainable peace and sustainable development. It is important to rely on hard facts in this regard.

**A2 (by B Ekman):** The Swedish government adopted a new national action plan on women, peace and security this year, and Afghanistan is a prioritised country. Last year, some Afghan women made quite critical conclusions in a report 'Missing the target', and we are now ready to step up our efforts in Afghanistan based on its own national action plan.

**Q3:** There has been a long and tough debate in Norway on separating the civilian and the military efforts. From a Norwegian point of view, looking at the development side as something completely separated and isolated from the military side does not make sense. To build a state you need to take both into account. But, as mentioned, having the military close by implies a danger of being attacked. Can SCA and the military give their perspective on this?

**A3 (by B Kristiansson):** SCA had its own point of departure, based on studies reflecting no gains in joint projects by military and development actors. Furthermore, such cooperation was questioned by local people and was not well understood. Building security forces is a different thing. Development agencies are not involved in that anyway. There are different missions to fulfil, and nothing gained by mixing them up.

**A3 (by M Luning):** There are many points of view in this kind of complex situation, with vast areas to be covered and different ways of working. The Swedish Armed Forces are peacekeepers. Sweden has been a peacekeeping nation for more than 500 years. The civilian-military cooperation is a grey zone. It is hard to find a coordinated way of working. Dialogue is the only way to solve this issue.

**Q4:** I want to refer to the discussion in Germany about

development actors. You cannot talk about development actors in general. There are governmental and nongovernmental organisations. The NGO sector needs to be a respected sphere, and NGOs do not want, and do not need, protection from the military. Many NGOs do not want to work with the military because that puts them in the firing line. Now to my question number 1: I was surprised to hear of the SCA survey finding that foreign soldiers cannot bring security at the village level. I am not sure if that also applies to the national level. But when I came back to Afghanistan in early 2002, I heard Afghans say 'thank god we have foreign soldiers, our own from PDPAs to the Taliban have messed it up so much that only foreigners are able to help.' So was that a problem of implementation and not so much related to the principle? My question number 2: Was the PRT the right concept? Was it right to make the military a development and state-building actor? We have seen more and more. NATO headquarters is even developing ideas on how the country should develop its natural resources, mining and so on. Maybe there should be more of provincial security teams instead of reconstruction teams?

**A4 (by B Kristiansson):** I can only refer to the study by SCA. Otherwise, I agree with your reasoning. But our study found that the presence of foreign military forces was not considered helpful in the rural areas, by the rural people. In the urban areas, it often sounded different.

**A4 (by AK Eneström):** I do not want to preclude our ongoing Inquiry. But we need to look at how international organisations are working together, in Afghanistan and in other conflict-affected countries, where state-building is a challenge. We need the lessons from experience, and the kind of questions you are asking, to be taken into account also when we are involved in state-building elsewhere.

**Q5:** Last year we published a report on the patterns of impunity in Afghanistan. In that report, we included a document from a PRT in the Balkh province, which described corruption, HR abuses, and criminal activities that were all traceable to the senior-most officials in the province. The common reaction to our report is 'yes, but we need the support from such government officials both for force security and for carrying out the reconstruction projects.' Can any of you comment on this contradiction in mission; that in order to carry out one part of the mission, another important part of the mission is undermined?

**A5 (by M Luning):** Your question is beyond my expertise, but I see your point. It is a very difficult question that has to be carefully analysed in order to handle the problem. However, if funds are stopped, women and children suffer the most. I have seen it myself, how the most vulnerable suffer when funds are withdrawn.

## CHAPTER 3

### PANEL DEBATE

MICHAEL CLAESSION  
 MANIZHA WAFEQ  
 ANDERS FÄNGE  
 ABDUL KHALIL RAUFI  
 MATS KARLSSON (MODERATOR)

# PANEL DEBATE

**THE PANEL DEBATE** following the presentations of the completed or ongoing inquiries of the Afghanistan Interventions 2001–2014 by the governments of Norway, Denmark and Sweden is reflected by three dominant themes, raised during the debate by the four participants Michael Claesson, Manizha Wafeq, Anders Fänge and Abdul Khalil Raufi, and under moderation by Mats Karlsson.

#### DEVELOPMENT AND AID EFFECTIVENESS

The international community should have allocated more resources to social sectors, such as health and education. Figures show that donors spent much more on military spending.

The international engagement in Afghanistan also sheds light on the importance of sustainability in aid and development project design. Development projects have not been sustainable due to an overall focus on quantity over quality. The international community must not forget to monitor and evaluate projects to guarantee quality and sustainability.

The problematic lack of sufficient coordination within the donor community was also raised.

The donors were not working with each other; too many priority areas from too many actors. And they did not overlap sufficiently. There is a need to work together towards common priorities and objectives in the future. Communication and information sharing between the

different donors must also be improved. Sometimes, it was evident that even the same donor launched projects that were ill-coordinated. On the project level, there is insufficient communication within the same localities. Everyone is doing their own research, reports, policies – and often without the involvement of Afghans. Regarding gender, for example, 500 reports, policies and documents of different kinds have been written. Still today, you hear people say: “information does not exist” – but it does exist! Exploring available knowledge is far too often insufficient, and seldom shared. Collaboration needs to be improved and solitary actions must be avoided.

Important lessons for future development cooperation in Afghanistan also entail a greater emphasis on working closer with the Afghans and not just for Afghans. Donors come with pre-designed projects, and many stick rigidly to both the project design and its budget. Much more room for flexibility and an openness for inputs from Afghans would be desired.

The international community’s commitment to Afghanistan, as reaffirmed at the Brussels Conference, is honorable, promising and much needed. It is important that the international community stands by their commitments in the future to provide the needed funding for long-term development projects in Afghanistan. In addition, international and regional assistance is required for investments in infrastructure projects and sustainable economic programs, especially in the areas of agricultu-

re, roads, transit lines and the management of water resources to produce energy and support irrigation.

There is an embryo of women's entrepreneurship which needs tailored advice and support, for example in the establishment of a credit system, incentives for marketing and logistics, and export opportunities. Despite the difficulties facing women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan today, there are 700 licensed women in businesses, all around the country, with investments of an equivalent to 5.8 million US dollars. This has created 4000 jobs, half of them for men. With the right support, this can multiply! But support has to be long-term, not the fragmented short-term programmes so often seen.

Civil society has an important role to play here and generally in development, and should maintain a continued role as an implementing and monitoring partner to ensure that aid is utilized for its intended purpose and that justice and social peace between individuals and groups are promoted in the future.

### STATE-BUILDING

The most fundamental condition for a sustainable development in Afghanistan is the state. If there is not a relatively well-functioning state, development cannot be expected to take place. Territorial control, monopoly on armed forces, rule-of-law and fair treatment by the police and the courts belong to a proper state. In fact, not only rule-of-law but also good laws are required. Afghanistan has good laws, but the state is not capable of implementing them. The question is, who is interested in a functioning state in Afghanistan? Government officials have their salaries and also side incomes, and they are not interested. Obvious examples of side incomes stem from the drug business. Powerful people in the provinces are not interested either, as they want to keep central authority at arm's length. Who is interested? The people, ordinary people are interested. But who is talking to them, who is working for them? There are too many vested interests in Afghanistan, and the state is not able to control that. These interests are found within the state as well. The functioning state is the absolute precondition for any sustainable development. One precondition for state building that President Ashraf Ghani has not mentioned in his book<sup>1</sup> is how to create the political unity that may agree on building such a state. This unity or consensus has not yet materialized.

The fragility of the Afghan state also results in a dysfunctional social contract, as we see today. There is a need for a social contract between the government and the people, which must not be disturbed by the international community.

The international community has an important role for future work within the state-building framework and should make its commitments and undertake its assistance to Afghanistan by considering supporting and promoting democratic values, strengthening democratic institutions, adhering to the separation of powers, supporting civil society and free media, protecting human rights, including civil and political rights. The elimination of corruption is of paramount national importance and should also be a top priority. The international community should support the Afghan government in implementing critical administrative reforms to achieve tangible results in fighting corruption.

### ON PRTs AND PEACE DIPLOMACY

Norway's evaluation is the one that has provided the most. It both adopted a broad picture and a narrow Norwegian picture, and successfully weaved it together to a comprehensive end result.

The military likes to divide things into strategic, operational and tactic levels and this is relevant here as well. This is really what it is about, the coherence at all of these three levels.

The strategic level comprises the political objective, and without a balance between strategic objective and the ones that follow from this, you immediately create imbalance and friction. PRTs, at the operational level, were largely a national issue. They were to a small extent coordinated by NATO and ISAF but largely left as a national issue for each donor country. They were only supported by guiding principles, not by any firm doctrines. The interpretations of these principles varied a lot, to say the least. In general terms, you have to have a common strategy, and the national strategy has to be in balance with the international strategy you try to adapt to.

The choice of the PRT approach needs to be identified: One size does not fit all! The PRT concept had evolved from the situation in Iraq, where there was no civilian administration at all. There, an approach of some kind, a structural way to deal with civilian and military problems, was needed. The PRT concept was generalized and transferred to Afghanistan. In the four provinces where the Swedish PRT operated, there were from the beginning NGOs present that were working perfectly well and in harmony with civilian administration and local society. There was no need for the PRT-concept. So in that regard, "one size does not fit all." The situation on the ground has to be understood and should be based on analyzing each region's needs and specifics. Again coming to the tactical level; pre-deployment training is badly needed, especially

1. A. Ghani & C. Lockhart. Fixing Failed States, 2008. Oxford University Press. (Editor's note)

when it comes to the interface between military and civil functionalities. This cannot be trained in the field. It must be trained beforehand! Likewise, the rapid staff rotations every 6–7 months limited the chances of success. The staff had hardly started to understand the new environment when it was time to say goodbye. The building of trust between PRT staff and Afghan counterparts was limited by the short time span and caused considerable frustration, not least among the Afghans.

Many young people in Afghanistan are frustrated that peace diplomacy has produced no result. They are questioning the so called peace agreement signed with Hezb Islami, a party that harbors warlords who have killed more than a thousand civilians. The young people are asking for transitional justice. Why has peace diplomacy not been more effective? What went wrong in 2003 upon the return of the Taliban? Today and in the foreseeable future, not only an end to the conflict is needed but also social justice. •

## Q&A | PANEL DEBATE

**Q:** Raufi touched upon the issue of good or bad states and on the need of a social contract between the government and the people of a nation. Back in history in Afghanistan, before the 1980s, have you ever faced an Afghan in a vest of explosives? Not before the Soviet invasion! Be careful and do not make it a local conflict – it is an international conflict. Except for Israel, all nuclear powers are involved, nearly all members of the UN Security Council are involved, militarily or politically. What do they expect of this nation losing its independence due to external contradictory interests by nuclear powers? Before the Soviet invasion, Afghanistan was a peaceful country. All of you in the international community came to help us, brave people. We fought communism but were left alone afterwards. The international community kept silent, and we were left completely alone. In Afghanistan, we first experienced hegemony from one party, then power was transferred to a different party and civil war erupted. My question to international experts is especially: This is not an internal conflict. Is it not a global nuclear power struggle? Something we cannot even think of accommodating in Afghanistan.

**A by Barnett Rubin (and new questions):** One sentence in response, when Afghanistan was left alone, it got the Taliban, and now that you are not alone you have them. Why should a government make a contract when it is entirely funded and defended by foreigners? Is it possible to defend a state without using a bit of violence?

**Q2:** With reference to Michael Claesson – yes, we recognize the lessons identified by Norway and Denmark. In 2003, a UNAMA colleague identified lessons learnt and immediately forgotten, lessons ignored, and a minority of lessons applied. How to bring this with us and implement lessons learnt?

**A by M Claesson:** Hard facts on what could be improved. If I stay in my own box, and with the Swedish constitution regarding the PRT side, or rather on the civilian-military cooperation, inter-agency cooperation

complicates things. You have to have a common strategy, and in balance with the international strategy you have to try to plug into. There are models that work relatively well, even if not perfect; for example, in UN multidimensional and integrated missions, where military, political and humanitarian actors share the same objectives, principles and concepts. Referring back to the sessions before lunch concerning corruption, soldiers get frustrated in direct confrontation with corruption. But there is a 'second row of people', a younger generation with sharp pencils and sharp intellects, and I put my faith in that generation!

**A by M Wafeq:** Let us collaborate and let us work together. Use government concepts and priority areas! Donors and civil society each have their own, but different, priority areas. We should all work on common objectives to build the state and promote a social contract.

**A by A K Raufi:** The president should have an interest in the social fields, because he got his position by the people. We are in a democracy. He used to be an ordinary citizen of our country. He was voted into this position. We can have peace if we cooperate with each other.

**A by A Fänge:** 'Left alone' is not exactly true: SCA was there! And with SCA, quite a few other NGOs, funded by different governments, and those governments were still engaged in Afghanistan. On an optimistic note, despite failures and mistakes, a lot of positive things have occurred, but the country is aid-dependent. Also, a lot of human resource development took place; midwives, teachers, engineers, etc. were trained, and there are still results from all of this. And what is there tends to stay, even if refugees are coming to Europe. Thousands of people have been introduced to Afghanistan. They get infected by the Afghan bug (Nancy Dupree calls it the Afghan virus), pulling them back. This is also a strength, in a more distant future, when international assistance to Afghanistan will decrease, there will still be engagement for Afghanistan!

**CHAPTER 4**REFLECTIONS  
BY MARK BOWDEN

MARK BOWDEN

**REFLECTIONS ON  
THE FIRST DAY OF  
THE CONFERENCE**

**I HAVE MANY REFLECTIONS** after four enjoyable years of working in Afghanistan. Many thoughts and a sense of tempered optimism as to the way forward. I have been very stimulated by the meeting here in terms of my overall reflections. I had a script beforehand, which I looked at and I made quite a few changes to that. So you have to excuse me for some breaks in the continuity of my presentation.

I started off with one part on the conference title, “What has been done and what can be done better?” I would actually change that to “What could be done better?” I refer to Margareta Wahlström’s earlier comments in the meeting. Margareta and I worked together in UNOCHA for some time, and I think that we both believe that when it comes to learning lessons, frequently more lessons are ignored than lessons learned being applied!

Looking at the other aspect of the title of the conference: Are we clear in what we understand by Afghanistan’s road to “self-reliance”? I ask this because I think there has been confusion in this meeting as to the meaning of “self-reliance”. Does self-reliance refer to making economic progress, achieving a more sustainable development? Or, does it refer to minimising Afghanistan’s dependence on the international community and foreign forces for its internal security and ability to address the insurgency? My first reflection is to stress that in a mutually interdependent world, we should be looking for a better quality partnership and stronger and more equal relationships

rather than promoting “self-reliance” as a goal. We live in a mutually interdependent world. The challenge we face is to ensure that our interdependence reinforces and helps us achieve our mutual goals.

Afghanistan’s geographical interdependence is, nowhere more apparent than within the security sector. Regionally, where Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran are bound by a complex set of security and economic relationships. Internationally, where Afghanistan relies heavily on the mutual interdependencies created between itself and the US and Europe in addressing global security and migration issues.

Thematically, this meeting has also discussed the interdependence between security and development. There is a frequently used expression that “there is no development without security and no security without development”. The role and interests of the UN lie particularly in this issue. My concern, as I will outline later, is that the relationship between these two elements of interdependence has been an unequal one. For many years the security agenda has heavily held sway over the development agenda with a detrimental impact on the development process.

Previous speakers today have also highlighted the lack of clear commonly agreed-upon objectives in their engagement in Afghanistan so that there is greater coherence in the response of the international community. This in turn would allow the international community to be



both more efficient and more effective in assisting Afghanistan in strengthening its economy and its ability to secure peace and security. The lack of commonly agreed objectives in many of the key areas such as state-building, security or development has been apparent. The UN's task in donor coordination has been hindered as many donors have had no clear objectives but to support each other. To paraphrase an earlier speaker: "with no clear destination, one can wander down many different paths." This describes the past approaches to state-building and development objectives.

**My major concern** is that the various donor pledging conferences have been more concerned with immediate political issues ... and I have argued for many years that there needs to be a stronger development agenda and in particular a stronger focus on poverty reduction.

Part of the problem has been the lack of a shared understanding of the development context or the starting point for development, by which I mean that the transition plans were initiated with overly high expectations of economic growth based on the premise of exploiting Afghanistan's vast mineral wealth. A further problem was created during the period of the security surge when there was confusion between the security and development actors. A confusion arising from the interlinkages between peace and security that was reinforced by a confusion of roles between the security forces and development actors. These two parties needed to recognise each other's distinctive roles much better! Security actors drove the development agenda for many years in Afghanistan without an understanding of a developmental approach, but strongly motivated to reward their allies and supporters at the local level. Rather than drawing on the skills of development professionals, the development actors were co-opted into the security agenda, thus compromising the impartiality of the development process and the humanitarian and development actors.

I have often described Afghanistan as one of the world's most distorted aid economies. Many of the challenges we now face in Afghanistan relate to the history that led to the distortion of aid primarily to meet a security agenda. With the benefit of hindsight, it is now clear to

see what happened. It is important that we now rectify these mistakes. A number of problems were created and left us with a number of challenges that now need to be addressed. First of all, the PRTs were at the heart of the confusion between the security and development agenda. In filling the void between national and subnational governments, not only was there a lot of mission creep, but resources were not allocated on a rational basis or as part of an overall national development plan. There was a lot of variation between the resources allocated to each PRT and their development role within the community. Both depended on the differing strategies of the various troop-contributing countries.

Not only did the PRTs lead to further confusion between security and development, they also increased dependency at the local level and led to a fragmented approach to governance and stabilization. They created the big gap we now need to address between national and subnational governments. The PRTs also led to other distortions in the aid economy, where bad and sometimes criminal behaviour was rewarded by the provision of development assistance. Investments in Afghanistan's infrastructure were particularly prone to these distortions. Most of the international investments in infrastructure went into the troublesome and insecure areas. Thus, areas where the security risk was low, such as the central highlands, were largely ignored as a result. Afghanistan is now affected by these distortions reflected in both transport and power infrastructure. This is an area where there should have been more coherence among the international community.

We now have to address the imbalances that resulted from this security-led agenda in our support to Afghanistan. This will mean addressing the need for better national systems of service delivery, rectifying imbalances of resource allocation between provinces and creating a stronger link between national and subnational governance. To summarise my first reflection: the history of the security engagement in development processes has led to serious distortions in the economy and aid dependency at the national and subnational level. These must now be addressed with greater coherence from the international aid community.

My second major reflection relates to ensuring greater international coherence and more realism in addressing the various elements of the transition. When we look forward as to how we address the process of state building that is inherent in the transitional process, we need to take into account the three elements of the transition put forward by Dr Ghani in his role in leading the transition process before he became the president. Dr Ghani highlighted three distinct transitional elements: the political transition, the security transition and the economic transition. Reflecting on this, and coming from today's

meeting, I am forced to question as to whether we had a common starting point with regard to the processes of transition and what our expectations were for the future direction of transition? Listening to today's discussion, I feel that this was not really the case! There were different views on what constituted the transition, what was important to do in this transition, and how to move forward. There has never really been a shared consensus between the international community, the government and civil society, and not even any consensus within the military, the development actors or political actors as to the priorities in transition. So I think it goes back to one of the earlier comments made by a speaker here: If you have no clear end point, you can follow any road. This situation is not uncommon and may be seen in other major crises. However, the consequences of this lack of consensus as to how to move forward with transitional processes leads to what we have seen in Afghanistan, which is the potential for competition between donors, even within donors! There was lack of coherence in programme design, but also a lack of clarity with regard to the agreed objectives.

From my personal perspective, part of the problem in Afghanistan has been that there has not been an agreement on what was the appropriate political and constitutional model that would bring stability. Rather, the political concern was that of mediation leading to a power-sharing approach to addressing political differences and divisions rather than addressing the potential inherent instability in the existing political model. It was necessary to develop a greater consensus. As a result, the political transition process was left with a gap in addressing the political fault lines in the country and what kind of consensus was required with regard to which political model would bring stability. That was a gap on the political side.

I believe that there have been various mistakes on the development aspects of the transition. My major concern is that the various donor-pledging conferences have been more concerned with immediate political issues and creating conditionalities around those political issues. I have argued for many years that there needs to be a stronger development agenda and in particular a stronger focus on poverty reduction. Overall, there has been very little interest in addressing poverty reduction and it was not really until the Brussels Conference that there was a stronger interest in poverty reduction, as reflected in the Afghan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF). The development and the "self-reliance agenda" yet again demonstrates the confusion between political, security and development agendas with usually very short-term objectives. Previous donor commitments were either geared towards political change, such as elections, or the signature of security agreements, such as the Bilateral Security Agreement. The objectives were driven

by the desire to either scale down aid, to bring about political change or to support the withdrawal or reduction of the international military presence. That is not to say that these were not legitimate concerns, but that they overshadowed the economic transition and left no room for a development agenda.

When I look back on the security transition, once again the need to speed up the reduction in the international military presence meant that critical gaps in the capacity of Afghanistan's security forces were not addressed. This was particularly the case regarding the air strike capacity. The end result was that Afghanistan was left with a national army that had only experienced a defensive role and had little offensive capability.

Returning to the economic objectives, I am struck by the optimism of economic projections and the impact of this on economic and aid planning. The economic growth projections that were made in preparation for the Tokyo Conference were for 8–12% growth by 2016/17 and achieving 18% GDP growth by 2020. The reality is that we are now at best seeing 2% growth with an essentially flat economy. So, in part, setting reasonable development objectives has been made more difficult by unrealistic optimism. While there was some recognition that GDP growth was heavily fuelled by the vast amounts of military expenditure in the country, the optimistic projections were also used to promote a drawdown of international assistance. While it may have been difficult to foresee the impact of a protracted and contested electoral process on economic growth, these unrealistically high forecasts inhibited discussions on poverty reduction and Afghanistan's growing social and economic inequality. The view was that such a high economic growth would ensure greater job creation and a trickle down of wealth. As a result, less emphasis was put on diversification of the economy. To summarise, my second reflection is that as we move into the transition, we need to set more realistic

**... in a mutually**  
interdependent world, we should be looking for a better quality partnership and stronger and more equal relationships rather than promoting 'self-reliance' as a goal. **We live in a mutually interdependent world.**

transition objectives, based on the needs of the country, not the needs of the international community to leave the country. This is a major issue in terms of achieving self-reliance

Finally, I would like to offer some reflections as to how we might now move forward to achieve greater self-reliance and to identify some of the main challenges we might face. Some of the common themes that have emerged in discussions today relate to how best to manage economic transition. Key issues will be to develop a more poverty focused agenda that is able to address growing impoverishment and social inequality. How do we look at issues like economic diversification and reduce the reliance on the existing illicit economy, where opium production is a safety net for the rural poor? How do we manage the revenue base on a more sustainable basis and ensure that the government of Afghanistan is better able to afford and deliver services?

Looking at the new challenges, one of my concerns are the changes now taking place in terms of population movements. I have concerns that there will be a far greater social fragmentation arising from the movement of people. How do we look at some of the new challenges, when something like 1.6 million people are on the move, and when each province of Afghanistan is hosting internally displaced people (IDPs) and where only three provinces in the country are not generating IDPs from conflict? This is bringing about major social change to the country. For the first time this year, rather than being able to return after a few weeks, many families are facing prolonged displacement; stuck and unable to return to their homes for many months. Afghanistan has received 700,000 returnees from Pakistan (out of 1.6 million people on the move) this year. A further 600,000 may return next year. This is a massive social change for the country. Not only will the numbers of returning people increase the population, they will also increase vulnerability to poverty and set back many develop-

ment achievements. This will require us to be more adaptive and flexible in setting our transitional economic and development objectives and moving towards self-reliance. When we talk about flexibility, it is not about flexibility per se; it is about ensuring better adaptation of our plans to the social and economic changes that will result from these population shifts.

Let me just mention two areas apart from the development agenda that we need to look at and take forward. One that has come up constantly in this meeting has been the issue of corruption and how to address it. My concern about the anti-corruption agenda is that it is basically donor-focused, it is about value for money. For the donor community that may sound a bit harsh. But a senior advisor I know kept on saying to me on corruption: "Have we done enough to please you?", "Have you got what you want?" That is the discussion that took place before Brussels. There is no strategy, no structure put in place to address corruption. So corruption is one of the two areas.

The other one is the issue of policing and security. Policing is a key issue. My concern at the moment in terms of security is that there is an increasing dependence on local militias, and the militiasation of forces, mainly through the police. We reformed the army but did not look at the police. And there is no consensus in the international community as to how this should be addressed. That is something we will have to learn to live with in the future unless we address it.

My final conclusion is that transition is a long-term process. It cannot be hurried. There is a lot to build on in Afghanistan. There are some good policies and strategies. But there is a need for better coherence in the way we address them, and a willingness to address some of the more difficult problems. My final note is that it is not about flexibility, it is about adaptability to changing circumstances and recognizing them properly. •

**CHAPTER 5**OPENING OF DAY 2  
AND KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

BARNETT RUBIN | KEYNOTE SPEAKER

# STATE-BUILDING, DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

**THE OPERATION** in Afghanistan is not a state-building and development operation. State-building and development became part of it, but only in so far that they supported the main mission, counterterrorism (CT). State-building and development in Afghanistan would have been much easier and cheaper before 9/11, but no country found it in its national interest to spend such resources. The US would not have spent hundreds of billions of dollars to turn Afghanistan into a well-governed prosperous state. The only reason the US became involved in that was to prevent terrorists from attacking the US. During the recent US presidential election, Afghanistan was not mentioned. It was subsumed under the general category of terrorism. The question that the candidates debated was not, “Is Afghanistan on the road to stability and progress,” but, “Has this made us, the US, safer?”

The US, of course, is the largest donor and troop contributor. The US launched this operation and decided to bring in the UN under certain terms. Since the US is by far the greatest funder, Afghanistan depends on the vote in the US congress to appropriate the money. If the US congress does not appropriate money to pay for the US military presence, the US aid mission, the Afghan government, and the Afghan national army, then Sweden will not be able to stay there. The CT priority shapes what the priorities are and how the mission is structured.

The CT goals, as conceived by the US, have nothing to do with sustainability. An illustration of the relevancy of

sustainability to US policy is provided by a recent statement by five former US ambassadors to Afghanistan, five former US military commanders in Afghanistan, two former US special representatives for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and a number of people who are described as scholars of Afghanistan. The statement situates its goals by saying, “Even today Afghanistan is central to what has been called the war on terror or the war against Islamic terrorism,” and “It provides a location and an ally for watching and, if necessary, attacking extremists across the region.” Imagine you are an Iranian, Russian, Pakistani or Chinese official reading this and learning that the purpose of the operation in Afghanistan is to provide a military base for Americans to attack others in the region. They have no reason to believe that the US will limit attacks to “extremists,” as defined by international consensus.

Sustainability means that the Afghan state would be the primary funder of its own activities, including the provision of security. It is quite a stretch to say that Afghanistan is a democracy, because the elected representatives of the people have no jurisdiction over the security forces. They do not vote on the budget for the Afghan army. The US congress votes on the budget for the Afghan army and makes its decision on the basis of the interest of the US. Afghans have no way to change that, at this point. To be democratic and sustainable, Afghanistan would have to have an economy that enables it to pay for the army.

The territory of today’s Afghanistan, which was demarca-

ted by the British and the Russians at the end of the 19th century, has never provided the resources necessary to sustain a state. When Afghanistan was a self-sustaining state, as during the Durrani Empire, it paid for the government by raiding Punjab and Kashmir and parts of Iran, because those were areas from which they could extract taxes. When the British contained Afghanistan within its current fixed borders, the Afghan state either needed to receive British aid to support itself, or the nation would fall into civil wars. Ultimately, Afghanistan was stabilized by a 1905 agreement with Britain and Russia.

From late 1890s until 1919, the Afghan state was sustained by subsidies from Britain. These were sustainable long-term subsidies, legal obligations under a treaty, a bilateral agreement. It was not vague like the Afghanistan strategic partnership agreement or the current bilateral security agreement with the U.S. It gave figures on how much Britain was going to supply every year, so that the Afghan state could plan. When Afghanistan became independent in 1919, it lost this support, and in a few years the king was overthrown. He did not have an army. A new dynasty took power, and the British again began supporting it.

After the independence and partition of India, Afghan Prime Minister Daoud Khan asked the US for assistance, but the US was aligned with Pakistan, so he instead turned to the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union funded the army from 1955 and worked out a modus vivendi with the US. That modus vivendi broke down in 1979, and twelve years later the Soviet Union itself collapsed. The USSR disappeared. The Afghan state received no external funding and collapsed itself, leading to the civil war of 1992–1996. Then the Taliban tried to reconstruct a minimalist state according to their ideas.

The political economy of funding the current Afghan state is fundamentally a bilateral partnership with the US, and SCA depends on this partnership, because you are there to help the US projects in Afghanistan. That shapes how things are done. Let me illustrate this with example of the army.

Right now, the cost of the army is the biggest obstacle to sustainability. It is still not big and effective enough. It is slowly losing territory and has taken a very high number of casualties. It is almost entirely funded by the US, but it is not part of a balanced state-building project including all aspects of security, including those needed for economic development and budgeting. Instead, in 2002 when the US-led coalition started building new security forces, the US did not want to be involved in “nation” building. There was no comprehensive plan. Instead, under US leadership, the donors chose the framework of leading nations for each sector of assistance. The US was not interested in police, justice, or counter-narcotics, let alone

in building an administration, but it wanted the Afghan army to help it fight terrorism.

In the early years, the US did not want to spend too much money. It was distracted by other events such as the war in Iraq. The US kept the size of the army relatively small. Then from 2006, when the Taliban became much more of a threat, the US changed the army policy and made it as large as possible regardless of sustainability. Now, this is potentially a huge problem. General Kayani, chief of army staff in Pakistan, argued that a large Afghan army would become a huge danger to Pakistan. The Afghan army would not invade Pakistan and defeat the Pakistani army, but at some point the US will leave, and the Afghan army will not get paid, and hundreds of thousands of unpaid armed men will try to do what Ahmed Durrani did, loot Punjab.

How can the Afghanistan state and army become sustainable? A long-term commitment by the US, no matter how sustained it is, is not sufficient. As a landlocked country Afghanistan's economic development depends on access to the world through its neighbors. The neighbors will not agree to such cooperation, however, if Afghanistan becomes a US military base. The signatories of the Brookings statement claim that the enduring US presence will change behavior (i.e. prevent neighbors from pursuing their national interests). But it is delusional to imagine that a small US troop presence will exert enough pressure to do so, and Afghanistan's neighbors will not stop pursuing their national interests.

Sustainability requires good relations with neighbors. Afghanistan is landlocked. It does not have a sufficient market for building an economy based on domestic demand. It has to rely on trade with, and connections to, the rest of the world. For Afghanistan to be connected to the rest of world, and in order for the rest of the world to have access to Afghanistan, including the US or Sweden, there has to be good relations with Pakistan, Iran, or Russia, because there is no other way to get to Afghanistan. That is the reality of being a landlocked country. Investors have to feel confident that there will be good relations for a long time to come, because these types of investments are not the type that pay off very quickly. One example is China's investment in a copper mine, which is now stalled. It would need 5 to 10 years before they start to recover anything from it.

Afghanistan, however, need not rely on the US. Because of the tremendous growth of China and India, there are now economic incentives to stabilize the region that did not exist before. Major political and financial actors in the region are able and willing to invest in infrastructure to integrate the region, including Afghanistan, and link it to external markets. China has started the Belt and Road Initiative to build connectivity infrastructure involving 64 countries. This includes the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). CPEC will cost tens of billions of dollars. China



founded the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), a new multilateral development bank, to fund many of these projects. India is the second-largest shareholder. Blocked from direct contact with Afghanistan and Central Asia by Pakistan's refusal to open the border, India is partnering with Iran to build a route to the Iranian port of Chabahar, to be connected by road and rail to Afghanistan and Central Asia. Afghanistan has signed an agreement to build a railroad to Turkmenistan to have access to a route crossing the Caspian Sea and into Turkey, the Caucasus, and Europe. In my office in New York, I met some Chinese scholars from a think tank in the Shandong province of China, and I asked them what Shandong was doing for the Belt and Road Initiative. They said: "We are building a railroad to Amsterdam!" The Chinese are quite serious about these big projects. And Afghanistan is benefitting from all this, getting protocols signed and receiving things from these trains. But making it effective will require a huge amount of investment.

The statement by the US former government officials who have been most involved in Afghanistan was issued in October and did not mention that there is a new in-coming president, and we have no idea what he is going to do. He said he would grudgingly keep the US troops in Afghanistan. He does not like any of the countries in the region, except for Russia and India. He did not like Pakistan until Nawaz Sharif called him, and then he called them a terrific fantastic people. But if he listens to the military advisors, he will not think they are great fantastic people for long. Then of course Iran, in the US view, is the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism. But if Trump likes India, what will he think of Chabahar? Is he all for it because of India and Afghanistan, or is he against it because of Iran?

Right now, Trump's potential partner, Russia, is concerned about two threats in Afghanistan:

the US and the Islamic state. For Russia and Iran, these two threats are the same: Russia believes, as do some people in Afghanistan as well as apparently Trump, that the US founded IS! They see IS as one of the tools of the US, the Saudis, the Qataris, and formerly Turks to try to push Iran and Russia out of South Asia, Iraq, and Syria. Russia and Iran have exaggerated views of the threat of IS in Afghanistan. They (IS) are trying to set up a force in Afghanistan, but so far the Afghan people are not cooperating. But I do not know how much longer that can go on with all these people being killed. These two common enemies of Russia and Iran is why Mullah Mansour, the former leader of the Taliban, went to Iran for consultations with Iran and Russia, whom he also met, on possibly cooperating against these two enemies, the US and IS. If you take this into account, then the killing of Mansour takes on a different meaning. It is not just about the Taliban and Kabul and Pakistan. It is a signal to Russia and Iran as

## How can the Afghan

state and army become sustainable? A long-term commitment by the US, no matter how sustained, cannot do it. As a landlocked country, Afghanistan's economic development depends upon access to the world through its neighbours. The neighbours will not agree to such cooperation, however, if Afghanistan become a US military base.

## It is quite a stretch

to say that Afghanistan is a democracy, because the elected representatives of the people have no jurisdiction over the security forces. They do not vote on the budget for the Afghan army. The US congress votes on the budget of the Afghan army and makes its decision on the basis of the interest of the US.

well. But it is dangerous, because we are getting another great game in Afghanistan.

If Trump and Putin are actually able to build some confidence, Russia might not regard the US presence in Afghanistan as such a threat, though on a recent visit to Moscow I found Russian officials skeptical. Trump might be interested in all of this infrastructure being built. There could be deals. Building huge amounts of infrastructure with dubious loans that will never be paid back is precisely Trump's business model! There could be big contracts for American firms in this if the US gets into this AIIB bank and so on. At the same time, Trump's anti-Islamic rhetoric and anti-Muslim activities have accelerated in the US. There were Quran burnings in the US causing huge demonstrations, and these kinds of events may make it more difficult for the US to stay in Afghanistan. Trump's domestic politics might make this unsustainable. But infrastructure investment could provide the basis, and it is the only way Afghanistan could ever be a sustainable state! •

## Q&A | BARNETT RUBIN

**Q1:** Thank you for the plain text. Not that it was all unknown, but we try to forget that from time to time. As Henry Kissinger said once, 'the Americans don't need any allies.' I wonder if the European governments would be able to come together a little and tell the Americans 'it is your business, you messed it up, so you must clean it up', and we do something different. That would probably also be a policy option, but maybe a utopian one. Because, as we heard from the Norwegian report, they only wanted to be nice allies, but maybe they were not thinking of Trump... We too, as well as some others here, have been at the Bonn conference in 2001, and everything was window-dressing. The US told all that you can go into Kabul and do your own business, and it had been discussed before to keep Kabul neutral so that other people could take part in governing or running the new Afghan state. This was more of a remark than a question. My question concerns the Bonn Conference about the rights issues, which was all window-dressing from the beginning. Why bother at all? Is the Bonn Agreement still valid?

**A1:** First, I should mention that Thomas and I were both part of the UN delegation at the Bonn Conference, and he personally played a role in preventing that the warlords got explicit recognition in the Bonn Agreement. I do not think it was just window-dressing. There was quite a debate in the US government whether or not to do it. I, and others who had been involved with Afghanistan for a long time, actually argued that the US had to do something else than bombing and leaving. Not having stabilized and built a state in 1989 was a huge mistake, and that is why we are where we are today. Colin Powell, although he was not part of the strategic core of the Bush administration, succeeded in convincing the president, and they put the UN in charge – which was not a sign of great respect for international institutions; it was a sign that they did not think it was important to do anything else. But they agreed to do something. It was good to do that and it created a good environment. There was an argument that it was important for counterterrorism to have a stable Afghan state that could be a partner of the international community in controlling extremists. Therefore, it was in the Bonn Agreement, because the US and Iran came up to me at breakfast one day and asked why it was not in the agreement. Also elections – for different reason, got

in there. The strategic core – you know the EU – it is not very likely right now! It was a remarkably bizarre meeting in Bonn in November-December 2001. It did lead to state structures, corrupt but in place! I came to Afghanistan during the Taliban regime. Everything was destroyed. Now there is at least a state structure, but it is not sustainable.

**Q2:** You were saying: 'During the Taliban, it was better!?' However, there were no woman in the street, and that is better now! Concerning relations between neighbours, they are two-sided. What should we do in Afghanistan, if the neighbours are unwilling?

**A2:** Afghans do not want to rely on neighbours, since that is how they got into trouble in the first place. They think that the US would protect them from their neighbours, with the US controlling Pakistan – although this is not true. You have to commit to a process, with resources, and backing from the US and others for this. Like the talk delivered by Ghani in Amritsar [some weeks ago]. If you do not manage to have good relations with your neighbours, you will never be able to sustain your government, because economic development requires good neighbours. If you only have good relations with one neighbour, other neighbours see that as a threat and will do something about it. The US engages consistently, including with its military presence, so that its presence is not seen as a threat. This has worked with China, recently. Now, China wants stability, and is asking the US to stay: 'Don't leave too quickly!' China used to oppose US military bases on the Asia landmass, but it is starting to change its message. Move the US forces towards Herat and inform Iran. Russia sees that as a threat. Non-state actors in Afghanistan are very active again. Bizarre as it seems, if Trump is able to work with Putin.

**Q3:** We are all there, supporting the US. I have two questions: 1. Does this include the Afghan government? 2. Is the US a benign actor or a spoiler for the rest of the world?

**A3.** Question no. 1: Yes absolutely, and they are clear about it. Question no. 2. Peace and stability – no country aims at peace and stability. No Afghan politician have that goal! It is all power politics. Insecurity and mistrust is the normal condition.

HUMIRA SAQIB | KEYNOTE SPEAKER

# MEDIA AND THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION

**DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUES.** I am sure that we will here discuss practical issues with regard to Afghanistan's development and transition from a donor-driven economy to a self-reliant one.

## ON MEDIA

In Afghanistan, we have seen great progress in the establishment of freedom of expression and private sector media outlets. Around 50 TV channels and more than 120 radio channels, as well as a huge number of printed media outlets are established all over Afghanistan. You can imagine how many journalists are trained to fulfil the needs of these outlets.

We have seen progress in free media but also in biased media. Warlords have used the opportunity to create media outlets and continue to broadcast their issues.

The safety of journalists has been an issue; both male and female journalists have been killed and media outlets have received threats because of the news they broadcast.

Gender equality within journalism and the media has been another issue. As women do not make up a reasonable percentage of the staff within the media in Afghanistan, women's issues are not reflected all that well.

Great attention should be paid to the security of media activists and women's participation in media. Both tech-

nical and financial support is required to improve and increase this.

The international community should support media to fulfill the responsibility of raising awareness in support of peace building, stability and economic development.

The government has also started violating the freedom of expression in the last few years. However, a law was approved last year on the right to information. There is though a need to strengthen its implementation.

With regard to the law on Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW), civil society and media played an important role in creating awareness after it had been approved by the president in 2009. Later (2013), it was sent to the parliament for approval and it is still under debate. Currently, we need the international community to provide political support so that it does not lose its value as an exceptional law – it should not be incorporated into the Criminal Code.

## ON CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Afghanistan has received massive technical assistance and capacity building support from the international community in every sector, for which we are thankful. But today there are still unfulfilled needs. There has not been enough transfer of knowledge. More attention should be given to the transfer of knowledge and skills

to Afghans. Furthermore, attention should be given to more advanced levels of programming, budgeting, policy-making, managing and implementation of projects, and not only on basic levels.

#### ON THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION

Afghanistan is a consumer country of products mainly originating from Pakistan, Iran and China. Our industries will not be allowed to be established unless the international community intervenes and ensures that Afghanistan will be independent when it comes to establishing a sustainable and self-reliant economy that creates jobs for Afghans. Our recommendation here is for the international community to invest money with our government and private sector through public private partnerships and establish factories in order to produce goods for domestic consumption and to create jobs.

One of the solutions to the neighboring issues can be working with and using regional capacities. We need to

see what technical expertise is available in the countries in Central and South Asia and use those experts for Afghanistan's development work. This is cost effective and also helpful with regard to establishing a friendly relationship between these countries and Afghanistan.

In the last 15 years, many institutions and organizations have been established with the support of the international community. The existing systems and institutions are sufficient to help implement development projects and there is very little need to establish new ones.

#### ON MUTUAL TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Transparency and accountability should be mutual. As international organizations require NGOs and the Afghan government to be accountable and transparent, we would also like them to report on their expenditures on the development and military aid for Afghanistan in a transparent manner. •

## Q&A | HUMIRA SAQIB

**Q1:** How may domestic production be established?

**A1:** The government should have a clear policy, on a long-term basis, to remove barriers for domestic production and create barriers for import. There is no clear policy to support domestic production. There should be investments in economic strategies that must support domestic production. A policy for public-private partnership was recently signed between the government and partners, preparing for several hundred jobs. This is a good strategy for the future.

**Q2:** How has the opening-up in media had an effect on women's rights?

**A2:** Unfortunately, we live in a traditional society. So, media is run by men, and the only women's issues dealt with in the media relate to violence against women. We need to talk about economic aspects and other aspects and rights. Women have different perspectives. Media needs to offer more opportunities for women, and women engaged in media need space and technical capacity. At all international conferences, the main journalists reporting were men. The participants were also all men. There are certain education opportunities for women, but not for the media sector. Only 1% of women who are in the media are academics. TV channels need support to give room for women.

**CHAPTER 6**ROUND TABLE  
DISCUSSIONS

BENGT KRISTIANSSON | EDITOR

# EDITOR'S NOTE ON THE REPORTS OF THE **ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS**

**THE TEXT** of each of the six theme-based round table discussions are statements, perspectives and opinions expressed under Chatham House rule. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions or understanding of SCA, the moderators or the rapporteurs. Nor do they reflect a consensus in the group or joint conclusions, unless specifically stated. The discussions are reported here in order to reflect the whole spectrum of views expressed. The format as suggested by the rapporteur and moderator of each group has largely been kept. However, editing and language revision has been carried out for increased conformity and coherence.



## ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

# PEACE AND SECURITY

MODERATOR | RICHARD GHIASY  
RAPPORTEUR | FAITH NILSSON

## YESTERDAY (2001–2014): WHY ENGAGE?

After 9/11, the global security environment changed abruptly, and the international community was faced with an imminent choice – to either be with the US or against it (as declared by Bush). There was a strong bilateral pressure from the US to intervene, to some extent also to combat. But engagement also occurred out of national security interests – there was a fear of 9/11 happening in their own turf and the US was seen as a guarantor of security. The Taliban were swiftly defeated and removed from power and most al-Qaeda cells were destroyed. The elimination of the direct terrorist threat to the US and its allies had been successful (not everyone agrees to which extent), but there was no strategy on how to continue from there.

Swedish NGOs were highly engaged in raising the development and non-military agenda; however, military objectives prevailed. There was peer pressure on the one hand and empathy on the other. The Swedish government had given in to the US pressure to fight, and this all happened abruptly. There were even Swedish military contingents at the top military level that did not know the clear reason for being in Afghanistan. There were instances where these created tensions with the local governor.

Counter-terrorism prevailed as the main strategy, despite differences in approaches between the countries involved. In Afghanistan, the intervention was perceived as a new era of hope generated in 2001 to get rid of the Taliban. Under the Taliban, Kabul had been a ghost town, although some experienced it as a peaceful period. The statements made by the international mission to Afghanistan were

clear and peaceful. However, what had happened on the ground was different. The Western countries depended on the US for military defence and national security, and after 9/11 the peer pressure meant no other alternative than to engage in Afghanistan militarily. It was a "snow ball effect" where everyone followed the US.

Billions of dollars poured into the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) and security forces to contribute to security in Afghanistan. However, the situation on the ground was that the international forces had actually relied more on the local Afghan provision of security instead of the opposite. For every one Swedish patrol, there were two Afghan patrols following to protect them and ensure their security.

## DEVELOPMENT AND THE HUMANITARIAN AGENDA

There was a huge influx of NGOs arriving to Afghanistan, many deaf and blind to the ground realities and there was no clear humanitarian strategy. There was a strong focus on remote areas by local grassroots organizations. The international community focused on the cities and were blind to what was happening in the remote areas – although these, particularly insecure for women at the village level, were the very areas in need of support.

Why did terrorism not stop after the terrorist threat was eliminated? After 9/11, the message was that the Taliban threat would be gone. It was because there was no clear strategy, not even for counter-terrorism, and certainly not for development and state building. For the civilian, aid and reconstruction components, there was none. Sta-

te-building, development and humanitarian efforts were handed over to UNAMA, which then handed these responsibilities to different nations. Since the main goal was to counter terrorism, the civilian objectives were side-lined. Forty-four nations were contributing forces and it was difficult to have a unified approach given the different rules of engagement for every nation. If an analogy is drawn: There were way too many physicians for one patient, and the chief surgeon did not understand the reinforcing illnesses of the patient in sufficient detail. There was no coordination among aid agencies and so much aid was transferred to Afghanistan. Transparency was neglected. Civilian and military aid through PRTs was pouring money, but with a lack of unified rules. There was a difference in rhetoric to what was happening in the field. The Paris Declaration and the London Compact provided a general rhetoric as to what donors should do. All had wish lists and whether it fitted in was another question. Technical assistance through various consultancy groups drizzled in and was extremely expensive.

#### **TALIBAN LEFT OUT OF THE NEGOTIATION TABLE**

There were discussions on why the Taliban had not been part of negotiations at the Bonn Conference. Could the US and the international community have brought them to the negotiation table? Some think that the US could have done so and that this would have altered the prospects of peace. However, at that time, there were attempts made but not concluded. It was a matter of policy, those harbouring terrorists would be considered terrorists themselves. There were even issues in the designation of the term “terrorist”. Bush did not declare the Taliban terrorists, but some of their allies were, such as the Haqqani network.

The decision made during the Bonn Conference was that an emergency Loya Jirga had to take place within 6 months and an inclusive and constitutional election was to be held. Meetings were first held at the district level and then in the regions, and there was a lot of enthusiasm and hope. The Loya Jirga was seen as an option for those who could not take part in Bonn. In the elections held, Karzai obtained a clear majority of the votes.

#### **STATE-BUILDING & INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN**

It must be concluded that the entire operation after 9/11 was not intended for state-building. The objectives were not formulated clearly. During the end of the Bush era, a study was conducted to assess the US invasion in Afghanistan, which found a huge range of objectives and concluded that not enough resources had been used for analysing the political situation of Afghanistan. There were discussions on how they had failed to understand even the basic economic and poverty-related contexts in Afghanistan. A comprehensive strategy was absent and the entire mission was ill-prepared. There was a limited understanding of the Afghanistan context, its domestic, political and regional dynamics, and existing knowledge was overlooked and not

**After 9/11,** the global security environment changed abruptly, and the international community was faced with an imminent choice – to either be with the US or against it ... The Western countries depended on the US for military defence and national security, and after 9/11 the peer pressure meant that there was no other alternative than to engage in Afghanistan militarily.

integrated in the intervention strategies.

There is an inherent contradiction in the demand or hope that the international community can build a social order or state in Afghanistan – it should be done by the Afghan themselves, if it is to be some sort of self-sustaining order. Ultimately development comes from within, not without. Different organizations had different tasks and resources, and others were prioritized over others (military). In the development sphere, the work was done by the international agencies, which undermined the Afghan government instead of empowering it. But it could not be empowered at that time. When negotiating the Afghan Compact, for instance, it was mentioned that the donor should report in accordance with the regulations used and upheld by the Afghan government. But in reality, donors mainly reported to their own governments rather than to the Afghan government.

Nor was the design of the institutions of governance adequate. Afghanistan has a very centralized government; to buy a pen in Logar, a governor has to ask permission from Kabul. There was over-centralization. Donors worked in different directions and came up with local governance structures in their own way. Parallel structures were created causing layers for corruption to appear.

Considering local governance, district governors were brought abroad for training, but there were differences in the level of implementation in Afghanistan and there was no monitoring system to measure results. There was an effort, but due to lack of coordination it could not work. There could have been a follow-up after the training to measure its usefulness.

How does one make a coherent apparatus of the international donor community and the government? The Americans dealing with governance in Afghanistan treated it as a technical issue: Funding plus training equals institution. This technical approach failed to address important

issues such as accountability. The understanding of the social context in Afghanistan was also problematic. In the 14 years of involvement by the international community, getting to know the country wherein social codes and respect is the golden rule (“bring tea and don’t create enemies”) was among the biggest lessons to be learned. All the countries came in with their respective national interest as the basis for the intervention.

### **A SUSTAINABLE INDIGENOUS ECONOMY**

The international community’s support of a sustainable indigenous economy – how did that work out? Many feel that the indigenous Afghan economy was neglected. If you put that many dollars into a market that is too small, and there is no money, Afghan goods become expensive. Regarding protectionism: In the development trajectory, there are prosperous countries with protectionist policies, such as Japan, but particularly underdeveloped economies may need a strategic level of protection. Afghanistan is dependent on foreign agricultural products. All Afghan produce is going to Pakistan because Afghanistan lacks storage facilities. Potatoes in Bamiyan go to Pakistan, and are shipped back to Afghanistan with the label of Pakistan. The same applies to the carpet industry.

There was a lack of tailored approach. The donors come with a structure imposed in Afghanistan that does not work, which is also true for some of the donors’ policies.

### **REGIONAL INFLUENCE**

Could the US have acted differently if they engaged with Iran early on? The US claims that they did engage, but once the declaration was made on the axis of evil, the potential engagement was no longer integrated in the strategic thinking of the US.

How was Russia, India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, US and China involved as they have a pivotal role in Afghanistan’s peace and security? Would it have made a difference if they were involved early on?

Was the Afghanistan-Pakistan dynamics brought in too late? The reality is that the conflict is partially sustained by other actors. Afghanistan is to some extent generating its own problems, but not fully, and the regional dimension is often overlooked. For the Northerners, Taliban equal 100% Pakistan, while the southern population perceives it as a regional and domestic problem, but now increasingly say that it is a Pakistani problem.

In the international realm, the EU might have underestimated the regional view and seen it as a separate Afghan problem. But there are regional factors at play. Throughout Afghanistan’s history, forces within its urban areas have stood for modernism and a relatively well-functioning state, whereas rural areas have been more conservative. The Taliban represent rural conservatism. There are views that Pakistan supports the Taliban because they think the Tali-

ban would be a factor for a greater Pakistan. This is detrimental to peace and a sustainable Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia supports Pakistan for training the Taliban. Chechen people are also part of the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Saudi financing, coming from oil income, is where state money is funnelled. In a state with no control over its own territory, surrounding countries are being sucked in. A major issue concerning Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran that no one wants to deal with for the time being is the Durand Line. During the last 15 years, India and China have grown and there are increasing impetus and incentives for cooperation on infrastructure projects.

### **TODAY AND TOMORROW**

Is there a solution to a more unified government before the 2019 election? If yes, what would it look like? What are the lessons learned on the formation of the National Unity Government (NUG) in 2014?

There is an ethnic split in Afghanistan, which was depicted as an electoral dispute about who won. The concept of winning is not described in the case of the NUG. There were issues of tribal voting, birth and death certificates and no reliable statistical records on the voting population. There is also the issue of whether or not the Pashtuns form the majority of the Afghan population. Considering the politics of Afghanistan, different and conflicting views are held by different ethnic groups. This is the complex reality. Power-sharing at the national level is problematic and the problem is that the semi-presidential system does not entail having two presidents, but having an effective system. The UN position was that Ghani had won. Through the Obama administration, a compromise was achieved; if there had not been a Unity Government and the threat to topple the government by force was carried out, then the US would have withdrawn its funding. There was no alternative to the formation of the NUG. There was no other choice but to build the NUG, otherwise Afghanistan would have experienced a crisis, which it could not have afforded. A political agreement between the two leaders with UNAMA and the US witnessing was the only viable option.

Afghanistan will be politically unstable for a long time. The international community can try to prevent it from turning into violence. The big issue with the Taliban is going to be concerning the control of the Afghan security forces. The NUG, however, not functioning the way it should. There is a genuine ethnic issue, which is why the election was problematic. Behind all issues in Afghanistan, also the possibility of peace negotiations, lies the ethnicity problem, further complicated by the discussion on “greater Afghanistan”. Peace with the Taliban is seen by the “Northern camp” as strengthening the Pashtun.

Moreover, there is the issue with the census, which was deliberately ignored by Karzai. At the Bonn talks, Northerners (Tajiks) wanted the census conducted before elec-

tions. Afghans themselves need to tackle these issues in a genuine manner. The census is needed to know the reality on the ground, and electronic IDs issued to Afghan citizens would help establishing democracy. Who is blocking the census – the Pashtuns, the Hazaras, the Tajiks?

If one talks about Ashraf and Abdullah, they both have strengths and weaknesses. The problem is the tail, where corruption and government abuse are present. If they start to cooperate, they will be seen by the tails as giving in, as traitors and they will lose support. Abdullah already has this problem. Exactly the same problem will occur in 2019 unless the agreement is implemented.

There is a weakness with having two leaders in power: Who is doing the good job for the people of Afghanistan? There is a perception that the Afghan people were divided into two camps. The views of the Afghan people were not sufficiently incorporated because the people of Afghanistan voted for one president, not for two persons in power. And, as it seems now, Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah do not have a sufficiently overlapping vision for the future of Afghanistan.

#### **NORDIC ROLE IN THE PEACE PROCESS**

Afghanistan forces and the opposition are in a deadlock, which consumes focus, funds and time of the NUG. Through which domestic and foreign avenues may this be broken? Is there a role for the Nordic countries to play in peace negotiations? Norway was the first country to commit itself to peace negotiations in Afghanistan. Norway stepped in as a mediating actor between the US, the Taliban and the Afghan government. The Taliban seem very interested in Sweden also stepping in. The relative advantage of the Nordic countries is that they are not seen as big players or as biased. But there is already a competition between Norway and Sweden to take credit. The Nordic countries can instead join forces with the EU and the US. The Taliban have mastered using these platforms to gain legitimacy (the Taliban were preaching women empowerment in Norway during negotiations while simultaneously

executing women in its provinces).

Norway has poured in money, and has been doing so for more than 15 years for peace and reconciliation. The Afghan government, however, feels very strongly that it should determine the position in the peace process, an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led initiative, but this is difficult given their dependency on other people's money.

#### **SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT**

The military intervention after 9/11 had the objective to eliminate the terrorist threat to the US and its allies, but there was no strategy for the subsequent military mission. For the civilian component, aid and reconstruction, there was no coherent long-term strategy concerning development and reconstruction.

The international community attempts to work together with the Afghan government in support of peace and stability efforts were scattered and fragmented, as a result of poor design and poor implementation.

An entry strategy considering implications of intervening is needed, preferably based on existing knowledge and including a large research component of the context while present. The framework also requires an exit strategy.

In the early years, there was a window of opportunity to integrate the armed opposition. Attempts were made, but not concluded. What happened later can be attributed to that failure.

When looking at the present time and the future: Were there alternatives to NUG in 2014?

Most likely not. It is not necessarily a great solution, but the best among a different range of solutions. But NUG is not what the Afghans voted for and it has caused a divide between two camps. No solution is expected to take place until 2019. •

## **Q&A**

**Q:** Were there alternatives concerning the setup of the strands of interventions at the start of the period starting 2001? Development, diplomacy and defence/military (DDD) interventions were there. Could a different balance between these have brought another result today?

**A:** We did not cover that in this Round table, whether a change in composition of those three strands would have had a different impact. To the extent that we did

cover that was in the reflection on what has worked and what has not worked. But not specifically on the ratio or the composition of these three strands. As a moderator I have here tried to convey what we agreed on in the RT. There were nuances what will appear in the report that you will produce, so let us not take this presentation as the actual or final conclusion. Trying to look at the DDD separate whereas they are intertwined, it gets a bit rigid.

## ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

# JUSTICE FOR ALL

MODERATOR | MARIA NYSTEDT  
RAPPORTEUR | LENA LINDBERG

## I. WHAT HAS WORKED?

The group started discussing the efforts of the international community in relation to a justice reform that has led to a positive development for Afghanistan. The Afghan constitution was highlighted as an achievement, including its references to Islam. In combination with the many treaties signed by the Afghan government, it provides a basis for action.

In relation to Transitional Justice (TJ), there are several problematic issues, but some highlights as well. Afghanistan has ratified the Rome Statute and can make use of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Cases have been registered in November 2016 at ICC concerning crimes by national security forces as well as by the US military in Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup>

Official commemorations of war victims have after several years been initiated. Based on a three-year action plan on justice, peace and reconciliation, a memorial day has been adopted and a monument erected by the government (though not officially inaugurated).

According to several civil society surveys, a majority of the population is in favor of TJ. Also, the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) recently carried out research in five provinces concerning TJ. The AIHRC is also putting pressure on the government to renew the TJ action plan approved by the government in 2004, which expired in 2008. It was suggested that this is an issue that the international community could promote.

Regarding human rights (HR), there are also issues of concern and some progress. It is possible to speak up about HR in Afghanistan today, and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) is keeping

HR on the agenda. A law for the elimination of violence against women (EVAW) has been adopted (even if not as well-known as it should be), and an increasing number of related cases are registered in special family courts, but mainly only in the cities. A lot of work has gone into awareness-raising about justice, including women's rights. There are women working in the justice system, although more women are needed throughout the system. Specialized EVAW prosecution units have been established in, for instance, Nimroz<sup>2</sup> within the Attorney General's Office.

Capacity development of officials in the justice system is still a concern, but also an issue where progress has been seen. UNAMA now has a stronger mandate for rule-of-law, and is raising awareness about the formal justice system in the provinces. But awareness will not be effective unless the formal justice system reaches beyond the urban centers into the rural areas, where different types of traditional justice still prevail.

## II. SOME ISSUES RAISED

The discussion in the group covered several difficult issues that are central to the development of justice in Afghanistan. The questions were raised, but some of the answers are hard to find.

Does justice for all require peace? Does justice for all require TJ? The question was raised as to whether or not the government had a strategy for the justice reform. Concern was expressed about how human rights can be promoted and ensured in the justice reform process. Members debated why donors and the international community (including Scandinavian countries) had been reluctant to promote the publication of AIHRC's crime mapping report (rejected by the President) in 2011. Questions were raised concerning the

1. ICC Preliminary Examination of November 2016 found a reasonable basis to believe crimes had been committed in Afghanistan by the Taliban and the Haqqani network, by the National Directorate for Security and the Afghan National Police and by the US military. Pre-trial chamber authorization to investigate is awaited and subject to further information from relevant national authorities. [https://www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/otp/161114-otp-rep-pe\\_eng.pdf](https://www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/otp/161114-otp-rep-pe_eng.pdf) (Editor's note.)

2. According to the Afghan government's website, such prosecution units have been established in 18 provinces, and a post as Deputy Attorney General for the Elimination of Violence against Women is under consideration. (Editor's note.)



## The Bonn conference

failed to address the need for attention to justice and rule-of-law and Early on, after 2001, there was a struggle to discuss justice reform. There was little interest in the importance of justice in order to build peace.

activities and coordination of donors in relation to the justice reform. A warning was made concerning international support for informal justice mechanisms (traditional/tribal or religion-based). It was claimed that traditional justice actors may occasionally be trusted with conflict mediation, but never with criminal justice and application of the law, as they are not under state guidance. Many instruments are in place but not utilized. An advisory panel for enhanced vetting of civil servants failed to follow its mandate. A disarmament and reintegration program that promised to sideline warlords was never implemented.

### III. LESSONS LEARNED

When discussing lessons learned, references were made to the Bonn Conference of 2001, where the transitional government was put in place. The participants identified the indicators of progress for Afghanistan, but at the time showed little interest in justice and rule-of-law.

It was argued that from the pro-Soviet government in 1978 until the Bonn Conference, there was no respected justice in Afghanistan. The country was destroyed. The Afghan laws were forgotten. Early on, after 2001, there was a struggle to discuss justice reform. There was little interest in the importance of justice in order to build peace. Italy took the lead in the review of laws, and started to train judges. However, this was mainly done in Italian law. When, later on, several donors started to work on justice reform, they did so without systematic follow-up and active engagement with the Afghan judiciary, and with little coordination among themselves. The result was that these ad hoc training programs and exposure visits had little constructive impact. Several embassies undertook similar initiatives with regard to training judges. Trainers were often brought from Arabic-speaking countries (Egypt, Tu-

nisia, Morocco, and also from Pakistan), with inadequate knowledge of the laws of Afghanistan.

Currently, USAID has the lead in relation to support for the judicial system reform, and the WB-administered Afghanistan Reconstruction and Trust Fund (ARTF) includes one program on rule-of-law. It is hoped that these interventions have a strategy for state-building in the realm of justice that is contextualized for Afghanistan, and designed after serious consultations with the citizens.

Lesson 1. The Bonn Conference failed to address the need for attention to justice and rule-of-law.

The formal justice system in Afghanistan is centered around the main cities and does not reach the provinces. Judges' salaries have doubled, but the trained judges remain in Kabul, as they fear getting killed if they go to other parts of the country. Many people in the provinces prefer informal justice, since it is delivered swiftly and accessibly to local population, whereas the formal justice sector is fraught with corruption and lengthy processes. The predominance of informal justice in the country may be seen as the result of the failure of the formal justice system. The formal justice system cannot be expanded and respected as long as the government does not have control over the territory, and as long as state institutions and the government itself suffer from corruption. Attempts have been made by international actors to improve the respect of HR within the informal justice system, but this might also be a problematic approach, as informal courts are not state-guided mechanisms and should not be treated as such – except in cases of local disputes or conflict resolution. The formal justice system has to be strengthened and monitored for anti-corruption and to ensure respect for HR and IHL. Also, in the informal justice courts, the rights of women and children are regularly reported as being violated. It was further discussed that the role of the police is essential. NATO is supporting security sector reforms (SSR), including the police. The UNDP and donors are paying police salaries. But worries were expressed about both the design and the implementation of the SSR reform.

Lesson 2. There has to be a strategy to promote formal justice also where conflicts make it difficult for state institutions to reach out in the provinces, as informal justice will otherwise dominate in large parts of the country.

Allegedly, the reason why the implementation of TJ was not a priority for the efforts of the international community was because the country was never demilitarized, and warlords and war criminals (as implicated in the AIHRC survey of war crimes) were actually both in the government and in the parliament. Three AIHRC commissioners

3. According to the UN rights-based approach to development cooperation, the government and state institutions are duty bearers in relation to the citizens, who are rights holder. (Editor's note.)

were replaced in 2011, to prevent the AIHRC from taking the survey forward. Some meant that part of the problem is that Afghan people in general do not understand the nature of TJ. They sometimes think that it is about listing warlords and executing them. The AIHRC is committed, but in its formal capacity as a constitutional, though independent, entity, it is not a duty bearer<sup>3</sup>. Warlords are committing crimes related to drug dealing, land grabbing, corruption, rape and violence with impunity, and the political leadership seems unable to handle the situation.

Lesson 3. The Bonn Conference and the international community helped establish AIHRC, but failed to act appropriately on the 3-year Transitional Justice Action Plan 2004–2008 and on the war crime mapping survey in 2011; both of which would have required stronger support for implementation.

#### IV. WHAT CAN BE DONE BETTER? SOME SUGGESTIONS.

Donors can

- give better support for anti-corruption, by supporting the new legal framework for anticorruption, Anti-Corruption & Justice Center (ACJC).
- demonstrate respect for the international principles they want to apply for Afghanistan.
- put the spotlight on corruption also affecting the average citizen, not only when it hits donor funded programs.
- provide support for the Afghanistan Bar Association for its work with victims of corruption.
- strengthen existing institutions and avoid creating new institutions.
- review the TJ Action Plan of 2004 and encourage the government to reiterate it, but without prompting too much, so as not to kill initiatives in support of access to justice for all (i.e. for the common citizen).
- support the new initiative to replace of prosecutors with inadequate education and put better educated prosecutors in place.
- help raising awareness about the new laws, such as the law on violence against women.

- work with the Ministry of Education to promote a new curriculum in the education system to raise awareness about justice and human rights from an early age.
- work with the government and civil society organizations to promote large-scale literacy programs, including elements of justice and HR.
- attend to the need to promote HR at every point of progress in the justice system reform.
- coordinate better between themselves and work hand-in-hand with the government and consult, consult, consult with the Afghan people and their civil society organizations.
- talk frankly about the challenges regarding justice for women and women in the justice system. There is a lot of talk about progress and positive highlights. The general situation, however, remains very alarming.

#### V. WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES? RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY:

- Make use of ICC. Read the ICC November 2016 report, and put pressure on the process.
- Advise Afghanistan to ratify all optional protocols and promote the preparation of an Afghanistan National Plan on justice for all, with a focus on HR. (N.B. There is an EU-Afghanistan action plan on HR, but no national plan.)
- Monitor and support the government in obeying the international laws and treaties Afghanistan has signed and ratified, in relation to HR and women rights.
- Relate to Afghanistan's constitution and the way it refers to Islamic rulings.
- Bring up all the aspects of justice, including TJ, into all speeches and prompt the renewal of the TJ Action Plan.
- Enable AIHRC to launch its 2011 crime mapping report. The president has not picked this up yet.
- Support ACJC and the Bar Association.
- Identify high-ranking officers with corrupt behavior and put pressure on the ACJC to process their cases. •

## Q&A

**Q:** You mentioned both at the beginning and at the end, the lack of political will. From where does that stem? Is that simply a lack of will or is it inability or lack of capacity? How come that three interventions of post 9/11, presumably including the principles you mentioned the international community should stand by, not seriously started reform work in the justice sector? Was it mainly because we failed or were there conflicting interests between the three kind of interventions? It is rather surprising that the lack of political will is there from the beginning and was not imposed!

**A:** You cannot impose political will, not the true political will. What we talked about in the group was first of all the feeling that you need to have security first! That security basically trumps the justice development. The ideological me would say it should not be the case. And also the issue of corruption hampers political will. The feeling was also that you need to deal with the issue of transitional justice, and powerful people don't want to deal with that, because people in powerful positions feel that they might be implicated. And that make them stop the agenda.

## ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

# GENDER AND UNSC RESOLUTION 1325

MODERATOR | LOTTA SJÖSTRÖM BECKER  
RAPPORTEUR | EMMA CEDERLUND

**THE ISSUE OF GENDER** and UN Resolution 1325 is an important theme with lessons from Afghanistan on gender mainstreaming, empowerment of women and proliferation of human rights. Over the period 2001–2014, both practical and theoretical experiences have been gained within activism and advocacy, service delivery and politics. Women's rights have been contextualized in a gender perspective. Notwithstanding what has been achieved in terms of serious and tangible gains towards women's empowerment and equality during the last 15 years, the round table discussion focused on remaining obstacles and hindrances for women's full participation in contemporary Afghanistan.

## YESTERDAY AND TODAY

There is no shortage of "legal" papers and official documents on the rights of women, but the problem is how to implement or enforce these governmental policies. The latest one is the National Action Plan to the UN Resolution 1325 (NAP 1325), which is an elaborate and good working document on how to include and promote women's participation, prevention, protection and relief and recovery in post-conflict situations. However, an evaluation done by Afghan Public Policy Research Organization points to the lack of a direct relationship between the progress of women's rights and the NAP 1325. The document seems to be disconnected from the real work with women's rights and nothing more than a mere document. Therefore, the question arises: how to proceed with the NAP 1325 for future change with this alleged

disconnected relationship in mind? In general, the NAP 1325 has not delivered enough. It has been restricted in its reach, isolated from other areas of governance, with a limited budget allocation. The civil society should play a watch-dog role towards the NAP 1325, and its mainstreaming in other areas of governance as well. This way, all progress of women's rights could be ensured and related to the NAP 1325. An increasing focus should be on youth engagement, although it seems uncertain whether or not NAP 1325 leaves room for the involvement of youth.

In general, the policy (elite) and grass-roots levels have not been particularly interrelated in the efforts to promote women's rights and inclusion. At the policy level, the space has been greater for women's rights and inclusion, while the space has been limited at the grass-roots level. Implementing policies drafted at one level have been difficult to apply with only little trickledown effect to the other level. In addition, much of the work that has been done has not been coordinated. One big question has been how to sufficiently push and/or incentivize the government to adequately enforce and implement the policies. This general gap in implementing and enforcing the "legal" papers drafted at a policy level to the local grass-roots level has not been helped by the international community designing mainly short-term interventions. The wide gap between grass-roots (local) and policy (elite) levels was evident (as was the lack of Afghan ownership) in many of the international conferences on Afghanistan, such as the international Bonn Conference

in 2011, where only higher level well-educated women participated and gave their perspectives.

Thus, for women's rights in general, a change had been seen at the high level, but this had not trickled down to the grass-roots level. One possible way of changing this was the use of media, especially media run by women. Increased visibility and participation of women in media could change perceptions and norms on women and femininity in the society. Female-led media was expected to facilitate women's voices to be heard rather than rejected and pushed away. The international community should give more attention and support to increasing female-led media.

On the issue of women's participation in the elections, the perception was that good figures were reported in the media. Women used their right to vote. However, women were largely uninformed about WHY they should be involved or on HOW their participation could lead to change. A distinction was made between women who voted and participated in the electoral process and those who engaged in politics beyond the election. At the first election, women's involvement was high and it peaked. Civil and international actors had conducted awareness-raising and information campaigns on the importance of female participation in the election, in both urban and rural settings. Yet, between election periods, warlords and other strong men had intervened by intimidating and proving women's involvement in politics undesirable. This led to negative sentiments and less involvement of women in the following election.

To counter the observed lack of female participation in the democratic processes (including elections), the argument of female-led and agenda-setting media could be used. If all women should have the possibility to participate and realize their importance in the democratic processes, media needs to play a proper agenda-setting role. Media both need to inform and influence the public agenda concerning the involvement of women, in relation to both the civil society and the government. Currently, and in the past, women's roles have largely come through as an after-thought, even their participation in the elections. And counting votes to see how many women have participated in electoral processes provide bad data, since malpractice within the election system is fervent and only provides quantitative information on a qualitative issue.

Also there are other constraints to women's full participation in the democratic processes – serious corruption and insecurity. Corruption leads to a democratic body where men with guns and money have bought their positions and are setting the political agenda and where women lacking both guns and money are neglected, or have to adjust to an already set agenda. The men with guns also further a climate of insecurity for women in the democratic body. "Women without guns against men with guns in the parliament." Parliament is thus populated by

warlords and their proxies (some of whom are women). This ties the hands of the women who have to follow the "men with guns" and are restrained from working for women's and human rights, etc. For women to fully participate, it becomes a question of access to the democratic body and security within it.

Besides focusing on female-led media, the international community must also help address the question of access to the democratic processes, being constrained by security concerns, gender norms, etc., which is the most pressing at the rural grass-roots level, away from the educated and influential elites of Kabul and other cities. The focus of the international community should be moved away from datasets on election participation and voting rates towards actual involvement and engagement of women. Some argued that more awareness and information campaigns in target areas were needed, while others wanted to focus on the question of access. Echoing the debate on security vs development: What comes first? Does female awareness and participation lead to greater access or does greater access lead to awareness and participation? Potentially a combination of both, with a focus of awareness and access for the most vulnerable population in terms of participating in the democratic processes might be a solution. An additional solution may be to mainly focus on the coming generation, the literate and educated youth, aiming to create a more accepting force for change within society.

But the frustration felt by women in the election process should not be misunderstood as a lack of interest; on the contrary it should be seen as a call for change. Frequently, even if women participate in the election process, they are disconnected from the actions of the politicians afterwards. Among the obstacles for women's empowerment that the international society does not easily see is "window dressing." Women are given prominent positions in politics without having the right capabilities and experience, and come under the control of men with guns in parliament and the government. For example, women were present in the election campaigns of both Abdullah and Ghani, but very few were appointed to their government, and those who were lacked essential experience. Moreover, women who might not initially have been chosen for "window dressing" are threatened into silence when they "put their neck out." This contributes to women losing interest in the political realm after an election. The few women that stick to a political movement after an election tend to do so to benefit their own or their families' careers rather than out of a genuine interest in politics. But again, this frustration and lack of participation should not be misunderstood as Afghan women losing interest or hope.

The international community's approach to addressing women's rights and empowerment in general has led to some questionable or direct harmful results for women. Initially, the approach was understood as putting women's rights OVER men's rights, which led to a backlash.

To counter this, the approach changed to “going traditional.” This involved talking to mullahs and working within the traditional perspective on women. “Going traditional” was an attempt to open the door for women in rural and more traditional areas. Yet, in some cases this led to strengthening the discriminatory and oppressing practices and caused critics from several actors, since they made the lives of women more dangerous, less protected and having less access to their rights. Currently, the approach is more neutral working with the inclusion of men in gender mainstreaming.

Concerning resource allocation, the international community has put a lot of resources into the issue of women's empowerment. It was discussed whether these resources have been accurately utilized by the government and lead to an actual difference in making justice and equality accessible to women. There is definitely awareness and knowledge in the ministries concerning women's rights and empowerment, but they do not act accordingly. The international community has pushed or forced every ministry to appoint a “gender focal person” and to write a gender policy. This has created a process where many ministries do not own, or even accept, the gender perspective, nor do they allocate a proper budget for its activities. In some instances, it has even led to hostilities and a lack of will towards gender mainstreaming, which in turn greatly hinders the process of implementing Resolution 1325 through the NAP. Gender, simply put, becomes a political item and a watchword for organizations working in Afghanistan. And an “easy-way-out” is to push an Afghan authority to write a policy and create a position. A solution to this issue at a policy (elite) level would be to include the young and educated women in the processes and to give them power to operate within NAP 1325 with an adequate budget. However, at the local level, the question of illiteracy and traditional norms remain the dominant reason for women lacking access to justice and equality. Therefore, in order to find ways to inform illiterate women of their rights and ways to access justice, one needs to use alternative methods, such as radio and television broadcasting and to encourage young men and women to talk to each other in safe spaces. When and if the traditional structures are used in order to promote women's rights and decrease the gap between the local and elite levels (rural vs urban), the international community needs to be aware of the risk of this being counterproductive.

A conflicting view proposed and debated was that international organizations should stop working with the most vulnerable populations and start working with the middle class, which would lead to a greater effect and impact, since the middle class would gain the ability to change and produce impact also for the most vulnerable.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Three themes may be summarized as lessons learned: implementing the NAP 1325 in general, female partici-

pation in the public sphere and protection of outspoken and empowered women.

In implementing the NAP 1325, there is a lack of skilled people in adequate positions and not enough or properly allocated budgets. This means that NAP 1325 runs the risk of becoming a “paper tiger,” a document without political will or ownership, which is not actually implemented, enforced or mainstreamed (isolated from other policies).

As for female participation in public spheres, there are several issues. The concept of window dressing may be seen as a collected term for many of these; women in public positions are not chosen by merit, they lack a mandate, they are under the pressure of nepotism, and, frequently, those who reached their positions on own merits are threatened into silence. Furthermore, the divide between grass-roots and elite levels affects women's participation. Educated women who can afford the protection have a better chance to gain access to the public sphere and justice, while illiterate and rural women farther away from the public sphere often have a hard time gaining access. Here, the youth of all levels in society already exposed to new and more liberal ideas should be utilized.

Finally, for the protection of women who are being threatened because of their outspokenness or participation in public life, there is currently no functional protection mechanism of support. For human right defenders, particularly outspoken women, the mechanism of support is very ad hoc and often results in them having to use their own funds to leave the country. The international community believing that it can withdraw once a project empowering women is completed, due to sustainability and exit strategies requested by donors, is not taking responsibility. It needs to stay and protect empowered women and take responsibility for the insecurity it has placed these women in.

## THE FUTURE

The first topic for discussion on the future was protection and how to balance the risks and need of protection of women, engaged in and responding to interventions by the international community. Afghan women are clearly exposed to dangers, and even more so once the international community withdraws. Awareness about this has resulted in the European Delegation to Afghanistan setting up a committee with a phone number that a human right defender (HRD) may call if she or he feels threatened. But this committee has limited power and reach. In the end, there are few other options for the threatened woman but to leave the country or area and relocate, often by using her own resources. And even when the defender receives financial assistance to relocate, the answer is still to have him/her relocated. For women, this insecurity and lack of protection are frequently the reasons for not engaging in the public sphere. Moreover, if a woman makes it into a public position, the lack of



protection often limits her ability to speak out. Even if the women's persona, character, manners and communication skills also play a role in the risk analysis, it was felt that the international community needs to stay responsibly engaged for the protection of the women at risk, also long-term.

Parts of the international community have worked with traditional or informal structures to promote women's rights and inclusion. This, some participants felt, could be detrimental and contradictory for promoting gender equality and the elimination of violence against women. Early childhood marriage and rape legitimized with marriage were just two examples mentioned where significant differences exist between formal and informal structures. Therefore, working within these informal structures should not be preferred by the international community. They should instead provide alternatives to the structures with actual value and impact.

Again, the discussion on the gap between the local (rural) and the elite (urban) levels of society resurfaced. At the local, often grass-roots, level many women are illiterate and lack access to public sphere as well as justice, while the elite women have higher education and often greater access. Then, which group of women should the international community target for interventions: the local level to hope for a direct effect, or the urban elite assuming a trickle-down effect? Perhaps a more symbiotic strategy may be possible to apply, thereby closing the gap.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The agenda of NAP 1325 should be mainstreamed into all areas of governance. Civil society should play an active part in monitoring it and holding authori-

ties accountable for NAP 1325 implementation on all levels (local, regional and national).

- Ensure that the international community's approach in supporting policy and legal processes is built on the principle of inclusivity and that the result is mainstreamed into all areas of governance.
- Make sure that Afghan ownership is in place and carefully consult with Afghans before any intervention. The international community needs to contextualize projects within the Afghan society before commencing any implementations.
- External actors should to the largest extent possible use and work within the formal (constitutional) Afghan structures to prove that these actually work and do so effectively, rather than working with traditional informal structures.
- The international actor must find ways to support and develop adequate mechanisms for the protection of the women they have inadvertently put in danger.
- The international community should review the balance between expenditures for expats and actual project costs.
- While transferring and allocating resources, an organization responsible for the budget need to ensure that it has an ethnic lens, that it learns from the Afghans as well as from lessons learned from previous projects and that it holds consultations before engaging with resources. Related to the implementation of the NAP 1325, it was also said that it is important that international donors ensure that all parts of NAP 1325 get the necessary resource allocation.
- Youth must be included in projects concerning women's rights and empowerment. Projects must also be more flexible and dynamic, and less mechanical and rigid. •

## Q&A

**Q:** Two questions. The first; did you discuss the time frame? We have heard these two days about considerable progress in the field of gender, but also reminded about the many problems. What is the time frame expected and required for change of these deep-rooted problems? The second; did you discuss "masculinity" as valuable in gender strategy, and if so, what did you say about it?

**A:** Yes, we discussed that, and of course the men need to be part of gender mainstreaming, the strengthening of women (status) and to defend women's rights. We talked a lot about that. It is part of the solution.

We did not discuss the time frame, except the need

for more of the long-term commitment, when it comes to working on gender and the implementation of UNSCR1325. I think a project-cycle-type of thinking prevails, because donors working within this field are busy fulfilling the requirements and showing results to their governments and funders. Too little attention is paid to the long term impact or the actual process that should be there. So it is a big challenge and we have to think much more on how we as donors and international actors are undermining the long term progress.

Additional comment: Refer to the youth, because they do carry the long term perspective.

## ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

# POVERTY REDUCTION

MODERATOR | ELISABETH WINTER  
RAPPORTEUR | JENS ROSBÄCK

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The discussion opened up with some introductory remarks on theories of poverty. Poverty has always been discussed, and was historically seen as a result of individual failure or shortcomings, such as laziness or stupidity, leading to punitive reactions from the society. Over time, social analysis resulted in more complex conclusions and theories of social exclusion became a foundation for explaining why poverty exists. With that various interventions also appeared to change such situations.

Generally, the belief is that economic growth is the most effective means of reducing poverty, but there are also concerns that social dimensions of poverty are forgotten. A core issue, very much true in Afghanistan, is that the poor do not have social protection.

The Afghanistan Unity Government (AUG) is indeed focusing on generating economic growth through developing agriculture, trade and extractive industries. The problem is that the growth does not trickle down to the poor. In fact, prices increase while poverty remains, and even gets worse among the very poorest. AUG is aware of this dilemma and points out in the Afghan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) that “poverty reduction is only worthwhile if it leads to inclusion.”

Currently, two-thirds of the Afghan population live under the poverty line. Afghanistan is ranked very low on all major global indexes on human and economic deve-

lopment. Female-headed households are much more likely to be poor.

## INITIAL DISCUSSION:

### IS POVERTY REDUCTION A REALISTIC AIM?

Yes, it is not only realistic, but a must in order to resolve the critical situation in Afghanistan. Poverty reduction is a critical component to achieve peace. Poverty and an unjust society are key drivers of conflict.

There needs to be recognition of the need for a good security situation to see gains in poverty reduction, and any gains can be easily reversed. We also need to understand that achieving SDG 1, the very first Sustainable Development Goal (out of 18), is about poverty reduction. Its objective is vast and very ambitious: “End poverty in all its forms everywhere before 2030.” This goal is closely connected with SDG 16: “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.”

It was pointed out that by working more intensely with the most vulnerable and poor, we can make the largest gain in reducing poverty and create a foundation for sustainable development. It was pointed out that this is particularly important in remote rural areas. It was pointed out that we should learn from the “opium economy” – they have market mechanisms and infrastructure that actually provide incomes to local communities.

Poverty reduction needs to be seen in a long-term perspective. There are too many short-term project approaches that are not really owned by the target groups but by development actors. One member at the round table said “the top-down discussion is the one I have most problem with. We are always discussing the macroeconomics. We need to focus more on the micro-floor and tell those stories. That is the only way to build an understanding on the top floor to show the microeconomic situation – daily work, daily challenges in the communities.”

Another perspective emerging from the discussion focused on the aid effectiveness perspective. We need to include poverty perspectives in the education, and health and other social services need to have a poverty perspective. And poverty reduction, surprisingly, has not been a focus of the international intervention in Afghanistan until the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan (BCA16) in October 2016.

Another core issue identified was the lack of sustainable funding. Donors have conditioned the funds to the AUG and also tend to have a time perspective that is too short.

Simultaneously, donors are bringing aid funds and, in cooperation with the AUG, implement activities. But the AUG “tends to think the job is done and now everything will be okay.” Questions remain how funds are spent – is it the right money at the right time? Do the funds reach the grassroots? Are people connected to the system (having ownership), or do they only have access to the services? We should use the results from evaluations more actively. “We are suffering from the copy and paste of strategies and policies... [made somewhere else]”.

We are now in the process of development evaluation – is it too much poorly spent money? We are happy that the funds have been available, but “is this aid bonanza helping out?”

The Citizens’ Charter programme was seen as one possible vehicle for reducing poverty, but other development programmes also need to look more into poverty dimensions. There is a need to also take stock of programmes like the Afghan Rural Development Programme (ARDP), the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and various development frameworks, such as the Afghan Peace and Development Framework (APDF) and the National Action Plan for Women’s Empowerment (NAP) and so on.

ARDP has been doing a good job in creating savings groups and established market links in the cities. Public-private partnerships can also be working on village levels; however, programme designs targeting public-private partnerships tend to focus on quite large-scale solutions.

## Poverty and an unjust society are key drivers of conflict.

It is important to invest in local skills and good loans to give more life opportunities and choices. We need to focus more on flexible, micro-based trade to respond to the fluid situation and a strong pattern of migration, not only of refugees but also general rural-urban migration. More than two million refugees are expected to return from neighbouring countries in the coming year. And Afghanistan has one of the highest rates of rural-urban migration in the world.

There is a focus on women doing (same) handicrafts, but this might not always be the right solution. The challenge is to create a job market for Afghan women. We need to start thinking and looking closer at cultural and social aspects. At the same time, we talk about women handicraft, and everyone laughs. But if the majority of women have that skill, why not invest in improving that skill and the products they are able to produce and add value to that? This may include food products, which are sometimes viewed in a patronising way by donors. “Don’t talk about pickles and jams,” they say. However, we should talk about it and make it an industry. There are examples of women building companies based on those skills selling to the cities and employing more than 50 women. We should also learn from minority groups such as the Kuchis. Among them, over 46% of the women have their own income in one way or another.

### CONCLUSIVE CONSIDERATIONS: IS POVERTY REDUCTION A REALISTIC GOAL?

Yes, it is not only a realistic goal, but an essential one. And if we go back to global statistics, we have seen tremendous achievements in the last decades. But it is a moving target. Some further considerations for the future are summarised below.

### POLICY

- Poverty reduction has not been on the agenda in the foreign interventions of Afghanistan. However, it must be in the future.

- We need to reinstate the poverty discourse to improve the lives of people in a sustainable way.
- The government has prioritised poverty reduction in terms of economic development and economic growth (SDG 8) in their development strategies, putting comparatively less focus on social and cultural empowerment. This needs to be balanced to meet the SDG.

## STRATEGIES

- We need employment opportunities, not only to generate income, but also opportunities capable of successfully competing with alternatives, such as opium farming, joining armed groups or fleeing the country.
- Take stock of existing programmes. There are working examples how it may look in programme practice. Secure that information on programmes are available and can be used for advocating better programme designs and solutions.
- Alignment with government priorities and priority areas. Donors can go in and support various aspects of the Citizens' Charter in order to "leave no one behind".
- There need to be better mechanisms in discussions with the government on behalf of the civil society to bring issues to the table.
- NGOs have the role to pass on capacity to local actors rather than deliver services.
- We do not yet know whether the new poverty focus at BCA will actually influence policies or whether the pledges will be enough to end poverty as set out in SDG 1.
- Build from the grassroots level to secure ownership

and sustainability – in particular with reference to resilience to emergencies and conflict.

- We need to listen more to the stories from the ground and bring them to policy makers.

## SOLUTIONS

The round table finalised the discussion by suggesting a number of hands-on solutions that could be useful in supporting poverty reduction along the lines of the initial discussions above.

- local food production
- access to credits for generating business and innovative ways to bring in accessible capital in a financially risky environment
- identify and build on what already exists of activities and aspirations in the local communities
- access to markets and value chains
- building community resilience for disaster risk reduction emergencies, such as conflict and natural disasters affecting the poor disproportionately
- public private partnerships at the very local level
- involvement of local authorities in poverty reduction strategies and activities
- improvement of capacity to understand how poverty may be reduced through the roles of various local actors
- access to basic social services for further poverty reduction
- local ownership over the activities and results will serve as protection against outside forces, such as security threats
- employment opportunities, not only small business generation •

## Q&A

**Q1:** It was impressive to hear you say we should be honest and frank about our own projects and programmes. Did you discuss the unpleasant reality that much of aid can distort local markets considerably. The massive interventions in Afghanistan have made a mark on the local markets. So, there is a problem which might even increase poverty, not reduce it.

**A1:** We did not discuss that specifically. I think that is the case for any badly thought-out programme and that is what we can all agree on. Design is important, and knowing really what the local situation is and taking your queue from the people who know about it, in other words the Afghans.

**Q2:** First a question on the nexus between development and security. Did you discuss the nexus between securi-

ty and violence and poverty? The second question is: the MDGs for Afghanistan are set for 2020, not 2015 as for other countries. How do you picture Afghanistan in 2020 as far as MDGs are concerned?

**A2:** In reply to your second question first: From what I have read, poverty could increase rather than decrease. There is a figure that it halved, but it looks as if it could suddenly increase again. So, I am worried about Afghanistan. I am worried about the security issue too, and you asked about the security nexus and so on. We began to discuss this, but there was not a great deal of time to talk about security, but of course we had to take it into account, because everything is affected by it. If things are insecure, it is very difficult to get investment, it is very difficult to visit projects, it is very difficult all around, so I am concerned about 2020 and what it is going to look like.

**According** to the World Bank, over 8 million children are attending schools today. The maternal mortality rate has fallen from 1,600 to 327 (per 100,000 live births). A lot has been done regarding health and education. But the quality of education is still low, as are parts of the health services.

## ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

# SERVICE DELIVERY

MODERATOR | AHMAD KHALID FAHIM  
RAPPORTEUR | KRISTER HOLM

### IMPORTANT LESSONS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S ENGAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN DURING THE PERIOD 2001–2014.

One lesson learned was that the international community's engagement requires a coherent approach on all levels. This must be agreed between the government and the donors and between the donors, so that cooperation and coordination between development actors can take place. The absence of political will from main actors to coordinate development aid within service delivery has limited success. The international community should address this issue by taking a coordinating approach in a responsible manner to the government and help enhancing its capacity. The lack of coordination affected different actors' development efficiency in a negative way. It meant costly duplications, poor service delivery and it opened the gates for corruption. A lesson to bring forward is to identify the real reasons of what was blocking the cooperation and coordination between serious development actors.

Another important lesson learned was the need for the international community to clearly communicate that service delivery to citizens is the responsibility of the government, which is to be held accountable. This accountability was in danger when NGOs and private companies engaged in service delivery and gave an impression that this service was a gift from themselves, when they actually won a tender from the government.

### I. YESTERDAY

What sectors of service delivery have been prioritized by the international community during the period 2001–2014? How has it affected poverty reduction?

First, the round table participants recognized that there was a huge lack of services available to the Afghan people before 2001. There was almost no government in place. Donors and NGOs came and acted to fill this gap. The focus was on quantity. This has later changed and in recent years, clearer demands from Afghans on the development actors to run, for example, schools with good quality have been heard. There is less acceptance among the people that mullahs or teachers with no education should act as teachers. We now see more of a bottom-up approach. People are putting forward their aspiration to learn.

It was concluded that both health and education were at the top of the service delivery agenda. Education for girls and health services in the field of maternal and child health have increasingly come in focus. Certain opportunities during this period was missed, such as prioritizing quality over quantity. This is crucial for the international community to address in the future.

According to WB, over 8 million children are now attending school. The maternal mortality rate has fallen from 1,600 to 327 (per 100,000 live births). A lot has been done regarding health and education. But there is still 3.5 mil-



lion children who do not attend school and one million children who are enrolled but remain absent. Only a part makes it to grade 6, 18% make it to grade 12 and even fewer make it to university.

The position at the round table was clearly that the quality of education is still low. Some expressed disappointment because Afghanistan had for many years focused on education with a lot of resources; however, it had not come farther. And some participants expressed disappointment over insufficient progress in advocacy work that many had shifted to away from service delivery.

The three most important contributions of the international community's engagement with service delivery during 2001–2014 took place in the sectors of health, education and water & sanitation. The latter has not been highlighted, as it is less of a donor "darling." It has been taken over by the government and some suggested that it could be called a success sector.

#### **WHAT MODEL BEST REFLECTS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S ENGAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN? WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES/RISKS WITH THE SELECTED MODEL?**

There were several models identified during the roundtable discussion. There was the model to contribute to capacity building in the government, deliver services in parallel structures, deliver services upon request from the government in a tendering system, deliver services through filling gaps where the government cannot deliver and finally through CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) reaching vulnerable groups outside the scope of the government, such as children with disabilities.

Many CSOs were mainly delivering services outside the structures, which meant a low level of coordination and less development effectiveness. In the model where the Ministry of Health took the lead, it used a tendering system for actors to make bids to provide the services.

There were almost no services provided in the country and no functional government in place when NGO came into the picture in 2001. The focus was to deliver as much as possible.

NGOs explained that they are not there for themselves, but for the Afghan people and that NGOs wanted to hand over the services to the government. Through the NGOs' service delivery, the government's legitimacy at the local level will be limited.

In the majority of the service delivery models there was a lack of clarity concerning the roles of the actors. The roles were overlapping. It was highlighted that the NGOs should have prioritized to support the government in

developing strategies and plans. And also develop service delivery standards in cooperation with NGOs. That could have helped the development on the sub-national level.

The effort of the government to decentralize mandates and resources was insufficient, according to some. It was a political issue where the central government, due to power structures, did not want to decentralize. One reflection was that donors should have pushed harder for a more decentralized process.

## **II. TODAY AND TOMORROW**

What lessons could be made from the work with the National Solidarity Program (NSP) that may be important for the work with the Citizens' Charter (the successor of NSP)?

Most views expressed around the table meant that the National Solidarity Program's (NSP) impact on women's empowerment has been positive. The proportion of women participating in the development of local villages has increased during the implementation of the NSP.

It is important to ensure that these experiences are taken into account in the Citizens' Charter, and it was perceived that the government has realized that future development programs should build on the successes of NSP. Some expressed that the Citizens' Charter does not differ all that much from NSP and that it mainly, in a both negative and positive way, is built on smaller adjustments.

A probable step forward is the accountability component in the Citizens' Charter, which in the new setup has a more clear structure for social audit. Another need and lesson is that the NGOs should continue to be clear about where the funding comes from (i.e. that the Citizens' Charter is a government-owned project contracted out to NGOs). It seems like communities in many places do not understand this.

It also came up that the Citizens' Charter should avoid short-term engagement and policies that could be described as "stop and go policies." This has resulted in an unequal development between villages and districts. This problem has to be addressed and avoided as sustainability otherwise will be weakened.

Resources could probably be used more effectively through supporting and working with clusters of CDCs, like 6–10 CDCs at a time through the Citizen's Charter, rather than village by village, as was the in the NSP. The role of NGOs in the Citizen's Charter has changed compared to the NSP. NGOs are mandated to focus on, for example, capacity building, advocacy and community mobilization, while the government takes over delivering the services through clusters of CDCs. This was seen at the round table as the right way to go. Building capacity

to strengthen the people's ability to claim their rights will be more important in the future.

However, this takeover by the government of the service delivery should be coupled with capacity building of government authorities on provincial and district levels. It is a long-term process that should be built on the successes reached within BPHS and the NSP. There was a notion that this is a result of sharing resources and cooperation between NGOs and the government structure. This experience has also led to the openness of the government for cooperation in other areas as well.

#### **WHAT ARE MOST PROBABLE FACTORS THAT MAY UNDERMINE THE CITIZENS' CHARTER'S EFFICIENCY AND REACH WITH REGARD TO SERVICE DELIVERY?**

Some factors that could undermine the development efficiency were identified. One was the understanding that the Community Development Councils (CDC) lack legitimacy in many areas. Others are not registered with the government and there are a wide variety of structures. The weak system of reporting back to the central government is yet another factor. To be able to address the needs for service delivery, the government has to know and act on the actual situation on the ground. Yet another probable factor identified was the lack of transfer of skills to grassroots and community levels, or even plans for how to proceed. Connected problems are the unclear job descriptions of CDCs and smaller committees attached to CDCs, as the authorities sometimes demand performance of the CDCs above their level of competence, which sometimes undermines their efficiency. NGOs should preferably implement through CDCs. ACBAR may further encourage its members to do so.

Another hugely important factor mentioned was that the security situation is deteriorating. The Taliban are taking control over more and more areas. This means that the possibility of the government to deliver on the ground is getting weaker.

#### **WHAT ROLE CAN WE ENVISION THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO PLAY IN THE FUTURE TEN YEARS WITH REGARD TO SERVICE DELIVERY?**

There was a consensus at the round table that delivering services is the main responsibility of the government. However, given the capacity and resources of the government, as well as the prevailing insecurity, there is a need for NGOs to complement the government efforts in de-

livering services. The NGOs' engagement in service delivery should focus on filling the gaps and responding to the development needs of the most vulnerable and excluded (e.g. women, children and persons with disabilities).

International donors, NGOs and CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) could for example:

- Engage in and support more coordination between genuine development actors. This could mean avoiding competition between donors that eliminate or undermine the coordination.
- There are a number of coordination groups between donors and NGOs, but fewer with the Afghan government. This needs to be changed to more coordination with the Afghan government.
- Engage in and support sub-national committees and independent directorates of local government.
- Provide support to the Afghan government's long-term strategy for development by aligning more funds to the national budget.
- Support the Afghan government to add to the 16 development indicators in the Self-Reliance Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF) – an indicator that measures the level of violence against women and children.
- Development actors, including international donors, NGOs and Swedish CSOs working in Afghanistan, start with themselves when it comes to alignment, harmonization and other behaviors that promote development effectiveness.
- Untie aid to military presence, demilitarize aid and abandon the method of earmarking before really knowing the needs of the people.
- Bring the government to the tables of the coordination bodies. There are now 180 civil society organizations plus 75 international<sup>1</sup>. A lot of coordination bodies already exist. And in the future, these bodies will have to be coordinated. Before, there was only coordination between the NGOs themselves. But now the ministries are invited to share their thoughts. This has to increase in the future.
- Make efforts for a common understanding of, and respect for, service delivery to people by any actor; be it the government, international military forces or armed opposition groups.
- Service delivery should be both accepted and implemented through neutrality and impartiality.
- Focus on organizing one group of international donors specializing on service delivery.
- Enhance the capacity of the government to take a coordinating approach in a responsible manner. •

1. CSOs include social and professional associations and community-based organizations

## ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

# CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION

MODERATOR | ROBERT EGNELL

RAPPORTEUR | CARLA DA COSTA BENGTTSSON

**THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF CONCEPTS**, ideas and institutions that indicate the ambition to better coordinate and cooperate between civilian and military actors in international cooperation. And they have all proliferated over the last two decades. Four questions related to this were discussed:

- Why did all of these concepts proliferate?
- How did we do it, what did it look like on the ground in Afghanistan?
- What were the related outcomes, consequences or benefits?
- Finally, what are the conclusions, lessons learned and ways forward based on this discussion?

## THE QUESTION OF WHY?

The discussion started off on civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) in Afghanistan with the question of why? Part of this was at the tactical level. However, CIMIC was interpreted as something more than just a matter of cooperation between the actors at the tactical level. The strategic level of relations and coordination at both national and international levels was also discussed. A second part of this were the lessons or traditions from Bosnia, where CIMIC was created and implemented. A third part was from the recognition that security and development are interconnected, based on decades of failed operations; both in terms of pure development and humanitarian affairs and in terms of military peace operations. Cooperation and working “hand in hand” was seen as something that should be promoted and as a potentially good thing. So, the idea was that if combined, perhaps the incredibly difficult task of achieving peace and stability and development at the same time could be achieved.

That was early on. Then, this operation evolved over time.

What started as indeed a counter terrorist campaign evolved into what was more of a stability and state-building campaign, and then evolved into a counter-insurgency campaign, which went into a transition period and back to a counter-terrorist campaign again. So, it has seen many stages and therefore many goals and many approaches. Especially when the counter-insurgency concept was brought into the picture, suddenly a very clear theory of change was presented. The idea was that service delivery would increase support from the local Afghans, which would indeed create increased stability and support for the Afghan government, and all kinds of good things would come from that. The mission therefore had to focus on humanitarian aid as well as pure military goals and means. The question then was how this could be done? The PRT (provincial reconstruction team) approach naturally suited this purpose. The PRT approach came from Iraq, where the former regime was completely dismantled and where there were no alternatives to reach out to civil society but by an integrated approach.

It was recognized that there was very little strategic rationale behind the CIMIC concept in Afghanistan and no doctrines on how to do it, beyond traditions and assumptions. So, commanders arrived on the ground and were told to run a PRT and to conduct all kinds of CIMIC operations, but for what purpose? And with what goals? No one was really told. In addition, there was very little academic support for the idea that increased cooperation leads to increased effectiveness, or that military service delivery would lead to increased popular support and, subsequently, to stability.

## THE QUESTION OF HOW?

There are a number of tactical level tasks of CIMIC, among them coordination with the humanitarian and

**It was recognized**

that there was very little strategic rationale behind the CIMIC concept in Afghanistan and no doctrines on how to do it, beyond traditions and assumptions. So, commanders arrived on the ground and were told to run a PRT and to conduct all kinds of CIMIC operations, but for what purpose? And with what goals? No one was quite told. In addition, there was very little academic support for the notion that increased cooperation leads to increased effectiveness, or that military service delivery would lead to increased popular support and subsequent stability.

development communities, contact with the local community, engagement with shuras, etc. Then there was the PRT concept, which was incredibly important in Afghanistan – actually an institutional civilian-military unit brought in from Iraq, but applied on a large scale in 27 different ways in the different provinces of Afghanistan. It should be noted, however, that the situation in Afghanistan compared to Iraq was different: in Afghanistan, there were already established authorities and NGOs involved in service delivery. Much of the PRT's work was quite short-term, which at times fuelled corruption. In some regions, there was lack of technical expertise and PRTs could not design, implement or evaluate the different projects. Another setback was that PRTs were sometimes unable to reach out to the rural areas and the people living there.

The work was also in support of military objectives rather than, for example, poverty reduction or humanitarian principles. CIMIC in its very definition is operations and activities in support of military objectives, nothing else. If there are other positive outcomes, then that is a plus, but that is not the idea behind it. From the local communities, there was little evidence of the benefits of this, and perhaps little interest as well. Most of the people had little, if any, awareness of the PRTs. In hindsight, the civil part of CIMIC was miniscule in comparison to the military part, and there were few concepts working in harmony with each other. The multi-nationality complicated things even further, as it resulted in many different views and understandings of key concepts, and in the end NATO's definition prevailed.

While there was much talk, there was actually not much of civilian-military cooperation and coordination on the ground, and even less so high up in the chain of command between civilian and military actors. And, at the political strategic level, it appeared harder to cooperate

and coordinate than on the ground where practical problems were at times solved together.

**THE IMPACT**

The most burning issue when it comes to civil-military cooperation is what kind of impact it had, positive or negative? The first thing to point out is the difficulty of measuring impact in relation to one factor alone. So to say that civil-military cooperation and coordination had a profound impact on anything is almost impossible from a social science standpoint.

We cannot isolate that factor and say that it is either the root of all evil or the silver bullet that led to the few successes we have seen in Afghanistan.

What has been seen, on the other hand, is a number of anecdotes and stories about successes at the tactical level where coordination between these actors has led to well-conducted projects. Whether these projects have led to increased support for the host government and led to peace and stability – that is a completely different issue! But there are lots of stories saying that a number of projects were successful due to well-coordinated actors on the ground.

There are also lots of stories of problematic outcomes and negative impacts, quite often when military units conduct operations that are not part of their particular expertise, or when they are too short term to be of much value on the ground.

The real issue is to what extent it has either led to victory in military terms – which clearly it has not – or to what extent it has led to support or damage for the development and the humanitarian community. Has this, as is often voiced, ruined humanitarian space by blurring the lines between civilian and military actors, thereby ruining the perception of their impartiality and neutrality in the minds of the local population? There is clear evidence that organizations that have worked for decades in certain areas had to withdraw during military campaigns. Now, whether this is because they were cooperating with the military or not is hard to know. And the question must be raised whether it is at all possible to be impartial and neutral in the midst of war, where there is an international community seen as an occupying force in another country?

There is plenty of evidence in reports on organizations feeling that the more they approach the military or the more they were seen as involved with the military, the less support they got from the local population, which made their work harder. This led to many organizations formulating policies not to be close or engage with the military and not allow anyone in uniform in their compounds.

What could be concluded from this discussion on impacts and consequences is that it seems as if the potential

benefits from close coordination and cooperation on the ground are rather limited. Or, at least in the way that this has been conducted so far. While there is little evidence of serious positive impact from this, the risks of negative impact are incredibly large. If this indeed blurs the lines between civilian and military actors and ruins the so-called humanitarian space, then there is no way to replace it. The costs of either the military conducting civilian duties or providing protection for civilian organizations are simply too high. So, there is a cost-benefit analysis that needs to be done in relation to these findings.

### THE LESSONS LEARNED AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

So, what can we learn from this? How to move forward? This is not really rocket science, but very difficult politically. The need for strategic coherence is evident. These operations, as the one in Afghanistan, are of a magnitude and with ambitions and aims that no actor can solve on its own. Which then means that if military, civilian, development, humanitarian, justice sector actors (etc.) present on the ground could cooperate better in coherence with each other, it would probably be better than

not doing so. To say that civilian-military coordination and cooperation is a failure and that we will never do it again would be too simplistic! The question is rather how and when and at what level. Strategy is about balancing ends, ways and means. How to do that? Goals must be set and clear, and positive outcomes must be formulated.

Finally, at what level should cooperation take place? Civil-military cooperation seems to happen at the tactical level right now, but not at the strategic level. It should be the other way around. It is the political and strategic levels that need to be coherent and coordinated, based on mutual analysis and planning. There needs to be a clear goal, and the goals then decide the means. There are no possibilities for cooperation if this is not in place. Then, the professional organizations – military, humanitarian and development – can take off to the field and do what they are best at and work within their own specific competencies. If you already have a mutual analysis and strategic approach at the strategic level, rather limited necessity for cooperation and coordination on the ground will be required. •

## Q&A

**Q1:** You said that a lot of research needs to be done, and that is well understood. Is it going on anywhere? Is there promising research that will help us being more evidence-based in our relationship between developmental actors and the military interventions in the future, if and when needed? The second thing, out of the many countries in Afghanistan that contributed with the PRTs, did not one single formulate a shared strategy between the civilian and military actors? Twenty-eight countries or so contributed to PRTs, with civilian and military troops. Did not anyone of them have a formulated strategy for what they wanted to achieve? Was it the same as the Norwegian report that stated the main reason being to please the US and Nato? That is not a real shared strategy!

**A 1:** On the first question, there has been a few interesting studies at Tusk university and elsewhere, where they try to find evidence whether this works or not. They could not find it. I don't see much research going on and perhaps it is just too hard to isolate these variables and to say something very conclusive about it. So I doubt that we will have evidence at the end of this research or at least of current research, that this is either good or bad. The jury will always be out in relation to many other factors, unfortunately. But we can do a lot more. But it means daring to take political risk. On the second question, yes there were many PRTs with different app-

roaches, different types of staff, some had zero dollars, some had millions of dollars to spend. The outcome is not particularly positive around any of them. I think what happened was that most of them had to construct their own rationale. None of them had clear strategic directives from the capital or from NATO headquarters. They just had to come up with their own ideas. And when you look at the measures of success within them – because they always do that at the end of the six months' tour, it is mostly quantitative in how many social patrols did we conduct, how many wells did we dig, body count, but very little in terms of the broader impact such as poverty reduction, support to development processes or development around the PRT, support for the government of Afghanistan for example. That is just too hard to measure. To be frank, almost every unit that arrived in Afghanistan had a worse security situation when they left than upon arrival! So it is not a particularly positive evaluation to conduct as a commander. So you try to think of other good things you have done during your time there. It is a difficult process.

**Q2:** Also, a lot of military data is classified and cannot be used in the research.

**A2:** Yes, some data is classified, but I am wondering whether we would find anything of interest in the classified data, to be honest.



**CHAPTER 7**REFLECTIONS AND  
CLOSING OF CONFERENCE

WADIR SAFI

# REFLECTIONS ON THE **PAST, PRESENT** AND **FUTURE**

**AFTER THE TALIBAN REGIME** collapsed, a government 'made in Bonn' took over. A constitutional Loya Jirgah approved the constitution of the presidential regime.

The first presidential election 2004 confirmed Karzai as a president – but his administration and parliament was composed of people from 'jihadi parties'. After the second presidential election in 2009 things developed to the worse with gunmen in parliament. These two periods with Karzai as president brought disunity among Afghans; Karzai also became 'anti-American' especially in the struggle against terrorism. Karzai was repeatedly saying in his speeches that the foreigners were more corrupt than Afghans and had caused the corruption in Afghanistan.

The international community was also not very successful in their reform strategies, as they did not coordinate these, nor between themselves. Security did not improve despite the massive funding of international military forces, and partly due to foul play of neighbouring countries. Agriculture did not improve and industry did not exist until now. Poppy cultivation did not stop and the drug mafia was happy.

The only developments we can mention were: (i) girls' schools opened; (ii) women started working in government offices; (iii) media developed with numerous radio and TV channels, newspapers and magazines, etc.

The third presidential election in 2014 saw a strong turnout of voters, despite 'spoilsport' in the run-up. Only 748 of the 7171 polling stations had to close. This showed that Afghans embraced change. It was a clear victory for democracy and a resounding verdict against terrorism and extremism of all shades. As the result of the election

was about to be announced, people expressed optimism about the direction of the country.

However, since then, the contesting of the election and the political struggle, compounded with rising insecurity as well as economic shocks and unemployment, is starting to show a decline in people's satisfaction with nearly all types of government institutions.

Concerning dispute resolution, there has been a slow but steady increase in the reported usage of state courts for dispute resolution. However, Afghans still approach a range of formal and informal actors for dispute resolution, depending upon the type of dispute.

Taking the above developments into account, the following can be requested from the international community:

- Support for Afghanistan's fight against terrorism must continue until all terrorist elements have been removed.
- Make the regimes of neighbouring countries that demonstrate double standards stop this behaviour and instead start respecting the principles of international law.
- Help establish effective monitoring of development aid to ensure that it benefits the people of the country.
- Support the supervision of Afghan civil servants to ensure their respect of the Constitution and of human rights.
- Help fight corruption.
- Help in developing poppy alternatives for farmers and in stopping drug trafficking.
- With the above support from donors, Afghanistan can prevent the young from emigrating to other countries in the world. •

KAI EIDE

# CLOSING REFLECTIONS

**I AM GRATEFUL** to the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan. It is an organization with a very solid reputation in Afghanistan. There are two international NGOs that I respect more than others: the Aga Khan Foundation and the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan. Both are very knowledgeable and both have made great contributions to Afghanistan over a long period of time.

I have been asked to comment on our two days of deliberations. First allow me to say a few words about “lessons learned.” I don’t know how many “lessons learned” exercises I have attended – and addressed – over the last eight years or so on Afghanistan. And there are many lessons to be learned. But we have a surprising ability to not learn any of them, but to go on and make the same mistakes somewhere else. When I left Afghanistan, I happened to be involved in Libya. Again, we repeated our mistakes from Iraq and from Afghanistan. In the Middle East today, we are also making some of the very same mistakes. The most serious mistake of all – of course – is to engage in a country without proper knowledge and understand-

ing of this country – and without respect for the people of that country.

Has any research been made on the lessons that have been presented today? My answer is: Everything we have discussed here today has been extensively studied in hundreds of research papers. Governments have asked think tanks for assessments and evaluations. Books have been written. PRTs have been studied extensively. Aid effectiveness, civilian-military relations! So much has been produced that there is no way we are able to read and digest it all. So we do not lack the material required to learn from mistakes – and from successes. The problem is rather the political readiness – or lack thereof. Someone here mentioned the problem of shaping a strategy if you do not know your objective. I agree. The famous baseball star Yogi Berra once said: “If you don’t know where you are going, you might not get there!” Experience shows that he was right.

The lack of a clear strategy was mentioned by Barney Ru-

bin. He claimed that there has only been one real strategy: the US strategy to combat terror in the aftermath of 9/11. And that was a strategy aimed at protecting US territory. It was not shaped with the objective of building the Afghan society after the fall of the Taliban. What the Norwegian report concluded is correct: we all felt the need to demonstrate that we were loyal allies and to contribute in the US fight against terror. There is nothing surprising in that. In the end, more than 40 countries took part in the NATO-led operation. In addition to demonstrating support to the US, however, each country had to develop its own national justification and “strategy.” They had different military rules of engagement and different relationships between military and civilian activities. Can you imagine being the commander of ISAF? The international civilian community in Afghanistan was often criticized for not having a common strategy. But NATO did not have a real common strategy either. However, the focus of discussion in the international community was heavily dominated by security issues. At NATO, discussions on security-related topics in Afghanistan took place twice a week – and for years. No other forum exhibited such frequent discussions on the civilian challenges. The fact that military challenges dominated the early discussions are understandable. But it was a mistake that we continued to focus so heavily on military requirements to the detriment of discussions on civilian challenges, which led to a situation where tremendous amounts of money were spent without any unifying strategy. That is something that should reflect upon when we engage somewhere in the future.

I can subscribe to much that has been said here today and yesterday. It is, for instance, correct that we were substituting Afghan institutions instead of building them. The PRTs are one prominent example, but far from the only one. It was considered faster and more efficient to bring in international “experts” than to build Afghan capacity – and it proved to be a basic mistake! Consultants came in, picked up in US and elsewhere, and sent to Afghanistan without proper knowledge of the country and of their own role. The result was that ministries were filled with consultants that had no impact – or even a negative impact by spending huge amounts while leaving Afghan ministries just as poorly staffed when the foreign “experts” left. What should we have done? In my opinion, there should have been a massive Afghan institution-building effort, enabling the Afghans to gradually staff their own institutions.

This seminar is useful because of the broad involvement and exchange of views between Afghans and internationals. But I have seen so many seminars – and there must be hundreds of them – organized for a day or for half a day about women’s participation or other politically correct topic. Since there is little coordination between various organizations and governments, such

## It is right to criticize

the international community. But I think the Afghans also have to say to themselves ‘we really have to do certain things differently from what we have done in the past.’ The most important, of course, is a readiness to work together in a unified way – to combat corruption, stand up against violations of human rights – even if they are committed by powerful people.

events far too often become short one-time events, while they should be integral parts of a continuing learning process.

In order to provide the kind of knowledge (i.e. instruments and tools) that can be used to promote real change, a sustained and systematic effort is required. We have to get out of this habit of fragmentation that is often motivated by a need to demonstrate what each and every donor or NGO is doing. Governments should also encourage their national NGOs to work with others with the aim of improving the prospects of sustainable results.

For good reasons, we focus on governments when we discuss lessons learned. I think the NGOs also should look carefully at their own practices and operations. When the Norwegian Afghanistan report was presented, there was, I thought, an atmosphere of denial across the board – including the NGOs. Too few were ready to say “yes, we also have a lesson to learn for our own activity.” The participation of women has been a prominent theme over the last two days – as it should. And the figures we all refer to are promising, since they demonstrate that there is an increase in the number of girls at school, women in parliament, women in government, etc.

But these figures only tell us a part of the story! Afghanistan is still suffering from massive discrimination against women. That is the basic truth. And here the male political leaders in Afghanistan have a serious job to do. And they have so far failed to live up to the challenge. How often do you see an Afghan male minister stand up and say: “We cannot tolerate this discrimination any longer. We cannot tolerate the abuse so many women face every day!” I saw President Karzai speak out once at a March 8 celebration. Apart from that, I never heard anything. What about the current government? How often do the present leaders stand up and say: “We have to do something!”, except for when a gross incident is revealed by the media and becomes a big international story. Such as

**The most serious mistake**  
of all – of course – is to engage  
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when a six-year old girl is promised to a 60-year old man, or when a 16-year old woman is killed; then there is a statement! But apart from that – silence! That is a big shame. To talk about statistics is good, but I still believe that there is a lack of a basic engagement and commitment, which is required to change the culture of society.

It is right to criticize the international community. But I think the Afghans also have to say to themselves “we really have to do certain things differently from what we have done in the past.” The most important, of course, is a readiness to work together in a unified way – to combat corruption, stand up against violations of human rights – even if they are committed by powerful people.

If disagreements and confusion is allowed to continue, then what will happen?

First, the international community will have a serious problem when it comes to sustaining its engagement.

Second, investments will not arrive, international or Afghan – and there is a lot of Afghan money in the Gulf region and elsewhere that could be invested.

Third, the army will lack the motivation it needs for fighting efficiently. The security services need to be convinced that they are fighting for somebody – and particularly a government worth their sacrifice.

Fourth, the administration will lack a clear sense of purpose and direction.

Fifth, even the Taliban will find it more difficult to en-

gage! You can only make a concession once. And when you do, you want to be sure that you have a counterpart that is clear and stable enough to engage in a peace process in a sustainable way.

We have discussed women’s participation and inclusiveness during this seminar. But the sad fact is that so far, we do not have a peace process.

Two days ago the Asia Foundation presented a new survey. Its main conclusion is that there is a downward trajectory in the national mood that began in 2013. Only 39% of Afghans interviewed in September 2016 said that the country is moving in the right direction. Other figures are equally negative. But then towards the end of the survey we see something I found very interesting. While confidence in public institutions and NGOs is at a historic low, two institutions enjoy more confidence than before: religious leaders score 66% and the media score 64%. According to the survey, those who watch TV – where women participate in different roles in news programs, in documentaries, in movies – have a more positive view of women’s engagement in society. It seems to indicate that, with the spread of traditional and social media, there is also a process towards greater respect for the role of women.

And, finally, the survey seems to confirm the need to make development projects visible. Those who are made aware through media of projects in their own community had a more favorable attitude with regard to Afghanistan’s future. Making development projects visible to the population is clearly important.

To conclude my remarks: I am very concerned about some basic trends and about the lack of determination to confront violations of human rights and to confront the widespread corruption. Of course, we must all demonstrate that there is progress, because progress is needed to motivate us all – Afghans and internationals. But we should not fall into the trap of what I call “happy talk!” There has been too much “happy talk” over the years and it has made us reluctant to address the real obstacles to sustainable progress. Let us be realistic and let us set our sights on what needs to be done. Because if we do not, then the international interest will inevitably fade away. And if we do, then I believe that the trends can be turned and that the Afghans can meet the future with greater optimism. •

PEDER JONSSON

# CLOSING REMARKS

**SCA IS A PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE ORGANIZATION.** I thank the founders of SCA for stating this from the very beginning, that they said exactly a people-to-people organization. I think this is one of SCA's real strengths in today's complex environment.

Two personal notes from this meeting:

I was intrigued by one little word in a sentence expressed by Mr. Rubin this morning and that was "enough" – in "good enough relations". Not good relations, but good enough relations in the context of Afghanistan's relations with its neighbours. I will take this "enough" and contemplate what it could actually mean in the future. It could be a turning point to simply discuss this formulation.

The other note is the long term perspective – 10 years according to our group discussion. I am very happy to hear from the Swedish government that they have a 10-year program. I would be very apprehensive and weary if I did not know that there was a 10 year commitment from the Swedish government.

Have we fulfilled the fourfold purpose stated in the welcoming speech? Yes, we have. We have analysed the lessons, we have drawn conclusions, we have highlighted the understanding of Afghanistan, and we have got many perspectives. But! We have one left! And that is the documentation. I think that this is extremely im-

portant, so I will not close this session, I will just pause it and we will return. So, when we leave today, see it as if you have been adjourned and that we will pick up in mid-February.

But I want to send a little piece of structure to that discussion – in the documentation, we should have chapters or paragraphs on lessons forgotten and, given the candour of our meeting, I think we dare write one on lessons ignored, and of course one on lessons learned. Last, but not least, there should be one on lessons to be implemented in the upcoming 10 years.

Before I end, I would like to thank you all! I would like to thank the Folke Bernadotte Academy for making this possible by providing the grants needed and also for attending the session and providing their expertise. I would also like to thank the Swedish Postcode Lottery for providing the means for making this possible. The keynote speakers and panellists, I really appreciate that you took the time and prepared for this meeting. The round table moderators, I understand that it was a pretty heavy task to perform and we are very grateful that you took the time and prepared and took the discussions seriously. And, of course, all present participants and all those who had to leave, I would like to extend my deepest thanks to you for setting aside these days.

And now, thank you! You are adjourned. •



# ANNEXES

## CONFERENCE AGENDA

### International Conference

## Afghanistan's Road to Self-Reliance – what has been done and what can be done better?

Stockholm, 8-9 December 2016

### DAY 1 - Thursday 8 December

Timetable	Program	Speakers
<b>8:30-9:00</b>	Registration Tea/coffee and lighter snack	
<b>9:00-9:20</b>	Opening	Welcoming of participants: - <b>Peder Jonsson</b> , Chairperson, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)  Opening of conference by: - <b>Jöran Bjällerstedt</b> , Ambassador-at-large for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs
<b>9:20-9:30</b>	Today's agenda	- <b>Lotta Hedström</b> , Head Moderator
<b>9:30-10:30</b>	Keynote speakers - addressing the topics of the round table discussions	- <b>Habiba Sarabi</b> , Vice Chair, Afghanistan High Peace Council  - <b>Ahmad Fahim Hakim</b> , Consultant, former Vice Chair, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
<b>10.30-10.45</b>	Short break	
<b>10.45-12.00</b>	Evaluation, lessons learnt and reflections from three Nordic countries interventions for Afghanistan 2001-2014	Presentation of Norwegian evaluation from interventions for Afghanistan 2001-2014: - <b>Paal Hilde</b> , Ass. Professor of Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies and former Head of Evaluation Committee's Secretariat  Presentations of Danish lesson learnt from interventions for Afghanistan 2001-2014: - <b>Nicole Ball</b> , Senior Fellow, CIP/ Landell Mills  - <b>Niels K. Vistisen</b> , Head of Thematic Analysis Section at Army Centre for Intelligence, Denmark

<b>12.00-13.00</b>	Lunch break	
<b>13.00-14.00</b>	<p>Evaluation, lessons learnt and reflections from three Nordic countries interventions for Afghanistan 2001-2014.</p> <p>...continued from before lunch.</p>	<p>Brief message:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Tone Tingsgård</b>, Chair of the Inquiry on Sweden's Engagement in Afghanistan</li> </ul> <p>Reflections from Swedish interventions for Afghanistan 2001-2014:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Bengt Ekman</b>, Senior Programme Manager, Afghanistan Unit, Sida, former Ass Director- General, Sida</li> <li>- <b>Anna-Karin Eneström</b>, Director-General for Political Affairs, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs</li> <li>- <b>Magnus Lüning</b>, Captain (N), Swedish Armed forces</li> <li>- <b>Bengt Kristiansson</b>, Vice Chairperson and former Secretary General, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)</li> </ul>
<b>14.00-15.15</b>	Panel debate	<p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Mats Karlsson</b>, Director, The Swedish Institute of International Affairs</li> </ul> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Michael Claesson</b>, Brigadier General &amp; Military Advisor, Swedish Armed forces</li> <li>- <b>Manizha Wafeq</b>, Co-founder and Chair of the Board, Leading Entrepreneurs for Afghanistan's Development (LEAD)</li> <li>- <b>Abdul Khalil Raufi</b>, Founder, Afghanistan Youth Social and Educational Organization</li> <li>- <b>Anders Fänge</b>, Board member &amp; former Country Director, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan</li> </ul>
<b>15.15-15.35</b>	Reflections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Mark Bowden</b>, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General (Resident &amp; Humanitarian Coordinator), UNAMA</li> </ul>
<b>15.35-16.00</b>	Tomorrow's agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Lotta Hedström</b>, Head Moderator</li> </ul>
<b>16.00-17.00</b>	Reception	

**DAY 2 - Friday 9 December**

<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
<b>08.30-09.00</b>	Tea/coffee and lighter snack	Seating in Round table groups
<b>9.00-09.05</b>	Welcome back	- <b>Lotta Hedström</b> , Head Moderator
<b>9.05-10.05</b>	Keynote speakers - reflecting on previous discussions and topics for the round table discussions	- <b>Barnett Rubin</b> , Associate Director, Center on International Cooperation, New York University  - <b>Humira Saqib</b> , Director, Afghan Women News Agency
<b>10.05 - 10.30</b>	Introduction of round table discussions	- <b>Lotta Hedström</b> , Head Moderator
<b>10.30-13.00</b>  <b>Coffe/tea can be fetched at 11.15</b>	Round tables: six groups, six topics	Round table moderators: <b>Elizabeth Winter</b> /British & Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group - <i>Poverty reduction</i> <b>Richard Ghiasy</b> /Stockholm International Peace Research Institute - <i>Peace &amp; security</i> <b>Lotta Sjöström Becker</b> / The Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation - <i>Gender &amp; UNSCR 1325</i> <b>Khalid Fahim</b> /Swedish Committee for Afghanistan - <i>Service delivery</i> <b>Robert Egnell</b> /The Swedish Defence University - <i>Civil-Military Cooperation</i> <b>Maria Nystedt</b> /Folke Bernadotte Academy - <i>Justice for all</i>
<b>13.00-14.30</b>	Lunch break	Lunch
<b>14.30-16.00</b>	Conclusions from round table discussions	- <b>Lotta Hedström</b> , Head Moderator  - <b>Bengt Kristiansson</b> , Head Rapporteur
<b>16.00-16.30</b>	Reflections	- <b>Wadir Safi</b> , Professor of Law & Political Science, Kabul University  - <b>Kai Eide</b> , Ambassador of Norway to Sweden, former Special Representative & Head of UNAMA
<b>16.30-16.45</b>	Closing	- <b>Peder Jonsson</b> , Chairperson, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan

# LIST AND BIOGRAPHIES OF **SPEAKERS, PANELLISTS AND MODERATORS**

## ABDUL KHALIL RAUFI

Founder of the Afghanistan Youth Social and Educational Organisation, leadership member of the Civil Society Joint Working Group (CSJWG), member of APD (Afghan People Dialogue UNAMA), and member of the Civilian Protection Group. A well-known civil society activist, human rights defender and media expert in Afghanistan. Established the Youth Development Centre in 2004. He has attended international conferences on youth and civil society in India, Dubai and Thailand and was a co-leader of the Afghanistan National Youth Peace Jirga of 2012.

## AHMAD FAHIM HAKIM

Consultant and former Deputy Chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and commissioner with the Electoral Complaint Commission. He is a qualified social scientist specialising in post-war recovery, with over twenty years of experience working as an activist and mobiliser for peace-building, human rights and civil society initiatives. Since 2013, he has collaborated with various national and international institutions as a freelance consultant and researcher on development, sub-national governance and peace-building. He was a lead advisor in the civil society preparatory process for the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in 2016.

## AHMAD KHALID FAHIM

Programme Director at the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan. He joined SCA in 2003 and served in the World Food Program in 2006–2007, after which he returned to SCA. He graduated in 2002 from the Medical Faculty at the Afghan University in Peshawar (Pakistan), and holds an MA in Social Science (Educational Research and Development) from Karlstad University, Sweden. He has many years' experience of education service in Afghan refugee camps.

## ANDERS FÄNGE

A board member since 2011 and former Country Director of SCA, who is one of Sweden's main specialists on Afghanistan. He is a journalist and has worked for the UN, and contributed with chapters in several books and numerous articles. He is Honorary Doctor at Umeå University (Sweden). He gives lectures on Afghanistan, its history, politics, culture and customs.

## ANNA-KARIN ENESTRÖM

Director-General for Political Affairs, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, who has previously served at the Swedish Mission in Strasbourg, at the Swedish Embassy in Nairobi, at

the Swedish Permanent Mission to the UN, as Ambassador to Pakistan and as the Swedish representative in the Committee for Foreign Affairs & Security at the Swedish Mission to the EU in Brussels.

## BARNETT RUBIN

Associate Director at the Center on International Cooperation (CIC), New York University, where he is the Director of the Afghanistan Pakistan Regional Program. In connection with the Bonn Agreement on Afghanistan, he acted as special advisor to the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan. During the period of 2009–2013, he served as Senior Adviser to the Special Representative for Afghanistan & Pakistan, U.S. Dept. of State. He advised the United Nations on drafting the constitution of Afghanistan, the Afghanistan Compact and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. His previous experiences include work in the US Council for Foreign Relations, at Columbia University, at Yale University and research at USIP. He is currently Chair of the Conflict Prevention & Peace Forum (US). He is the author of several books and articles on Afghanistan and its neighbours.

## BENGT EKMAN

Senior Programme Manager, Afghanistan Unit, Sida, and former Assistant Director-General. He joined Sida in 1979 and has held posts at different levels, such as Director of Planning and Chief Controller at the headquarter and postings abroad (Vietnam, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Burma). In Burma he served as Head of Development for several years and he led Sweden's support for the democratisation efforts.

## BENGT KRISTIANSSON

Deputy Chairperson of the board of Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) and former SCA Secretary-General. Originally a paediatrician and associate professor at Gothenburg University, he has long experience of development and research in several countries (Ethiopia, Yemen, Somalia and Afghanistan). He initially worked with the UN and Save the Children in Afghanistan for several years and later joined SCA.

## ELIZABETH WINTER

A founding member of the British & Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG), and is a trustee of Afghanaid. She is a social scientist and researcher, and she has specialised in civil society development with extensive experience of ma-

naging NGOs in the UK, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Involved with Afghanistan and aid agencies working there since the 1980s, she regularly travels to Afghanistan.

## HABIBA SARABI

Vice Chairperson of the Afghanistan High Peace Council. Originally a haematologist, she became a politician and reformer in the context of the post-Taliban reconstruction of Afghanistan. In 2005, she was appointed governor of Bamyan Province, becoming the first woman ever to be a governor of any province in the country. She has also been Minister of Women's Affairs, after having taught girls in refugee camps in Pakistan. In 2013, she won the Ramon Magsaysay Award for her work in good governance. In 2016, she was awarded the Asian N-Peace Prize for her unrelenting work to bring peace to Afghanistan, while ensuring a focus on gender equality and women's empowerment. She is currently part of the international Women Mediator Network for Peace, supported by organisations such as the Folke Bernadotte Academy (Sweden).

## HUMIRA SAQIB

Director of the Afghan Women's News Agency, the only news agency in Afghanistan focusing solely on women's issues. With over ten years of experience as a journalist, she founded her agency in 2012 to report and highlight women's issues and events in Afghanistan and globally. The agency covers areas such as international women's movements, women in politics and women's rights, and it publishes in Dari, Pashto and English to increase its audience in different regions. It hopes to become one of the mainstream news sources in Afghanistan.

## JÖRAN BJÄLLERSTEDT

Ambassador-at-Large for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding at Sweden's Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He has participated in the preparatory work for Sweden becoming a member of the UN Security Council. While serving as Ambassador in Nairobi, one of Sweden's largest delegations responsible for six countries in the region, he was also a permanent representative of both UNEP and UN HABITAT.

## KAI EIDE

Norway's Ambassador to Sweden since 2014 and former Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Head of UNAMA in Kabul (2008–2010). He has also served as the UN Special Envoy to Kosovo, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Norway's Ambassador to NATO and the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE), Special Advisor on the Balkans and Norway's Ambassador at the International Conference on former Yugoslavia. He has also written a book on Afghanistan.

## LOTTA HEDSTRÖM

Former Chair of the board of SCA. She is a professional con-

ference facilitator and lecturer on many topics relevant to society. She was as a member of the Swedish Parliament, 2000–2006, for the Green Party.

## LOTTA SJÖSTRÖM BECKER

Secretary-General for the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, appointed in 2016. She has broad experience of working with human rights in Sweden and abroad, most recently in Afghanistan, Georgia and Sri Lanka.

## MAGNUS LÜNING

Captain (N), head of the Naval Operations Department N3 at the Swedish Armed Forces (SAF) headquarter. He is a graduate from the advanced command course at the Swedish National Defence College. He has been Commander of the Swedish contingency contributing to UNFIL off the coast of Lebanon. He served as Swedish Naval and Deputy Defence Attaché to the United States. As Head of Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Department, he is responsible for analysing SAF's contributions to peacekeeping operations, and for coordinating the lessons learned activities.

## MANIZHA WAFEQ

Co-founder of LEAD (Leading Entrepreneurs for Afghanistan's Development) and Chairperson of its board. Through LEAD, she is working to advance the economic interests of Afghan women. She is also Country Manager of "Peace through Business", a programme under the Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women (IEEW), where she has trained more than 300 business women from Kabul and the provinces. She has over fifteen years of experience working on development projects, and founded the Bibi Khadija Award for women entrepreneurs. She also runs her own clothes manufacturing company.

## MARIA NYSTEDT

Project leader for rule-of-law at the Folke Bernadotte Academy. She has previously worked as advisor on rule-of-law, human rights and gender for the EU missions in Libya and Afghanistan. She has also worked with the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations in New York, the war crimes tribunal for former of Yugoslavia (ICTY), and Europol in The Hague.

## MARK BOWDEN

Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, UNAMA, Kabul, responsible for development coherence, governance, economic development and rule of law since November 2012. Mr. Bowden is also the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in charge of coordination of the United Nations system activities, humanitarian disaster management and donor coordination. Previously, Mr. Bowden held senior UN posts in Somalia and the Sudan, and at the UN Of-



for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. He has served as Conflict Management Advisor to the UK government and also headed the Save the Children Fund in East Africa and in Bangladesh. Mr. Bowden is a distinguished expert in the humanitarian field and in addressing emergencies.

## MATS KARLSSON

Director of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs. He has worked with international development cooperation, the management of global issues and regional integration over thirty years. He has been in the senior leadership of the World Bank, as Vice President of External Affairs, also contributing to the UN system. He has worked twelve years in country and regional operations in Africa and the Middle East. Previously, he was Swedish State Secretary for Development in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, while also working with European integration.

## MICHAEL CLAESSON

Brigadier General and military advisor in the Swedish Armed Forces and Deputy Head of the Plans & Policy Department (within the Defence Staff), with responsibilities covering military strategic policy and guidance for capability development, defence planning, operations as well as multi- and bilateral cooperation and policy. In 2012–2013, he was Head of the Swedish ISAF force in Afghanistan. Previously, he has been Special Attaché at NATO headquarters in Brussels. He has been advisor to the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and advisor to the Swedish Armed Forces, concerning security and international affairs.

## NICOLE BALL

Senior Fellow at the Center for International Policy (US) and Landell Mills (UK), and at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations in The Hague. She has previously held positions at the Overseas Development Council, the National Security Archive in Washington DC, the Swedish Institute for International Affairs in Stockholm and the University of Sussex in the UK. Her current work is focused on fragile and conflict-affected states.

## NIELS K VISTISEN

Head of the Thematic Analysis Section at the Army Centre for Intelligence, Denmark. He was the governance advisor in the Danish ISAF force in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, in 2010. Previously, he has held several positions in the Danish Ministry of Defence. He has also served in the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs as a political advisor.

## PAAL HILDE

Associate Professor of the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies at the Norwegian Defence University College and former Head of the Secretariat of the Evaluation Committee in Norway.

## PEDER JONSSON

Chairperson of the board of SCA and senior advisor on aspects of communication relating to energy and environment, IT, telecommunication and complex systems. He is also a member of the Business Executives Council of the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences, the Swedish Committee on Environment & Climate and the Swedish Committee for Digital Economy at the International Chamber of Commerce. He is also carrying out research in the field of industrial organisation and economy, at the Swedish Royal Institute of Technology.

## RICHARD GHIASY

Researcher at the Armed Conflict and Conflict Management Programme of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). He has lived in China for extended periods of time, has studied and worked in seven countries and has travelled professionally to more than twenty countries. He is a former non-resident analyst at the Afghan Embassy in Beijing. More recently he was a Research Fellow at the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS) in Kabul. He holds an MBA from Wuhan University of Technology and an MPA in development studies from Tsinghua University.

## ROBERT EGNELL

Professor of Leadership and Head of Department for Security, Strategy and Leadership at the Swedish Defence University. He is also a senior fellow at the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University and a senior faculty advisor to the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS). Previously, he was senior researcher at the Swedish Defence Research Institute (FOI). He has a doctorate in War Studies from King's College, London.

## TONE TINGSGÅRD

Chairperson of the Inquiry on Sweden's Engagement in Afghanistan. She was a member of the Swedish Parliament from 1994 to 2010. Between 1998 and 2006, she was vice Chair of the parliamentary Defence Committee.

## WADIR SAFI

Professor at the Law and Political Science Faculty of Kabul University since 1977. Previously, he has served as Minister of Aviation in Afghanistan (as a non-partisan technocrat). He got his PhD in International Law & Political Science in Prague, and has been a board observer and senior legal advisor of the International Development Law Organisation (IDLO), which has UN observer status. He also earned recognition in community leadership. Currently, he is the President of the National Legal Training Centre, where Sharia and Law Faculty students can acquire judicial certification to practice their profession.

# LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
<b>Abdul Khalil Raufi</b>	Founder	Afghanistan Youth, Social & Educational Organization
<b>Ahmad Fahim Hakim</b>	Consultant, former Vice Chairperson	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
<b>Ahmad Shaheer Anil</b>	Executive Director	Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO)
<b>Amanullah Jawad</b>	Chairman	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development (ACBAR )
<b>Anders Fänge</b>	Board member & former Country Director	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)
<b>Anders Sjöberg</b>	Ambassador	Embassy of Sweden to Afghanistan
<b>Ann Wilkens</b>	former Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan & Afghanistan	
<b>Anna-Karin Eneström</b>	Director-General for Political Affairs	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden
<b>Annelie Renqvist</b>	Conference Administrator	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)
<b>Barnett Rubin</b>	Associate Director	Center of International Cooperation, New York University
<b>Bas JM Beek</b>	Programme Manager Women's Leadership	Cordaid
<b>Bengt Ekman</b>	Senior Programme Manager, Afghanistan Unit, Sida, former Assistant Director- General	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
<b>Bengt Kristiansson</b>	Head Rapporteur	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)
<b>Bitte Hammargren</b>	Editor & analyst	Swedish Institute of International Affairs
<b>Börje Almqvist</b>	Journalist/photographer	
<b>Carla Bengtsson</b>	Round table Rapporteur - Civil-Military Cooperation	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)
<b>Elin Eikeland</b>	Senior Advisor	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Norway
<b>Elisabeth Winter</b>	Round Table Moderator - Poverty Reduction	British & Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG)
<b>Emma Cederlund</b>	Round table Rapporteur - Gender & UNSCR 1325	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)
<b>Emma Nilenfors</b>	Head of Afghanistan Unit	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
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<b>Hameed Haami</b>	Ambassador	Embassy of Afghanistan to Sweden
<b>Hanneke Kouwenberg</b>	Member	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)
<b>Hans Linde</b>	Member of Parliament	Parliament of Sweden
<b>Humaira Saqib</b>	Director	Afghan Womens News Agency
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<b>Jöran Bjällerstedt</b>	Ambassador-at-large for Peacebuilding and State-building	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

<b>Kai Eide</b>	Ambassador & former Special Representative of the Secretary-General & Head of United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)	Embassy of Norway to Sweden
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<b>Klas Bjurström</b>	Strategic Management Officer	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)
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<b>Lotta Hedström</b>	Head Moderator	
<b>Lotta Sjöström Becker</b>	Round Table Moderator - Gender & UNSCR 1325	The Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation
<b>Magnus Lüning</b>	Captain (N), Swedish Armed forces	Swedish Armed Forces
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<b>Paal Hilde</b>	Associate Professor	Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies & Former Head of Evaluation Committee's secretariat
<b>Palwasha Kakar</b>	Senior Program Officer for Religion and Inclusive Societies & former Deputy Minister of Women Affairs, Afghanistan	United States Institute of Peace (USIP)
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<b>Robert Egnell</b>	Round Table Moderator - Civil-Military Cooperation	Swedish Defence University

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<b>Vilhelm Rundquist</b>	Inquiry Secretary	Inquiry on Sweden's Engagement in Afghanistan, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden







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