

Patrick Travers & Taylor Owen

# Between metaphor and strategy

*Canada's integrated approach to peacebuilding in Afghanistan*

Canada's mission in Afghanistan has evolved considerably. What began as a contribution to operation *Enduring Freedom* in the aftermath of 9/11 has since transformed into postconflict reconstruction, counterinsurgency warfare, and nationbuilding. Yet even as the nature of the mission has changed, its justification has remained the same. Three successive governments have emphasized that it both secures national interests and projects humanitarian values. Ostensibly, Canada is in Afghanistan to protect against the threat of terrorism, demonstrate leadership on an issue of international importance, and rebuild a failed state. While these may be complementary objectives, they are also part of a new integrated approach to peacebuilding. Instead of treating defence, diplomacy, and development activities separately, Canada now aims to implement comprehensive solutions to state failure. Government departments are expected to work together to pursue common goals with coherent policy. In this respect Afghanistan is the first real test for an emerging new approach to integrated peacebuilding, and for better or worse, Canada is at the centre of the trial.

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So far the gap between the rhetoric of integrated peacebuilding (also labelled “whole of government,” or “3D” peacebuilding) and reality remains significant. Critics have characterized the policy as an empty vessel or a convenient repackaging of old practices.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the decision to go to Afghanistan was heavily influenced by the geopolitical context and the Canada-US relationship lends credence to claims that the new approach is little more than a way to sell Canadians on a difficult mission. Moreover, instead of breaking down policy boundaries, the result may actually have been increased competition between government departments for policy ownership and access to resources.<sup>2</sup> In this context, the prominent role of the Department of National Defence has also raised questions about the balance between defence, diplomacy, and development objectives. Finally, in each of the three component areas, results have been mixed. Development progress has been uneven, with some parts of the country enjoying growth and stability while others remained mired in poverty and violence. The resurgence of the Taliban is an unwelcome development and has dragged the military into a protracted and dangerous campaign. Disagreements within NATO—particularly about sharing the burden of combat—have in turn created diplomatic tensions. Afghanistan’s national development remains plagued by corruption, the influence of regional warlords, and aid dependency.

As such, Canada’s approach remains halfway between an empty metaphor and an actual strategy. This is certainly not ideal. Using integrated peacebuilding as a rhetorical device to sell Canadians on the mission does the public a disservice. It diminishes debate and obscures the real challenges Canada faces. Yet implementing an integrated approach to peacebuilding poses formidable problems. It requires a significant shift in thinking and demands difficult departmental coordination. Nonetheless, there are good reasons for taking this approach seriously. Whatever the initial motives for adopting an integrated approach, it fits well with Canada’s history of military and humanitarian commitments. Equally, Canada is not alone in making this shift. The move towards comprehensive solutions to state failure is a

1 On this repackaging, see Lane Anker, “Peacekeeping and public opinion,” *Canadian Military Journal*, summer 2005, 28-30.

2 Andrew Cooper, “Adding 3Ns to the 3Ds: Lessons from the 1996 Zaire mission for humanitarian interventions,” CIGI working paper no. 4, December 2005.

broader trend in international politics and is well supported by academic research. This approach is more than a passing fad and is likely to shape future peacebuilding efforts.

Given these considerations, this article outlines the challenges Canada faces in implementing its new approach. The analysis rests on a key distinction between two challenges raised by integrated peacebuilding. The first concerns asks what an integrated policy should look like. In other words, what tactics and strategies should be employed in an integrated approach? The other concerns the implementation of integrated policies. In short, what kind of institutional collaboration and coordination are necessary to successfully develop integrated policy? Our contention is that integrated policy requires solutions to both sets of challenges. Improving coordination may well be a desirable goal, but without a corresponding shift in thinking it is simply traditional policy done better.

The article proceeds in three sections. The first provides a brief overview of Canada's integrated approach and its origins in academic and policy research. The second examines the practical difficulties Canada has encountered trying to pursue an integrated policy in Afghanistan, and the third identifies the institutional implications of these difficulties and highlights the key challenges Canada faces.

#### THE CASE FOR INTEGRATED PEACEBUILDING

The most explicit statement to date of Canada's new approach comes from the international policy statement "A role of pride and influence in the world," which declared that "an integrated '3D' approach, combining diplomacy, defence and development, is the best strategy for supporting states that suffer from a broad range of interconnected problems."<sup>3</sup> The notion predates Prime Minister Paul Martin's 2004 statement that "the three Ds means building public institutions that work and are accountable to the public for their actions, 'not just policing' but also government ministries, a system of laws, courts, human rights commissions, schools, hospitals, energy and water and transportation systems."<sup>4</sup> The term "3D" has since fallen out of

3 "A role of pride and influence in the world," Ottawa, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 2005, 20.

4 Paul Martin, "Address by Prime Minister Paul Martin on the occasion of his visit to Washington, DC," Washington, DC, 29 April 2004.

favour under the Conservative government, only to be replaced by “whole-of-government.” The substance is the same. Peter MacKay, in his role as minister of foreign affairs, has stated that “not just the Canadian forces, but Canadian diplomats, development workers and experts in human rights, good governance, the rule of law, and democracy building have all come together in common endeavour overseas to advance Canada’s security...a whole different approach is what is needed and is how we are proceeding.”<sup>5</sup>

Whether described as “3D” or “whole-of-government,” this integrated approach recognizes that coordinated assistance is required where underdevelopment and political instability engage one another in a vicious cycle of poverty and violence. In turn, adopting an integrated approach demands new bureaucratic practices. Government departments must “work more closely together—from planning through to execution—so that contributions as disparate as police force training, civil engineering and private sector development combine into one, comprehensive approach to capacity building.”<sup>6</sup>

This trend reflects common lessons learned from intervention in the Balkans during the 1990s, but is also part of a broader response to the problems posed by failed and fragile states. These are numerous. Fragile states breed civil wars, generate regional instability, provide safe haven for terrorism, and compromise efforts to solve problems of the global commons. As developed nations have grappled with these issues it has become evident that old concepts and practices must either be modified or jettisoned. Modern conflicts are increasingly taking the form of complex political emergencies, including elements of guerrilla campaigning, criminal profiteering, and terrorism. In response, traditional peacekeeping has evolved into a spectrum that now includes peacemaking and peace enforcement. Similarly, where sovereignty was once sacrosanct, an enhanced focus on international human rights and the emergence of concepts like human security has redefined the role of states. The responsibility to protect explicitly presented itself as a transition “from territorial security, and security through armaments, to security through human development with access to food and employment, and to environmental security.”<sup>7</sup>

5 Peter Mackay, “Why we are there: Canadian leadership in Afghanistan—address to the members of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs,” Ottawa, 19 October 2006.

6 “A role of pride and influence in the world,” 20.

7 “The responsibility to protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty,” International Development Research Centre, 2001, 15.

The most striking aspect of these changes is that they have occurred simultaneously in several different disciplines. Indeed, the interrelationship between security and development has become an increasingly prevalent mantra in both academic and policy discourse. The United Nations' high-level panel on threats, challenges, and change concluded that "development and security are inextricably linked."<sup>8</sup> Likewise, the Commission on Human Security declared "not only are peace and development both important...they are also interconnected...the chain from poverty and deprivation to violent conflict—and back—has to be followed carefully."<sup>9</sup> The sentiment is not simply confined to international commissions on humanitarian issues. The national security strategy of the United States observed in 2002 that "poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers," but added that "poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders."<sup>10</sup>

From this assessment of the interrelationship between political stability and underdevelopment it is a short step to the corollary that international interventions must tackle the full range of factors contributing to a crisis. Instead of addressing issues in terms of separate policy areas, the task now is to turn vicious cycles into virtuous ones. As a recent World Bank report has argued, "conflict risk works through multiple channels, and so calls for a package of complementary solutions."<sup>11</sup>

As a result, Canada's new integrated approach to peacebuilding rests on solid empirical foundations. Recent research at the nexus between security and development suggests that peacebuilding is by necessity a complex and multifaceted exercise. Yet if the theory is well grounded, the practical difficulties are significant. Identifying the problem is only the first step, and, in this case, perhaps the easiest. Like much of the established literature, Canada's definition of an integrated approach remains exceptionally broad. The concept is not yet fully formed. As publicly articulated, it now encompasses a wide range of security, governance, and development tasks, with little speci-

8 High-level panel on threats, challenges, and change, "A more secure world: Our shared responsibility," United Nations, 2004, viii.

9 Commission on Human Security, "Human security now," United Nations, 2003, 7.

10 "The national security strategy of the United States of America," Washington, 2002, foreword.

11 Paul Collier, *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2003), 10.

ficity as to how these are to be integrated. Thus, while the appeal of the approach is obvious, determining exactly what it entails in practice is another matter.

#### FROM CONCEPT TO PRACTICE

The central challenge of merging disparate policy areas into a single comprehensive approach is to maximize complementary policies while minimizing the inevitable trade-offs. This is especially difficult at a tactical level as operating procedures and specific decisions on the ground take on greater significance. Take, for example, the impact that the civilian casualties in military operations can have on counterinsurgency policy. An Afghan interpreter working for an international organization in Kandahar exemplifies the challenge: "I have been working with the foreigners for four years now, and lots of them are my friends, but if my brother was killed by those guys, I would become a suicide bomber and blow them up. They cannot do these things to us and expect us to not to react."<sup>12</sup>

This raises difficult questions. What is the acceptable level of collateral damage for Canadian military operations? Is this calculus different when the military is operating as part of a larger integrated peacebuilding project? In some respects, the answers call into question well-established modes of thinking. While heavy armour and air strikes may be of use in a classical military perspective, their utility in a counterinsurgency operation, let alone as part of a nationbuilding effort, is questionable. Even effective military tactics may ultimately be counterproductive. As the new US counterinsurgency doctrine states,

Bombing, even with the most precise weapons, can cause unintended civilian casualties. The benefits of every air strike should be weighed against the risks, the primary danger being collateral damage that turns the population against the government and provides the insurgents with a major propaganda victory. Even when justified under the law of war, bombing a target that results in civilian casualties will bring media coverage that works to the benefit of the insurgents.<sup>13</sup>

12 Quoted in "Losing hearts and minds in Afghanistan: Canada's leadership to break the cycle of violence in southern Afghanistan," policy paper, [www.senlisouncil.net](http://www.senlisouncil.net).

13 "Counterinsurgency," US army headquarters, December 2006, E1, [www.fas.org](http://www.fas.org).

These types of tradeoffs are not limited to military doctrine. Canadian officials in Kandahar have recently begun paying local Afghan national police salaries directly after discovering that money transferred to Kabul for that purpose had not reached its intended recipients. This is certainly an indictment of both the national police and the current culture of corruption in Afghanistan. It also has immediate benefits. Paying the salaries directly buys local loyalty, prevents the police from using their position to extort resources, and provides a powerful incentive for them to do well at a dangerous job. At the same time, circumventing Kabul goes directly against the new Afghanization policy of the Karzai government and may undermine attempts to build a national, independent, and accountable police force.

These decisions are difficult enough in isolation, but Canada's position as one member of a 35-nation coalition further complicates the problem. To return to our first example, the decision to avoid tactical air strikes for fear of the impact on development objectives is immediately nullified if an ally uses air strikes in the same area of operation. The local population is rarely able or willing to differentiate between members of the coalition. Given these constraints, hard questions must be asked about the utility of pursuing an integrated approach if the coalition as a whole does not abide by its principles.

Even from this brief sketch, it is clear that integrated peacebuilding raises a number of practical difficulties. While much disagreement naturally centres on the overall structure and purpose of a given mission, the difficulties are most apparent when discussion turns to issues that overlap the traditional boundaries between defence, development, and diplomacy. The most vocal of these debates has played out between the military and a broad range of humanitarian actors.

For its part, the defence establishment has expressed its wariness at becoming social workers with guns. The fear is that development assistance activities distract from core tasks, raise the security risks, and complicate the battlefield. While the military has long regarded counterinsurgency tactics as part of its purview, the line between civilian and military responsibility is becoming increasingly ambiguous. At the same time, the Canadian military has been keen to incorporate the concept of integrated peacebuilding into its transformation of the armed forces. Renewal efforts have focused on developing a full-featured but dynamic military. It has invoked the notion of a "three-block war"—whereby soldiers could be "engaged in combat against well-armed militia in one city block, stabilization operations in the next block, and humanitarian relief and reconstruction two blocks over"—to justify the

need for a capable modern armed forces.<sup>14</sup> This concept reflects a broader recognition that the military will be called upon to perform a wide range of roles in the post-Cold War world.<sup>15</sup> In addition to providing national security, the military now expects to be more involved in conflicts spanning the entire spectrum from traditional peacekeeping to outright warfare.

At a less abstract level, the military has already responded to these shifts by adjusting its capacity in crucial areas. Experience with peacemaking has highlighted the importance of civil-military cooperation. Not only is it increasingly vital that the military secure local support for its operations, but the situation is often complicated by the presence of international institutions and humanitarian NGOs. Winning local approval has led the military into new activities, including providing short-term emergency relief, engaging in lengthy community consultations, and participating in infrastructure projects. Where the situation is gradually transitioning from conflict to post-conflict, soldiers may also be called upon to perform basic policing duties. All of these tasks lie outside soldiers' traditional duties, thus requiring retraining and imposing new risks. The politicized context of peacekeeping or peacemaking missions also demands greater awareness of other international actors. The military may be required to provide protection and support to those carrying out humanitarian assistance. It may also have to coordinate its efforts with representatives of NGOs in the field, ensuring that the work of a wide range of actors does not conflict.

While grappling with these new roles, civil-military coordination is a means of accomplishing military objectives.<sup>16</sup> As a result, the relationship between humanitarian workers and soldiers is sometimes fractious. There are several factors underlying these tensions. Institutional and cultural differences have led to misunderstandings and mistrust.<sup>17</sup> NGOs are hesitant to

14 "A role of pride and influence in the world," 11. For a more detailed account of this rationale, see also "Policy statement," Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2005, 14-15.

15 Timothy Edmunds, "What are armed forces for? The changing nature of military roles in Europe," *International Affairs* 82, no. 6 (2006), 1061-65.

16 Michael Pugh, "The challenge of civil-military relations in international peace operations," *Disasters* 25, no. 4 (2001): 346; and John G. Cockell, "Civil-military responses to security challenges in peace operations: Ten lessons from Kosovo," *Global Governance* 8, no. 4 (2002): 388.

17 Abiew, Francis Kofi, "NGO-military relations in peace operations," *International Peacekeeping* 10, no. 1 (2003): 32.

share information for fear of jeopardizing their neutrality, while the military imposes strict limits on the dissemination of intelligence. Moreover, the military typically adopts a short-term approach to its humanitarian activities, using them instrumentally to achieve specific mission goals. Humanitarian actors, expecting to remain beyond the termination of hostilities, tend instead to focus on long-term development.

On these grounds some critics have argued that the military is fundamentally unsuited to conducting humanitarian operations. From this perspective, calls for a coordinated and comprehensive approach in fact represent the cooption of legitimate humanitarian activities for military purposes. In using development assistance to win local support the military allocates resources and designs projects in ways that are less efficient or sustainable. John Watson has complained that the concepts of a three-block war, as well as 3D policy, are both dangerously disconnected from the reality on the ground.<sup>18</sup> Beyond practical difficulties, principles also clash.<sup>19</sup> NGOs operate in close communication with the communities they serve. To maintain both trust and ethical integrity, they strive for impartiality and neutrality. This not only seeks to ensure access to those who need assistance, but also serves as a crucial means of protection. The narrowing of humanitarian space thus not only endangers those agencies with the most experience in the provision of emergency assistance, but also affects the safety and welfare of the local population. At the same time, the introduction of significant donor funding for development assistance in countries like Afghanistan raises real dilemmas. On the one hand lies the temptation to maintain a high public profile and make use of newly available resources. On the other lie concerns both about the purpose and type of military involvement in the crises. In either case, NGOs have been feeling increasing pressure to quell their ethical misgivings and join the effort.

As a result, integrating development and defence policy, especially in the context of a conflict situation, raises a host of questions. Where should aid be targeted? Should it be used to support military objectives, to spark

<sup>18</sup> John A. Watson, "Feedback at gunpoint," public lecture, National Library and Archives, Ottawa, 12 September 2006.

<sup>19</sup> Francis Kofi Abiew, "NGO-military relations in peace operations," *International Peacekeeping* 10, no. 1 (2003): 32; and Stephan Klingebiel and Katja Roehder, "Subordination or cooperation? New interfaces between development and security policy," *Peace, Conflict and Development* 6 no. 1 (2005): 23.

long-term economic reconstruction, or both? Who should conduct humanitarian assistance? Is the military capable of doing so effectively without undermining other actors? Clear answers will inevitably depend on the goals and circumstances specific to a particular crisis, but the trade-offs are real and unavoidable. It will not always be possible to secure all the goals at the same time and some policies will contradict each other. This is not in itself a fatal flaw for an integrated approach to foreign policy, but it does demand new rigour. Decisions about tactics have to be made with the larger mission in mind and the long-term effects of current policies must be considered carefully.

#### MAKING INTEGRATED PEACEBUILDING HAPPEN

It is clear that integrated peacebuilding is tremendously difficult. At a tactical level, it involves challenging tradeoffs between the myriad of competing objectives within the broader mission. What is more, actors must make these decisions from within vastly differing institutional cultures, with little experience of collaboration. As a body of experience with these challenges has developed, a set of basic guidelines has also emerged. We believe that integrated peacebuilding demands consideration of at least five factors: mission clarity, institutional coordination, international collaboration, and balance and timing. While not an exclusive list, these five components together offer a framework by which the Canadian mission can be assessed, and in so doing, provide some early reflections on the utility of the concept for Canadian, and international, objectives in Afghanistan.

#### *Mission clarity*

Coordinated and comprehensive policymaking demands exceptional clarity. Given the breadth of terms like security, development, and good governance, it is imperative that all participants understand the policy in the same way.<sup>20</sup> Diplomats, humanitarian workers, and defence experts may view the same issues in strikingly different terms, reflecting varying institutional cultures and divergent objectives. Exactly what constitutes humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding, support for good governance, and long-term economic development may need to be both defined and prioritized. Without sufficient com-

20 Necla Tschirgi, "Development and security," Paper presented at the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes conference, Bonn, September 2005.

mon ground, setting joint goals and developing a shared strategy may well be impossible. This task is also made more challenging within an integrated policy framework. The range of potential mission types is considerable. A Canadian response to a given crisis could aim to eliminate security threats, stabilize the region, rebuild a state, or generate economic growth. The purpose of the mission therefore determines whether and what kind of integrated policy is appropriate for a specific set of circumstances. It should not be forgotten that there are also practical benefits to this process. Experience suggests that success in statebuilding efforts, for example, partially depends on the degree to which key participants—including local actors—fully understand the mission's goals and objectives.<sup>21</sup>

This is not to suggest that integrated policymaking is a static process. Certainly, adjustments will have to be made in response to changing circumstances. Especially considering the complexities of peacebuilding efforts, a degree of flexibility is both inevitable and necessary. Nonetheless, when a clear definition of the mission is not established beforehand the risk remains that ad hoc solutions to emerging problems will undercut the overall strategy.<sup>22</sup>

If comprehensive and coordinated policymaking demands clarity, Afghanistan poses a number of problems. The mission has been defined in strikingly varying terms as it has progressed. The initial decision to intervene reflected a set of political concerns, including the need to repair relations with the United States damaged by the refusal to join the Iraq War and respond to the threat of global terrorism.<sup>23</sup> But Afghanistan also presented an opportunity that complemented Canadian support for peacebuilding and human rights. Over the course of the mission, Canada's involvement has gradually moved towards reconstruction efforts, both by providing military assistance to stabilize the country and by increasing the amount of development funding distributed.

This has created considerable ambiguity about the mission's overarching goals. Is Canada committed to remaining involved until Afghanistan is capa-

21 Richard Caplan, *International Governance of War-Torn Territories: Rule and Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 253; and Simon Chesterman, *You, the People: The United Nations, Transitional Administration, and State-Building* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 239-40.

22 Don W. Macnamara, "Haiti: an opportunity for Canada to apply the '3-D' concept," *Policy Options* (February 2005): 66.

23 Bill Schiller, "The road to Kandahar," *Toronto Star*, 9 September 2006, F01.

ble of functioning independently? By any measure this would require a long-term commitment of substantial resources, certainly more than have currently been pledged, let alone made available, by the international community. Or are the goals more limited, including neutralizing the risk of terrorism and contributing to our allies' major military and diplomatic effort? If so, what is the use of pursuing an ambitious new approach to peacebuilding?

### *Institutional coordination*

Integrated peacebuilding depends heavily on effective institutional coordination. Yet coordination can mean many things, from simple information sharing to truly collaborative decision-making. Indeed, different governments have reached varying interpretations of the degree of coordination necessary.<sup>24</sup> However, some basic requirements do apply.

Addressing interrelated difficulties on the ground with comprehensive policies means that strategy has to apply across several levels of bureaucracy. Policymaking conducted at a general level in Ottawa must filter down to initiatives in the field if the approach is to be effective. Coordination must be a means to an end and not the end itself. Increased information sharing that does not affect activities on the ground is simply traditional policy performed to a higher standard. There are also good reasons for supposing that basic communication between departments will not suffice. This might be true if the bulk of initiatives were largely complementary, but in practice integrating diverse policy areas poses real dilemmas. There are trade-offs to be negotiated and this in turn demands an overarching policy framework that goes beyond improved communication and integrates the actual decision-making process.

Canada has had relatively more success integrating policy at the departmental level than seems to be the case either in the field or within the international coalition. Faced with the political decision to become involved in Afghanistan, the bureaucracy responded by creating a number of forums for institutional cooperation. The initial team in Kabul worked closely together across institutional boundaries and regular meetings now take place at several levels of seniority. The DFAIT-headed Afghan task force, with representatives from each of the three principle ministries engaged in Afghanistan, is also a positive step. Greater consultation and cooperation is occurring than

24 "Whole of government approaches to fragile states," OECD, Paris, 2006.

was previously the case. There are nonetheless limits on how much real collaboration has taken place and it appears to fall below even the vague standards outlined for integrated peacebuilding policy.

At the interagency level, integrated peacebuilding demands significantly more than information sharing. It requires a fundamentally different form of mission planning. Decisions made collaboratively between DFAIT, CIDA, and DND will be different from those made by any one branch. For example, when planning the Kandahar mission, collaborative decision-making would likely have placed less emphasis on building schools, due to the security situation, and devoted greater attention to opium cultivation. An integrated peacebuilding policy would therefore not have permitted military engagement without simultaneously addressing key development issues.

It is difficult to see how this level of integration could occur given the current bureaucratic structure in Ottawa. As a recent senate report has indicated, CIDA simply does not have the influence to be an equal partner with DFAIT and DND. On this problem, two elements of the British model are instructive. First, Britain raised its development ministry to a full senior ministry to put it on the same level as defence and diplomacy. Second, it provides large pools of funding that can only be accessed through joint applications. If Canadian policymakers are serious about implementing an integrated foreign policy, similar structural changes may be required. The conflict pool model may not ultimately be suitable for Canada, but the status quo is insufficient.

### *International coordination*

As no country is capable of unilaterally conducting a large-scale peacebuilding mission, international coordination is always going to be necessary. This poses significant problems for the development of a national integrated peacebuilding policy. Given limited resources, Canada cannot claim to be carrying out an effective integrated approach if its objectives are negated by the actions of its allies.

International collaboration is particularly problematic in Afghanistan where the coalition includes 36 members. While NATO and *Enduring Freedom* have at times managed unified military command, development, and diplomatic efforts, they have never been coordinated under a single organizational structure. This means that development assistance may be provided using an array of mechanisms, including international institutions, the local government, Canadian and local NGOs, or direct programs. This complicates attempts to develop a comprehensive and coordinated policy, even as it also brings new technical expertise and resources to bear on the crisis.

For example, while Britain and Canada have demonstrated resolve in the face of serious threats in Kandahar and Helmand, other NATO allies have been reluctant to provide more troops or permit existing forces to engage in combat operations. Even though the United States committed to a troop increase of 3200 soldiers in January 2008 (bringing the total to 29,200) as called for by NATO and a wide range of NGOs and Afghan experts, burden sharing remains an issue. Beyond insufficient resources, discrepancies in leadership have also appeared. In the fall of 2006 the United Kingdom negotiated a deal in the Musa Qala district of Helmand province whereby local elders would take control of the area if both Taliban and British forces withdrew. Immediately upon assuming leadership of the NATO mission, however, the Americans declared that such compromises were unacceptable. The area has returned once more to outright hostilities, but the difference in approach of the two allies is striking.

While current troop levels and funding make Canada a major contributor to the mission, the international community has still not pledged sufficient resources to rebuild Afghanistan. The disparities between actual and necessary support are dramatic. The “Afghan compact” called for US\$27.6 billion dollars to be spent to reach broad development objectives. As total international commitments are currently at approximately one third of this figure, there is little doubt that more development money is needed. Military requirements paint a similar picture. Estimates of necessary troop and policing levels in early 2006 showed a shortfall of approximately 80,000 men.<sup>25</sup> This shortfall has not yet been effectively rectified and Canada’s new emphasis on training Afghans will not fill the gap for some time. All of these factors suggest that even if Canada has succeeded in bringing together development, defence, and diplomacy, these integrated policies are being implemented within an inadequate international framework.

### *Balance*

Much of critique of the Afghan invasion and reconstruction effort has focused less on the absolute figures and more on the imbalance between development and military funding. At both the international and domestic level, funding has been heavily weighted towards military expenditures. Total international military spending by US and NATO forces in Afghanistan be-

25 Seth G. Jones, “Averting failure in Afghanistan,” *Survival* 48, no. 1 (2006): 119.

tween 2002 and 2006 outpaced total development funding by 900 percent, with US\$82.5 billion spent on the military and just \$7.3 billion on development.<sup>26</sup> The ratio is similar within Canada. Averaged over a 10-year commitment of a billion dollars, Canada is spending approximately \$100 million per year on development compared with an estimated \$600 million to one billion per year in military expenditures. In short, it is difficult to dispute former Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy's claim that instead of a balance between development, diplomacy, and defence, the Afghan mission "has become one big 'D'."

What to make of this situation is a more difficult question. Given continuing violence in Afghanistan, such an imbalance may simply reflect an appropriate concern for security. Should stability be achieved, we might expect the proportion of total funding devoted to development assistance to rise. The corollary of this argument, however, is that the resource balance reflects an assessment of the actual situation on the ground. It is this aspect that drives much of the critical Canadian commentary on Afghanistan. Given military dominance within the Kandahar reconstruction team and, more broadly, in the mission budget, political justifications referring to reconstruction and development assistance begin to look less accurate.

### *Timing*

Even where broad agreement exists on the division of labour within an integrated peacebuilding approach, sequencing may also be an issue. While it is generally agreed that security is a necessary precondition for development, key decisions take place at the thresholds. When the situation on the ground is fluid, determining the point at which efforts can begin to shift from short-term emergency assistance and warfare to long-term economic and political reconstruction becomes difficult. Indeed, they are often done simultaneously.

Afghanistan is a perfect example of how decisions made in an earlier phase of international involvement can complicate subsequent efforts. This has occurred in at least two ways. First, many connect the current insecurity levels in Afghanistan to the premature movement of US forces to Iraq in the spring of 2003. Had these forces remained in Afghanistan, total military expenditures would have been significantly higher, and the security situation

26 "Good intentions will not pave the road to peace," Afghanistan policy brief, CARE International and the Center on International Cooperation, September 2003.

at least arguably better suited for development and reconstruction work. In this case, the short-term priorities of one member affected the long-term prospects for the coalition as a whole. Second, the decision to work with the northern alliance at the very outset of *Enduring Freedom* provided significant military benefits. Yet the enduring legacy has been increased corruption and weakened central government due to the political and military power of the warlords. What made sense for military reasons at one stage of international involvement in Afghanistan has become an obstacle for building good governance.

Criticism about the balance of the mission and the legacy of past decision-making underscores how the lack of an overarching vision for the mission has complicated efforts. Not recognizing the ramifications for future peacebuilding efforts, military decisions relating to the original war against the Taliban—and by extension al Qaeda—have now become an obstacle. Despite the difficulties of actually assessing the appropriate balance in resource distribution, criticism of military dominance reflects the uncertain nature of the mission.

#### WAYS FORWARD

The Canadian experience in Afghanistan thus far yields two principal conclusions: that Canada is not currently employing a fully integrated approach and that doing so requires a degree of interagency and international coordination that does not currently exist. This is not to suggest that the mission is completely lacking in elements that would be present in an integrated approach. Indeed, many of the policies are a step in the right direction and increased cooperation is to be lauded. Nonetheless, the rhetoric does not match reality.

In our view, the status quo is unsustainable. The international commitment to rebuilding Afghanistan is at a turning point, even as it remains clear that years of continued assistance are necessary. Continuing to both describe the mission in terms of an integrated approach and fall short of that standard only obscures the situation Canada faces.

The failure to develop an integrated approach in Afghanistan is significant, but the more important question is, where do we go from here? What lessons should we derive for future efforts? On this point, it is evident that fundamental conceptual and practical gaps remain. Neither the doctrine nor the institutional structure necessary for its implementation has been fully developed. Several challenges must be addressed.

First, we must carefully evaluate the extent of our influence. Integrated approaches by their nature imply considerable commitment to a wide range of issues. When forces outside our control undermine aspects of a comprehensive solution they risk unravelling the whole. In Afghanistan, for example, a number of possible “deal breakers” have emerged, including instability in Pakistan, the resurgence of the Taliban, the failure to control the opium trade, and weak military commitment within NATO.

This raises important strategic choices. We must be clear about what we can do in a given situation. It makes little sense to pursue an integrated approach unless we possess the tools for the task. In smaller or more manageable crises, Canada might be able to act relatively independently. Certainly a task the size of Afghanistan requires partners. This, in turn, demands a careful and frank analysis of what the international coalition as a whole is prepared to commit. Integrated peacebuilding requires unity of purpose, both at the start of the mission and through its difficult phases. Perhaps the most important lesson from Afghanistan is that our efforts will inevitably fail unless our partners are working from the same strategy. In short, much more thinking is needed to define the conditions and circumstances suitable for this new approach.

Second, the development of the integrated peacebuilding so far suggests that it may actually be a convenient repackaging of old principles or a bureaucratic exercise intended to force greater cooperation in Ottawa. If either is the case, we need to seriously rethink the approach and our objectives in Afghanistan. There are real costs to empty rhetoric. It takes up policy space, distracts attention from other challenges, and discourages clear thinking. If we are not sufficiently committed to a comprehensive approach we may also be dressing a military mission in humanitarian clothing. There are many potential benefits of integrating our military, development, and diplomatic efforts, but there is no honour or integrity in mistaking one for another.

Third, Afghanistan is an unfortunate but unavoidable test case for the emerging practice of integrated peacebuilding. It is hard to imagine a more challenging peacebuilding mission, mired by counterinsurgency, decades of conflict, and deep tribal differences. For this reason, if we are going to be there, and be at the forefront of implementing a new approach to peacebuilding, then we must take it seriously. This includes reevaluating established bureaucratic processes, significant and controversial tactical rethinking, and international leadership. Equally, however, failure in Afghanistan does not mean that integrated approaches should be abandoned altogether. It is worth

remembering that this is an ongoing process and lessons learned now may be more applicable in different circumstances.

The challenges of the Afghan mission are significant, but there is more at stake. If Pearsonian peacekeeping is no longer applicable in a significant number of contemporary conflicts, a replacement must be found. The world is looking for new ways of responding to the complexity of failed and fragile states, and what we do in Afghanistan will play a role in shaping the course of future peacebuilding efforts. In short, Canada's choice between integrated peacebuilding as metaphor or strategy matters.