



House of Commons
Defence Committee

**The Comprehensive
Approach: the point of
war is not just to win but
to make a better peace**

Seventh Report of Session 2009–10

*Report, together with formal minutes, oral and
written evidence*

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The Defence Committee

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The second part of the title of the Report was inspired by a reading of Plato's *Laws*.

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Conclusions and recommendations

1. The MoD and the Armed Forces, the FCO and DFID all recognise that engagement in future conflicts is likely to require the use of the Comprehensive Approach. It is, therefore essential that a shared understanding exists across Government and, in particular, within the MoD, the FCO and DFID about what the Comprehensive Approach is. This must be underpinned by joint policy and doctrine. In recent years, the UK has always operated in coalition with allies and international organisations making a common understanding of methods and desired outcomes and of the Comprehensive Approach crucial. The UK has been at the forefront of thinking on and the development of the Comprehensive Approach, and it must continue to work with allies to embed its use in the major international organisations—the UN, NATO and the EU. (Paragraph 175)
2. The forthcoming Strategic Defence Review should form part of a wider and more comprehensive security review looking at the UK's desire and ability to participate in operations requiring the use of the Comprehensive Approach. The Review presents an opportunity to ensure that the Comprehensive Approach is embedded in future Government policy and that the Armed Forces are designed, trained and equipped to perform their role in such operations. (Paragraph 176)
3. It is crucial that, in all situations requiring the Comprehensive Approach, certain elements should be agreed at the very earliest stage based on a thorough and all-embracing assessment of the situation. These elements include leadership, objectives, a defined end state, strategy, tactics and the nature of personnel required. This assessment may need to be amended in response to changing threats and other circumstances but this should not prevent an early assessment taking place which reflects the needs and expectations of local nationals. Communication is a key component of any strategy and needs to include plans for conveying the strategic intent of the mission to local nationals and also to the British public in an informative but fair and balanced way. (Paragraph 177)
4. There is evidence that the Comprehensive Approach is beginning to work in Afghanistan and elsewhere but there is still much to develop especially in Whitehall and in working multi-nationally with allies and international organisations. We have heard a lot said about the importance of the Approach but if it is to continue to work in Afghanistan and in future areas of conflict, then the policy must be given the leadership, political clout and resources it needs. In responding to this Report, the MoD must set out how the Comprehensive Approach is being addressed in the Strategic Defence Review. (Paragraph 178)

Development of the Comprehensive Approach

5. The Comprehensive Approach is widely accepted as valid in most situations where military force is required and in other situations such as those requiring post-conflict reconstruction and stabilisation. The National Security Strategy re-iterated the need for a cross-government approach drawing upon the capabilities of the Armed Forces, the FCO, DFID and others. We recommend that the MoD, the FCO and DFID,

working together with the Stabilisation Unit, produce a Comprehensive Approach policy and doctrine. Many of the ingredients for such a policy and doctrine already exist but are not brought together in one place. The doctrine should take account of our recommendations in the remainder of this Report. The MoD should incorporate the Comprehensive Approach policy into its Strategic Defence Review. (Paragraph 30)

Strategic intent and planning

6. It is evident that the need for a clear strategy and vision has been recognised for Afghanistan. It is important that all parties share an understanding of the context and nature of the challenges faced. In future situations where the Comprehensive Approach is adopted all relevant government departments and the Armed Forces should agree a clear set of objectives with appropriate measures of achievement and with a clearly defined end state set in the context of the nature of the challenges faced. The need for post-conflict reconstruction and stabilisation should be recognised and incorporated into the planning at the earliest stages. These objectives may need to adapt and evolve but it is essential that the agencies pursuing the Comprehensive Approach have an agreed and feasible end state in mind at every appropriate juncture. (Paragraph 41)

Who is in charge?

7. We understand why, for major situations such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is inevitable that the Prime Minister should take overall responsibility for the use of the Comprehensive Approach. We note there has been a debate about whether this is necessary, whether it provides effective leadership and clarity for all missions and whether it might be appropriate for the Prime Minister to appoint a lead Minister. We consider that at the start of each operation using the Comprehensive Approach, the Government should formally decide and announce what the appropriate governance arrangements should be. Certainly as missions evolve these matters should be kept under review. (Paragraph 47)
8. As part of its role in facilitating cross-departmental assessment and planning, the Stabilisation Unit should support the relevant Minister and Whitehall committees in the operation of the Comprehensive Approach. The Government should consider whether the Unit should be placed within the Cabinet Office to ensure it has sufficient political clout with other departments. Likewise, leadership focus and effectiveness in some missions might be enhanced by appointing a special envoy or representative. This person should have direct access to the Prime Minister. (Paragraph 48)

Changing departmental cultures

9. The Government should consider whether there is any benefit in putting this on a more formal basis. (Paragraph 49)
10. We recognise and welcome the progress that has been made in making the Comprehensive Approach a reality. The MoD, the FCO and DFID have all made

efforts to reduce cultural and operational differences but all acknowledge more needs to be done. We call upon the Departments to identify what changes, particularly in respect of departmental cultures and working practices, still need to be made. For example, we expect, as a minimum, to see that any review should consider the involvement of high level officials, the enhancement of promotion prospects for those involved in Comprehensive Approach activities and a financial commitment to co-ordination of the Approach. The three Departments should, in response to this Report, provide us with the results of the review into the changes needed to working practices and how they intend to plan and manage the necessary changes. (Paragraph 54)

11. Whilst we note that DFID believes that the International Development Act allows it to participate fully in reconstruction and stabilisation operations and in conflict prevention, we believe a review of whether the Act creates a culture within DFID which adversely impacts on its participation would merit the further attention of post-legislative scrutiny. (Paragraph 60)

Structure and funding

12. It is only right that the Armed Forces should be funded from the Reserve for operations such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, as situations change and conflicts move away from war fighting to reconstruction and stabilisation, resources may need to be reprioritised or redistributed. The balance of investment decisions become crucial. The Government, therefore, should clarify the mechanism which funds other government departments for conflict. (Paragraph 65)

The Stabilisation Unit

13. The work of the Stabilisation Unit in developing and maintaining a cadre of deployable civilians and civil servants has been significant in the UK's capacity to implement the Comprehensive Approach. The Stabilisation Unit should be provided with sufficient resources to continue maintaining this capacity and the training of appropriate individuals. (Paragraph 76)
14. We look forward to seeing the results of the Association of Chief Police Officers' work on the deployment of serving police officers. The Home Office and the devolved administrations should resolve the issues inhibiting serving police officers from volunteering to serve in areas of need as quickly as possible. The Home Office and the devolved administrations should promote the use of serving police officers to train local police forces in areas of need. The MoD should also set out the role for the MoD Police in contributing to stabilisation operations. (Paragraph 77)

Learning lessons

15. We acknowledge that the evolution of the work of the Stabilisation Unit will progressively ensure that cross-institutional knowledge and skills gained during deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan will be retained and built on. How to maximise improved capability for the Comprehensive Approach from 'lessons learned' should be addressed in the Strategic Defence Review. (Paragraph 81)

16. We note that the three Departments are looking further at the process of learning lessons. The Stabilisation Unit working with the three Government Departments should make it a priority to encourage those involved in the Comprehensive Approach to learn lessons from each situation and to disseminate the lessons as appropriate. In particular, the Stabilisation Unit should work closely with the Permanent Joint Headquarters of the Armed Forces drawing on its thorough and comprehensive lessons learned process. The Stabilisation Unit should institute a transparent and regular process of such dissemination and should run regular seminars for relevant staff in the three principal Departments and in other departments involved and for staff on its database of deployable personnel. The Unit should be given sufficient resources to carry out this essential function. (Paragraph 82)

Making the case in the UK

17. Communication is a key component of maintaining support amongst the British public for the use of military and civilian forces in unstable areas. As part of the planning process for the use of the Comprehensive Approach, a communications strategy should be developed for each deployment and then be implemented to ensure that Government policy is fully described and communicated to the British public. This strategy should be part of a wider strategic communications plan linking in with communication to all parties including allies, international organisations and, importantly, to local nationals. (Paragraph 85)

Personnel

18. We recommend that DFID, the Stabilisation Unit and the FCO should reconsider whether they can delegate to the MoD the responsibility for maintaining the security of their personnel, to ensure that there is sufficient flexibility to take account of temporary security arrangements created by the Armed Forces in a way that meets the Departments' duty of care. (Paragraph 90)
19. Recognising the development of the Military Stabilisation Support Group, the MoD should determine under what circumstances this Group will work with the Stabilisation Unit and whether it needs to strengthen its capability in reconstruction and post-conflict stabilisation (and consequently its training and recruitment). It should report to us on the results of this assessment and confirm that this issue will be dealt with in the context of the Strategic Defence Review. (Paragraph 95)
20. There is a need for more cross-departmental working with secondments between the three Departments to enhance the skill sets of relevant staff and to increase the mutual understanding of the different cultures in each Department. There may also be the need to recruit staff with additional skill sets in each of the Departments. DFID is already looking to do this. The FCO and the MoD should review whether they need to modify or expand the skills sets of the people they wish to recruit. (Paragraph 96)
21. Joint training is an important element in the integration of civilian and military staff and in the successful use of the Comprehensive Approach. There should be a greater

sharing of training and education within the three principal Departments. At the minimum, civilians being posted to conflict areas such as Afghanistan should participate in pre-deployment training with the military about to be sent to such areas. This should be in addition to the training provided by the Stabilisation Unit to civilians in preparation for deployment into conflict areas. We also expect to see continuing participation in joint exercises such as Joint Venture and Arcade Fusion. The Departments should pursue appropriate means to ensure the knowledge gained by individuals is consolidated. (Paragraph 103)

22. The FCO and DFID should seek to increase the number of their staff attending the courses at the Defence Academy, and the role of the Academy should be reviewed, as part of the Strategic Defence Review, with a view to its becoming the focus for Government-wide education and training on the Comprehensive Approach. (Paragraph 104)

Departmental information technology and information management systems

23. As the ability to communicate and share data is key to the further development of the Comprehensive Approach, the FCO, DFID and the MoD should provide us with an action plan for how they intend to remedy the deficiencies in communication, information systems and data sharing between their Departments. The plan should include details of who will be responsible for delivering the plan and its constituent parts as well as the timetable for implementation. (Paragraph 106)

Working on the ground

24. The UK is at the forefront of the development and use of the Comprehensive Approach and has worked well with international organisations and other member states to further the development of the Approach internationally. However, more needs to be done. We, therefore, recommend that the MoD, the FCO and DFID should continue to work with the UN, NATO and the EU to promote the effective use of the Comprehensive Approach within these organisations so that future complex emergencies requiring a multilateral approach can operate more effectively. We consider such work to be essential to addressing the perception and reality of uneven burden-sharing amongst member states. (Paragraph 127)
25. We note the positive examples of the use of the Comprehensive Approach in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone, and recently, in Afghanistan. These success stories should be brought together to inform the development of a strengthened Comprehensive Approach doctrine. Positive outcomes in Afghanistan should also be used to inform the public debate about the success of operations there. (Paragraph 142)

Working with NGOs

26. The MoD, DFID and the FCO recognise the importance of the independence of NGOs and that care should be exercised when coordinating activities with them. Nonetheless, NGOs are an important component in the use of the Comprehensive

Approach and have much to offer, not only in terms of humanitarian aid work but in their knowledge and understanding of the region and the needs of local people. The three Departments should expand their work with NGOs to identify better ways to draw on their expertise and to ensure that each side is aware of the other's activities without compromising the safety of aid workers on the ground. (Paragraph 152)

Working with local nationals

27. We consider the ability to communicate directly with local nationals to be important. We recognise that there has been additional language training for deployment to Afghanistan since 2003 but progress, particularly within DFID and the FCO, has been unimpressive. The three Departments should give the matter higher priority both in current and future operations. (Paragraph 158)
28. The MoD, the FCO and DFID together with the Stabilisation Unit should provide training and education on the culture, history and politics of areas where their staff will be deployed on the Comprehensive Approach. For instance, training could draw upon the knowledge and expertise of personnel, including those of other countries and in particular the USA, who have served in Afghanistan, in some cases on more than one occasion. This training should be in addition to appropriate language training. (Paragraph 167)
29. We endorse the Government's intentions with regard to the support of women, in line with UNSCR 1325, within the Comprehensive Approach and expect to see explicit reference to this in the Comprehensive Approach policy and doctrine that we call for earlier in this Report. (Paragraph 174)

1 Introduction

Background

1. The Armed Forces are increasingly deployed into complex and volatile situations where the separation between the war fighting phase and the peace support phase is unclear. The requirement for post-conflict reconstruction and stabilisation has become central, not least in conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan. This involves a significant overlap of work by the Department for International Development (DFID), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) which makes a well co-ordinated and joint approach essential. In recent years, the UK has only operated in coalition with allies and international organisations where a common understanding of methods and desired outcomes becomes yet more important. This recognition led to the development of the Comprehensive Approach by the MoD and its adoption by the UK Government.

2. Definitions of the comprehensive approach vary internationally. We take as our starting point the definition used by the MoD in its Joint Discussion Note and subsequently implemented in UK policy. The MoD defined the Comprehensive Approach as an approach “with commonly understood principles and collaborative processes that enhance the likelihood of favourable and enduring outcomes within a particular situation”.¹ Further definitions are discussed in paragraphs 11 to 14. Where we use the term the “Comprehensive Approach”, it should be taken to mean the MoD definition.

Our inquiry

3. The Defence Committee announced its inquiry into the Comprehensive Approach on 25 March 2009. It decided to examine to what extent UK military and non-military agencies work effectively through a comprehensive approach.

4. We wished to draw upon lessons learnt principally from Iraq and Afghanistan but also from other theatres. We decided to consider whether the approach taken by the UK Government had been well co-ordinated and proactive with an outcome based focus, and to see whether this approach had been effective.

5. We were particularly interested in the following issues:

- the validity of the Comprehensive Approach;
- how well UK government departments are working together;
- how the UK is working with its allies in NATO, particularly the USA;
- the lessons learnt from operational theatres before Iraq and Afghanistan;
- to what extent the Comprehensive Approach has been implemented in Iraq and Afghanistan and how successful the approach has been;

- what impact the Comprehensive Approach has had on the structures, resources and training in the relevant UK government departments;
- the effectiveness of the Approach in delivering favourable and enduring outcomes; and
- what adjustments are needed to the Comprehensive Approach to deliver better outcomes.²

6. On Tuesday 9 June 2009, we took evidence from Professor Theo Farrell, King's College London, Professor Malcolm Chalmers, the Royal United Services Institute, and Brigadier (retired) Ed Butler, a former Commander of British forces in Afghanistan and now Chief Executive of CforC Ltd. This session provided us with the views of independent academics and a former commander in Afghanistan.

7. On Tuesday 16 June 2009, we took evidence from the Permanent Under Secretaries of the MoD (Sir Bill Jeffrey), the FCO (Sir Peter Ricketts) and DFID (Dr Minouche Shafik) on the operation of the Comprehensive Approach across Whitehall.

8. In our third evidence session on Tuesday 30 June 2009, witnesses included representatives from NATO and the European Union, independent commentators, and a representative from a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). The witnesses from NATO were General John McColl, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Martin Howard, Assistant Secretary General for Operations and Nick Williams, Deputy to the NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Kabul. The other witnesses were Robert Cooper, Director-General for External and Politico-Military Affairs, General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, Daniel Korski, European Council on Foreign Relations, Stephen Grey, Sunday Times journalist and Howard Mollett, Care International.

9. On Tuesday 7 July 2009 we took evidence from Bill Rammell, Minister for the Armed Forces, Lord Malloch-Brown, Minister for Asia, Africa and the UN in the FCO, Michael Foster, Under-Secretary of State for Development, and Richard Teuten, Head of the Stabilisation Unit, Brigadier Gordon Messenger, a recent Commander of British Forces in Afghanistan, and Nick Pickard, Head of Security Policy, at the FCO.

Other evidence

10. In addition to the oral evidence sessions, we accepted written evidence from a number of bodies including the MoD, the FCO and DFID. We requested supplementary evidence from these Departments following their oral evidence. We also asked the National Audit Office to seek and collate the views of NGOs operating in areas of conflict about the Comprehensive Approach covering:

- their understanding of the Comprehensive Approach and communication on the approach from government departments;
- the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Approach, including the performance of UK departments;

2 Defence Committee press notice, *The Comprehensive Approach*, 26 March 2009, www.parliament.uk/defcom

- challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the planning and delivery of the Comprehensive Approach; and
- lessons for the future.

Definitions of the Comprehensive Approach

11. There is no one commonly agreed definition of what a comprehensive approach entails. The MoD defines the Comprehensive Approach as “commonly understood principles and collaborative processes that enhance the likelihood of favourable and enduring outcomes within a particular situation”. It is based on four guiding principles:

- **Proactive Engagement**, if possible ahead of a crisis, enables coordinated approaches to complex situations. This requires a shared approach to the collection and interpretation of crisis indicators and warnings in order to inform planning and increase the time available for reaction.
- **Shared Understanding** between parties is essential to optimize the effectiveness of their various capabilities. Where possible, shared understanding should be engendered through cooperative working practices, liaison and education in between crises.
- **Outcome-Based Thinking**. All participants involved in crisis resolution need to base their thinking on outcomes and what is required to deliver a favourable situation, when planning and conducting activities. Planning and activity should be focused on a single purpose and progress judged against mutually agreed measures of effectiveness.
- **Collaborative Working**. Institutional familiarity, generated through personal contact and human networking, enhances collaborative working and mutual trust. Integrated information management, infrastructure and connectivity enable information sharing and common working practices.³

12. There are many other definitions in the UK and internationally. In his written memorandum, Daniel Korski gave us the following definition:

In its simplest definition, the “comprehensive approach” means blending civilian and military tools and enforcing co-operation between government departments, not only for operations but more broadly to deal with many of the 21st century security challenges, including terrorism, genocide and proliferation of weapons and dangerous materials.⁴

13. Most of the definitions include the following elements: that the approach is horizontal, including both civilian and military parties and, where possible, allies and international organisations and local nationals; and vertical, taking account of the different stages in the situation from the initial war fighting phase to reconstruction. Other definitions usually

³ The Ministry of Defence: The Comprehensive Approach Joint Discussion Note 4/05

⁴ Ev 140

contain “engage, secure, hold and develop” elements. The Comprehensive Approach can also be used in situations where there is no initial war fighting phase.⁵

14. Central to the concept of a comprehensive approach are stabilisation operations. Richard Teuten of the Stabilisation Unit defines stabilisation operations as follows:

Stabilisation operations combine military, political and development actions. Military intervention seeks to assist in the disarmament and demobilisation of armed opposition, to start the process of building effective security forces and to provide the security needed for the efforts of other actors. Political engagement seeks to ensure that there is a workable inclusive settlement that addresses the underlying causes of conflict and promotes reconciliation. Capacity building support seeks to enable the Government to extend its authority. This means laying the foundations of law and basic economic governance. It also means putting in place the building blocks for sustainable development through supporting basic infrastructure and service delivery, and a framework for the private sector. Underpinning all these must be effective strategic communication, both in the country concerned and at home, to avoid unrealistic expectations and sustain support.⁶

Development of the Comprehensive Approach

15. The Comprehensive Approach is a relatively new concept but the combination of civilian and military actors in a counter-insurgency operation is not new. Many commentators refer back to strategies adopted in previous conflicts and in successful counter-insurgency campaigns in the past, for example, Malaya. General Sir Rupert Smith in his book *The Utility of Force* says:

The Malayan emergency is held up to this day in militaries around the world as a successful example of counter-insurgency and counter-revolutionary war. Briggs and Templar between them removed the principal political objective from the MCP’s [Malayan Communist Party] campaign. The depiction of the conflict as a liberation struggle from colonial oppressors that would never yield control lost credibility in the face of the promise of independence backed by the gift of land in the soon-to-be independent state. They separated the people from the guerrillas’ influence and then developed the forces and intelligence to hunt them down on their ground and on their terms.⁷

16. Whilst there has always been the need for cross-departmental co-operation in Government, throughout the 1980s and early 1990s Governments began recognising that policy issues such as security, terrorism, family breakdown and drug abuse could not be addressed by one government department or agency alone. A new wave of reform promoted “joined up Government”, with a focus on the horizontal and vertical integration of both policy and delivery. The aim was to align incentives, cultures and structures of authority to match critical tasks which cut across organisational boundaries. Though this

5 Qq 2, 3, 98, 234–235

6 Speech by Richard Teuten, Head Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit, Stabilisation Unit, *Stabilisation and “post-conflict” reconstruction*, RUSI, 31 January 2007

7 Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in a Modern World*, Penguin, p 205

was mainly a domestically-focused effort from 1997 to 2002, a number of internationally-focused initiatives were introduced, most prominently the Global Pools, a cross-departmental funding mechanism that compelled different departments to agree on resource allocation. In the 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review, Public Service Agreements (PSA) were introduced that sought to promote departmental co-operation working towards a shared target.⁸

17. The MoD currently supports two PSA targets which are led by other government departments: PSA 26 *to reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from international terrorism*, led by the Home Office and supported by the Cabinet Office, the FCO, the MoD and DFID with other departments and agencies; and PSA 30 *global and regional reduction in conflict and its impact and more effective international institutions*, led by the FCO and supported by DFID and the MoD, along with other departments and agencies.⁹

18. The Comprehensive Approach was initially developed by the MoD. The background to its development was explained in the memorandum from the MoD, the FCO and DFID:

From 1991, it was increasingly apparent that operations in Bosnia involved a complex interplay of civilians, para-military and military groups and individuals, international organisations and international media. The MoD recognised the roles played by, and the importance of, Other Government Departments and Non-Governmental Organisations, but noted that they added to the complexity and that efforts were rarely co-ordinated or focused on a common set of objectives. Nevertheless, the progress made when activity was co-ordinated reinforced the importance of a holistic approach.¹⁰

19. Professor Farrell told us that he thought the Comprehensive Approach had developed from lessons learned in Bosnia, Kosovo and Sierra Leone, where development, humanitarian and political activities were integral to the desired end state, and, also in Iraq, with the failure of post-conflict operations. He said that the Comprehensive Approach also developed out of the concept of effects-based operations.

The other direction, which we really cannot overlook, I think is fundamentally important is the development of effects-based operations (EBO) the whole doctrine, thinking and concepts that come from the United States. It is picked up by the British military from 2004 onwards. [...] They went through a phase of experimentation between 2004 and 2005 and they found that the American approach to effects-based operations was flawed and they adapted it to suit British command culture and military practices. Then in 2005 and 2006, in September of both those years, we see two iterations of a doctrine called the effects-based approach to operations (EBAO). That is fundamental because that is the framework in which the British military begin to think about a comprehensive approach in a more structured, coherent way and hence we see between those two versions of EBAO

8 Ev 140

9 Ev 83

10 Ev 82

doctrine in January 2006 the Comprehensive Approach doctrine that is produced by DCDC (Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre), which is the UK's doctrine command.¹¹

20. To improve cross-departmental working in conflict prevention, the Government established tri-departmental (the MoD, FCO and DFID) funding arrangements for Conflict Prevention, Stabilisation and Peace-Keeping activities. The Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit (now called the Stabilisation Unit), also owned by all three Departments, was established in 2004. Its role was to facilitate cross-departmental assessment and planning; to develop and deploy civilian expertise; and to identify and learn lessons.

21. The MoD initially produced a Joint Discussion Note in 2005–2006 called the Comprehensive Approach. This was followed, in March 2007, by a Joint Doctrine Note on “Countering Irregular Activity within a Comprehensive Approach”. The Comprehensive Approach is also covered in the latest British Defence Doctrine published in August 2008. There is no formal policy document agreed by all the relevant government departments, although Brigadier Messenger told us that the doctrine was based on consultation with other departments.¹²

22. Professor Farrell was concerned that there was still no cross-government doctrine on the Comprehensive Approach.

We do not have a cross-government doctrine on the Comprehensive Approach. The doctrine that we have was developed by the Doctrine Command, DCDC, in January 2006. Note that it was a “Joint *Discussion* Note”, that is very important. They used the word “discussion” because they wanted to indicate to the other government departments that this was not a Joint Doctrine Note, it was for discussion and they were going to engage them, but, of course, they immediately rubbed up against the other government departments because they feel this is military led, which it was at the time, and they do not understand why they should buy into a military concept. As yet we still do not have one (Interagency doctrine) whereas the Americans are developing a joint doctrine. The State Department has a project which is led by a British Colonel.¹³

23. In their joint memorandum, the MoD, the FCO and DFID said that the National Security Strategy was a key component in the continuing development of the Comprehensive Approach. The Strategy was first published by the Prime Minister in March 2008. It outlined the threats to the UK and its interests, together with the UK's responses. It states that:

4.47 To improve integration at the multilateral level, we will work to ensure that the UN delivers its commitment to genuinely integrated missions, and support the UN Peacebuilding Commission, which works to ensure integrated effort by all donors on strategy and delivery, and to provide immediate support for post conflict

11 Q 3

12 Q 414

13 Q 50

reconstruction. We advocate the development of a stronger international capacity, including through the EU and UN, to deploy civilian stabilisation experts, including judges, lawyers and police, at short notice and in larger numbers and to make them available for multilateral deployment.

5.5 Building on recent experience at home (for example on counter-terrorism) and overseas (for example in Afghanistan, where security, policy and development officials now work together in joint teams), we will continue seek greater integration and responsiveness at the operational level. The new Stabilisation Unit will have a key role.¹⁴

24. The update to the National Security Strategy produced in June 2009 stressed the requirement for a cross-government approach. It also said that, to meet future challenges, it would need to draw upon a wide range of integrated capabilities including the Armed Forces, law enforcement, security and intelligence agencies, diplomatic capabilities and international development activity.¹⁵

25. In parallel with the development of the Comprehensive Approach in the UK, the concept was slowly being adopted by the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The adoption of the Approach by the EU was promoted by the UK and Denmark. By 2006, other nations including Canada, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway and Slovakia were also pressing for NATO to adopt the Comprehensive Approach.¹⁶ Further detail on work in the international organisations is covered in part 3 of this Report.

26. We asked many of our witnesses about the validity of the Comprehensive Approach. They were fully supportive of the approach and agreed that most situations would warrant the use of some aspects of the Comprehensive Approach.¹⁷ Professor Chalmers said:

I think the challenge is to have an approach which recognises the complexity of the problems but then has clear lines of command and division of labour which means that people get on with their particular jobs. What that often means is that the comprehensive nature needs to be at the planning level, at a relatively high level of discussion, but once you get down to specific tasks being done by Army brigades or by DFID field officers or whatever, they have a job and they get on and do it. They do not necessarily have to be consulting all the time with their counterparts.¹⁸

27. Sir Bill Jeffrey and Sir Peter Ricketts agreed that the Comprehensive Approach was likely to be applicable in any situation where you might have to use military force.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: In the kinds of things we have been doing recently – and I am looking back to the Balkans as well as Iraq and Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, etc. – it is

14 Ev 83

15 Cabinet Office, *National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom Update 2009: Security for the Next Generation*, Cm 7590, June 2009

16 Ev 144

17 Qq 11–12, 97–98, 234–235

18 Q 12

entirely applicable. If you get into what in MoD parlance – and this Committee knows this as well as I do – is referred to as state on state conflict, which is more purely military in character, I think it is less applicable, although as one saw even at the end of the Second World War there was a point at which civil reality has to intrude and military people have to work closely with civil authorities. So even there I think you get to that point if you are going to be successful at all.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I agree. I think in any circumstances where you are using military force or you might have to use military force there is a period of tension and crisis and breakdown beforehand where perhaps the civilian instruments would be more important than the military although there would be planning going on. There will be a period of military conflict and then there will be a period after the military conflict at which, whatever the circumstances, the civilian powers will have to reengage with governance, capacity building and development work, which is exactly what the Comprehensive Approach is all about. I cannot think of a scenario where we would be employing the military instrument without also needing the development and governance capacity building instruments that we bring to that.¹⁹

28. We asked how the Comprehensive Approach might operate, for example, in anti-piracy work. All three PUSs were of the view that the Comprehensive Approach was useful in the current operations.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: That is an inventive counter example, I agree, because if you look at what we are doing off the Horn of Africa just now it does not have the civilian components in quite the same way, although oddly enough it does raise some issues where we need to draw our Foreign Office colleagues in, for example to consider jurisdictional issues where we have detained people and need to find countries in the locality willing to try them. So even there it spills over into civil life to some extent.

Sir Peter Ricketts: As soon as the Royal Navy detained pirates off the coast of Somalia we were engaged because we needed to negotiate with the Government of Kenya and other countries for a place to which to deliver these people for justice and so again the military were not operating alone, they had to operate in close coordination with the diplomats.

Dr Shafik: Clearly we are also contributing on the development side both on the humanitarian side in Somalia but also in terms of trying to strengthen the very tenuous capacity of the Somali Government in order for them to be able to get a grip on things like piracy.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: Arguably if you go to the root cause of the piracy it lies not on the high seas but in Somalia being a very unsettled country.²⁰

29. Representatives from NATO and the EU were also of the opinion that the Comprehensive Approach was valid in most circumstances.²¹ In particular, General McColl told us that the Comprehensive Approach is vital in situations of instability.

19 Q 97

20 Q 98

I think the idea of a comprehensive approach is absolutely essential. If you analyse the future threats that we might face, they are largely bracketed around the concept of instability, and the lines of operation that deliver you strategic success in respect of instability problems are economics and governance; the security operation simply holds the ring. It is, therefore, essential that we have a comprehensive approach to these types of problems.²²

30. The Comprehensive Approach is widely accepted as valid in most situations where military force is required and in other situations such as those requiring post-conflict reconstruction and stabilisation. The National Security Strategy re-iterated the need for a cross-government approach drawing upon the capabilities of the Armed Forces, the FCO, DFID and others. We recommend that the MoD, the FCO and DFID, working together with the Stabilisation Unit, produce a Comprehensive Approach policy and doctrine. Many of the ingredients for such a policy and doctrine already exist but are not brought together in one place. The doctrine should take account of our recommendations in the remainder of this Report. The MoD should incorporate the Comprehensive Approach policy into its Strategic Defence Review.

21 Q 234

22 Q 235

2 In Whitehall

31. Given the nature of the Comprehensive Approach, it is vital that it is co-ordinated at all levels: centrally in the UK; with allies and international organisations; and at all levels on the ground. Some witnesses told us that the Comprehensive Approach was better developed on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan than it was in Whitehall.²³ This chapter deals with how the Comprehensive Approach has been developed within Government and covers what we see as the vital elements needed to deliver an effective Comprehensive Approach: a clear vision and strategic intention; strong leadership; a change in departmental cultures, structure, funding and personnel arrangements; better working with NGOs and local nationals.

Strategic intent and planning

32. Many witnesses agreed that it was crucial for the UK to have an agreed understanding of the strategic intent of the undertaking, plus a clear vision of the objectives and the proposed end state.²⁴ Such understanding and vision were needed prior to the start of such an intervention. The use of the Comprehensive Approach required as much prior intelligence as possible and thorough preparation and planning to be undertaken jointly with the three most relevant departments—the MoD, DFID and the FCO—and, in some cases, with other departments as well, such as the Home Office. Liaison with international organisations and allies and with NGOs was also a key component of such planning.

33. None of the situations where the use of the Comprehensive Approach will be of value is likely to be straightforward to resolve. This, inevitably, makes preparation difficult and time-consuming. The situation in Afghanistan was and still is complex. General McColl supported the use of the Comprehensive Approach there but pointed out, for example, that co-ordination in Afghanistan is difficult.

If you analyse the future threats that we might face, they are largely bracketed around the concept of instability, and the lines of operation that deliver you strategic success in respect of instability problems are economics and governance; the security operation simply holds the ring. [...] we have 40 nations in the alliance. Each of them has three or more departments involved in this issue of the Comprehensive Approach. We then have at least ten others who are critical players in the country. We have international organisations—another 20—we then have NGOs, who run into their hundreds. Then on top of that, of course, we have the Afghan National Government. [...] Therefore, what we have to have is a concept which enables us to co-ordinate a reference in a coherent way, and the Comprehensive Approach, as we have heard, is the language of common currency in Afghanistan and in many of these theatres, because it is commonly understood that we need to work together.²⁵

23 Qq 88, 304, 391

24 Qq 2, 3, 68, 73, 282

25 Q 235

34. Before the Iraq invasion, Major General Tim Cross, a Service advisor to our Committee, who was involved in both the preparation for the immediate aftermath of the invasion in terms of military logistics and the issue of humanitarian support and immediate reconstruction after it, saw no evidence of longer term reconstruction planning. In his evidence to the Chilcott Inquiry into Iraq, he wrote:

There was scant evidence of any serious so-called Phase IV planning (reconstruction). [...] I tried to work through the immediate implications of the proposed operations and their possible aftermath; not just the military logistic implications but the issues of refugees, humanitarian support and immediate reconstruction. [...] I cannot claim to have given any immediate thought to the longer term reconstruction—physical or political—of Iraq, nor perhaps, as an operational military commander, should I have done. But importantly I got no sense of anyone else doing so either, neither in the UK nor in the US.

Overall, I therefore saw no evidence of a (relatively) clear Strategic Level ‘End State’ for post-war Iraq, or an overall Campaign Plan for how we would get to that ‘End State’. All such debates seemingly ended with the military defeat of Saddam’s Forces.²⁶

35. Brigadier Butler also saw a void in planning for stabilisation in Afghanistan and Iraq and that the allied forces had missed the opportunity of the “first 100 days” after the initial conflict.

Firstly, there is still a crying requirement for one plan and one lead in Afghanistan and I think that is the same on all operations/campaigns which we deploy on.²⁷

36. In recognition of the changing circumstances and the absence of a joint strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, the UK published a new comprehensive Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan in April 2009. In announcing the new Strategy, the Prime Minister recognised this deficit.

So I am pleased to publish this comprehensive strategy setting out our approach to Afghanistan and Pakistan—building on the strategy for Afghanistan I announced in December 2007, and the consistent support we have given to Pakistan in recent years. In previous decades the international community has not always shown the long-term vision that is so badly needed.²⁸

37. The Strategy set out the context of the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In particular, it dealt with the importance of the area in combating terrorism and denying a safe haven to Al Qaida. It also acknowledged that it was an area of conflict with regional instability and transnational crime, with Afghanistan being the source of 90% of the heroin in the UK. The importance of Pakistan being a nuclear-armed state with weapons of mass destruction was also stressed.

26 Witness Statement by Major General Tim Cross CBE to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009, www.iraqinquiry.org.uk

27 Q 68

28 HM Government, *UK policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan: the way forward*, April 2009, p 3

Afghanistan and Pakistan are of critical importance to the UK and the international community as a whole. Instability and insecurity in both countries have a direct impact on our national security and the safety of our citizens.²⁹

38. The guiding principles set out in the Strategy underpin the need for a Comprehensive Approach.

- an *international approach*: living up to our international obligations, working closely with the international community to leverage the UK's resources and ensure proper burden sharing;
- a *regional approach*: promoting peaceful relations between all countries in the region, focused on countering the threat of violent extremism;
- a *joint civilian-military approach*: recognising that military force alone will not solve the region's problems;
- a *better co-ordinated approach*: within each country; across the two countries especially on the border areas; and across the different lines of activity, from counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics, to governance and development;
- a *long-term approach* focused on *developing capacity in both countries*, including moving to a transition process for Afghan security forces to take over responsibility in Afghanistan, with international forces moving to a training and support role;
- a *political approach* encouraging *reconciliation* in both countries so that militants renounce violence in favour of legitimate political processes;
- an approach that combines *respect for sovereignty and local values with respect for international standards* of democracy, legitimate and accountable government, and human rights; and
- a *hard headed approach*: setting clear and realistic objectives with clear metrics for success.³⁰

39. In August 2009, General McChrystal, Commander NATO International Security Assistance Force, made an assessment of the situation in Afghanistan following the early days of his appointment. He reported on the need for NATO to develop a new strategy that was credible to, and sustainable by, the Afghans.

To execute the strategy, we must grow the Afghan National Security Forces and elevate the importance of governance. We must also prioritize resources to those areas where the population is threatened, gain the initiative from the insurgency, and signal unwavering commitment to see it through to success. Finally, we must

29 HM Government, *UK policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan: the way forward*, April 2009, p 5

30 *ibid.*, p 14

redefine the nature of the fight, clearly understand the impacts and the importance of time, and change our operational culture.³¹

40. He also said that to defeat the insurgency, there needed to be a properly resourced strategy based on four main pillars:

- improve effectiveness through greater partnering with the Afghan National Security Forces;
- prioritise responsive and accountable governance;
- gain the initiative and reverse the insurgency's momentum; and
- focus resources to those areas where vulnerable populations are most threatened.³²

41. It is evident that the need for a clear strategy and vision has been recognised for Afghanistan. It is important that all parties share an understanding of the context and nature of the challenges faced. In future situations where the Comprehensive Approach is adopted all relevant government departments and the Armed Forces should agree a clear set of objectives with appropriate measures of achievement and with a clearly defined end state set in the context of the nature of the challenges faced. The need for post-conflict reconstruction and stabilisation should be recognised and incorporated into the planning at the earliest stages. These objectives may need to adapt and evolve but it is essential that the agencies pursuing the Comprehensive Approach have an agreed and feasible end state in mind at every appropriate juncture.

Who is in charge?

42. The Comprehensive Approach needs strong leadership. There is currently no accepted procedure for appointing someone at departmental level to take the lead in each situation where the Comprehensive Approach is used. For example, when asked about who was in charge of the implementation of the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan, we were told that it was the Prime Minister.³³ The MoD, the FCO and DFID all stated that it would not be appropriate for one departmental Minister to be designated for a conflict situation such as Afghanistan as it would lead to other Ministers giving it a lower priority. For example, Sir Peter Ricketts, Permanent Under Secretary at the FCO, told us:

I do not think that it would be a good thing to have a single day to day minister. It would be for the Prime Minister to judge, but it is actually a Cabinet Committee of the three Secretaries of State here represented with the Prime Minister in the chair. If you want to have all three departments fully committed, seeing this as a core part of their business I think you need all three Secretaries of State as part of a collective ministerial group that is directing it.³⁴

31 "Commander's Initial Assessment", 30 August 2009, www.media.washingtonpost.com

32 *ibid.*

33 Qq 120, 127 319, 338, 341

34 Q 121

[...] in choosing a single minister I think you would risk disengaging other departments, which is the opposite of the Comprehensive Approach really.³⁵

43. Although the joint memorandum from the Departments said that a Senior Responsible Owner should ideally be appointed in the relevant theatre, we could not identify who this might be in Afghanistan but, nevertheless, we believe such an appointment could be important. Some witnesses suggested that even if no specific Minister was appointed then there should be an MoD Permanent Joint Head Quarters equivalent in the Cabinet Office, supported by staff there, or a Regional Envoy appointed for the area reporting directly to the Prime Minister.³⁶

44. As it stands, it is difficult to know who, within Whitehall, is charged with translating what Ministers want into a Comprehensive Strategy. Professor Chalmers recognised the strain placed on the centre of Government but was not convinced that there was a major problem with co-ordination.³⁷

I think ultimately it has to be at the centre of government with the Prime Minister at the highest level, and therefore with the Cabinet Office working to co-ordinate the different departments in furtherance of that objective. That puts a lot of strain on the centre but I think inevitably, if that is the case, in implementing particular aspects of the Comprehensive Approach, however, in Afghanistan for example, different departments will take leads depending on what the particular issue is.³⁸

Stephen Grey disagreed.

As to the solutions, obviously there are many, but the only thing I would highlight is that at the moment the strategic commander of all UK agencies is the Prime Minister, and there is no other place where it comes together. [...] I think the Prime Minister of Britain has got other things on his mind, and that is the real problem. So I think there needs to be someone, not quite a General Templer of Malaya who had full civilian powers dealing with a sovereign country, but there are so many agencies involved, so many countries involved here that Britain's interests need to be combined into one role, an ambassador that combines the role of both military commander and civil commander.³⁹

As did Brigadier Butler.

We have touched on a potential czar to bring this all together. Where it started to work was when Dr Reid was Secretary of State for Defence and he was the *primus inter pares* between DFID and the FCO and the military. He really got to grips with things in the last part of his tenure as Secretary of State, in those two or three months up to his move to the Home Office. He knocked heads together. We discussed/argued what the priorities were, what the issues were, what those

35 Q 133

36 Qq 20, 59, 299 and Ev 149, 151

37 Qq 20, 59

38 Q 20

39 Q 299

definitions of sufficient security were and then he knocked their heads together and action was starting to take place. So it can work while you have one Secretary of State who is responsible for delivering stabilization operations in a campaign.⁴⁰

45. Lord Malloch-Brown told us that the relevant Secretaries of State had met monthly to deal with Afghanistan and Iraq.⁴¹ This, however, was not part of any formal Cabinet Office structure.⁴² He also said that the Ministerial Committee on National Security, International Relations and Development (NSID) discussed Afghanistan and other issues involving the use of the Comprehensive Approach. It had met, for example, the previous week to discuss Somalia. He stressed that the meeting of the three Secretaries of State was to supplement NSID not replace it.⁴³

You would have to accept that NSID meeting on a geographic basis to deal with issues is a perfectly logical way of conducting its business. The Afghanistan issues require Afghanistan teams to be at the meeting and briefs. I am not sure to deal with it thematically as a comprehensive approach would necessarily contribute. Let me be clear that the meeting of the three Secretaries of State is intended to supplement and give urgency and momentum to decision-making, not to replace NSID.⁴⁴

46. Bill Rammell said that the meeting on Somalia had looked at all aspects from the military perspective to development in Somalia and building judicial capacity within the region.⁴⁵ Mr Teuten told us that the sub-Committee of NSID on overseas defence had responsibility for the Comprehensive Approach.⁴⁶

47. We understand why, for major situations such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is inevitable that the Prime Minister should take overall responsibility for the use of the Comprehensive Approach. We note there has been a debate about whether this is necessary, whether it provides effective leadership and clarity for all missions and whether it might be appropriate for the Prime Minister to appoint a lead Minister. We consider that at the start of each operation using the Comprehensive Approach, the Government should formally decide and announce what the appropriate governance arrangements should be. Certainly as missions evolve these matters should be kept under review.

48. As part of its role in facilitating cross-departmental assessment and planning, the Stabilisation Unit should support the relevant Minister and Whitehall committees in the operation of the Comprehensive Approach. The Government should consider whether the Unit should be placed within the Cabinet Office to ensure it has sufficient political clout with other departments. Likewise, leadership focus and effectiveness in

40 Q 68

41 Q 320

42 Q 325

43 Qq 320–328

44 Q 328

45 Q 329–330

46 Q 331–332

some missions might be enhanced by appointing a special envoy or representative. This person should have direct access to the Prime Minister.

49. The relevant cabinet committee (NSID) only meets “probably every couple of months”. Lord Malloch-Brown also told us that “the tripartite meeting is really the principal vehicle for overseeing in the case of Afghanistan”, but this only meets monthly, is not a formal subcommittee of the Cabinet and lacks a Cabinet Office secretariat.⁴⁷ Lord Malloch-Brown felt that this system was “on probation” and they still need to “show it works”.⁴⁸ **The Government should consider whether there is any benefit in putting this on a more formal basis.**

Changing departmental cultures

50. As set out above, the three main departments involved in the Comprehensive Approach are the FCO, DFID and the MoD, including the Armed Forces; but other government departments, such as the department for Business, Innovation and Skills (for developing trade links) and the Home Office (for police training) also have a role to play. Each of these organisations has a very distinct culture and limited experience of working jointly. We asked the Permanent Under Secretaries (PUSs) of the MoD, DFID and the FCO how well their departments worked together. All three PUSs reported that there had previously been difficulties but that staff in each department now had a greater understanding of the issues faced by the other departments.

Dr Shafik: Clearly in the early days there was not a long tradition of DFID working with the MoD—there was a longer tradition of DFID working with the FCO—and we had obstacles to overcome. But I think it is fair to say that over the last few years there has been a huge uptick in the quality of the engagement. [...] I think that can be evidenced by the huge increase in resources that we have put into conflict and fragile states; by the decision that we have taken to put half of our aid budget into what we call fragile and conflict states, going forward; and there has been a steady improvement in terms of the level of interaction with DFID staff actively engaging with the military in terms of pre-deployment and in terms of training programmes. We now have a whole cadre of people in DFID who speak military, which is quite an achievement actually because it takes a while to learn the language and the ways of working with a different organisation.⁴⁹

Sir Bill Jeffrey: I admire my military colleagues greatly but they have a very special way of doing things and they have a language of their own in the international development world and indeed in the international world. People come at things from different angles and I think that the most challenging thing we have had to do is to build understanding among well motivated people who just approach things in different ways. My sense is that that is where we have made some progress. [...] my observation over the three and a half years I have been doing this job is that DFID’s

47 Qq 324–326

48 Q 415

49 Q 106

approach to this has changed quite substantially.⁵⁰ It is not that they were not contributing three and a half years ago; it is more that in the intervening period they have an even clearer recognition of the inter-relationship between conflict reduction and poverty reduction. And throughout that period the law has been the same, so I think it is more about policy and the attitudes of people and addressing these cultural issues.⁵¹

Sir Peter Ricketts: For me in the last 12 years I have been very closely involved with the FCO work in Bosnia, in Kosovo and then in the early days in Afghanistan and Iraq, so I have seen over 12 years a considerable improvement in our capacity to establish ourselves and operate in these difficult and dangerous circumstances. [...] We have learnt how to operate right alongside the military and we have had to learn about duty of care to our staff so that our staff can be out there right behind the front line and working very closely with DFID in doing that. Yes, I am sure that we did not do it well in the early days and I think we did not do as well as we should in learning the lessons of Bosnia for Kosovo and of Kosovo for Afghanistan.⁵²

51. These comments were echoed by Ministers although they recognised that there was more to do.

Bill Rammell: If I am honest, I think there are still cultural challenges between all of our three departments in that the military, aid workers and diplomats have a different mindset when they come at a problem initially but some fundamental shared interests. I think we still need to do more to ensure we can break down those barriers. [...] This is something which, again, will develop over time as more people within DFID, the FCO and the MoD have direct contact and experience with this kind of engagement and develop the appropriate skills.

Lord Malloch-Brown: You have to look at this at probably three levels: the on-the-ground level in a place like Helmand; the London level; and then what I would argue is by far the most important level, which is the international level of how we work with allies and partners, either through the vehicle of the United Nations or narrower coalitions where that is the case. If you take each, on the ground I think in terms of the philosophy and administrative arrangements, a comprehensiveness of a Comprehensive Approach, it is working well and the shortcomings, which are considerable, are not shortcomings of those administrative arrangements but shortcomings imposed by a highly insecure situation where the practical difficulties of doing development while there is still a war on are very, very difficult. [...] I have no doubt there are still cultural issues to be resolved, but the area where I would argue, perhaps, we have fallen well short is at global level. [...] While I think in Afghanistan we are now starting to see real progress with the new US administration in its focus on both a military and development surge, if you step back and look globally, an awful lot of these operations are still bedevilled by a lack of clear

50 Q 117

51 Q 118

52 Q 119

command and control structures, if you like, at the international level and a lack of strategy and priority setting.⁵³

52. Professor Farrell also gave an external perspective on the cultural and operational differences between the Departments.

[...] so you need to appreciate obviously from DFID's point of view that Afghanistan is not necessarily the main effort and it draws resources away, and perhaps this is partly true for the FCO. I would also point to culture, conceptual differences and operational differences and if you go down through those, it perhaps helps you appreciate how far we have come is quite extraordinary, given these natural tensions. When DFID and FCO and MoD get into a room together they barely understand the language they use together. DFID personnel sometimes do not even understand what they mean by these words and that makes it very, very difficult to build shared understanding.⁵⁴

53. Professor Chalmers said that by and large the Armed Forces had accepted the principle of the Comprehensive Approach but some had been frustrated by the slow progress in other departments.⁵⁵ Professor Farrell said that, in recent research, 86% of officers surveyed recognised that the Comprehensive Approach was the future of the military operations.⁵⁶

54. We recognise and welcome the progress that has been made in making the Comprehensive Approach a reality. The MoD, the FCO and DFID have all made efforts to reduce cultural and operational differences but all acknowledge more needs to be done. We call upon the Departments to identify what changes, particularly in respect of departmental cultures and working practices, still need to be made. For example, we expect, as a minimum, to see that any review should consider the involvement of high level officials, the enhancement of promotion prospects for those involved in Comprehensive Approach activities and a financial commitment to co-ordination of the Approach. The three Departments should, in response to this Report, provide us with the results of the review into the changes needed to working practices and how they intend to plan and manage the necessary changes.

The International Development Act

55. The International Development Act 2002 established poverty reduction as the overarching purpose of British development assistance, either by furthering sustainable development or improving the welfare of the recipients. There are differing views as to whether the Act with its emphasis on poverty reduction operates as a constraint on what DFID can do as part of the Comprehensive Approach and its work on reconstruction and post-conflict stabilisation.

56. A report by the Institute for Public Policy Research called *Shared Responsibilities: a national security strategy for the UK*, recommended that the 2002 Act be amended to make

53 Q 303

54 Q 48

55 Qq 23, 26

56 Q 23 and Ev 152

DFID's mission that of the promotion of development through poverty reduction and the promotion of conditions of safety and security in the developing world.⁵⁷ Professor Chalmers said that many of the poorest countries in the world were affected by conflict and "we should not immediately assume that there is a fundamental conflict between security and development objectives".⁵⁸

57. Daniel Korski suggested that the International Development Act 2002 bred an organisational culture which militated against spending resources within countries at risk.

There have been initiatives to compel departments to think about projects jointly (eg by pooling funds). However the majority of funds to be used in conflict environments are still allocated to DFID, which is circumscribed by the strictures of the International Development Act that mandates that funds have to focus on poverty-alleviation. Though this need not, in fact, constrain spending decisions, it has bred an organisational culture inside DFID that militates against spending resources in countries-at-risk of instability as well as alongside the military.[...] It is hard to see how anything else than statutory change can help engender a new culture inside the department.⁵⁹

58. Michael Foster and Dr Shafik, the Minister and PUS at DFID, both reported that the Act was not an obstacle to their full participation in the Comprehensive Approach and post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction. Their view was that there was no conflict between poverty and security aims as many of the poorest nations are designated fragile states and, therefore, no revision of the Act was needed.⁶⁰ Dr Shafik also pointed out that half the activities funded under the Conflict Fund did not qualify as official development assistance.⁶¹ The Minister, Michael Foster, told us:

[...] the poverty reduction test—which I think is used by some people to suggest that somehow you cannot use DFID funding to deliver in conflict and fragile states—can be long-term and it can be indirect. I think there is a greater recognition now on the ground that dealing with conflict, dealing with fragile states all add to the case for poverty reduction, it is just that it is not a direct link as would be the case of providing education to a primary school pupil. There is a very clear link then between an education a child has and the reduction in poverty. Indirectly, it can make sure schools are not destroyed by conflict, people are not injured or killed by conflict because all of those add to poverty reduction. Anything which prevents injuries, deaths, damage to infrastructure is by its nature poverty reduction and, therefore, can fulfil part of the Act quite comfortably.⁶²

59. We asked Dr Shafik if there had been any conflict within DFID in working in Iraq, potentially one of the richest countries in the world.

57 ippr Commission on National Security in the 21st Century, *Shared Responsibilities A national security strategy for the UK*, 30 June 2009, recommendation 88

58 Q 52

59 Ev 147

60 Qq 108, 307

61 Qq 109–111

62 Q 307

I think we have always known that Iraq is not a poor country and it would not have been a natural place for DFID focus in the early days. Iraq's revenue last year was \$60 billion, in contrast to a place like Afghanistan, which was \$4 billion – so a completely different scale of resources. The issue in Iraq has never been resources; it has been helping the Iraqis use their own resources better. But in the early days in Iraq we found ourselves doing a lot more large-scale infrastructure than you might expect in a country with that per capita income because of the level of destruction associated with the conflict and also because of the years of neglect of Basra and the Basra Province during Saddam's regime.⁶³

We also asked if there was a sense of resentment amongst DFID employees that they were spending time and resource on a rich country.

I do not think I would quite use the word “resentment”. I think there was an issue of defining a meaningful role in a country of where the issue of resource transfer was not the priority and I think we have successfully defined what that role is. Just to give you an example, we quickly realised that the issue for Basra was not putting lots of DFID aid money into Basra; the issue was helping the Basra Provincial Council to make itself an effective vehicle for tapping into central government money and being able to spend it. [...] It is not DFID money; but what DFID did was work with the Provincial Council to help them develop the capacity to plan, to prepare proposals so that the central government would allocate resources, and to be able to spend it themselves.⁶⁴

60. Whilst we note that DFID believes that the International Development Act allows it to participate fully in reconstruction and stabilisation operations and in conflict prevention, we believe a review of whether the Act creates a culture within DFID which adversely impacts on its participation would merit the further attention of post-legislative scrutiny.

Structure and funding

61. The three Departments—the MoD, the FCO and DFID—are funded and structured differently, reflecting different roles and responsibilities, which inevitably impacts on their ability to respond to conflict. The MoD is usually funded and prepared for contingent operations and the Armed Forces have personnel prepared for deployment in conflict. Most of the additional costs of operations are funded from the Reserve. DFID has little capacity to find staff to deploy to conflict zones quickly. In the early days in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Department did not have enough staff willing to be deployed. To staff and fund work in a conflict, DFID has to reprioritise its work and divert resources from other areas whilst maintaining its commitment to providing support to many developing countries across the world. The FCO does have staff it can deploy across the world but again has to reprioritise its work to do so.⁶⁵

63 Q 112

64 Q 113

65 Qq 46–48

62. Professor Chalmers said that the Comprehensive Approach would work better in the future, if the asymmetry of funding and structure between the three Departments were addressed.

[...] we do have to look at resourcing and funding and the basic asymmetry between the nature of the different departments, the three main departments (MoD, DFID and the Foreign Office) which are likely to be involved in this sort of operation in future. The MoD, the Armed Forces, is an organisation which appears to have significant spare capacity in order to be able to intervene. They also have an arrangement with the Treasury, which is clearly fraying right now but it certainly has been in operation in recent years, where the additional costs of operations are funded from the reserve.

He compared this with DFID and the FCO:

DFID has I think around 1500 home-based, UK staff globally; they do not do development directly so much as manage development contracts. The average DFID member of staff has £3 million a year to manage. They do not have a surge capacity and also of course there is a very large number of countries in which they are engaged. The Stabilisation Unit is one way of getting round that issue providing some civilian surge capacity but I think there is an issue about whether that is large enough for the demands. Finally, the Foreign Office again has a wide variety of different responsibilities. Certainly the way in which Foreign Office engagement in Afghanistan and Iraq has been funded in recent years is by being asked to re-prioritise away from other areas into Afghanistan and Iraq, which indeed they have done, but inevitably that is a slower process. I really think resourcing and financing arrangements and having a more level playing field between the different departments is actually critical.⁶⁶

63. The level of resources deployed on the Comprehensive Approach by each of the Departments is different. The Stabilisation Unit had an annual budget of £7 million. This is to rise to £12.7 million from 2010.⁶⁷ The shared pools for conflict prevention, peace support and stabilisation totalled only £171 million in 2009–10, after allowing for contributions to international organisations. Even that level of funding required the Departments to dip into their normal funds to make up the deficit caused by a weak pound resulting in the subscriptions to international organisations being higher than planned.⁶⁸ Money for aid in Afghanistan is likely to total some £450 million over 4 years to 2008–09. In comparison, the cost to the Reserve of the additional costs of the Armed Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan were £4 billion in 2008–09.

64. Bill Rammell commented that the military component was often necessarily the first required for any given situation:

The MoD—I will put this up front—is in a slightly different position in that the cost of conflict has never been a mainstream part of our budget, and therefore we have

66 Q 46

67 Ev 169

68 Qq 139, 346

got to call on the urgent operational requirement and the reserve. But I do think within this context that sometimes there is a misleading impression that you can therefore trade off the security elements into the other areas. I do believe [...] the military component is fundamentally necessary before you can move on into the other areas, so I do not think you can actually trade that military component.⁶⁹

65. It is only right that the Armed Forces should be funded from the Reserve for operations such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, as situations change and conflicts move away from war fighting to reconstruction and stabilisation, resources may need to be reprioritised or redistributed. The balance of investment decisions become crucial. The Government, therefore, should clarify the mechanism which funds other government departments for conflict.

The Stabilisation Unit

66. The Government established the tri-departmental Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit in 2004. In late 2007, it was renamed the Stabilisation Unit to reflect the nature of its role in supporting the management of the MoD's Stabilisation Aid fund. It sits in DFID but is jointly owned by DFID, the FCO and the MoD. Its role is to facilitate cross-departmental assessment and planning; to develop and deploy civilian expertise; and to identify and learn lessons. It has been the primary source of civilian experts to the Helmand mission and has deployed experts elsewhere such as Iraq, Kabul, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Staff from the Unit produced an updated version of the integrated Helmand Roadmap (plan) and continue to support military exercises and planning in Whitehall for future UK engagement on conflict, bilaterally and multilaterally. The Unit is developing itself as a repository of expertise and experience on stabilisation. It is coordinating cross-Whitehall work on improving joint assessment and planning at the strategic and operational levels.⁷⁰

67. In 2008, the National Security Strategy (NSS) identified the need to improve the effectiveness of the UK and the international community in supporting countries affected by violent conflict, including how better to deploy civilian stabilisation experts. When announcing the NSS, the Prime Minister said that:

We must have civilian experts and professionals ready to deploy quickly to assist failing states and help rebuild countries emerging from conflict,... Britain will... make available a 1000-strong UK civilian standby capacity.⁷¹

68. A Cabinet Office Task Force Review of Stabilisation and Civil Effect was launched in June 2008 to determine how best to achieve this outcome. It reported to the NSID sub-committee on National Security, International Relations and Development (Overseas and Defence) in January 2009 focusing on the creation of the 1000-strong Civilian Stabilisation Capacity and the strengthening of the role of the Stabilisation Unit.⁷² A Stabilisation

69 Q 408

70 Ev 84

71 Ev 167

72 Ev 146

Implementation Team was also established in early 2009 to deliver these Ministerial commitments and to determine the nature and extent of additional Stabilisation Unit planning capability and how best to implement it. It was also to consider the terms and conditions of service, as well as risk and safety considerations, for deployed civilian staff.⁷³

69. The Review also recommended that the Stabilisation Unit become the “single HMG delivery unit for civil effect”, including the responsibility for managing the deployments of civilians and police officers for UK stabilisation missions in hostile environments and international peacebuilding missions. The Stabilisation Unit is, however, not responsible for all civilians in hostile environments—the bulk of these posts are posts in UK Embassies and DFID offices and are filled using their standard recruitment processes.⁷⁴

70. The Unit was tasked with establishing a UK Civilian Stabilisation Capacity (now called the Civilian Stabilisation Group) of over 1,000 civilians and police. This pool would allow the continuous deployment of up to 200 personnel. This was primarily to be achieved by:

- enhancing the existing database of Deployable Civilian Experts, so that it held 800–1,000 quality assured personnel from outside Government;
- forming a cross-government Civil Service Stabilisation Cadre (of around 200); and
- appealing to a wide range of volunteer networks, and making better use of the relevant civilian skills of Armed Forces Reservists.

71. The number of personnel required by type of skills was determined on the basis of analysis agreed across government of the respective roles of civilians and the military in stabilisation environments, taking account of recent experiences and possible future scenarios.⁷⁵

72. In 2008–09, the Stabilisation Unit reviewed all individuals then on its database to assess their suitability for working in challenging environments. Significantly enhanced experience of stabilisation activities on the ground in Afghanistan and elsewhere meant that a much more specific requirement for personnel could be set. As a result the number of personnel on the database was halved. Over the course of 2009 a targeted recruitment campaign generated over 1,200 new applications. A detailed assessment process, including face to face interviews with more than 400 individuals, was followed by more targeted efforts to meet specific skill sets. The majority of the Deployable Civilian Experts are self employed.⁷⁶

73. Recruitment from the Civil Service for the Cadre began in July 2009. Applications were received from 35 government departments including from devolved administrations, as well as Local Government employees, representing administrative grades up to the Senior Civil Service. All applicant members obtained the agreement of their line managers to join

73 Ev 85

74 Ev 168

75 Ev 167

76 *ibid.*

the Cadre, with the requirement for additional line management endorsement for specific deployments.⁷⁷

74. The Stabilisation Unit is providing 'core training' to 390 of the 1150 Cadre (34%) most likely to be deployed over the period to mid 2011. Training provides an understanding of how to work in hostile environments and of good practice in stabilisation planning. By giving this training in advance of an appointment to a particular post, the lead time between appointment and deployment is minimised. Once appointed to a post, an individual also receives training specific to that post ('pre-deployment training'). The 34% core training coverage represents a balance between maximising preparedness and minimising expenditure on personnel who are not ultimately deployed.⁷⁸

75. The Stabilisation Unit took on responsibility for deployments of Home Office police officers and civilians deployed to multilateral missions in October, with the transfer of the International Secondments Team from the FCO. The Stabilisation Unit currently manages 121 personnel deployed overseas in any month, comprising 33 serving police officers and 88 civilians serving on both multilateral and bilateral missions. Personnel were deployed as of November 2009 in 17 countries, including 47 to Afghanistan, 23 to Kosovo, 15 to Iraq, 13 to Georgia and 5 to Sudan. Other deployments were to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Pakistan.⁷⁹

76. The work of the Stabilisation Unit in developing and maintaining a cadre of deployable civilians and civil servants has been significant in the UK's capacity to implement the Comprehensive Approach. The Stabilisation Unit should be provided with sufficient resources to continue maintaining this capacity and the training of appropriate individuals.

77. We understand that, in both Iraq and Afghanistan, it has been difficult to recruit serving policemen to assist with the training of the local police forces and that, consequently, the MoD Police currently provide the bulk of support. For example, in Afghanistan, the UK provided six police mentoring teams in Helmand all of which were made up of the MoD Police supported by the infantry. There are no serving UK civilian police officers working alongside UK military and civilian personnel in Afghanistan. However, there is a small number of serving UK civilian police officers in Kabul as part of NATO or EU deployments. Concerns apparently remain about whether such officers should be deployed into hostile environments. The Association of Chief Police Officers is examining the current policy and conditions under which the UK can deploy UK civilian police officers.⁸⁰ **We look forward to seeing the results of the Association of Chief Police Officers' work on the deployment of serving police officers. The Home Office and the devolved administrations should resolve the issues inhibiting serving police officers from volunteering to serve in areas of need as quickly as possible. The Home Office and the devolved administrations should promote the use of serving police officers to train**

77 Ev 167

78 *ibid.*

79 Ev 161, 168

80 Ev 163

local police forces in areas of need. The MoD should also set out the role for the MoD Police in contributing to stabilisation operations.

Learning lessons

78. Some witnesses told us that a crucial component of using the Comprehensive Approach successfully is the process by which lessons are learned and that the UK did not take all of the lessons learned from the early days in Afghanistan into Iraq nor from Iraq then into the later phases in Afghanistan.⁸¹ Sir Peter Ricketts said:

I am sure that we did not do it well in the early days and I think we did not do as well as we should in learning the lessons of Bosnia for Kosovo and of Kosovo for Afghanistan. I think now, having created this Stabilisation Unit, which is there to centralise and preserve the lessons from this extraordinary decade of involvement in stabilisation work, so that if we had to do it again there are people and there are doctrines and there is experience available for the next time around, I think that means we will be much better placed if we have to do this again then we were starting out from 1995/6 in Bosnia.⁸²

79. Professor Farrell also told us that there had been a history of poor lessons learning:

[...]in Britain we do not really have a very good strategic lesson-learning process. There are individual lesson-learning processes going on in the various government departments. It seems to me that that is one of the things the Government should be focusing attention on, less on what we saw and more on government departments across the board coming together to learn the lessons from the operation. [...] if you look at the history of counterinsurgency, for instance, in all historical cases we have time and again gone in, made mistakes, learned from the mistakes, got a lot better, managed the operation, got into another operation and made the exact same mistakes again. We go through these cycles of constantly rebooting our memory and relearning. It is one thing that the British have yet to really get better at—institutional memory. It is about better learning and retaining the knowledge so we do not have to relearn the mistakes we have made.⁸³

80. The Stabilisation Unit has an overarching responsibility for the process of learning and disseminating lessons.⁸⁴ We asked the MoD and DFID how the Stabilisation Unit linked in with the thorough process of identifying and learning lessons from operations managed by the Armed Forces' Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ). They told us the following:

PJHQ Lessons are sourced from Post Operational Reports raised by returning Operational Commanders at 1 and 2 star level. The PJHQ Lessons staff identifies those lessons which require a civilian input and assigns them on the Defence Lessons Identified Management System; where these are within the mandate of the Stabilisation Unit (SU), they are assigned to the Unit for resolution.

81 Qq 46, 72, 83, 87, 91, 96, 99, 119, 208, 270

82 Q 119

83 Q 83

84 Q 136

MoD as a whole, together with DFID, FCO and Stabilisation Unit are implementing a capability for learning cross-cutting lessons on conflict (within the scope of PSA 30) across the three Departments, which will be based in the Stabilisation Unit.⁸⁵

81. We acknowledge that the evolution of the work of the Stabilisation Unit will progressively ensure that cross-institutional knowledge and skills gained during deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan will be retained and built on. How to maximise improved capability for the Comprehensive Approach from ‘lessons learned’ should be addressed in the Strategic Defence Review.

82. We note that the three Departments are looking further at the process of learning lessons. The Stabilisation Unit working with the three Government Departments should make it a priority to encourage those involved in the Comprehensive Approach to learn lessons from each situation and to disseminate the lessons as appropriate. In particular, the Stabilisation Unit should work closely with the Permanent Joint Headquarters of the Armed Forces drawing on its thorough and comprehensive lessons learned process. The Stabilisation Unit should institute a transparent and regular process of such dissemination and should run regular seminars for relevant staff in the three principal Departments and in other departments involved and for staff on its database of deployable personnel. The Unit should be given sufficient resources to carry out this essential function.

Making the case in the UK

83. Situations which require the use of the Comprehensive Approach are by their nature likely to be complex involving many parties including international organisations and other allies. Communicating the need for such conflicts or interventions is not easy. However, it must be a key component of the Comprehensive Approach not only to win the hearts and minds of the relevant local nationals but also to make the case in the UK for the importance of the relevant operation in both the national and international media.

84. Bill Rammell said that the UK Government was getting the message about the importance of Afghanistan across to the British public but did not recognise that communication was a continuing challenge.

We are getting the message across. We have undertaken some structural initiatives like a joint communications unit in Afghanistan to achieve that end. There is a disjuncture. We face a very difficult situation in Afghanistan and the loss of life is extraordinarily concerning, but I think there is a disjuncture sometimes between the media perception of what is happening in Afghanistan and actually where people are at.⁸⁶

I think we need probably to be just more simple and clear about why we are there. It is the point [...] that actually were we to withdraw from Afghanistan today, then the threat to our national security in this country I genuinely believe, based on the

85 Ev 161

86 Q 410

evidence, would be much more significant. I think we have got to get that across more effectively.⁸⁷

85. Communication is a key component of maintaining support amongst the British public for the use of military and civilian forces in unstable areas. As part of the planning process for the use of the Comprehensive Approach, a communications strategy should be developed for each deployment and then be implemented to ensure that Government policy is fully described and communicated to the British public. This strategy should be part of a wider strategic communications plan linking in with communication to all parties including allies, international organisations and, importantly, to local nationals.

Personnel

86. It is inevitable that military and civilian personnel have different terms and conditions and perhaps that Departments have widely different approaches to their duty of care towards staff, to health and safety considerations and to risk assessment and management. The terms and conditions of the staff in the three Departments are also different and staff from DFID and the FCO have not been recruited or trained to work in dangerous areas. At first this led to delays in deploying staff and limited their ability to work in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Brigadier Butler told us that the difficulty of getting civilians to engage in reconstruction and development in Helmand in 2006 was frustrating for the military.

I think the challenge was [...] what individuals' definitions of security and sufficient security was all about and that was linked to what individuals and departments' thresholds for risk were about. Most risk averse was DFID and that was institutional, legal, personal and cultural, then you had the FCO, then members of the security services and then the military, and trying to get a common consensus of what was secure and sufficient security to go out and do the business, in this case reconstruction and development, was extremely frustrating on all sides.⁸⁸

Dr Shafik said that many of these earlier problems had been overcome.

I think that there is actually quite a good story to tell in terms of the lesson learning and the adaptation that has occurred in terms of the number of people and types of people we have been able to deploy. If you look at the early days there was serious difficulty, for example, in recruiting civilians to go to Helmand. At the moment the vacancy rate in Helmand is well below 10 per cent and we are able to fill every post, and that reflects the fact that we have tapped into lots of different kinds of people and we have trained our own people and we have systems in place that can support them when they are there so that they can be effective, and I think that is a very good sign of us being able to respond and adapt.⁸⁹

87. Sir Peter Ricketts recognised that the FCO had not learnt the lessons from Bosnia and Kosovo as well as they might but agreed that the situation had improved recently.

87 Q 411

88 Q 68

89 Q 107

I have seen over 12 years a considerable improvement in our capacity to establish ourselves and operate in these difficult and dangerous circumstances. We did not have in 2003 an embassy in Baghdad; we did not have an embassy in Kabul; we did not have anything in Lashkar Gah or anything in Basra, and over the last five or six years we have built up to having one of our largest concentrations of diplomats anywhere in the world actually in Kabul; and very substantial operations in Lashkar Gah and in Baghdad and now a small but remaining mission in Basra. We have learnt how to operate right alongside the military and we have had to learn about duty of care to our staff so that our staff can be out there right behind the front line and working very closely with DFID in doing that. Yes, I am sure that we did not do it well in the early days and I think we did not do as well as we should in learning the lessons of Bosnia for Kosovo and of Kosovo for Afghanistan.⁹⁰

88. When asked whether the varying responsibilities with regard to duty of care and health and safety in the FCO and DFID had been resolved, Lord Malloch-Brown said that there had been dramatic progress. He acknowledged that staff had not been able to provide sufficient development and political support to the military a few years ago but that there was no longer a yawning gap between the risk appetite of the military and its other partners in the Comprehensive Approach, although the gap was not completely closed.⁹¹

The duty of care was in the old days a terrible restraint on being able to get the staff out doing the development and political work that needed to be done. [...] There really has been dramatic progress. [...] we had a situation where we had increased the number of staff seven-fold essentially, and that refers to both DFID and FCO staff. If you look today in Lashkar Gah or in Kabul, as of literally today we have no vacancies in either place. We have now got 64 UK-based staff in Kabul and 11 in Lashkar Gah, making a total of 76. We have also been able to get them out and about. [...] We think we have given mobility to the mission. It is getting out and about and is able to provide the development and political support to the military side that was not, frankly, happening a few years ago.⁹²

89. Michael Foster told us that there was now a greater, although not overwhelming, appetite in staff to go into risky environments:

Of the five most difficult environments that we are currently working with, that seven-fold increase is from 14 to 98 HCS (Home Civil Service) staff, which is the seven-fold increase that Mark referred to. For DFID, when we compare the Afghanistan general posts, there is a greater rate of applicants to those posts in Afghanistan than there is to DFID as a whole. I am not saying that there is this overwhelming appetite to go into risky environments, but it is now very clear that people are moving that way because they are fulfilling posts.⁹³

90 Q 119

91 Qq 375, 376

92 Q 375

93 Q 377

90. On our January 2010 visit to Afghanistan, we noted that there were still some obstacles which stood in the way of effective joint working although many issues relating to the varying risk appetite amongst different groups of staff had been resolved. For example, Stabilisation Unit and DFID staff are not permitted to take advantage of any temporary increase in security created by the Armed Forces in order to facilitate visits by senior Afghan or British politicians and officials—hence they cannot participate in such visits. **We recommend that DFID, the Stabilisation Unit and the FCO should reconsider whether they can delegate to the MoD the responsibility for maintaining the security of their personnel, to ensure that there is sufficient flexibility to take account of temporary security arrangements created by the Armed Forces in a way that meets the Departments’ duty of care.**

91. Between January and May 2009, DFID carried out a study: Meeting Workforce Demands in Hostile and Difficult Environments.⁹⁴ The study concluded that while the Department had been successful in meeting the requirements for staff to work in difficult posts it nevertheless needed to strengthen its approach to such arrangements because of:

- the likely increase in workforce demands from fragile and conflict affected states generated by DFID's focus on this agenda; and
- a concern that the current approach could not guarantee to generate a secure, predictable supply of the best, well prepared talent to take on professionally challenging high profile assignments which are hard to fill.

The study made a number of recommendations which were accepted by the Department including:

- DFID should retain the volunteer principle (even though there exists a legal case to deploy personnel in specific locations);
- a strategy of developing and managing three sources of volunteers from within the existing workforce, new recruits and secondments and better and more use of consultants;
- strengthen career incentives (that is the next posting and promotability) recognising the stretching experience of working in fragile states;
- recruitment for those core skills in greatest demand; and
- draw on the Stabilisation Unit’s Civil Service Stabilisation Cadre.⁹⁵

92. The Stabilisation Unit has worked closely with the MoD in supporting its thinking on the role of the military in stabilisation. This has been based on a common understanding that the military have a crucial supporting role in the delivery of civil effect in hostile environments. The Unit has contributed to the development of the role of the

94 Ev 170

95 Ev 172

Civil-Military Co-ordination Group into the Military Support to Stabilisation Group, and to stabilisation doctrine and training courses.⁹⁶

93. In a supplementary memorandum, the three principal Departments told us that they recognised the potential role of Reservists with civilian skills to enhance the capability of the military in performing their supporting role. They also told us how these skills were going to be exploited.

...[The] MoD should rapidly identify members of the Armed Forces Volunteer Reserves with relevant skills not just to serve with the military but also to deploy as part of the CSC. In consultation with the SU, FCO and DFID, MoD has written a paper setting out options for the recruitment and deployment of reservists in stabilisation roles, the recommendations of which have been endorsed by the 3* Defence Strategy and Plans Group. The MoD, in conjunction with SU, is now focussing on means of identifying current reservists' civilian skills, in line with SU's task matrix, and planning communications with reservists and employers (including civilian opportunities available with SU). A second phase of implementation will focus on recruitment and training, and ensuring coherent mechanisms for identification and employment of members of the CSC and of reservists.⁹⁷

94. The MoD told us that the Armed Forces had been further developing their ability to provide civilian and military co-operation:

Civil Military Co-Operation (CIMIC) is acknowledged as a critical activity in stabilisation operations. The military's ability to deliver better 'co-operation and co-ordination' has dramatically increased in the last 12 months with the development of the Military Stabilisation Support Group (MSSG), which has responsibility for: 'Preparation and delivery of civil effect/CIMIC planning teams and functional specialists, capable of providing stabilisation support to all deployed formation HQs and Battle Groups (BGs) in order to contribute to PJHQ and Joint Task Force operational capability.'

The MSSG has been tasked with increasing the capability, training and education in CIMIC, Military Assistance to Civil Effect and Stabilisation and, since the summer 2008, has provided a 400% increase in support of Op HERRICK. The Group has doubled in size over the last 12 months and is yet to reach its full establishment and therefore reduce the need for augmentation to meet the operational need. CIMIC is the key enabling function that facilitates the stabilisation plan in Afghanistan to be delivered and is now recognised as a high priority to achieve success.⁹⁸

The MSSG currently has 40 personnel deployed on Op HERRICK filling Stabilisation planning functions, which mainly involve CIMIC. The deployment is manned by a combination of Core MSSG staff and Individual Augmentees from all

96 Ev 170

97 *ibid.*

98 Ev 162

Three Services and the Reserve: 40 personnel (10 MSSG); 6 Royal Navy; 28 Army (6 Reservists); and 6 Royal Air Force.⁹⁹

95. Recognising the development of the Military Stabilisation Support Group, the MoD should determine under what circumstances this Group will work with the Stabilisation Unit and whether it needs to strengthen its capability in reconstruction and post-conflict stabilisation (and consequently its training and recruitment). It should report to us on the results of this assessment and confirm that this issue will be dealt with in the context of the Strategic Defence Review.

96. There is a need for more cross-departmental working with secondments between the three Departments to enhance the skill sets of relevant staff and to increase the mutual understanding of the different cultures in each Department. There may also be the need to recruit staff with additional skill sets in each of the Departments. DFID is already looking to do this. The FCO and the MoD should review whether they need to modify or expand the skills sets of the people they wish to recruit.

Training

97. We were told by witnesses such as Professor Farrell that there needed to be more opportunities for staff in the MoD, the FCO and DFID to train together which would aid integration of civilian and military personnel.¹⁰⁰ Professor Farrell said:

The basic problem with training is that the military have a whole series of training regimens and various exercises, but DFID in particular, FCO to a lesser extent, simply lack the spare capacity to give staff over for these exercises, it is as simple as that, whereas for the military it is built into how they work, it is built into their personnel structure, they expect staff to be doing this. [...] It is true that the key to getting them to work together is better training, [...] but I suspect [...] that a few months into deployment those personal relationships build up and that is when you get a better understanding.¹⁰¹

98. In 2008, the MoD supported 'Joint Venture', a joint biennial exercise in the planning and conduct of joint operations in a medium scale stabilisation intervention. It is predominantly a military command-post exercise designed to test expeditionary capabilities in dealing with a complex regional scenario and series of political-military events. A senior official from the FCO was appointed Senior Responsible Officer in order that civil-military co-operation could be tested, with the objective of building on work in Helmand and elsewhere. Participants included representatives of the FCO, DFID, the Stabilisation Unit and other parts of Government as well as representatives from NGOs and international partners.¹⁰² Michael Foster said in relation to Joint Venture, "there can be

99 Ev 163

100 Q 49

101 Q 50

102 Ev 88

an exchange of ideas which will bring what are characterised as two extremes closer to one uniform policy”.¹⁰³

99. In November 2009, NATO ran its exercise “Arcade Fusion” with a complex scenario designed “to provide a key vehicle for developing a shared understanding of the comprehensive approach and delivering unity of purpose across civil and military communities.” Some 1,500 civilian and military personnel participated in the two-day exercise. The UK, including the FCO, DFID and the MoD, played a strong role in the exercise. In particular, the UK provided an “innovative civilian planning element” and the Rt Hon Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, a former Secretary General of NATO, played the role of the UN Special Envoy.¹⁰⁴

100. Professor Farrell suggested that a greater involvement by the staff from other Departments and the Stabilisation Unit in pre-deployment training, particularly the mission rehearsal exercise, would also improve the integration of staff.

The two key things I would suggest are if we could somehow get a better integration of folk from the stabilisation unit in the pre-deployment training, particularly the mission rehearsal exercise, [...] that would help build the partnership between the deploying brigade and the PRT before the brigade gets into theatre, and it would presumably help transfer knowledge from the PRT to the brigade as it prepares for deployment.¹⁰⁵

101. Sir Bill Jeffrey also stressed the importance of training to the better use of the Comprehensive Approach.

The Stabilisation Unit itself provides quite a bit of training for all purposes. The thing that I am most conscious of, because we tend to provide it but it is proving valuable, is that we now have routinely not many people but a significant number of people from FCO and DFID on the Defence Academy advanced command staff course and on pre-deployment exercises before troops deploy to theatre. All brigade mission rehearsal exercises for Helmand are now with civilians who are likely to be involved in theatre.¹⁰⁶

102. We asked if staff in DFID and the FCO were reluctant to attend the courses provided at the Defence Academy in Shrivenham. Dr Shafik commented as follows:

[...] in terms of DFID management we have sent a very clear signal that attending these kinds of courses like the higher command staff course [...] is a priority. I think it is no accident that the Private Secretaries of most of the ministers and my own have all served in Afghanistan and Iraq; so the people who we signal are on the fast track in the organisation, many of them are ones who have served in these posts and we have sent a very clear signal that these are our best and our brightest and that they

103 Q 304

104 www.arcc.nato.int

105 Q 91

106 Q 150

will be rewarded for reaching out across Whitehall and learning about cultures in other departments and working in these very tough places.¹⁰⁷

103. Joint training is an important element in the integration of civilian and military staff and in the successful use of the Comprehensive Approach. There should be a greater sharing of training and education within the three principal Departments. At the minimum, civilians being posted to conflict areas such as Afghanistan should participate in pre-deployment training with the military about to be sent to such areas. This should be in addition to the training provided by the Stabilisation Unit to civilians in preparation for deployment into conflict areas. We also expect to see continuing participation in joint exercises such as Joint Venture and Arrcade Fusion. The Departments should pursue appropriate means to ensure the knowledge gained by individuals is consolidated.

104. The FCO and DFID should seek to increase the number of their staff attending the courses at the Defence Academy, and the role of the Academy should be reviewed, as part of the Strategic Defence Review, with a view to its becoming the focus for Government-wide education and training on the Comprehensive Approach.

Departmental information technology and information management systems

105. In their joint memorandum, the MoD, the FCO and DFID said:

Operational and exercise experience has highlighted the need better to align and link departmental Information Technology and Information Management systems to ensure connectivity and improved communications. This is particularly important in theatre as it will allow better knowledge and information management. The three Permanent Secretaries have tasked their Chief Information Officers to identify options for tackling these constraints.¹⁰⁸

The Departments acknowledged that “there are tensions and issues such as authority funding, data sharing/communication that currently limit progress”. They also said that these are being addressed.¹⁰⁹

106. As the ability to communicate and share data is key to the further development of the Comprehensive Approach, the FCO, DFID and the MoD should provide us with an action plan for how they intend to remedy the deficiencies in communication, information systems and data sharing between their Departments. The plan should include details of who will be responsible for delivering the plan and its constituent parts as well as the timetable for implementation.

107 Q 151

108 Ev 85

109 Ev 89

3 Working with international organisations

107. The Comprehensive Approach is difficult to implement because of the number of international parties usually engaged in a conflict situation. In addition, interactions occur at many different levels between allies so increasing the complexity. This will also be true of future conflicts. This difficulty makes relationships, co-ordination and understanding between international organisations and allies all the more important.

108. The MoD, the FCO and DFID told us that the UK had been one of the strongest advocates of the Comprehensive Approach across a wide range of international organisations, in order better to combine civil and military measures and co-ordination within any given operational environment.¹¹⁰

109. Other allies and international organisations have a concept similar to the Comprehensive Approach adopted in the UK. There are, however, different views internationally as to its exact definition. In June 2008, the Finnish government hosted an international seminar on the ‘Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Prevention and Management’ attended by many nations and the principal international organisations including the UN, NATO and the EU. The seminar adopted an overarching definition of the Comprehensive Approach.

While there is no commonly accepted definition for ‘Comprehensive Approach’, there is broad agreement that it implies pursuing an approach aimed at integrating the political, security, development, rule of law, human rights and humanitarian dimensions of international missions.¹¹¹

The United Nations

110. The UN has taken steps to move towards a more comprehensive approach to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Measures include joint assessments, joint programme frameworks, and the adoption of integrated UN Missions in a number of countries, such as Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. There is also the Peacebuilding Commission, an intergovernmental advisory body of the UN, which supports peace efforts in countries emerging from conflict. Its role includes bringing together all relevant actors, marshalling resources, and supporting the development of integrated peacebuilding strategies.¹¹²

111. The United Nations issued Guidelines on Integrated Missions Planning Process in June 2006. This guidance provided for a comprehensive and inclusive UN system approach to planning of integrated missions, bringing together different UN departments and agencies and formed part of the broader UN peacebuilding strategy. The UN recognised that it “struggles with integrated planning due to its huge and bureaucratic decision-

110 Ev 86

111 Ministry of Defence (Finland) *Seminar publication on Comprehensive Approach: Trends, Challenges and Possibilities for Cooperation in Crisis Prevention and Management*, June 2008, www.defmin.fi/english

112 Ev 86

making system, the applicability of current planning procedures to the field and the fluid context on the ground.”¹¹³

112. In addition, the UN is working to improve joint working with other partners. For example, in 2008, it signed the UN-World Bank Partnership Framework for Crisis and Post-Crisis Situations and a Joint Declaration on Post-Crisis Assessments and Recovery Planning with the World Bank and the European Commission.¹¹⁴

113. Prompted by a UK-led debate at the UN Security Council in May 2008, the UN instituted a review of how it could provide more effective and well co-ordinated support to countries emerging from conflict. The Presidential Statement that followed the debate highlighted the following gaps:

The Security Council encourages efforts to address the urgent need for rapidly deployable civilian expertise and stresses that the critical role for such expertise is working in co-operation with national authorities to strengthen national capacities. The Security Council highlights the need for the United Nations to play a leading role in the field in co-ordinating international efforts in post-conflict situations. The Security Council stresses that coordination between national authorities and others involved in longer-term reconstruction and development, including organs of the UN system in accordance with their respective mandates, the international financial institutions, as well as with civil society and the business sector, is vital for the success of UN and international engagement in post conflict situations. The Security Council stresses the need to ensure that finance is available from the outset for recovery and peacebuilding activities to meet immediate needs, and to lay a solid foundation for longer-term reconstruction and development.¹¹⁵

114. The Report of the Secretary-General on the review, ‘Peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict’, was published in June 2009. The Report highlighted the challenges that post-conflict countries and the international community face in the aftermath of conflict and stressed the importance of the earliest phase following a conflict. It concluded that, in many cases, it had missed this early window.

The immediate post-conflict period offers a window of opportunity to provide basic security, deliver peace dividends, shore up and build confidence in the political process, and strengthen core national capacity to lead peacebuilding efforts. If countries succeed in these core areas early on, it substantially increases the chances for sustainable peace—and reduces the risk of relapse into conflict.

While building peace is primarily the responsibility of national actors, the international community can play a critical role. In too many cases, we have missed this early window. Time and time again, we have failed to catalyse a response that delivers immediate, tangible results on the ground. Often, it has taken months before essential government functions resume or basic services are available. In some case, it

113 United Nations, *Integrated Missions Planning Process: Guidelines endorsed by the Secretary-General on 13 June 2006*, June 2006, www.undg.org

114 Ev 86

115 Ev 86 and United Nations Security Council, *Statement by the president of the Security Council (S/PRST/2008/16)*, 20 May 2008

has taken several years before the international community has aligned its efforts behind a common strategic vision. Capacities and resources have been insufficient to meet urgent demands on the ground. Even though capacity is limited, we frequently struggle to focus scarce resources on a limited set of agreed results that can enhance confidence in and commitment to a peaceful future.¹¹⁶

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

115. NATO adopted political guidance on the Comprehensive Approach in 2006. In April 2008, NATO agreed an Action Plan with pragmatic proposals to develop and implement its contribution to a comprehensive approach. The plan states that NATO—the Headquarters, the Command Structure and the nations—wants to bring together all the resources at its disposal—military and civilian—to deal with the problems that face it. It also focused on improving NATO’s co-operation with other actors, including other international organisations and NGOs. The Comprehensive Strategic Political Military Plan for Afghanistan, agreed at the same time, embodied this.¹¹⁷

116. In April 2009, NATO reaffirmed this approach at the Strasbourg-Kehl Summit. Following the Summit, the Heads of State and Government confirmed the priority afforded to the Comprehensive Approach.

Experience in the Balkans and Afghanistan demonstrates that today’s security challenges require a comprehensive approach by the international community, combining civil and military measures and coordination. Its effective implementation requires all international actors to contribute in a concerted effort, in a shared sense of openness and determination, taking into account their respective strengths and mandates. We welcome the significant progress achieved, in line with the Action Plan agreed at Bucharest, to improve NATO’s own contribution to such a comprehensive approach, including through a more coherent application of its crisis management instruments and efforts to associate its military capabilities with civilian means. Progress includes NATO’s active promotion of dialogue with relevant players on operations; the development of a database of national experts in reconstruction and stabilisation to advise NATO forces; and the involvement of selected international organisations, as appropriate, in NATO crisis management exercises.¹¹⁸

117. UN Security Council resolutions have provided the mandate for NATO operations in the Balkans and in Afghanistan, and the framework for NATO’s training mission in Iraq. NATO has also provided support to UN-sponsored operations, including logistical assistance to the African Union’s UN endorsed peacekeeping operations in Darfur, Sudan and in Somalia; support for UN disaster relief operations in Pakistan, following the earthquake in 2005; and escorting ships carrying World Food Programme humanitarian supplies off the coast of Somalia. The September 2008 NATO-UN Declaration committed both organisations to work together more closely and establish a framework for

116 United Nations, General Assembly Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (A/63/881–S/2009/304)*, 11 June 2009

117 Ev 86

118 Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg/Kehl, 4 April 2009, www.nato.int

consultation and co-operation, and reaffirmed their willingness to provide assistance to regional and sub-regional organisations as requested. The MoD, the FCO and DFID told us that practical co-operation to deliver the comprehensive approach on specific operations is generally further advanced than political co-operation between Headquarters.¹¹⁹

118. In Afghanistan, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and NATO are working together on the ground and have jointly developed an integrated planning process to focus civilian and military resources on key districts in a coordinated way. In 2008, NATO also generated a NATO-wide policy for Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and their management. The work of the PRTs in Afghanistan is now co-ordinated through the Executive Steering Committee which is chaired by an Afghan national and has representatives from the following organisations on it: the NATO SCR, the UN, the EU and ISAF.

119. The witnesses from NATO told us that NATO considered the Comprehensive Approach to be important although they recognised that NATO was considerably behind the UK in the development of the Comprehensive Approach. General McColl said:

It is far more difficult for NATO to do that than the UK. Whereas from where I sit in my NATO position, [...]in comparison to other nations, it is often commented to me that the UK is joined up in this respect. When you look inside the UK and understand the various difficulties that we have in delivering that Comprehensive Approach, it may not appear quite like that to us, and there are difficulties and there are areas where we can make improvement. [...] but given the fact that it has really only been since last year that we have given ourselves a commitment to do this, it is not surprising that the UK—which has been at this for slightly longer—has made far greater progress.¹²⁰

120. When asked if it was more difficult for NATO because it is a military alliance, General McColl said it was more difficult because it is primarily a political alliance and in order to move forward on the Comprehensive Approach, NATO needed consensus from all nations. One of the primary obstacles is the relationship with the EU.¹²¹ This is dealt with in paragraph 124 below.

European Union

121. As well as being the biggest donor of development funding, the European Union (EU) has a powerful set of civilian and military resources which should enable it to apply a comprehensive approach to crisis management: civilian expertise, judges, police officers and customs officials; military force, economic might and the most extensive diplomatic network in the world. Since the launch of the first European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) mission in 2003, the EU has deployed civilian and military personnel in three continents in areas of UK strategic interest. Of the 21 ESDP operations launched to date

119 Ev 87

120 Q 215

121 Q 216

most have had a more civilian than military focus—helping to build the rule of law, support peace agreements or monitor borders.¹²²

122. In the wider context of the EU’s ability to adopt a Comprehensive Approach, the existing pillar structures of the EU institutions have a fragmented approach to crisis management, post-conflict reconstruction and development. There is a gap in culture, working practice and political direction, between the Commission and the Council Secretariat, and within the Secretariat between the policy and operations arms.¹²³ The MoD, the FCO and DFID told us that the UK fully supported and helped to influence and accelerate EU thinking on this subject, through the active participation of the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, the Permanent Joint Headquarters (both part of the MoD) and the Stabilisation Unit.¹²⁴

NATO-EU

123. There are standing arrangements agreed for consultation and co-operation between the EU and NATO, including the “Berlin Plus” arrangements whereby the EU has both guaranteed access to NATO planning capabilities (aimed at avoiding unnecessary duplication) and use of NATO’s command and control arrangements for running operations. EU military operations thus fall into two categories, “Berlin Plus” operations using NATO command and control arrangements, like EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia, and “autonomous” operations using command and control provided by one or more Member States, like Operation ATALANTA in the Gulf of Aden. The MoD, the FCO and DFID told us that the UK continued to engage actively to encourage progress, including through a NATO-EU capabilities group that brings together nations and staff from both organisations.¹²⁵

124. The primary obstacle to progress is NATO’s relationship with the EU. It has not been possible to sign a security agreement with the EU because of continuing issues with Turkey and Greece related to Cyprus. For example, NATO has not been able to sign an agreement with the European Police Mission. The Mission has had to sign separate agreements with every nation that runs a PRT. Similarly, they have not been able to develop a vehicle tracking system showing where EU and NATO vehicles are in Afghanistan. The compromise is a system which shows where EU vehicles are to NATO vehicles but not the reverse. General McColl said:

It is more difficult because it is primarily a political alliance and, in order to move forward on something as complex as the Comprehensive Approach, you need consensus from all nations and there are a number of obstacles to that. The first—and I would describe it as the primary obstacle—is our relationship with the EU. As you go round capitals, you will find capitals outdoing each other in explaining how important they view the relationship between NATO and the EU, and yet the reality on the ground is somewhat different, and the reason for that is because there are

122 Ev 87

123 *ibid.*

124 Ev 88

125 Ev 87

some nations who deem it unacceptable for us to sign a security agreement with the EU.¹²⁶

Working on the ground

125. As General McColl pointed out, the use of the Comprehensive Approach is often characterised by the large number of different players and the complexity of the co-ordination of those players. This is very much so in Afghanistan.

Talking to the issue of Afghanistan [...] we have 40 nations in the alliance. Each of them has three or more departments involved in this issue of the Comprehensive Approach. We then have at least ten others who are critical players in the country. We have international organisations—another 20—we then have NGOs, who run into their hundreds. Then on top of that, of course, we have the Afghan National Government. All of that needs corralling and the idea of having one single hand that is going to control all of that is clearly wishful thinking. Therefore, what we have to have is a concept which enables us to co-ordinate a reference in a coherent way, and the Comprehensive Approach, as we have heard, is the language of common currency in Afghanistan and in many of these theatres, because it is commonly understood that we need to work together. So I think from that perspective it is absolutely essential that we have a comprehensive approach and that we spell it out.¹²⁷

126. General McChrystal reported that working in a coalition presented inherent difficulties.

As formidable as the threat may be, we make the problem harder. ISAF is a conventional force that is poorly configured for COIN [counter-insurgency], inexperienced in local languages and culture, and struggling with challenges inherent to coalition warfare. These intrinsic disadvantages are exacerbated by our current operational culture and how we operate.

Preoccupied with the protection of our own forces, we have operated in a manner that distances us—physically and psychologically—from the people we seek to protect. In addition, we run the risk of strategic defeat by pursuing tactical wins that cause civilian casualties or unnecessary collateral damage. The insurgents cannot defeat us militarily but we can defeat ourselves.¹²⁸

127. The UK is at the forefront of the development and use of the Comprehensive Approach and has worked well with international organisations and other member states to further the development of the Approach internationally. However, more needs to be done. We, therefore, recommend that the MoD, the FCO and DFID should continue to work with the UN, NATO and the EU to promote the effective use of the Comprehensive Approach within these organisations so that future complex emergencies requiring a multilateral approach can operate more effectively. We

126 Q 216

127 Q 235

128 "Commander's Initial Assessment", 30 August 2009, www.media.washingtonpost.com

consider such work to be essential to addressing the perception and reality of uneven burden-sharing amongst member states.

4 On the ground

Making it work

128. Many witnesses told us that the Comprehensive Approach was working better on the ground than in London.¹²⁹ Professor Farrell said:

I think you need to distinguish between where we are in Whitehall and the departments versus in the field. There has been tremendous progress in the field and in terms of planning and operations.¹³⁰

129. The joint memorandum from the three Departments described how the Comprehensive Approach in the Democratic Republic of Congo had been used successfully.

[...] the DFID, MoD and FCO team recognises no border between development, military and political issues. They have pushed the boundaries for joined up work not just by having joint policy teams but also creating joint management functions and a joint communications unit to handle press and public affairs. The UK earned a reputation for speaking with one voice and linking political pressure and programmes to influence partners towards a positive result. The departments continue to work together to deliver our contribution to international efforts to secure a lasting peace in DRC by pooling analysis, ideas and problem solving and shifting funding flexibly to take advantage of opportunities. Such collaboration does not end with the cross-Whitehall conflict prevention initiative.

It cited as an example of how the Departments work closely together on a project to rebuild a vital bridge in the eastern part of that country.

Although funded through DFID's infrastructure programme, much of the expertise needed to deliver the project is being sourced through MoD's links with the military engineer community. This comprehensive approach has contributed to providing the leverage needed to encourage the UN locally to provide the construction manpower. Overall, this means the project can be delivered quicker, more effectively and at less cost than would otherwise be the case.¹³¹

130. Professors Farrell and Chalmers described the difficulties in the use of the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan together with some of the improvements which had been made. In particular, they commented on the need for good planning but also on the difficulties posed, especially in making the plan stick. Professor Farrell said:

The Joint Plan for Helmand was led by the PCRU [Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit, now called the Stabilisation Unit] involved in collaboration with PJHQ. It was highly comprehensive in its generation. It had a flaw in terms of connecting what

129 Qq 88, 217–218, 282

130 Q 88

131 Ev 85

were those aspirations at an operational level generated in Britain with what was happening on the ground. The Helmand Road Map was designed to address that. The primary authors were despatched by the Stabilisation Unit into Lashkar Gar and they worked with 52 Brigade and they took 52 Brigade's campaign plan, its operational design, and built around that a reformed plan for Helmand. Both of those are great examples of comprehensive planning actually. I think both at an operational and tactical level as well we are seeing much more of a comprehensive approach.¹³²

131. In their joint memorandum, the three Departments also cited improvements in the co-ordination in Helmand since the establishment of the Civil-Military Mission.

One good example of the Comprehensive Approach being used in practice is the UK Civil-Military Mission Helmand (CMMH) in Lashkar Gah. The CMMH is the integrated structure that brought together the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and the military led Task Force Helmand (TFH), and it co-ordinates the efforts of DFID, FCO, MoD, and other international partners, including the US, Denmark and Estonia, in a comprehensive approach to stabilisation including a seamless package of reconstruction assistance for Helmand province. Staff are also based in five Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) across Helmand Province in Gereshk, Musa Qala, Garmsir, Nad-e-Ali and Sangin.

It provides a mechanism, through joint teams, for tracking and driving implementation across the thematic and geographical strands of the Helmand Roadmap.¹³³

132. We asked the PUSs if the success of the PRTs was too dependent on the particular individual leading it. In essence, they acknowledged the importance of good leadership but said that leaders were not the whole story.

Dr Shafik: There is no doubt that leadership matters and I think we have seen when we have had good leaders of PRTs that they are more effective. Having a cadre of people who are experienced in these situations is quite important. [...] But leaders cannot be the whole story and so the work that we are doing through the Stabilisation Unit and building up the civilian cadre and having other people in the PRT who have experience working in this comprehensive inter-departmental way will reinforce the fact when you do not have the strongest leadership. So I think you have to work on both fronts—the leaders as well as the worker bees that are also need to be embedded with a comprehensive spirit.¹³⁴

Sir Bill Jeffrey: I think the nature of this beast is such that the person you put in charge of it is going to have a profound impact on how successful this is. [...] The

132 Q 14

133 Ev 85

134 Q 167

way to make it stronger and more consistently effective is by [...] growing a group of staff who have done quite a bit of this sort of thing.¹³⁵

Sir Peter Ricketts: Leadership is always important in these operations [...] But we also need to have systems in place so that it is not totally reliant on any one individual and there is a strong enough system so that cooperation will work in addition to there being a good leader at the top. I think it is very important and a very powerful signal that the next civilian leader of our operation in Helmand will be a DFID member of staff.¹³⁶

133. In recognising the importance of Afghanistan to the UK, DFID has redistributed its aid funding for development, reconstruction and stabilisation so that Afghanistan receives a greater proportion than other poor countries and a higher proportion of that aid is spent in Helmand. Dr Shafik explained the current distribution of aid money in Afghanistan.

If DFID was treating Afghanistan like a normal country and we try to allocate aid on an objective criteria based on how much poverty there is in that country and how good its policies are and how effectively we think the money could be used we would probably allocate it one-tenth of what we give it now. So that gives you a sense of proportion; we are giving it ten times more than we normally would if we were treating it as an ordinary country. If you look at Helmand, Helmand actually only constitutes about five per cent of the population of Afghanistan. We are giving it about a quarter of our aid programme, so again disproportionately putting more effort in given the priority that it has.¹³⁷

134. As discussed in Part 2 of this Report, in the early days in Iraq and Afghanistan it was difficult for the FCO and DFID to identify people willing and able to deploy to theatre. In addition, it was difficult to find civilians with the relevant skills to deploy to carry out the reconstruction work in all fields. This has improved with good work being done by DFID and the Stabilisation Unit to provide more civilian staff on the ground in Afghanistan. Dr Shafik said that staff were working better together:

[...] there has been a steady improvement in terms of the level of interaction with DFID staff actively engaging with the military in terms of pre-deployment and in terms of training programmes. [...] I think that if you see the operations in action in Helmand, for example, or in Basra most people would say that they are some of the best examples of civilian-military collaboration anywhere in the world.¹³⁸

135. One area of concern is that military and civilian personnel serve different length tours. The majority of the Armed Forces do six months with at most one break (called rest and recuperation) while civilians stay for at least a year but do six weeks in theatre followed by two weeks off. This difference has led to some difficulties in co-ordination and the continuity of knowledge within the military. In order to help address the difficulties in co-

135 Q 175

136 Q 179

137 Q 140

138 Q 106

ordination, the MoD has recently extended the lengths of some key officer postings to one year but combat tours remain at six months.¹³⁹

136. Professor Farrell told us that some UK commanders felt that they did not have enough authority or access to funds to carry out development work, unlike their American counterparts who had access to Commanders Emergency Response Pool (CERP) funding.¹⁴⁰ The American military were thus better resourced and empowered to carry out development work. We asked the PUSs if there was any conflict in the way the Americans and the British operated. Dr Shafik said that they did operate differently:

[...] the Afghan government's budget this year is about \$4 billion. The CERP programme, the US military walking-around money, as they call it, is about \$750 million. It is equivalent to all the revenues raised by the Afghan state. There is something wrong with that picture, and our view is that unless the Afghan government is seen to be delivering security and basic services to its own population it will never be seen as legitimate and credible and able to have a writ over their country, and so ultimately we feel very strongly that the majority of our aid money should go through the Afghan government and that is a difference in approach from the American approach. We are actively discussing this with the Americans and the new administration is more sympathetic to this approach because they realise that in the end your only exit strategy is for the Afghans to do it themselves, and so unless we get them used to managing money and raising their own revenue and spending it responsibly you will be there forever.¹⁴¹

137. Dr Shafik disagreed with the approach taken by the Americans calling it “misguided” and saying that its effect was “transient” and not sustainable unless followed by longer term development.¹⁴²

138. We asked Brigadier Messenger, a former commander in Helmand, whether the Forces in Helmand had sufficient resources. He said that he had limited sums devolved to him to spend and that bigger projects were funded from the Stabilisation Aid Fund devolved to staff in Kabul and Lashkar Gah.¹⁴³ He had not looked with any envy on the CERP funds available to American commanders and, indeed, thought that cash would not necessarily avoid the need for combat.

I do not buy into this “go in with cash and you might avoid the need for combat” because to my mind to go in with cash, there is no guarantee that that cash will go to the right place. In some ways, having that approach rewards instability and may even be counterproductive in certain areas.¹⁴⁴

139. We asked about positive outcomes on the ground from the use of the Comprehensive Approach. Dr Shafik said that the wheat programme in Helmand had been successful.

139 Qq 38, 78, 182–183, 271

140 Qq 28, 29

141 Q 195

142 Qq 142–143

143 Q 402

144 Q 403

In Afghanistan the latest reporting is that they have had the best wheat harvest this century in Afghanistan and they have produced 6.3 million tonnes, making Afghanistan self-sufficient in wheat for the first time ever. And poppy seems to be going down. Over the last year we have had a programme with Governor Mangal to distribute wheat seed in Helmand. [...] I think that that is an example where that is a programme that we develop with the Governor in collaboration with the FCO working closely with the Governor and his advisers and the military were clearly key for providing the security envelope for that distribution programme and we could not have done that unless that had been a collaborative effort.¹⁴⁵

140. There has been a significant increase in the cultivation of wheat and a fall in that of opium. The FCO has funded seven annual reports into the changing pattern of crop cultivation in Afghanistan. The latest report, published in May 2009, concluded that, although opium production had decreased, improvements in security were needed to prevent a return to the level of opium production in less propitious times.

Across much of Afghanistan opium poppy is being replaced by wheat in the 2008–09 growing season—a pattern of crop substitution that was already evident in some parts of the country the previous year. This is largely as a result of the fall in opium prices and the sharp rise in wheat prices over the last eighteen months. [...]

Unfortunately, the conditions for enduring reductions in cultivation are currently not in place in many areas of Afghanistan, and the potential for production to return to many of the areas declared poppy free in 2007 and 2008 is very real. It remains to be seen how those in both the development and drug control communities might respond to the threat and the reality of resurgence in cultivation in the coming years. It is certainly hoped that the response will be one that focuses on delivering durable reductions in opium production through improvements in social protection, basic security, incomes and employment rather than simply delivering short term reduction in the area under cultivation through measures that might expose rural communities to greater risk and endanger their continued support for the Afghan state.¹⁴⁶

141. Dr Shafik also pointed to the success of the Comprehensive Approach in Sierra Leone.

There we had a joint approach across HMG to transform the security sector, both the Ministry of Defence, the Army and the police and the Office of National Security, and that was a joint programme run by the Ministry of Defence through the IMAT Programme; it was led by the British High Commissioner in Sierra Leone who oversaw this team effort. I think it is no accident that as a result of that strengthening of the security sector in Sierra Leone at the last elections there was an orderly transition of power, the Opposition Party won and they took office in a peaceful manner and there were no security incidents as a result. I think that is another good example where the collaborative approach across defence, diplomacy and

145 Q 155

146 David Mansfield, *Sustaining the Decline?: Understanding the Changes in Opium Poppy Cultivation in the 2008/09 Growing Season*, May 2009, www.fco.gov.uk/resources

development resulted in an extraordinary transition in less than a decade in one of the poorest countries in the world.¹⁴⁷

142. We note the positive examples of the use of the Comprehensive Approach in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone, and recently, in Afghanistan. These success stories should be brought together to inform the development of a strengthened Comprehensive Approach doctrine. Positive outcomes in Afghanistan should also be used to inform the public debate about the success of operations there.

Working with NGOs

143. NGOs are involved in almost all situations where the Comprehensive Approach is likely to be used and as such departments need to promote good working relationships with them. In the joint memorandum, the Departments told us that they met regularly with international and non-governmental organisations, both in-country and in London, to ensure these were aware of the UK's objectives in particular countries or regions and those of the international community.

These meetings are valuable in exchanging perceptions, de-conflicting initiatives and, where appropriate, identifying common objectives and how best to coordinate in their achievement. The NGO-Military Contact Group also meets regularly to cover generic issues, including enhancing mutual understanding and, where appropriate, better ways of working together and the development of a more comprehensive approach to issues.¹⁴⁸

144. As part of this inquiry, we asked the National Audit Office to undertake research on our behalf to identify the views of NGOs about the Comprehensive Approach. Nine NGOs and one body representing NGOs working in areas such as Afghanistan and Iraq participated. Many NGOs told us that they believe that working too closely with the military and others adversely impacted on the effectiveness of humanitarian aid and, in some cases, the safety of their staff. They were willing to co-operate with the Government on the planning and co-ordination of efforts, particularly in the UK, but were unwilling to work collectively alongside the military and DFID.¹⁴⁹

145. Many of the NGOs identified a number of potential or actual benefits of the Comprehensive Approach. These included the potential to bridge the gap between insecurity and security and thus create a stable environment in which humanitarian and development activities could be conducted. They also thought that the Comprehensive Approach could address both the initial stabilisation of a country and the subsequent risk of the country slipping back into conflict. They cited the following additional benefits:

- co-ordinated activity across defence (military), development and diplomatic arms of government;
- coherence of government policy as an obvious and important objective; and

147 Q 155

148 Ev 85

149 Ev 93–95

- the creation of conditions for a more inclusive consultation of key stakeholders in a way that could make an intervention more responsive to the needs of the civilians on the ground.¹⁵⁰

146. The NGOs, however, did express concerns about the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Approach when applied to a country in conflict. In particular, they were concerned that the Comprehensive Approach impacted on the effectiveness of humanitarian and development aid in general, and the NGOs' ability to undertake their role safely and effectively. In particular, NGOs said that the Comprehensive Approach could:

- distort aid flows, with resources being moved away from meeting the greatest humanitarian and development needs towards stabilisation activities;
- reduce the effectiveness of aid spending in that quick impact projects do not address key development challenges and, therefore, are poor value for money;
- blur the lines between military and humanitarian organisations. This blurring can impact on the local population's perceptions of the neutrality, impartiality and independence of NGOs, and thus on the NGOs' ability to operate effectively and safely in countries where there is a conflict. Consequently, NGO access to vulnerable and /or remote populations in conflict situations can be hindered;
- increase the militarisation of civilian settings or facilities, such as hospitals, in the host country. For example, the presence of armed private security providers in Afghan hospitals (to protect DFID staff) can turn the facilities, and the Afghan users of those facilities, into targets for belligerents; and
- result in governments, including their military organisations, undertaking a greater role in the provision of humanitarian assistance. This increased role could be at odds with international guidelines and agreements (for example, authored by the UN) on the provision of humanitarian assistance in general, and the relationship between humanitarian and military actors in particular. Amongst other things, the guidelines and agreements seek to ensure that differences between humanitarian and military actors are recognised and respected and there is space for humanitarian organisations to operate safely and effectively.¹⁵¹

147. Both Professors Chalmers and Farrell agreed with much of what the NGOs said.

Professor Chalmers: There is clearly a tension between those who would argue that they should be integrated into a more general approach and the NGOs themselves who would say that they are quite prepared to co-ordinate but they are independent actors with different objectives and indeed sometimes have problems when the actions of the military appear to increase their insecurity [in Afghanistan].

Professor Farrell: I would have thought the problem there is that a lot of DFID's funding goes into the NGO community to then provide the services that are

150 Ev 93

151 Ev 93–95

required. What is very important practically for all the NGOs, with only a few exceptions, is the appearance that they are independent, that they are not connected to some kind of national form of military effort. [...] It is fundamental to their ability to operate because they have to be seen as neutral because they have to go to dangerous areas and work with people. If that impartiality was lost then their physical security would be threatened and also their ability to work with the locals.¹⁵²

148. We asked DFID how difficult it was to work with NGOs. Dr Shafik stressed that her department was sensitive to the concerns of NGOs, and that they operated under internationally agreed guidelines when working with NGOs.

Many NGOs, particularly the humanitarian ones, place a very high premium on their independence and neutrality, and it is the key to their own security. We consult with them regularly. They have said quite clearly that it is very important for them not to be seen as agents of the military because their security is then jeopardised. They provide a vital service and the more NGOs we have operating in places like Afghanistan the better off we are, and in order to work with them we have [...] developed guidelines for engagement with NGOs in armed conflict for Afghanistan and the ISAF troops have signed up to those guidelines.¹⁵³

149. We asked witnesses from NATO and the European Union how they managed their relationships with NGOs.

Mr Howard (NATO): Certainly in my time in NATO we have had a number of engagements with NGOs on very specific issues, for example to do with civilian casualties in Afghanistan. I think we are now broadening that into a much more systematic relationship with NGOs to talk about the overall plan or the overall sense of progress inside Afghanistan, but I know that actually on the ground in Afghanistan there is pretty regular contact with commanders and NGOs, well recognising that some NGOs will always have difficulties about working with the military, for their own reasons will always be very keen on the concept of humanitarian space and, therefore, the need to keep a certain amount at arms' length. Personally, I think there is quite a long way for us to go in this area, but we are making progress, particularly on the ground.¹⁵⁴

Mr Cooper (EU): I think for us the place where we do this best at the moment is in Kosovo, where we have had quite a long preparation time. We have created a kind of forum of NGOs and consulted them, and we work in partnership with the main NGOs on the ground in Kosovo, and that works very well.¹⁵⁵

Mr Williams (NATO): [...]the UN hosts a forum of NGOs at which ISAF [International Security Assistance Force] is present and in which some form of co-operation is developed. One issue that has irritated NGOs has been the fact that some ISAF nations have driven around in white vehicles, for example, therefore

152 Q 66

153 Q 194

154 Q 242

155 *ibid.*

confusing the status of ISAF with the status of NGOs, but we came to a very amicable solution to that where ISAF has issued instructions for the repainting of its vehicles. So there are mechanisms and fora for working things out. [...] So I would not say there was a huge gap between NGOs, but their purposes and *modus operandi* are slightly different. They need a certain space and distance from ISAF in order to function, in order to be recognised for their specificity. Sometimes on the ISAF side there is a sense of obligation towards the NGOs. If they get in trouble it will be ISAF, often, that may be required to help them out. I think the relationship is balanced, as long as everyone understands what the relationship is. I think the biggest problem the NGOs have is that the military turn-over in ISAF is so huge that, as they develop relationships with particular points of contact, then that point of contact goes and the continuity goes and the ability to build up a fruitful, stable, more co-operative relationship is hampered, not by ideological reasons often, but just by practical reasons of change-over in ISAF staff. NGOs tend to be much more present for a greater period and often have more experience than some of the ISAF officers that they are dealing with.¹⁵⁶

150. Lord Malloch-Brown told us that disassociating themselves from the military did not necessarily make aid workers safe.

[There is] this argument by NGOs and UN humanitarian agencies, which they make as strongly inside the UN as to you as a Committee, which is for this need for humanitarian separation and space, I am sympathetic to it, although in truth I do not think it is altogether practical, because I am not sure that people who want to kill a foreigner in these situations stop first to ask, “Are you from DFID or Oxfam?” Also, the indiscriminate nature of the weaponry now being used, these IEDs kill everybody who is in a vehicle going across that area. While I respect the argument, I do not think it would give them as much protection as they assert. They would not be treated as neutral combatants, very sadly. Further proof of that is that even the Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross, which are the most neutral, if you like, and most humanitarian, have in recent years come under attack and lost lives.¹⁵⁷

151. Further tensions that need to be recognised may result from the role NGOs play in civilian society in support of regional and local government. This may be most evident in Afghanistan where the ISAF mission has a clear role to support the national Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

152. The MoD, DFID and the FCO recognise the importance of the independence of NGOs and that care should be exercised when coordinating activities with them. Nonetheless, NGOs are an important component in the use of the Comprehensive Approach and have much to offer, not only in terms of humanitarian aid work but in their knowledge and understanding of the region and the needs of local people. The three Departments should expand their work with NGOs to identify better ways to

156 Q 243

157 Q 383

draw on their expertise and to ensure that each side is aware of the other's activities without compromising the safety of aid workers on the ground.

Working with local nationals

153. To make change happen on the ground, it is crucial to work with the local community and if possible to build on the structures and systems in place. This work needs to be conducted at three levels, local, regional and national. It is not straightforward to identify what local people want. There are many needs in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, with many competing factions and voices. The local population will have been significantly affected by the original conflict and the current security situation. It is important that the capability and confidence of local people is built up in all fields such as security, governance, law and order and development. The capacity to undertake reconstruction needs to be developed in local authorities.

154. Professor Chalmers believed that it was central to work closely with local nationals and to build up their local capacity in reconstruction, security, governance and law and order as the UK is not in the business of occupation and colonisation. He also said that the UK had a good record of channelling more aid through the Afghan state than other allies.¹⁵⁸

155. At the start of the conflict in Afghanistan there was a limited understanding of the needs and expectations of the Afghan people and insufficient knowledge of the recent history and culture of Afghanistan. In an address to the International Institute for Strategic Studies on 1 October 2009, General McChrystal stressed how complex and how serious the situation in Afghanistan was. He pointed out areas of tremendous progress such as the construction of roads, the provision of clean water, access to healthcare and education but he also reported that many villagers live in fear. He said that “We must redefine the fight. The objective is the will of the Afghan people. We must protect the Afghan people from all threats: from the enemy; and from our own actions.” The changed approach by the USA recognised that reconstruction was not a secondary activity and that civilian casualties and collateral damage had a significant impact on the ability to do reconstruction and stabilisation work, and, ultimately, to the withdrawal of allied forces from Afghanistan.¹⁵⁹

156. An important component of working with local people is the ability to communicate directly with them in their own language. We asked the FCO, DFID and the MoD about the number of personnel who were fluent in the various languages spoken in Afghanistan. It was apparent that there had been very few people who spoke Pashtu in the early years of reconstruction work in Afghanistan.¹⁶⁰ Dr Shafik told us that DFID relied “very heavily on local staff; we have more Afghan staff working for us in Afghanistan than we have UK staff, so a lot of the language issues are addressed by the fact that much of our work is actually being done by Afghans”.¹⁶¹

158 Q 42

159 General McChrystal address at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1 October 2009, www.iiss.org

160 Qq 168–171, 180–181, 188–191, 356–360 and 364–368

161 Q 172

157. The FCO told us that “until 2002 we did not have an embassy in Kabul at all and so the need for Pashtu speakers lapsed and our cadre dissipated; so we now need to re-establish it”.¹⁶² We asked the three Departments for details of the numbers of personnel speaking the various languages. The results are summarised in the table below.

Table: Language skills¹ in the MoD, DFID, the FCO and the Stabilisation Unit

Department	Pashtu	Dari	Farsi
	Pashto is primarily spoken in the east, south and southwest of Afghanistan	Dari, a Persian language, is most commonly spoken in the northern and western part of Afghanistan and Kabul	Another commonly spoken Persian language
DFID		7 UK based staff in Kabul are learning Dari ²	
Stabilisation Unit	18 speakers on the database	21 speakers on the database	
The FCO	5 members of staff trained and a further 4 in training	23 staff trained and 2 in training	36 staff trained and 7 in training
The Armed Forces and the MoD³	<p>In 2005–06, 34 personnel attended courses in Pashto at intermediate or higher level</p> <p>In 2006–07, 38 at intermediate or higher and 108 at basic</p> <p>In 2007–08, 81 at intermediate or higher and 124 at basic</p> <p>In 2008–09, 59 at intermediate or higher and 116 at basic</p>	<p>In 2005–06, 39 attended courses in Farsi/Dari at intermediate or higher</p> <p>In 2006–07, 52 at intermediate or higher and 8 at basic</p> <p>In 2007–08, 27 at intermediate or higher and 3 at basic</p> <p>In 2008–09, 37 at intermediate or higher and 1 at basic</p>	

Source: Memorandum from the MoD, DFID and the FCO¹⁶³

Notes:

1. As at 9 September 2009

2. DFID has access to local staff who speak Pashto and Dari in Kabul and Lashkar Gar

3. In addition to the courses above, there is a Basic Patrol Course in Pashto for 250 personnel per brigade—500 annually

158. We consider the ability to communicate directly with local nationals to be important. We recognise that there has been additional language training for deployment to Afghanistan since 2003 but progress, particularly within DFID and the FCO, has been unimpressive. The three Departments should give the matter higher priority both in current and future operations.

162 Q 180

163 Ev 158–159

159. We asked to what extent witnesses thought that the various institutional players in a comprehensive approach could work successfully with local nationals. Professors Chalmers and Farrell recognised working with locals as key to the operation of the Comprehensive Approach.

Professor Chalmers: The only hope for success in Afghanistan or Iraq is a situation in which local people, who have more stake in their security than we do, create a sustainable process. [...] The key to that success is finding ways of helping to build a state. Some of the interesting dilemmas, for example in aid, and I think the UK has a relatively good record of channelling more money through the state, is in helping build up fragile local capacity rather than always going for an easy option of getting contractors and NGOs in to build things on behalf of Western donors but not actually connecting with local governments.¹⁶⁴

160. Professor Farrell also told us that there was often a tension between what was needed by the Afghan government in terms of large scale projects and what was needed by the local population. He explained that one Brigade in Helmand had refined an American tool called the Tactical Conflict Assessment Framework for identifying local needs and had trialled it in Lashkar Gar successfully. The basis for the tool is engagement with local nations and key leaders in the area to ask what kind of services they required and who should deliver them. The methodology is not perfect and was subsequently dropped by the military.¹⁶⁵

161. There are inevitable tensions between local and national priorities, in particular, when setting up the rule of law and governance and the military. We asked Professor Chalmers whether these tensions could be resolved or had to be worked through.

I think it is the latter. It is certainly not resolved. We are in a very difficult situation in which we are inevitably major players and ISAF more generally are major players in Afghan politics, but Afghan politics, as in any country but even more so, is riven with tension and conflict and it is difficult for us to behave in ways which do not favour one actor over another, but in particular in Afghanistan there is a real issue and a debate about the extent of devolution of powers to provincial or sub-provincial levels. The provincial governors are appointed by the President.¹⁶⁶

In particular, in the case of Helmand, how far do you give weight to the views of local actors as distinct from national Afghan government actors? I do not think there is a simple answer to that.¹⁶⁷

162. When asked about how well the international forces had been able to work with the Afghan people, General McColl told us that there had been some progress in areas such as health, education and economic growth but, in other areas such as governance and counter-narcotics, progress had not been satisfactory.

164 Q 42

165 *ibid.*

166 Q 44

167 Q 45

If I take politics for the first example, when we first arrived there [in 2001–02], there was nothing in the ministries—no desks, no people, no middle-class—the politicians were people who had been at war with each other for the last God knows how many years; there was simply no governance at all. Since then we have gone through a series of Jirgas and elections and there is a proper sense of governance, of politics, although I absolutely take the point that the governance at the lower level is extremely corrupt and needs a great deal more work, but there has been political development there. If you go on to the areas of health, education, economic growth in terms of the percentage of growth annually since we arrived in 2002, in all of these areas there has been significant growth, and I think it needs to be taken within that context. You can hone down on areas, and security in the south of the country over recent times is certainly one, counter-narcotics is another where progress has not been satisfactory, and, indeed, just recently in the south there has been a significant increase in the number of incidents, so it is a patchwork, but I think if you are going to get a satisfactory picture of the work of the Comprehensive Approach you need to take it over a significant period of time to give yourself a coherent picture.¹⁶⁸

163. Mr Williams also told us that local people would not notice the operation of the Comprehensive Approach but rather its results.

Comprehensive means that all the organisations and players, including to some extent NGOs, are working towards a common idea of what has to be achieved according to strategies which, after a number of years, are now in place across a range of development goals. So the man by the side of the river may not notice whether NATO, or the EU, or the UN is delivering something, but the overall effect should be that what is delivered should increasingly be part of a consistent, coherent strategy which has been developed by the Afghan Government with the support of the various international actors.¹⁶⁹

164. Mr Cooper explained the position from the EU perspective.

I am aware of only one part of the picture, but I know that the European Union aid programmes over the years have actually been building up an Afghan NGO to do election monitoring. There will be European monitors out there as well, but the bulk of the monitoring will actually be done by Afghans, which is the best way to do it.¹⁷⁰

165. Mr Mollett explained that Care International worked closely with local nationals in Afghanistan in order to make the aid sustainable in the long term.

Certainly within Care we have had some really interesting experiences in working both with traditional shuras and then establishing community development committees or councils in Afghanistan, also partly as an implementing partner of the National Solidarity Programme. In a way it goes back to the point I was making in my previous response [...] where I drew the contrast between private sector contractors that may be hired to work to deliver a project to meet a short-term

168 Q 236

169 Q 237

170 Q 238

objective set by the military or a political actor at the international level, or agencies that are trying to work with communities on the basis of the needs and the interests that they articulate, and that is the basis on which we work.¹⁷¹

166. Polls by the BBC and others reported in 2009 that the opinions of local nationals about their own safety and their views about foreign forces had worsened in recent years, particularly in those areas where security was still poor such as the south of Afghanistan.¹⁷² However, the most recent poll by the BBC and others highlighted greater optimism from local Afghan people although many of the poll's results were not as high as those in 2005 and 2006. Seventy per cent of those interviewed said they believed that Afghanistan was going in the right direction compared with 40% a year before. Seventy-one per cent said they were optimistic about how the situation would be in 12 months compared with 5% who said it would be worse.¹⁷³

167. The MoD, the FCO and DFID together with the Stabilisation Unit should provide training and education on the culture, history and politics of areas where their staff will be deployed on the Comprehensive Approach. For instance, training could draw upon the knowledge and expertise of personnel, including those of other countries and in particular the USA, who have served in Afghanistan, in some cases on more than one occasion. This training should be in addition to appropriate language training.

Working with local women

168. In many areas requiring post-conflict reconstruction and stabilisation, there are specific issues relating to women, in particular, where there has been a significant period of conflict or oppression of women. The use of the Comprehensive Approach must take into account the particular needs of women over and above those of the rest of the local population.

169. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, particularly Article 8(c), calls on all actors negotiating and implementing peace agreements to adopt a gender perspective ensuring the respect for the human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary. Dr Shafik told us that the UK was one of the first countries to have a national action plan for implementing UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 which is led by the FCO. She also described their approach generally and, more particularly, in Afghanistan where they had had success in some areas but less so in getting women involved in the political process and reconciliation.

The Stabilisation Unit includes training on UNSCR 1325 in all of its training programmes as part of pre-deployment, so before we deploy people we train them and sensitise them to these issues. We have gender expertise in our civilian database. We do lesson-learning on working with women in countries in conflict like Iraq, like Afghanistan, like Sudan, and we share that around. Clearly, in Afghanistan we have

171 Q 290

172 BBC/ABC/ARD poll reported in 2009, www.bbc.co.uk

173 BBC/ABC/ARD poll of 1,534 Afghan nationals from all 34 provinces in Afghanistan, 11–23 December 2009, www.bbc.co.uk

to adapt the way we work. Probably the biggest impact we have had is getting two million Afghan girls into schools, although, as you know, that is a struggle because the Taliban consistently target teachers of girls and have assassinated dozens of them in the last couple of years. However, we also do other things. For example, we have a micro finance programme in Afghanistan which we have been running for many years, the vast majority of the beneficiaries of which are Afghan women who have proved to be incredibly creditworthy and repay their loans and have developed small businesses as a result of that, but clearly we have adapted that programme by having female loan officers who go out and collect the payments. We have found ways to work with women in Afghanistan. We have probably been less successful at having them participate in the political reconciliation and political process. They have probably been less visible. We have been more successful in other countries, like Sudan, where we supported making sure that women were at the table in the Darfur peace talks. We had more room to manoeuvre in that context.¹⁷⁴

170. The FCO told us that it was responsible for the UK's Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 and that it had undertaken the following activities in Afghanistan:

To encourage the Afghan Government to implement 1325 we are funding various programmes—including a £500,000 women's empowerment programme—to promote women's equal participation in governance and to build awareness of women's rights among civil society and policy makers. It is positive that because of a constitutional quota, over a quarter of the MPs in the Lower House of the Afghan Parliament are women.

Across Afghanistan, the UK supports the representation of women in our justice projects and programmes. For example, the proportion of female judges at the Criminal Justice Task Force, which investigates and prosecutes narcotics cases, is far above the national estimated figure of 3% women in the judiciary.

In Helmand, UK advisers are supporting the development of justice systems that can provide access for women. UK supported legal education initiatives are raising awareness of human rights, including rights and access to justice for women. Advisers with gender expertise are ensuring that gender issues are an important element of all our capacity-building work with the justice sector.

The UK programme in Helmand recognises the specific challenges faced by women working in the justice sector, including the Afghan National Police and the prison service. For example, Military Defence Police officers are mentoring female officers through firearms training and 10 week literacy training has been delivered to female officers.

The UK has also assisted in developing a provincial women's group, focusing particularly on the rights of women and their children. One of the first elements to their work has been to provide literacy and vocational training to women in Lashkar Gah prison. Female prisoners there are also accessing legal representation for the first time, following the UK's support to the Independent Legal Foundation-Afghanistan.

We will continue to lobby the current, and any future, Afghan government on women's rights issues—as we did with the Shia Family Law. That law has not come into force and we welcome President Karzai's announcement that the law will be changed to bring it in line with the Afghan Constitution; which guarantees equal rights for women.¹⁷⁵

171. We asked, in terms of developing and promoting the Comprehensive Approach, how essential it was to focus on some of the more entrenched cultural views on the role of women in civil society in Afghanistan, and whether this was crucial to achieving peace and reconciliation or a luxury on the way to having a military, stable and secure region. Mr Teuten replied:

It is neither a luxury nor the single most important thing. It plays a role. Certainly, the attempts that have been made in one of the districts that Gordon Messenger mentioned to involve women in the bottom-up governance arrangements through the shura offer the potential for contributing significantly to promoting better governance and greater stability. So efforts are being made, but it is not the number one priority. But equally, as I say, it is not a luxury.¹⁷⁶

172. Mr Howard told us that the implementation of UNSCR 1325 was high on NATO's agenda.

In addition to that, going beyond Afghan, the NATO military chain of command have also tried to embed the concepts of UNSCR 1325 into their planning. I know that my military counterpart, the Director of the International Military Staff, has been working very hard on that. [...] On the ground there are various statistics which are brought out about the number of girls that are going to school in Afghanistan. I know it is at a much lower level, but that, I think, is evidence of progress, and the other thing I would draw attention to was a very specific criticism made by the international community, including at the NATO summit in Strasbourg, of President Karzai when there was an attempt to introduce a new law, the pro-Shia law, which you have probably heard about, and that has had impact, because the President has said, "Hold fire. We will not do that." So I am not suggesting that there is not much more to do, but both the particular issue of UNSCR 1325 and the position of women in Afghanistan and in zones of conflict more generally, I think, are quite high on NATO's agenda.¹⁷⁷

Mr Cooper explained from an EU perspective.

I just wanted to say that we have specific directives on 1325 and 1820 in the European Union. I think there may be a couple of exceptions, but each of our missions has a human rights and/or gender adviser. In some cases I find that I get continual pleas from the heads of the mission: can they have more women in the mission. For example, we were running the border crossing; we were monitoring the border crossing at Rafah, between Gaza and Egypt. It was essential that we had some

175 Ev 160

176 Q 400

177 Q 239

women officers there as well to handle the women who were crossing. There are many cases in the Congo where we are dealing with sexual violence, in which we need more women than we have at the moment, and they are vital in what you try to do.¹⁷⁸

173. DFID emphasised to us how work in Afghanistan had resulted in significant numbers of girls being allowed to go to school.¹⁷⁹ The Department later told us that enrolled pupil numbers in Afghanistan had grown from one million in 2001 to 6.6 million in 2009, 36% of whom were girls. No girls had been allowed to go to school under the Taliban.¹⁸⁰

174. We endorse the Government's intentions with regard to the support of women, in line with UNSCR 1325, within the Comprehensive Approach and expect to see explicit reference to this in the Comprehensive Approach policy and doctrine that we call for earlier in this Report.

178 Q 240

179 Qq 108, 197, 392

180 Ev 160

Conclusions

175. The MoD and the Armed Forces, the FCO and DFID all recognise that engagement in future conflicts is likely to require the use of the Comprehensive Approach. It is, therefore essential that a shared understanding exists across Government and, in particular, within the MoD, the FCO and DFID about what the Comprehensive Approach is. This must be underpinned by joint policy and doctrine. In recent years, the UK has always operated in coalition with allies and international organisations making a common understanding of methods and desired outcomes and of the Comprehensive Approach crucial. The UK has been at the forefront of thinking on and the development of the Comprehensive Approach, and it must continue to work with allies to embed its use in the major international organisations—the UN, NATO and the EU.

176. The forthcoming Strategic Defence Review should form part of a wider and more comprehensive security review looking at the UK's desire and ability to participate in operations requiring the use of the Comprehensive Approach. The Review presents an opportunity to ensure that the Comprehensive Approach is embedded in future Government policy and that the Armed Forces are designed, trained and equipped to perform their role in such operations.

177. It is crucial that, in all situations requiring the Comprehensive Approach, certain elements should be agreed at the very earliest stage based on a thorough and all-embracing assessment of the situation. These elements include leadership, objectives, a defined end state, strategy, tactics and the nature of personnel required. This assessment may need to be amended in response to changing threats and other circumstances but this should not prevent an early assessment taking place which reflects the needs and expectations of local nationals. Communication is a key component of any strategy and needs to include plans for conveying the strategic intent of the mission to local nationals and also to the British public in an informative but fair and balanced way.

178. There is evidence that the Comprehensive Approach is beginning to work in Afghanistan and elsewhere but there is still much to develop especially in Whitehall and in working multi-nationally with allies and international organisations. We have heard a lot said about the importance of the Approach but if it is to continue to work in Afghanistan and in future areas of conflict, then the policy must be given the leadership, political clout and resources it needs. In responding to this Report, the MoD must set out how the Comprehensive Approach is being addressed in the Strategic Defence Review.

Formal minutes

TUESDAY 9 MARCH 2010

Members present:

Mr James Arbuthnot, in the Chair

Mr David Crausby
Linda Gilroy
Mr David Hamilton
Mr Mike Hancock
Mr Adam Holloway

Mr Bernard Jenkin
Mr Brian Jenkins
Robert Key
Mrs Madeleine Moon
Richard Younger-Ross

Draft Report (*The Comprehensive Approach: the point of war is not just to win but to make a better peace*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 178 read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Seventh Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Written evidence was ordered to be reported to the House for printing with the Report, together with written evidence reported and ordered to be published on 19 May, 30 June and 13 October in the last session of Parliament, and 1 December.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 16 March at 10.00 am

Witnesses

Tuesday 9 June 2009

Page

Professor Theo Farrell, Department of War Studies, King's College London, **Professor Malcolm Chalmers**, Royal United Service Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI), King's College, London and University of Bradford, and **Brigadier (retired) Ed Butler**, Chief Executive CforC Ltd

Ev 1

Tuesday 16 June 2009

Sir Bill Jeffrey KCB, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence, **Sir Peter Ricketts KCMG**, Permanent Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and **Dr Nemat 'Minouche' Shafik**, Permanent Secretary, Department for International Development

Ev 22

Tuesday 30 June 2009

General John McColl, Deputy Supreme Allied Command Europe, **Mr Martin Howard**, Assistant Secretary General for Operations, NATO, **Mr Nick Williams**, Deputy to the NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Kabul, and **Mr Robert Cooper**, Director-General for External and Politico-Military Affairs, General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union

Ev 42

Mr Daniel Korski, Senior Policy Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations, **Mr Howard Mollett**, Conflict Policy Adviser, Care International, and **Mr Stephen Grey**, journalist, *Sunday Times*

Ev 53

Tuesday 7 July 2009

Bill Rammell MP, Minister for the Armed Forces, Ministry of Defence, **Rt Hon Lord Malloch-Brown**, a Member of the House of Lords, KCMG, Minister for Asia, Africa and the UN, FCO, **Michael Foster MP**, Under-Secretary of State for Development, DFID, **Mr Richard Teuten**, Head of the Stabilisation Unit, **Brigadier Gordon Messenger DSO OBE ADC**, Royal Marines and **Mr Nick Pickard**, Head of the Security Policy Group, FCO

Ev 63

List of written evidence

1	International Development Committee, House of Commons	Ev 81
2	Ministry of Defence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development	Ev 81, 157, 158, 167
3	National Audit Office	Ev 93
4	Care International UK	Ev 136
5	British Red Cross	Ev 135
6	Daniel Korski, The European Council on Foreign Relations	Ev 140
7	Josh Arnold-Foster	Ev 150
8	Supplementary memorandum from Professor Theo Farrell, Department of War Studies, King's College London	Ev 152
9	UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC)	Ev 155
10	Ministry of Defence and Department for International Development	Ev 161
11	Supplementary Memorandum from Department for International Development	Ev 170

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2009–10

First Report	The work of the Committee 2008–09	HC 119
Second Report	MoD Winter Supplementary Estimate 2009–10	HC 150
Third Report	National security and resilience	HC 149
Fourth Report	Readiness and recuperation of the Armed Forces: looking towards the Strategic Defence Review	HC 53
Fifth Report	Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2008–09	HC 52
Sixth Report	Defence Equipment 2010	HC 99

Session 2008–09

First Report	Winter Supplementary Estimates 2008–09	HC 52 ^A
Second Report	The work of the Committee 2007–08	HC 106
Third Report	Defence Equipment 2009	HC 107 (HC 491)
Fourth Report	Spring Supplementary Estimate 2008–09	HC 301 ^B
Fifth Report	Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2007–08	HC 214 (HC 534)
Sixth Report	The UK's Defence contribution to the UK's national security and resilience	HC 121
Seventh Report	Defence Support Group	HC 120 (HC 984)
Eighth Report	Service Complaints Commissioner for the Armed Forces: the first year	HC 277 (HC 985)
Ninth Report	Ministry of Defence Main Estimates	HC 773 (HC 986)
Tenth Report	Russia: a new confrontation?	HC 276 (HC 987)
Eleventh Report	Helicopter capability	HC 434 (HC 381)
Twelfth Report	Scrutiny of Arms Export Controls (2009): UK Strategic Export Controls Annual Report 2007, Quarterly Reports for 2008, licensing policy and review of export control legislation	HC 178 (Cm 7698)

^A Government response published as a Memorandum in the Committee's Fourth Report (HC 301)

^B Government response published as a Memorandum in the Committee's Ninth Report (HC 773)

Session 2007–08

First Report	UK land operations in Iraq 2007	HC 110 (HC 352)
Second Report	Costs of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan: Winter Supplementary Estimate 2007–08	HC 138 ^A
Third Report	UK/US Defence Trade Cooperation Treaty	HC 107 (HC 375)

Fourth Report	The Iran hostages incident: the lessons learned	HC 81 (HC 399)
Fifth Report	Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2006–07	HC 61 (HC 468)
Sixth Report	The work of the Committee in 2007	HC 274
Seventh Report	Medical care for the Armed Forces	HC 327 (HC 500)
Eighth Report	Operational costs in Afghanistan and Iraq: Spring Supplementary Estimate 2007–08	HC 400 ^B
Ninth Report	The future of NATO and European defence	HC 111 (HC 660)
Tenth Report	Defence Equipment 2008	HC 295 (HC 555)
Eleventh Report	Ministry of Defence Main Estimates 2008–09	HC 885 (HC 1072)
Twelfth Report	Scrutiny of Arms Export controls (2008): UK Strategic Export Controls Annual Report 2006, Quarterly Reports for 2007, licensing policy and review of export control legislation	HC 254
Thirteen Report	The contribution of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to ISTAR capability	HC 535 (HC 1087)
Fourteenth Report	Recruiting and retaining Armed Forces personnel	HC 424 (HC 1074)
Fifteenth Report	UK operations in Iraq and the Gulf	HC 982 (HC 1073)

^A Government response published as Memorandum in the Committee's Eighth Report (HC 400)

^B Government response published as Memorandum in the Committee's Eleventh Report (HC 885)

Session 2006–07

First Report	Defence Procurement 2006	HC 56 (HC 318)
Second Report	Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2005–06	HC 57 (HC 376)
Third Report	Costs of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan: Winter Supplementary Estimate 2006–07	HC 129 (HC 317)
Fourth Report	The Future of the UK's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent: the Manufacturing and Skills Base	HC 59 (HC 304)
Fifth Report	The work of the Committee in 2005 and 2006	HC 233 (HC 344)
Sixth Report	The Defence Industrial Strategy: update	HC 177 (HC 481)
Seventh Report	The Army's requirement for armoured vehicles: the FRES programme	HC 159 (HC 511)
Eighth Report	The work of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory and the funding of defence research	HC 84 (HC 512)
Ninth Report	The Future of the UK's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent: the White Paper	HC 225–I and –II (HC 551)
Tenth Report	Cost of military operations: Spring Supplementary Estimate 2006–07	HC 379 (HC 558)
Eleventh Report	Strategic Lift	HC 462 (HC 1025)
Twelfth Report	Ministry of Defence Main Estimates 2007–08	HC 835 (HC 1026)
Thirteenth Report	UK operations in Afghanistan	HC 408 (HC 1024)
Fourteenth Report	Strategic Export Controls: 2007 Review	HC 117 (Cm 7260)
Fifteenth Report	The work of Defence Estates	HC 535 (HC 109)

Session 2005–06

First Report	Armed Forces Bill	HC 747 (<i>HC 1021</i>)
Second Report	Future Carrier and Joint Combat Aircraft Programmes	HC 554 (<i>HC 926</i>)
Third Report	Delivering Front Line Capability to the RAF	HC 557 (<i>HC 1000</i>)
Fourth Report	Costs of peace-keeping in Iraq and Afghanistan: Spring Supplementary Estimate 2005–06	HC 980 (<i>HC 1136</i>)
Fifth Report	The UK deployment to Afghanistan	HC 558 (<i>HC 1211</i>)
Sixth Report	Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2004–05	HC 822 (<i>HC 1293</i>)
Seventh Report	The Defence Industrial Strategy	HC 824 (<i>HC 1488</i>)
Eighth Report	The Future of the UK's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent: the Strategic Context	HC 986 (<i>HC 1558</i>)
Ninth Report	Ministry of Defence Main Estimates 2006–07	HC 1366 (<i>HC 1601</i>)
Tenth Report	The work of the Met Office	HC 823 (<i>HC 1602</i>)
Eleventh Report	Educating Service Children	HC 1054 (<i>HC 58</i>)
Twelfth Report	Strategic Export Controls: Annual Report for 2004, Quarterly Reports for 2005, Licensing Policy and Parliamentary Scrutiny	HC 873 (<i>Cm 6954</i>)
Thirteenth Report	UK Operations in Iraq	HC 1241 (<i>HC 1603</i>)
Fourteenth Report	Armed Forces Bill: proposal for a Service Complaints Commissioner	HC 1711 (<i>HC 180</i>)

Oral evidence

Taken before the Defence Committee on Tuesday 9 June 2009

Members present:

Mr James Arbuthnot, in the Chair

Mr David S Borrow
Mr David Crausby
Linda Gilroy
Mr Mike Hancock
Mr Dai Havard

Mr Adam Holloway
Mr Bernard Jenkin
Robert Key
Mrs Madeleine Moon

Witnesses: **Professor Theo Farrell**, King's College, London, **Professor Malcolm Chalmers**, Royal United Service Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI), King's College, London and University of Bradford, and **Brigadier (retired) Ed Butler**, Chief Executive CforC Ltd, gave evidence.

Q1 Chairman: Good morning, this is the first of our evidence sessions into the Comprehensive Approach. I never know which of the Defence Committee's inquiries is the most important one we do, but this must be up there as being extremely important because it permeates all that we do in terms of our military and foreign policy. I would like to welcome our witnesses, Professor Farrell and Professor Chalmers. Brigadier Ed Butler is going to be joining us at I think 11.30. We will then ask him some of the questions that we will begin by asking both of you, if that is all right. Welcome to our first evidence session on the Comprehensive Approach. Can you define the Comprehensive Approach, please?

Professor Chalmers: Thank you very much for that introduction and we are very pleased to be here. Perhaps I could say what I think a comprehensive approach is, which I think is relevant to defining what the Comprehensive Approach of the Government is. It seems to me a comprehensive approach is one which seeks to elucidate how the different elements of national power and influence can be brought together to solve a particular problem. I think that has at least two dimensions, one that I might call the horizontal dimension, but also a vertical dimension. The horizontal dimension is the familiar one of making sure the different elements of the UK Government—DFID, FCO, MoD and so on—work together in pursuit of the common objective. The vertical dimension of a comprehensive approach is, in a sense, looking at the different stages of approaching and responding to conflict or potential conflict from, in the first instance, a common understanding of what the problem is and a common agreement on what the HMG strategy for responding to that problem is, then moving on to the specifics of how one might do it in a particular theatre—the sort of thing one sees in the Government's Afghanistan/Pakistan strategy document—and then finally, at a more operational and tactical level, how the different arms operate in particular in Helmand or Lashkar Gah or wherever it might be. We have to understand the comprehensiveness in both those dimensions.

Q2 Chairman: Professor Farrell, is that right?

Professor Farrell: I guess the way I would think about it, which is consistent with Professor Chalmers, is a definition that would have four elements. The first element is the deployment of military and non-military instruments; the second element is that they would be employed in a co-ordinated and concerted national response to complex operations overseas—and I say co-ordinated and concerted as opposed to integrated because they do not necessarily have to be fully integrated; the third element would be that they have a shared understanding of the operational objectives and end-state; and the fourth element is that they would engage in joint planning, execution and evaluation of all operational activities.

Q3 Chairman: At some stage this concept of a comprehensive approach was developed. Can you tell us when and why and how it was developed?

Professor Chalmers: I am not sure I know the answer to that. Do you know?

Professor Farrell: I know from a military perspective where it came from. It comes from I think two things principally. The first is lessons of operations really from Bosnia onwards. From Bosnia onwards the British Forces found themselves in operations that they recognised, where development activities, humanitarian activities and political activities were integral to the kind of objectives and end state they were trying to achieve, where they appreciated that they had to work more closely with non-governmental, humanitarian agencies. UNHCR for instance was the lead agency in UNPROFOR II operations in Bosnia. Likewise, we learnt that in Kosovo they went in after the end of our air campaign. Of course in Sierra Leone likewise they learnt that and finally in Iraq in 2003 with the failure of post-conflict operations. I think that is one direction it comes from. The other direction, which we really cannot overlook, I think is fundamentally important is the development of effects-based operations the whole doctrine, thinking and concepts that come from the United States. It is picked up by the British military from 2004 onwards.

I know it appears in the 2003 Defence White Paper and I have seen a report from this committee where I think you were reasonably critical, and for good reason, in the early stages because EBO seemed to be new-fangled thinking that was not well worked out at that stage, and certainly it was not well worked out, but the British military put a lot of thinking into trying to work it out. They went through a phase of experimentation between 2004 and 2005 and they found that the American approach to effects-based operations was flawed and they adapted it to suit British command culture and military practices. Then in 2005 and 2006, in September of both those years, we see two iterations of a doctrine called the effects-based approach to operations (EBAO). That is fundamental because that is the framework in which the British military begin to think about a comprehensive approach in a more structured, coherent way and hence we see between those two versions of EBAO doctrine in January 2006 the Comprehensive Approach doctrine that is produced by DCDC (Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre), which is the UK's doctrine command.

Q4 Chairman: So they did it drawing on lessons learnt from Bosnia onwards, created by a recognition of some form of failure in Iraq?

Professor Farrell: I think it is lessons learnt from Bosnia onwards, a succession of them, including lessons from Iraq, combined with the conceptual apparatus that was coming from the United States at the time, and that helped them begin to produce coherent thinking and the beginnings of a doctrine on how we can, in a more structured way, co-ordinate with our non-military partners to have a comprehensive response. It is those two elements coming together.

Q5 Chairman: You referred to the flaws in the American effects-based operations. What were those flaws?

Professor Farrell: Put simply, the American approach was a very scientific approach to operations they were trying to develop, based on a thing called systems and systems analysis where you look at the operation, you look the opponents you are trying to engage and the objectives as a system with a network. For instance, the enemy becomes a network and there are nodes in his network; you try to identify them and target them with precision strikes or non-kinetic activities and you cause his scheme of manoeuvre to collapse, and therefore you can defeat the enemy without having actually to obliterate them and the environment in which you operate. It is a very scientific way of thinking about it. When the British tried to apply it here—they did an exercise in 2005, Joint Venture 2005—they found it was a very staff-heavy approach that does not work with the British Army's approach to mission command, which is a very command-led approach, and in fact the exercise failed because the commander was so frustrated by his staff, he tried to do a run-around and the whole thing just ground to a halt. That was really useful because that caused

DCDC to stop, to think and say “How can we re-work this to make it make sense for us?” Whereas from 2005 onwards our approach to effects-based approach to operations is really more key towards soft effects, influence operations and critically operations with civilian partners in British military thinking, on the American side, EBO doctrine, effects-based operations doctrine, continues along the science of warfare path, which of course fails eventually because it has just been abandoned by US Joint Forces Command as a doctrine.

Q6 Mrs Moon: I just wonder, Professor Farrell, how much of our time in Northern Ireland influenced the way we thought this through. Did it have any influence at all having to work so closely with the civilian population for so long? Was there any influence there?

Professor Farrell: I would have thought it must have influenced it because I think our experience in Northern Ireland has influenced British peace support operations doctrine and the development of civil military (CIMIC) doctrine and both those bodies of doctrine actually define foundations that you could build and you have built stabilisation upon. So I think it has. Whether that was a critical influence, I do not think so. The difference in Northern Ireland of course is that you are operating in an environment which is a well-developed environment—all the instruments of government are there—whereas the whole point I think about the Comprehensive Approach is that we are going for the most part into extremely dangerous environments where we are trying to rebuild states from the ground up. I am sure we will get to this eventually; personally, I think that a comprehensive approach is precisely designed for these stabilisation operations and it has very limited utility for conventional war fighting.

Q7 Mr Holloway: Is that not kind of the point that in Northern Ireland you have the consent of most of the people? The comprehensive approach is designed to win over the people, to separate the people from the insurgents. Is that not what we are missing?

Professor Chalmers: I would have thought in the Northern Ireland conflict there was significant discomfort with the British position.

Q8 Mr Holloway: The majority of people in Northern Ireland were behind us. In Helmand Province, the majority of people are not with us. Is not the point of the conflict that it is supposed to win them back?

Professor Farrell: That is an interesting question. I think the Comprehensive Approach is a critical aspect of our thinking about how we would for instance win hearts and minds but it is not necessary because you could apply a traditional COIN framework, the counter-insurgency framework, which has principles like co-ordination with civilian partners, etc. but is not attempting to be as comprehensive as the Comprehensive Approach. The Comprehensive Approach also I think is not just about mission specific although an application, as

Professor Chalmers says, must be mission specific. I think it is actually about developing the conceptual and institutional capabilities, capacities, so that we can then apply it to each operation as it comes along.

Q9 Mr Holloway: Do you think if we were less ambitious we might do better? Are we trying to do too much?

Professor Farrell: With the Comprehensive Approach?

Q10 Mr Holloway: Yes? Are we being over-ambitious? Should we perhaps scale down the extent of our ambitions?

Professor Chalmers: The question then being what would you not do and what you would leave behind in your less ambitious approach, and certainly an approach which was more predominantly military and had less civil components and less emphasis on securing the people, as it were, might be less effective in Afghanistan. It depends on the particular case. I think I would emphasise what Professor Farrell said in the sense that this is an attempt to move beyond CIMIC on the one hand and hearts and minds on the other, which often have a tendency to be seen as add-ons to the existing defence ways of doing things, to think more comprehensively, but the cost of moving to the more comprehensive, interdepartmental approach is that the transaction costs become much more considerable. A lot of resources are spent on co-ordination at every level and that can slow down the process of decision making.

Q11 Mr Crausby: You say, Professor Chalmers “a comprehensive approach” in the sense presumably that it needs to be adapted to the particular circumstances. You make that as a particular point. Could you tell us something about what would be a suitable comprehensive approach for current and immediate future circumstances?

Professor Chalmers: I think arguably there has always been an attempt to have a comprehensive approach to conflicts going back historically. Even World War Two, the paradigmatic military-dominated conflict, also had political objectives. There was a development aspect to the follow-on to World War Two in terms of what happened in Germany and what have you. Those are all very important but I think in traditional state-on-state warfare there is a certain sequencing in which at a certain stage the military component was dominant and then political and development aspects were dominant at a later stage. What is happening therefore I do not think we should see as distinct from history except that we are dealing with different sorts of conflicts and it will continue to be so. In the particular sort of situation in which the British find themselves in Helmand, it is necessary to have, I would argue, these different elements of government working simultaneously rather than sequentially, though clearly in some circumstances some particular places and times will be dominate and another will not.

Q12 Mr Crausby: Are there any particular circumstances where a comprehensive approach is inappropriate in the sense of should we not be careful that we sometimes might over-manage these situations?

Professor Chalmers: It is clearly important to have systems in place that do not over-complexify and impose undue burdens. I think the challenge is to have an approach which recognises the complexity of the problems but then has clear lines of command and division of labour which means that people get on with their particular jobs. What that often means is that the comprehensive nature needs to be at the planning level, at a relatively high level of discussion, but once you get down to specific tasks being done by Army brigades or by DFID field officers or whatever, they have a job and they get on and do it. They do not necessarily have to be consulting all the time with their counterparts.

Q13 Mr Jenkin: Would you describe this as a mature doctrine now and if you do, where are the fault lines in it? As we are applying it to Afghanistan, does the Comprehensive Approach apply equally to the tactical, to the strategic and the grand strategic level and are we not in danger of just applying it at the tactical level in Helmand when we just do not control the strategic or grand strategic theatre at all?

Professor Chalmers: I would agree entirely with your last point. I think it is very important when we are dealing with Helmand and indeed Afghanistan. The way that the Government has recently formulated this is within the context of I am not sure grand strategy is quite the right term but a broader approach to Afghanistan and Pakistan, looking at that and situating what our Armed Forces are doing in Helmand within that broader context. I think that is very important because if you do not have a clear idea of why you are there and what your objectives are, then you are less likely to achieve lasting success. Even if you have tactical success, you will not achieve operational success.

Q14 Mr Jenkin: Is that then not the shortcoming in the whole Comprehensive Approach? The Comprehensive Approach is about having a sort of global view of the whole problem and yet we are very good at doing sticking plaster and holding positions in Helmand but that is all we can do because we do not have the capacity to do anything else?

Professor Farrell: I would approach it slightly differently and say: this is part of the problem, which is the enormous complexity. We are seeking to be comprehensive within our national response and we are seeking to be comprehensive in our engagement with non-national assets (NGOs, UN, etc.) and we are seeking to be comprehensive with our ISAF partners, so it is at three levels we are trying to be comprehensive and that is where the problem lies in those separate fault lines. In terms of our own national response and whether it is comprehensive, and this is where I would slightly disagree, I think at the highest strategic level there is not sufficient political direction perhaps, or has not been in the past, in our campaign in Afghanistan. At the

campaign operational level, I think it has been comprehensive. If you look for instance at the two key campaign plans—the Joint Plan for Helmand that was produced really from October 2005 onwards and the Helmand Road Map that was produced in early 2008—both of those were comprehensive in their production. Both efforts were led by what was then the Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit and then in 2008 it became the Stabilisation Unit. The Joint Plan for Helmand was led by the PCRU involved in collaboration with PJHQ. It was highly comprehensive in its generation. It had a flaw in terms of connecting what were those aspirations at an operational level generated in Britain with what was happening on the ground. The Helmand Road Map was designed to address that. The primary authors were despatched by the Stabilisation Unit into Lashkar Gar and they worked with 52 Brigade and they took 52 Brigade's campaign plan, its operational design, and built around that a reformed plan for Helmand. Both of those are great examples of comprehensive planning actually. I think both at an operational and tactical level as well we are seeing much more of a comprehensive approach. For instance, the Civil-Military Mission in Helmand is a great success. A part of it is taking the J5 cell of our brigade at Task Force Headquarters and co-locating them physically with the PRT, and they built around that the Helmand Civilian Military Mission. That is very comprehensive in its approach. Now practically all of the major boards that are used by the Task Force and critically the Joint Targeting Board are comprehensive; they have civilian people on that trying to co-ordinate kinetic and non-kinetic activities. I think at a national response level our approach is comprehensive and getting more comprehensive. There are issues of resourcing, etc.. There are issues still of course in terms of training, etc., but it is becoming more comprehensive. It is at the ISAF level that we are having a problem. That is the critical problem in Afghanistan, I think.

Professor Chalmers: If I could just add briefly to what Professor Farrell has said, I think he is right in characterising where we have got to now but I think we have gone through a significant learning curve since 2006. I think the civil component was sadly under-resourced and under-available at the beginning on 2006. We have learnt—and that is a very positive thing; we should never be complacent that there is not more to learn. Having a Comprehensive Approach does not mean that we have the right comprehensive approach. The real debates are more about what the right comprehensive approach should be rather than whether there should be a comprehensive approach.

Q15 Mr Jenkin: Is a comprehensive approach effective in Afghanistan if it is not also addressing Pakistan?

Professor Chalmers: No. You have to address the regional dimension as part of a comprehensive approach; that is one of the benefits of having one.

Q16 Chairman: Professor Farrell, I think you said that at a high strategic level there has been insufficient co-ordination. What did you mean exactly?

Professor Farrell: Certainly, if we look at the early phases, and this is where I completely agree with Professor Chalmers, we did not have that degree of co-ordination and commitment of resources across all the government departments as we were going into Helmand in 2006 onwards. I think that was possibly because we had not appreciated the scale of the challenge that we were facing going in. I also think, though—and this is more of an intuition than any analysis I have done, so I will be cautious in what I say—that in 2006 and 2007 part of the problem that we had with our campaign was that we were still extracting ourselves from Iraq, and that was diverting resources and attention at the national command level in terms of the two campaigns. My intuition is that there could have been until quite recently at the highest level better co-ordination of our campaign in Afghanistan and particularly in terms of figuring out what we are trying to do and communicating that to all the various constituencies in Britain to gain support behind it. I have the strong sense that in Britain we are only slowly waking up to the fact that we are fighting a war in Afghanistan and the Government has not been successful in mobilising Westminster, the likes of yourselves, let alone the population and the wider community behind this effort. In that sense, whenever I go to America I am struck by the difference because in the United States there is no mistake about this.

Chairman: I think this will be a major theme of our inquiry. It is interesting that you say that.

Q17 Mr Hancock: Professor Chalmers, it is good to see that you practise what you preach, having progressed from peace studies to war studies at various times in your experience. I am interested to know where the Comprehensive Approach actually begins—and it touches on what you have just said, Professor Farrell, about whether you start with your own people, your own population—and where do you begin with this comprehensive approach and why have we failed so miserably to learn from the experiences we have had over the last 60 years?

Professor Farrell: It is interesting because your comments to my mind suggest the issue about whether the Comprehensive Approach is anything more than a way of aligning institutions in government to produce a more co-ordinated response to these national operations, whether it is beyond that about mobilising society and other political institutions.

Q18 Mr Hancock: It is everything, is it not?

Professor Farrell: That is interesting. I am not convinced it is, actually. I would be very cautious about advocating a comprehensive approach that extends beyond mobilising the instruments of government in a more co-ordinated fashion because we find it so complex and difficult just to do that, and then connect that bit to our coalition partners, because that is where it has to happen. I think if you

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add social and political mobilisation to the mix of co-ordination that would be too ambitious. I am not saying those are not important themes. I am just saying they do not necessarily belong in the Comprehensive Approach.

Q19 Mr Hancock: I think you need to go to the military funeral of somebody who has been killed in Afghanistan and listen to what the families and friends say about the lack of a comprehensive approach to the public because the one question they ask is “why?” If you cannot really give a comprehensive approach to your own population about what you are trying to do, there comes a time when they say “no more”.

Professor Farrell: Let me give you an example to illustrate my perspective on this. For instance, if we do another Iraq 2003, hopefully next time we will have the Comprehensive Approach waiting to apply to deploy when we finish the major war-fighting phase and sequence it in so that we can begin already to deploy a comprehensive approach in those areas of territory that we will have captured from the enemy. But when we are in a war-fighting situation, I think it has much more limited utility; it is waiting to be deployed. But we still should obviously be mobilising society and our political institutions behind the national effort, which will be a war, so it is a separate thing.

Q20 Mr Hancock: Who should lead this then, both of you? Who should take responsibility for the Comprehensive Approach? Where should the top be?

Professor Chalmers: I think ultimately it has to be at the centre of government with the Prime Minister at the highest level, and therefore with the Cabinet Office working to co-ordinate the different departments in furtherance of that objective. That puts a lot of strain on the centre but I think inevitably, if that is the case, in implementing particular aspects of the Comprehensive Approach, however, in Afghanistan for example, different departments will take leads depending on what the particular issue is.

Q21 Mr Hancock: In hindsight, would you say that was the biggest failure of the way in which we handled both Iraq and Afghanistan, that that was not there?

Professor Chalmers: There was a very interesting report in David Kilcullen’s excellent book *The Accidental Guerrilla*, and perhaps you recall it, when he was interviewing government officials about how our approach in Afghanistan and Iraq fitted within our overall counter-terrorist strategy, and the answer that was given, which I think is perhaps not entirely true but is nevertheless revealing, is that the UK did not see Afghanistan and Iraq as part of a counter-terrorist strategy; it saw it as part of an Alliance commitment. I think it is very revealing because in a sense you have to go back and ask why it was the UK engaged its forces in Iraq in 2003 and in Helmand in 2006. Given that we are a relatively small player in both those conflicts compared with the United

States, the relationship with the United States is inevitably important for our strategy. So a comprehensive approach, a comprehensive definition, in relation to the particular theatre but also in relation to our public has to define I think more clearly how we articulate what we are doing with what our major ally is doing.

Q22 Mr Hancock: I thought his conclusion was that nobody gave him the same answer and that was the problem he found.

Professor Chalmers: True.

Q23 Mr Hancock: What do you think the Armed Forces’ role is in this and have they accepted the Comprehensive Approach theory?

Professor Chalmers: The Armed Forces include a large number of people. I think by and large they have accepted the principle. In practice, I think it does vary and it does depend on the constituencies at the time. As I have said already, one of the big challenges in a comprehensive approach, the Comprehensive Approach, is the transaction costs involved. One example is command and control. The Brigade Commander in Helmand reports in theory to PJHQ back in the UK, but there is also a role for the British Ambassador in Afghanistan; there is a critical role for President Karzai, the Afghan Government, and there is a role for ISAF. It is part of the skill I think of a senior military commander to be able to navigate that but that nevertheless can cause problems, as we saw in action in both operations. In the Musa Qala it was an Afghan Government initiative rather than a Coalition initiative that in the end led to the operations there. We just have to keep confronting those issues. They are not easy ones. Inevitably that sort of issue does cause frustration. There is also frustration inevitably between different government departments. We have different cultures, different resource availabilities, and it seems to me one cannot impose a comprehensive approach from above entirely, though there is an element of essential leadership that is important. One also has to have mechanisms to encourage a culture of joint working in which each department finds that they can achieve more together than separately, even if they have often rather different emphases in terms of their objectives.

Professor Farrell: I have actually done work on this, so I can give you some empirical answers on this issue of military acceptance of the Comprehensive Approach. I have emphasised that it has to be understood in the context of the effects-based approach to operations. Even though the doctrine has now been abandoned by Doctrine Command, the principles that underpin it have not and they exist in doctrine and they are the ones that underpin the Comprehensive Approach. The first of the three things that I would look at is doctrine. If you look at the new stabilisation doctrine, and a draft has been produced called JDP3–40 and it was the main effort this year for Doctrine Command, clearly in that they have the notion that future operations are going to involve phases where the military is the supported

element but then it leads to where the military is the supporting element. At the heart of the doctrine there is this construct whereby there are four phases in operations: engaged, secure, hold, develop. As you go from engage and secure to hold and develop—although it is idealised, it is not actually sequential—you move from the military taking the primary role to the military taking the supporting role, and they accept this. Secondly, if you look at training, and I have done the training to be a joint operations planner (it is called the JOPC at PJHQ), quite clearly in that training and in the exercises where they applied it you have very much the notion that these operations will involve very close, essential to them, collaboration and co-operation with civilian agencies. In a major exercise, which is a complex PSO exercise, the lead person in the exercise is a civilian. Also, finally, I have done survey work on military opinion.¹ For instance, I surveyed the officers in the Joint Service Command Staff College, a small survey with 128 responses. I asked the question “Would future operations constitute a holistic mix of military and non-military elements focused on strategic effects?” and that is the kind of thing you would see in a comprehensive approach, 79% said that they would. Then I have done a survey of the NATO school, a survey sample with 2,460 responses, of which 146 were British. There we had an 86% positive response rate that they recognised the Comprehensive Approach as the future of military operations. In those elements (doctrine, training and officer opinion) I think there is now broad acceptance of the notion of a comprehensive approach. It comes back to what Professor Chalmers said: everyone agrees this is the future of these kinds of operations and now the discussion is over exactly how they make it work.

Q24 Mr Hancock: Did you throw up a sense of frustration on the part of senior commanders, particularly once they had left the Services, and their comments about the lack of a comprehensive approach which actually restricted them militarily because they were never sure about how far they could go and what their real role was? There seemed to be more than a degree of frustration. Does the demand for this comprehensive approach come from that failure?

Professor Farrell: If I can just respond to that because I have read all the post-operation reports and in none of them does a Commander express the view that their having to operate through a comprehensive approach has restricted them.

Q25 Mr Hancock: But that was when they were serving.

Professor Farrell: These are confidential, post-operational reports.

Q26 Mr Hancock: That was when they were serving officers going up the chain of command. Why is it when they leave the Services so many of them have been critical?

Professor Farrell: I sense a different criticism, which is that the civilian partners within the Comprehensive Approach have not delivered the resources to enable a comprehensive approach. That is different. It is also quite fascinating if you compare 12 Brigade versus 52 Brigade, which was critical because in 2007 is where we make the transition from really a war-fighting phase in Helmand into a much more clear-hold-build kind of thing that we expect to see in the COIN operation. 12 Brigade started off attempting a more classical COIN approach but ended up getting bogged down in a very kinetic campaign, but even in that, in the post-op report, the Commander feels that the Comprehensive Approach by and large works, in the sense that it makes sense and it delivers what he is trying to achieve. With 52 Brigade, which has a much more comprehensive approach to my view, and there were a number of factors which they benefited from but also because they were more focused on this going in, there the Commander is highly critical of the Comprehensive Approach and says in fact, “We stopped using the words ‘comprehensive approach’ because we felt it did not reflect what was happening on the ground” and yet their campaign looked much more comprehensive. So I think part of the issue is also: what are the expectations of commanders going in? If you have very low expectations, you will think it worked OK; if you have very high expectations, you will think it is disappointing. In that sense, there is division in the military opinion in terms of the expectations they take with them into theatre.

Q27 Mr Havard: Can I ask questions about money? There is all this evolution that has gone on. I have watched it since 2003 on the ground in these various places. As I understand it now, the Stabilisation Unit and the Stabilisation Aid Fund and so on, the question really is about where does the money come from and who controls it. Is the money controlled by the Ministry of Defence or is it controlled by DFID? In other words, how does that play in terms of the questions I want to know whether you have asked of them in their assessment of whether they think the Comprehensive Approach is a good or a bad idea, whether you asked them any questions about how the money works?

Professor Farrell: I detect a slightly different issue which is not where the money comes from—

Q28 Mr Havard: Who spends it and how can I spend it?

Professor Farrell: Yes. There is a fascinating comparison between an American PRT and our PRT. In the American PRT, they can directly deliver quite a lot of aid very quickly through the CERP programme. They can do up to \$100,000 a month without authorisation to make a very quick impact. I know that British Commanders tend to be—

Q29 Chairman: Remind us what that programme is, just for the record?

¹ See Ev 152.

Professor Farrell: It is the emergency response programme, and so it is the Commander's Emergency Response Program. Basically it enables PRT to target finance. The American PRTs are military led. A military PRT has access to \$100,000 of aid that they can just deploy like *that* per month to make a difference. In our case of course a lot of the aid comes through the Stabilisation Unit and, as I understand it, is then distributed into NGO partners and Afghan Government schemes, so it is less immediately responsive in that sense. I think Task Force Commanders find that frustrating because they cannot simply say "We can placate opinion this way quite quickly by deploying money"; instead there are these other schemes that they must work through. Then again, for instance, the Stabilisation Unit, or certainly DFID, would argue that the more long-term approach is better.

Q30 Mr Havard: I know the argument. I just wonder what the attitudes were from the people you have surveyed about the Comprehensive Approach and whether the finances featured heavily in those influences, if you like, on their opinion as to whether or not they thought it was a good or a bad idea in practice

Professor Farrell: The survey that undertook which at 14 questions had one question on effects based and most if it was about military transformation.

Q31 Mr Hancock: Is that survey the closest we have got to any sort of review on a comprehensive approach and did you do it for the MoD?

Professor Farrell: No, it was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Q32 Mr Hancock: What was its purpose then of it?

Professor Farrell: It was a two-year research programme on European military transformation. I would have thought the Stabilisation Unit conducts fairly regular reviews.

Q33 Mr Hancock: Do you have any knowledge of those?

Professor Farrell: The one I have is that the team that was deployed in late 2007 from the Stabilisation Unit into Helmand was actually deployed to conduct a review of how the PRT was functioning, how the campaign was going. When it arrived on the ground, it realised there was a need to re-do the plan and then, in collaboration with Brigadier Andrew Mackay, the Task Force Commander, they re-did the plan, so it was on their initiative.

Q34 Mr Jenkin: One battle group commander lamented to me privately that after he did a two-company attack on a village in Helmand involving helicopters, Apache, light artillery, fast-strike aircraft, when they got in there and had taken casualties, he wondered how much money he had just spent and if he could just have walked into that village with a suitcase full of money, the same money, would it not have been a much more effective way to take that village. Is that not the Comprehensive Approach and should we not be empowering our

front-line commanders to spend money, much as they did in Anbar Province for example under the Americans, rather than deny our front-line commanders the use of cash as a weapon system?

Professor Chalmers: We should certainly be asking those sorts of questions and asking whether the approach you suggest would be more effective or not. Whether that is a task that should be left solely to the military, however, is more questionable. I think in order to answer that sort of question you have to do the broader analysis of what the likely effects of that sort of cash option would be.

Q35 Chairman: Surely the whole purpose of the Comprehensive Approach is that that question should not be left to wholly to the military?

Professor Chalmers: Exactly, but you are absolutely right that a broad range of options should be examined because if only one actor dominates the Comprehensive Approach, they are likely to emphasise those tools in which they have a comparative advantage. I wonder, Mr Chairman, if I could just say a little bit more about resourcing and financing or are you planning to come on to that later?

Chairman: We will come on to that.

Q36 Mr Jenkin: Is not Whitehall still asking the military to operate within too narrow a doctrine? The fact is the post-conflict reconstruction effort is probably attempting to over-civilianise it when the civilians cannot operate in that environment and we are denying front-line commanders access to cash which will enable them to win hearts and minds in the villages with a soft power rather than kinetic power, which actually alienates the population? Have we still not failed to grip that part of the Comprehensive Approach?

Professor Farrell: I would just be very cautious here. Coming back to your question, it seems to me there are three issues it raises. One is our model versus the American model. The American model is the military-led PRTs deploying money quite quickly to make a quick impact versus our model which works through a Stabilisation Unit, DFID's more longer-term projects. Why is there a difference?

Q37 Mr Jenkin: They have the money and they control it.

Professor Farrell: Our PRT is more comprehensive. Very few civilians are deployed in the American PRT; they are primarily military. They have no doubts in their mind that money is a weapon, whereas the Stabilisation Unit, DFID working through the Stabilisation Unit, is constantly reminding commanders that money is not a weapon, that we are both trying to stabilise and develop the society. There is some virtue to that perspective. The virtue is that you are probably going to have a better chance, in terms of the long term, of winning hearts and minds if you genuinely engage in the process of development than if, in a very operational sense, you deploy money as a weapon, and locals know this. The other problem also, by the way, is that Task Force Commanders who are deployed for six

months may not have sufficient appreciation of the human terrain to avoid being manipulated by locals in terms of the expenditure of resources.

Q38 Mr Jenkin: That begs the question whether you do the Comprehensive Approach with six-month tours; the standard for America is 15-months tours.
Professor Farrell: Correct. The Civil-Military Mission in Helmand obviously contains Stabilisation Unit-deployed assets, and these people will be there for longer than six months, and that gives it a slightly longer-term perspective and a better appreciation of the human terrain. There are two other points, by the way: you said that a battle commander said he could just walk in with a suitcase of cash and that would achieve the objective. I personally think that one thing that has been under-appreciated is that we are engaged in a war against an enemy of which the Comprehensive Approach is a key element in our national strategy and our coalition strategy, but we must necessarily engage in some elements of war-fighting. It probably was unavoidable that in 2006-2007 we had to engage in a heavily kinetic campaign. Something else has been done now in Iraq that clearly shows that a successful COIN campaign is not all about this soft hearts and minds stuff.

Q39 Mr Jenkin: If I may just say so, one of the fundamental precepts of counter-insurgency warfare is that you use force as a last resort, precisely because it has such a negative collateral effect. It depends what you use that cash in a suitcase for. If you just use it for bribing, I totally agree, but actually these villages need money in order to fund that area and security. They have projects that need to be funded. Of course I am not talking about bribing their way in but it is about using cash to win hearts and minds and get that development going before you have to fire the kinetic weaponry. For you to say, "Oh, well, we had to do some hard war fighting, we had to make some kinetic effort", every time a counter-insurgency effort resorts to force, it is a step backwards.

Professor Farrell: Let me give you an illustration of what I mean, and, by the way, I disagree entirely that the principle of COIN is force of last resort; the principle of COIN is minimum use of force under the principle of military necessity. Sometimes that can require considerable force. Look at the Musa Qala campaign.

Q40 Mr Jenkin: That is a semantic point.

Professor Farrell: Actually it is not. Look at the Musa Qala campaign; there we used lots of force. The question is: how did we use it? Over a period of months, from October onwards, the commander had moved forces on both flanks at Musa Qala large packages of force, and he engaged in very restrained use of kinetic activities. The precise purpose was that his concert of operations was not that we were going and engaging in a fire fight in the town but, in so far as possible, by using large packages of force, we would coerce the enemy and push them out, so then we could go in and take the town whole and that

would give us a better platform to bring people back in and rebuild it. That concert of operations essentially worked.

Q41 Chairman: Professor Chalmers, do you want to add anything on that?

Professor Chalmers: Yes, I think I would. It is important to have money available when you get into the hold phase but I think it is even more important that when you get to the hold phase you provide security for people at that phase and you have a sophisticated understanding of what you will achieve by helping one group as against another. It is too easy, I think, in a situation where you do not have a full appreciation, as perhaps was the case early on in Helmand, to find yourself siding with one group against another through economic assistance or through eliminating drug and opium production in one place rather than another, and to provide economic advantages to groups which are not simply for us or against us.

Mr Jenkin: Any use of kinetic force, any use of money as a weapon system, has to be used intelligently and in the right way. I am not denying that but at the moment I just stick with this point: that option is not available to our commanders.

Q42 Mrs Moon: One of the things that we know about change is that it has to be bought into and it has to be bought in bottom-up, not top-down. How successfully do you think the various institutional players that we have in our comprehensive approach actually work with local nationals and how successful are they at engaging locals in the change programme?

Professor Chalmers: I think this is an absolutely central question in theatres such as Afghanistan, but indeed in most of the operations which we are talking about in terms of the broad counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism campaigns, we are not in the business of occupation, of colonisation. The only hope for success in Afghanistan or Iraq is a situation in which local people, who have more stake in their security than we do, create a sustainable process. Because we can support but we cannot replace, that is true, in the whole phase in the clear hold of the build because we do not have the resources but also because I think foreign troops in the end do not have the legitimacy to provide sustainable security. You would have to have tens of thousands, maybe even more, Coalition forces in Helmand in order to hold every village in that province, and then it would look very much like a replay of the nineteenth century, and that is certainly not what we want. The key to that success is finding ways of helping to build a state. Some of the interesting dilemmas, for example in aid, and I think the UK has a relatively good record of channelling more money through the state, is in helping build up fragile local capacity rather than always going for an easy option of getting contractors and NGOs in to build things on behalf of Western donors but not actually connecting with local governments. The Taliban will lose in southern Afghanistan if there is a successful alternative, a successful Afghan

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alternative, and some of the greatest weaknesses right now in Afghanistan—and indeed in Pakistan—is because right now local people are not convinced that the Afghan or Pakistani alternative to the Taliban is preferable to sticking with the Taliban, both because they fear the Taliban but also because the government alternative is not necessarily one which they see as any better.

Professor Farrell: What I would say in answer is that I think this difference between top-down versus bottom-up and how we think about development and targeting aid, etc. is a critical one. It goes to the heart of why we had the Helmand Road Map because our initial Joint Plan for Helmand was too top-down, it was not connecting to the locals in Helmand. The Helmand Road Map was trying to address that. Essentially, here is the quandary. The advantage of top-down programmes is that you can do big projects like the Kajaki Dam project that had a big impact for a lot of people; it can demonstrate the effectiveness of the Government of Afghanistan. Key to what we are trying to achieve is to build support and the appearance of capacity and the actuality of capacity of the Government of the Afghanistan's capabilities and therefore public support. You want to do some big top-down projects to show the Government of Afghanistan is delivering a road, etc. The problem is that that does not necessarily meet what the locals want. The locals might have very particular requirements at a really local level. So you want to do some really local projects to demonstrate that you have responded to what they want, but that tends to be a contractual relationship between you and perhaps local aid workers and them and not necessarily evidence of the Government of Afghanistan delivering that capability and those services. So you have a natural tension. We have tended to focus on the bigger stuff because for Task Force commanders when they come into theatre, it fits into their campaign plan: "for six months I will do X, Y, Z, some of this big stuff, and then I will depart and I will have achieved that." There tends to be a predisposition towards that. There has been a slight change in that for 52 Brigade, they were very focused on the local engagement. They were looking at: how can we better target stabilisation and development activities to meet the requirements of locals? They developed a methodology called the Tactical Conflict Assessment Framework (TCAF), which is one of the big success stories for Britain, by the way. It was a methodology that conceptually was developed by the Americans, by USAID but USAID could not get any military buy-in and it just so happened that coincidentally both the Task Force Commander of 52 Brigade, Brigadier Mackay, and his chief of engineers were very unsatisfied by the experience in Iraq because the methodology they were using for measuring effects was too artificial and abstract; they wanted something that really connected to what people wanted. He happened to meet this guy called Jim Derleth in Washington. He had developed the TCAF methodology for USAID and they brought him over to help until they figured out the way to make it work in Helmand. Arguably, it was very

successful; it was four simple questions that you ask the population as you encounter them, which is about the kinds of services that they really require and who should deliver them, and then you keep asking the same sets of questions as you encounter these people over a period of months to see if it works. They trialled it in Lashkar Gar because they realised that in Lashkar Gar you had a displaced persons population on the outskirts of the town. The primary methodology by which you communicate with locals, the key leader engagement, was missing these people because the key leaders in the Lashkar Gar were thinking about their own population and they were not concerned about the displaced people on the outskirts of the town, and yet that was the primary recruiting grounds for the Taliban. We want to target the displaced persons. They used the TCAF methodology on one bunch of displaced persons; they applied the methodology and responded to what they required. For the other bunch they used the methodology but they did not respond to what they requested. They used a controlled experiment over three months. They admit it is not a perfect methodology but it seemed to bring results when you combined it with key leader engagement and the survey work that they were doing as well. There is a very critical article in the RUSI journal by 16 Brigade because they abandoned TCAF. I think the point of article that it is not a perfect methodology is a very fair point. The point for everyone here to realise of course is that 19 Brigade subsequently adopted it; 11 Brigade, when they go in, are going to use it; the Marines are using it as they deploy the Second Marine Expeditionary Force; and the Americans are using it in Iraq—they have taken it to Iraq. They see it as the British having developed the methodology; it works for them and we are going to use it too. That is partly because the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit that was embedded within 52 Brigade saw it being very effective and took the message back into the US Marine Corp with them.

Q43 Mrs Moon: How central to this engagement has been the institutional players' understanding of UN Resolution 1325 and the engagement with women in post-conflict reconstruction? Is that happening at all because whenever I speak to military personnel who have come back, they know what I am talking about. Is it there within the thinking or are women in Afghanistan just being marginalised as part of those local players in reconstruction?

Professor Farrell: I do not know the answer to that question.

Chairman: We will have plenty of opportunities to ask others, I am sure, during these evidence sessions.

Q44 Linda Gilroy: I am pleased you mention tactical conflict assessment. I was going to ask you about that because I actually saw that when I was out in Afghanistan visiting 29 Commando and 3 Commando Brigade, and they were using that. I did not read about it until I came back and it does seem to be a very effective tool. That illustrates, and I think you said this, even within a region between what is need locally in a village and the big strategic

Kajaki Dam type approach, but are there tensions between how our Government relates to the deployment at local level and at national level? You mentioned that if there was a part that was not bought into the Comprehensive Approach it was at the international ISAF level. What are the tensions that exist there in terms of how we go about delivering it? In a way, you are setting up the checks and balances in a region; you are introducing civil, military, rule of law and governance, media players and the sort of legal framework and yet that can be in conflict with the relationship presumably between the UK Government and the national Afghan Government because it is local government versus national government and there are tensions in every country between those. Is that resolved in some way or is it a tension that is permanently there and will exist and just has to be worked through?

Professor Chalmers: I think it is the latter. It is certainly not resolved. We are in a very difficult situation in which we are inevitably major players and ISAF more generally are major players in Afghan politics, but Afghan politics, as in any country but even more so, is riven with tension and conflict and it is difficult for us to behave in ways which do not favour one actor over another, but in particular in Afghanistan there is a real issue and a debate about the extent of devolution of powers to provincial or sub-provincial levels. The provincial governors are appointed by the President.

Chairman: I want to come on in a moment to the international tensions, but I think one of the questions Linda was asking was about the tensions within the British Government. Am I right?

Q45 Linda Gilroy: Yes, but that is a tension, Chairman, for the British Government. How do you resolve those issues in terms of the UK comprehensive approach contribution?

Professor Chalmers: In particular, in the case of Helmand, how far do you give weight to the views of local actors as distinct from national Afghan Government actors? I do not think there is a simple answer to that.

Q46 Linda Gilroy: To come back to the UK contribution, we have talked about bits of this but can you just both perhaps say a bit about how well the different government departments do work together and perhaps more importantly what scope there is for improvement from the position that has been attained?

Professor Chalmers: For me I think there has been significant improvement in recent years in relation to Afghanistan. One of the challenges actually will be, if there are future conflicts, whether we can learn the lessons of the last years in future conflicts because I think the experience in Iraq and Afghanistan is actually that this civil component took some time, perhaps for structural reasons but also for cultural reasons, to catch up and can we make sure that is not the case in future? To do that, it seems to me, we do have to look at resourcing and funding and the basic asymmetry between the nature of the different departments, the three main departments (MoD,

DFID and the Foreign Office) which are likely to be involved in this sort of operation in future. The MoD, the Armed Forces, is an organisation which appears to have significant spare capacity in order to be able to intervene. They also have an arrangement with the Treasury, which is clearly fraying right now but it certainly has been in operation in recent years, where the additional costs of operations are funded from the reserve. That is not the case with DFID and FCO. DFID has I think around 1500 home-based, UK staff globally; they do not do development directly so much as manage development contracts. The average DFID member of staff has £3 million a year to manage. They do not have a surge capacity and also of course there is a very large number of countries in which they are engaged. The Stabilisation Unit is one way of getting round that issue providing some civilian surge capacity but I think there is an issue about whether that is large enough for the demands. Finally, the Foreign Office again has a wide variety of different responsibilities. Certainly the way in which Foreign Office engagement in Afghanistan and Iraq has been funded in recent years is by being asked to re—prioritise away from other areas into Afghanistan and Iraq, which indeed they have done, but inevitably that is a slower process. I really think resourcing and financing arrangements and having a more level playing field between the different departments is actually critical.

Q47 Linda Gilroy: Are you saying that the funding and the way funding is organised in different departments actually impedes the Comprehensive Approach at the moment?

Professor Chalmers: Yes, I think it does.

Professor Farrell: Is this a question about tensions between the departments?

Q48 Linda Gilroy: Yes.

Professor Farrell: Cost is one, and I absolutely endorse what Professor Chalmers has said, and so you need to appreciate obviously from DFID's point of view that Afghanistan is not necessarily the main effort and it draws resources away, and perhaps this is partly true for the FCO. I would also point to culture, conceptual differences and operational differences and if you go down through those, it perhaps helps you appreciate how far we have come is quite extraordinary, given these natural tensions. When DFID and FCO and MoD get into a room together they barely understand the language they use together. DFID personnel sometimes do not even understand what they mean by these words and that makes it very, very difficult to build shared understanding.

Q49 Linda Gilroy: Do they have enough opportunities to train together?

Professor Farrell: No.

Q50 Linda Gilroy: Who should lead that? Should it be FCO or DFID?

Professor Farrell: The basic problem with training is that the military have a whole series of training regiments and various exercises, but DFID in particular, FCO to a lesser extent, simply lack the spare capacity to give staff over for these exercises, it is as simple as that, whereas for the military it is built into how they work, it is built into their personnel structure, they expect staff to be doing this. Let me come back to the conceptual thing which I think is interesting. We do not have a cross-government doctrine on the Comprehensive Approach. The doctrine that we have was developed by the Doctrine Command, DCDC, in January 2006. Note that it was a “Joint Discussion Note”, that is very important. They used the word “discussion” because they wanted to indicate to the other government departments that this was not a Joint Doctrine Note, it was for discussion and they were going to engage them, but, of course, they immediately rubbed up against the other government departments because they feel this is military led, which it was at the time, and they do not understand why they should buy into a military concept. As yet we still do not have one (Interagency doctrine) whereas the Americans are developing a joint doctrine. The State Department has a project which is, led by a British Colonel. In terms of operations on the ground, just understand the different perspectives. From the military point of view, when they arrive on the ground they have spent six months training for deployment and they will have fully developed plans which they then calibrate. Then they encounter folks in the PRT, some of whom are very well trained and very experienced, some of whom are not, some of whom have been there for a year and some of whom have been there for a few weeks, who will have regular breaks that the military do not have, who will not work the kind of hours the military do, and they begin to question the knowledge, the skill and the commitment of these staff who are perhaps prevented by their departments from deploying to forward operation bases because their departments have a different risk appetite. From the civilian point of view you have got military commands that arrive for six months. They arrive, they want to do everything they want to do in six months and depart. They do not have the longevity of knowledge that the PRT perhaps has and do not understand what DFID is trying to do, which is long-term development, but instead, from the civilian point of view, they think, “Well, the military think we’re really some form of ‘developmental follow-on forces’.” So there are these fundamental differences of perspectives. It is true that the key to getting them to work together is better training, which would be nice, but I suspect—obviously Brigadier Butler would have a better perspective on this—that a few months into deployment those personal relationships build up and that is when you get a better understanding.

Q51 Mr Jenkin: Professor Farrell, I think you have given us an extremely important account of what is happening, which we saw on the ground last year, with PRT operating very capably and in a very

integrated way but with a tiny amount of money and on a relatively short time-frame and then DFID operating in Kabul from some points of view on a different planet, working to a very long-term timescale that seemed completely divorced from the reality of what was happening on the ground. This is not an accident, is it? This is a deliberate act of policy on behalf of the Government. It has been legislated for in the Development Act and cemented in place and held there by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. What you are saying, are you not, is that this has got to change?

Professor Farrell: On this point I would be entirely in agreement. I understand why it was committed into legislation that DFID would work towards the Millennium Goals, but in the context of the kind of operations we are going to be engaged in increasingly in the future, where we are going to deploy national assets, where Britain can provide most types of force for good in the world, then we need better alignment between DFID’s departmental objectives and goals and those of our other government departments.

Q52 Mr Jenkin: Can this be done without amending the Overseas Development Act?

Professor Chalmers: It does seem to me that a lot of this debate is about the best route to achieving development in a country which is conflict affected such as Afghanistan. Most of the poorest countries in the world are conflict affected. One of the primary reasons they are poor is because they have not managed to find a way of managing and resolving those conflicts. We should not too easily assume that there is a fundamental conflict between security and development objectives.

Q53 Mr Jenkin: Is that a yes or a no?

Professor Chalmers: My instinct is that it is not necessary to amend the Act.

Q54 Mr Jenkin: From my point of view we have got soldiers, our constituents, dying in this war and an increasing number of people, like Lord Ashdown, are saying that maybe these lives are being wasted because our effort is not being as effective as it should be. I do not think it is time to have an academic discussion about whether this can be done within a framework of a particular Act of Parliament; I just want the Government to get on with it. It does not make sense to me to have Afghanistan as the fifth largest project for DFID when Afghanistan, as our primary foreign and security policy preoccupation, is straining every sinew of the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces. That seems to me completely misaligned. How do we align these two departments so they are pushing in the same direction instead of being disconnected, as they are at the moment?

Professor Chalmers: I do not think that changing the relative funding priority for Afghanistan compared with Nigeria or Tanzania requires a change in the International Development Act.

Q55 Mr Jenkin: Except the DFID people say, “We do not do wars, we do poverty. We didn’t want to go to Afghanistan. They’ve created that problem. We’re going to concentrate on this, that and the other.”

Professor Chalmers: My experience of DFID is that there are competing cultures within DFID. There are an increasing number of people who are very well aware, for the reasons I have given, that you have to tackle conflict in order to alleviate poverty. From the other side of the debate as it were, which has been polarised in the past but I think is much less so now, the Counter-Insurgency Doctrine quite rightly puts a central emphasis on the need to respond to the security and development needs of ordinary Afghan people in this case if you are to achieve your broader political objectives. So it seems to me there is a convergence rather than divergence about the need to integrate security and development.

Q56 Mr Jenkin: Should there not be a Secretary of State for Afghanistan? Should there not be somebody other than the Prime Minister at the highest political level who has overall responsibility for cross-governmental policy? At the moment we have a Cabinet committee that meets once every two weeks. It is not working very well, is it?

Professor Chalmers: The Prime Minister, as I said in an earlier response, has the lead responsibility.

Q57 Mr Jenkin: He is busy.

Professor Chalmers: The question is whether the Prime Minister should delegate responsibility for that to somebody other than one of the principal officers of state. If that person was a politician, I would find it hard to work out how you could then have a situation in which that person sitting in the Cabinet Office or Number 10 had the clout to tell the Secretary of State for International Development or Defence or Foreign Affairs how to do things. I do not think that would work. The Foreign Secretary in particular is one of the senior officers of state and would not take kindly to having somebody between himself/herself and the Prime Minister. It is entirely appropriate to think about whether you need to strengthen the apparatus on an official level so that there are officials with primary responsibility for Afghanistan or whatever the priority is at the moment in Number 10 or the Cabinet Office, but as for having a political appointment at that level, either they would be too junior and then they would be ignored or they would be too senior and would throw into question more general questions about our machinery of government.

Professor Farrell: It would not address the real problems we are experiencing. I do not think the problem now is the allocation of resources. I think by and large there has been a great improvement in this past year in the allocation of resources to the campaign and in terms of the civilian commitment of resources in terms of growing the PRT, etc. and also in terms of, if you look on the ground, the relationship between the FCO 2 Star who is controlling the Civil-Military Mission and the task force commander, and the ambassador is widely recognised as being an extremely capable fellow who

is doing a fantastic job. He was able to help facilitate the development of the Helmand Road Map which was developed in theatre but got buy-in back in Whitehall. It all seems to be working pretty well. The problem is co-ordination at ISAF level and with the Afghan Government.

Chairman: Brigadier Butler, welcome to the Committee. You will get your chance in just a moment.

Q58 Mr Borrow: I wanted to follow up on the point that Bernard has made and it is perhaps taking a different tack altogether. One of the concerns I would have would be the undermining of the DFID philosophy by making the Comprehensive Approach work in Afghanistan, because the philosophy within DFID in terms of the priority of poverty reduction and development—and it is not hands-on development but working through partners which is critical—is the way in which DFID works throughout most of the world, but when it is working in Afghanistan it needs to work in a different way. The question I would ask is whether or not there ought to be something different than DFID to deliver that in Afghanistan? Rather than change DFID into something else, recognise the fact that if you are asking UK plc to work alongside the military to do development in a conflict zone then some sort of other organisation is needed and that may be needed separate from DFID. It would really worry me if the culture and philosophy of DFID, which I think is one of the successes of the UK plc in the last ten years, was undermined because we wanted it to do something else in a conflict zone.

Professor Chalmers: One of the rationales for the establishment of the Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit and now the Stabilisation Unit was precisely to answer the concern you have and to create a mechanism which was not bound by the International Development Act and interpretations of it and was specifically geared up for providing some sort of spare capacity in relation to conflict zones. The other interdepartmental mechanism which has recently had its funding cut but which has had a role in this respect is the Conflict Prevention Pool, which again is an interdepartmental mechanism which can fund the sort of projects, such as security sector reform, for example, in Sierra Leone, which DFID would have been unable to fund. There are questions of resourcing in relation to those mechanisms, but I think we do have mechanisms and principles which can address that problem.

Q59 Chairman: I want to follow up on Bernard Jenkin’s key question about whether there should be a Cabinet minister in charge of Afghanistan. Professor Chalmers, you said that at official level there could be an improvement in the mechanism. Would you be talking about a Permanent Under-Secretary in charge of co-ordination perhaps with a separate department for the Comprehensive Approach or in relation to Afghanistan? What exactly would the improvement look like?

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Professor Chalmers: I was thinking of something much more evolutionary. If you feel there is not enough co-ordination or central direction in relation to Afghanistan or any other problem then you can reallocate the resources within the Cabinet Office and ask somebody at a PUS or a fairly senior level in the Cabinet Office to take on that role in reporting to the Prime Minister about how he/she is achieving that. It is no more than that. I am not convinced right now that we have a central problem in this regard, but if we felt we did have such a problem then clearly you could have somebody at that level.

Mr Hancock: I am interested in the concept of the Comprehensive Approach at the other end in a place like Afghanistan. Can it work where you have the basic ingredient, the rule of law, where you have a government which is perpetrating corruption and does little or nothing about it to the great frustration of our soldiers on the ground there who see their colleagues dying and yet they see this corruption around them all the time? The Comprehensive Approach also has to embrace them, does it not, in some way?

Chairman: I am wondering whether that is a question you should put to Brigadier Butler in a few moments' time, if that is okay.

Q60 Mr Hancock: It is a follow-on from what we are doing here. There has to be the same leadership in the country that you are working in, does there not? The Comprehensive Approach cannot come just in one direction, it has to come both ways, does it not?

Professor Chalmers: Yes.

Q61 Robert Key: Chairman, the Professors have explained that although the British do not have a single unified Comprehensive Approach or doctrine, at least we are thinking about it and moving towards it. Would you say that the Americans are ahead of us in that game and are better at delivering a Comprehensive Approach on the ground in Afghanistan, for example?

Professor Farrell: No. I think quite the opposite.

Q62 Robert Key: Can you explain why?

Professor Farrell: If you look at American PRTs, they are military led, they have much more military personnel, they have very few civilian personnel, it is much more a military asset, whereas ours are a much more serious attempt to co-ordinate civilian and military assets in a single framework. If you look at recent reports by the General Accounting Office on attempts by the State Department to raise deployable assets, they have plans in place, but they have not recruited yet the staff to the levels you would expect. There is a State Department project to produce a document, which would be a cross-government document, encouraging embryonic adoption on stabilisation/Comprehensive Approach, but I think it is very instructive that the effort is being led by a British Colonel.

Q63 Robert Key: Is there any thinking going on along these lines in, for example, NATO?

Professor Farrell: Yes. The Comprehensive Approach Political Guidance was adopted in the Riga Summit in 2006 and the Comprehensive Approach Action Plan was adopted at the Bucharest Summit in 2008. So there is a political acceptance that the Comprehensive Approach is the way forward, but things are progressing quite slowly. The action plan is a bit vague. There are a number of problems. There has been some progress. For instance, the Multinational Exercises 5, which ran from 2006 to 2009—these are a whole series of exercises, conferences and seminars designed to develop the Comprehensive Approach understandings among partners—is obviously very good. NATO had deployed in 2003 a senior civilian representative into ISAF command, but that has not really worked because he sits alongside the COMSAF/ISAF and spends most of his time trying to figure out where his authority is. There are two basic problems that are delaying progress in the Comprehensive Approach understanding within NATO and developing the mechanisms. The first one is France. The French are concerned that if we see significant progress in developing the Comprehensive Approach in NATO that would further NATO's global role and the French are uncertain as to whether they want that vis-à-vis balancing the EU role versus the NATO role. The second problem is that the NATO partners disagree themselves over the fundamental nature of the campaign in Afghanistan. As we know, the British, Canadians, Dutch, Americans and Danish all basically accept that we are doing an ongoing stabilisation campaign whereas the Germans, the Italians and the Spanish see this more as a peace support operations-type of campaign and, therefore, they are coming at this from different perspectives. And yet Afghanistan is the canvas on which NATO is trying to develop the Comprehensive Approach.

Q64 Robert Key: What about the United Nations? They signed up to the Comprehensive Approach.

Professor Farrell: I do not know the answer to that question.

Q65 Robert Key: What has happened to the National Security Secretariat? If you turn all this around and look through the other end of the telescope, we should be doing horizon scanning to identify failed states and where the new dangers and threats are coming from and we could surely identify these. What has happened to that National Security Secretariat that was meant to be doing this?

Professor Chalmers: As I understand it, there is going to be a refresh or a new edition of the Government's National Security Strategy before the Recess, so we anticipate that eagerly. In a way the National Security Strategy is an example of a Comprehensive Approach. It is starting with an identification of the issues and then talking, albeit in rather general terms, about how all the different elements of national power might meet those particular problems. On the National Security Secretariat, it comes back to what I was saying earlier about whether we have got the right

allocation of resources in the centre in terms of co-ordination. Part of the problem here is that in a whole range of issue areas you could say that the logical conclusion is that you should have more and more resources put into the centre to co-ordinate, but if you go too far you end up taking scarce resources, scarce people away from the actual line departments themselves and thereby institutionalizing their conflict. This is a central dilemma of the British machinery of government which we are not going to solve today.

Q66 Robert Key: The delivery of a lot of these efforts depends entirely upon the non-government organisations operating with those countries, does it not? The Americans see money as a weapon. We do not. We see our money going through the NGOs on the ground with different objectives and working at a different pace. If we cannot take the NGOs with us will the Comprehensive Approach ever work?

Professor Chalmers: One has to distinguish between two sorts of NGOs. There are NGOs who are in the category you have just mentioned where they are subcontracted to provide particular services by official actors, but the other category, which perhaps presents a whole different set of problems, are NGOs who are operating independently, who are not funded by government and who are performing humanitarian missions. There is clearly a tension between those who would argue that they should be integrated into a more general approach and the NGOs themselves who would say that they are quite prepared to co-ordinate but they are independent actors with different objectives and indeed sometimes have problems when the actions of the military appear to increase their insecurity.

Professor Farrell: This is a very interesting point. It comes back to this issue about whether one changes the remit of DFID to better align with national objectives in Afghanistan. I would have thought the problem there is that a lot of DFID's funding goes into the NGO community to then provide the services that are required. What is very important practically for all the NGOs, with only a few exceptions, is the appearance that they are independent, that they are not connected to some kind of national form of military effort. That is fundamental to the identity of the people who work within it and therefore goes down to the identity of DFID because it recruited when it formed up in 1997 from the NGO community. It is fundamental to their ability to operate because they have to be seen as neutral because they have to go to dangerous areas and work with people. If that impartiality was lost then their physical security would be threatened and also their ability to work with the locals.

Q67 Robert Key: I am absolutely not seeking to be judgmental about this, but could you suggest which are the NGOs who maintain their integrity and their independence above all else?

Professor Chalmers: There is a publication which was brought out in April on "Civilians and the international security strategy in Afghanistan"

which was offered by 11 NGOs, which was expressing precisely the sort of concerns I mentioned earlier, which I can gladly give to the Clerk later.

Q68 Chairman: Brigadier Butler, would you like to add anything to what has been said on this question?

Brigadier Butler: I could give you a quick overview from a practitioner's perspective having served in the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and other places. I think the issue with the Comprehensive Approach is it means all things to all men. I am sure if I asked all of you here what the definition of it is we would have 30 different definitions. I would also suggest that the tribal tapestry here within HMG is as complex as we see in Afghanistan itself. We have come a long way since the early days of what is now known as the Comprehensive Approach. Certainly at the tactical end what you see in Helmand now is far better than it was in 2005/06, but you get the divergence from the tactical to the strategic, which goes through Kabul and then comes back here, which is quite a wide spectrum and that is part of the problem. If you asked again in the PRT or back here across government, the four main areas which we are interested in, governance, security, reconstruction and development and counter-narcotics, what their definitions of success and the end state was you would get completely different answers to that. We are working to different timescales, whether it is 30 years for reconstruction and development or maybe a ten-year horizon in terms of capacity building for the Afghan forces or Iraqi or others who we might be helping. If you times that by the power of 40 for the number of troop contributing nations to the power of three for their own government departments representing those then you have a hugely complex problem, again which the two Professors have touched on. I think the challenge was—and I will allude to some of them which I faced in 2006 as the Commander of British forces in Helmand itself—what individuals' definitions of security and sufficient security was all about and that was linked to what individuals and departments' thresholds for risk were about. Most risk averse was DFID and that was institutional, legal, personal and cultural, then you had the FCO, then members of the security services and then the military, and trying to get a common consensus of what was secure and sufficient security to go out and do the business, in this case reconstruction and development, was extremely frustrating on all sides. If we look at 2006, there was a common perception that views diverged on what was happening on the ground back to here. I sense that the judgment of those in Whitehall was that the whole of Helmand was burning. In the case of 2006, it was only North Helmand which was having a serious battle with the Taliban. There were plenty of other opportunities for the development and reconstruction to take place and that was a frustration felt by the military and by the Afghans who had the expectation we were coming in to do something about it. There is a statistic—and I would not argue whether it was plus or minus five or 10%—that 70% of the violence takes place in 10% of the

areas and affects 6% of the population in Afghanistan. That is an awful lot of Afghanistan where I would argue one could be doing reconstruction and development. If you looked at what was going on in Helmand, then that is part of the 6% of the country which may be more seriously affected and I think there are some deductions you can draw from that. We know what the legal duty of care, health and safety problems are, but if we put our minds to it those would all be resolvable. Perhaps I may suggest how one might sum up the options of how you might fill what people might call the stabilisation void in crisis and post-crisis areas. Clearly the first 100 days, we missed those in Afghanistan and in Iraq. I think if we all recognised that before we got into conflict, the military and other government departments, then we could resource, plan, think through and engage all the levers which would bring about stability, reconstruction and development. Firstly, there is still a crying requirement for one plan and one lead in Afghanistan and I think that is the same on all operations/campaigns which we deploy on. We have touched on a potential czar to bring this all together. Where it started to work was when Dr Reid was Secretary of State for Defence and he was the *primus inter pares* between DFID and the FCO and the military. He really got to grips with things in the last part of his tenure as Secretary of State, in those two or three months up to his move to the Home Office. He knocked heads together. We discussed/argued what the priorities were, what the issues were, what those definitions of sufficient security were and then he knocked their heads together and action was starting to take place. So it can work while you have one Secretary of State who is responsible for delivering stabilization operations in a campaign.

Q69 Chairman: So you would suggest that the personality of the person, perhaps in the Ministry of Defence although not necessarily, is the thing that can provide that co-ordination?

Brigadier Butler: I think in his case it was personality but also considerable experience. Having been a minister in the Ministry of Defence before, he understood the military and he clearly understood the other government departments which he had been a part of at various levels within government.

Q70 Mr Hancock: When you were in command and you felt these frustrations there, how was that received through the chain of command in the military back here? How do you think that portrayal that you were giving on the ground through your superiors was getting through to ministers so that they could actually look at what was not happening and what was not going right?

Brigadier Butler: Most of that was little understood because no one really knew what type of campaign we were in, they knew very little about Afghanistan. We had been preoccupied across government, especially the military, with what was going on in Iraq. As ever, we did not clearly think through what type of campaign we were going to get engaged with, the nature of the threat, the nature of the

environment and what the degrees of corruption and everything else were about until we actually arrived there and then it did come, as we know, as a considerable shock to people. What is of benefit now, three years later, is that we know what the problems are and we are starting to think about some of those solutions. Whether we can resource those solutions and have the political will and appetite and resources to see it through, others may judge differently.

Q71 Mr Hancock: Were you surprised at what you found when you got there as opposed to what you were told you could expect to find before you left here to go to Afghanistan?

Brigadier Butler: No, because I had been there twice before. I was one of the few senior military commanders who had been in Afghanistan. I knew quite how hard the Taliban were going to fight. I knew the logistic difficulties because it is a vast country with very little infrastructure. Merely surviving was always going to be a challenge.

Q72 Mr Hancock: Were you surprised about what you were being told? You had that advantage but other commanders had not. Were you surprised at the lack of information and co-ordination that was needed to make this operation work let alone succeed?

Brigadier Butler: Yes, because we do not have a genuine cross-government strategic lessons learned process. We had just been going through—and we are going through exactly the same now as we saw in Iraq—how you pull everything together, how you think through to the finish, and how you think about “Phase 4” as it was known in Iraq. We have re-learned extremely painfully and expensively all those lessons which we learned from 2003 onwards.

Q73 Mr Jenkin: Would it be helpful if you gave us a short account of how the Government approached the tasking of HERRICK, how you felt it developed and how the Comprehensive Approach was being applied to the military tasking before you deployed? Could you talk us through a bit of the history of that?

Brigadier Butler: In 2005 it got off to quite a good start because the preliminary operations headquarters was drawn from the Permanent Joint Headquarters and included representatives from the Foreign Office, the Department for International Development and what was then the PCRU, and they all sat down in Kandahar with the military and came up with the UK’s Joint Campaign Plan for Helmand. They identified a lot of the issues, they identified the resources and they identified the timescale challenges. When this was presented back in December 2005 I think, unfortunately, their recommendations and the areas they highlighted as “severe” and other challenges were not taken forward. For example, the military was only ever resourced for £1.3 billion for a three-year campaign despite the fact that we were only just getting out of the Balkans after ten years and we were still heavily committed in Iraq itself. Secondly, the other

government department members from the FCO and DFID highlighted that Helmand was not going to be turned into what I think we have loosely referred to as Berkshire or one of the Home Counties inside that three-year timescale and that was going to take considerably longer. There was no agreed definition of what a successful end state looked like. I have always challenged people saying, "Look, if Afghanistan is the sixth poorest country in the world, if we want to turn it into the tenth poorest country in the world, if that was a metric we were after, we could probably resource it in terms of time and money and define what it would take to raise it out of the poverty level, out of a cycle of low level violence let alone insurgency, which might be there based on international data and our own experiences from other conflict areas." A lot of these problems were raised logistically, resource wise, starting in December 2005, but they were not acted on principally because we were very heavily, politically and militarily, intellectually and physically, engaged in Iraq in 2005/06 where Iraq was not going well on a number of fronts.

Q74 Mr Jenkin: What about the capping of the manpower at 3,150 people? Was that your choice or was that imposed from above?

Brigadier Butler: No. The 3,150, which then rose to 3,350 to take account of additional RAF personnel, was a Treasury imposed cap on the number of men which we could deploy with. Our assessment deductions said that if you had a steady state, ie simply sustaining the force and doing routine business and I think under-taking only one significant operation a month, then those forces could just about hold the ring in Helmand itself, but they would not stand any stresses of a higher tempo, more engagements with the enemy or particularly challenging environmental conditions.

Q75 Mr Jenkin: Did you at any stage begin to wonder whether this was going to work and whether you should recommend to your commanders that you just should not go?

Brigadier Butler: No. We certainly highlighted all the military challenges. There were only three days in July 2006 when I did not have a senior visitor come to see us, but we spent—myself and my staff and the other government departments—six months raising these issues and really educating those people about what the nature of the fight was, what the enemy was doing and the challenges which we were going to face. It was not a question of going in with open eyes. I think it was that those eyes were not looking and focusing on the core issues, the strategic issues and the policy issues of what we wanted to achieve in Afghanistan.

Q76 Chairman: In those senior visitors you had Ministry of Defence ministers, Foreign Office ministers and DFID ministers. Did you ever have a Treasury minister?

Brigadier Butler: Not in my tenure, no.

Q77 Mr Crausby: Professor Farrell has already indicated that within the Armed Forces there is a broad acceptance of the need for a Comprehensive Approach. How far do you think that the Armed Forces have bought into the Comprehensive Approach? To what extent is it top-down through the chain of command?

Brigadier Butler: The Armed Forces of today are more sophisticated than they have been for a generation and that goes from the bottom to top. If you take a young Lieutenant or Captain, a Lance Corporal, Corporal or equivalent who served in the Balkans, he is now a Commanding Officer plus in Afghanistan. So from the mid-1990s to late 2008/09 he has gone through the ranks. He is very sophisticated. He knows that one of the many things he achieved in his military career was buying time and space for other activities to take place. That may be a UN Security Council Resolution, it might be an election or it might be a reconstruction and development plan to be unrolled. The military fully recognise that force alone is not the answer and it is only temporal. If you apply too much of it you lose the consent of the people you are trying to help, which rapidly goes from tolerance to them not wanting you there; and if we lose too many casualties we lose the popular support of our people back here. So the military are very aware that they can only buy some limited time and the space for the Comprehensive Approach, and the other lines of operation (reconstruction, development and business). What we are not applying, is a sufficient business approach and investment from the private and economic sector into these areas. One of the Professors mentioned the difference between maybe a relatively new member of DFID or the Stabilisation Unit or FCO coming in on an early tour. He may go to Afghanistan or elsewhere for the first time and he is already mixing with a very mature breed of people who have been there for a considerable amount of time.

Q78 Robert Key: Do you think the American military commanders were fully signed up to the American Government's concept of establishing a Western-style pluralist democracy as the end game in Afghanistan, and was it very frustrating because pretty clearly we did not think that was very likely to happen?

Brigadier Butler: No, and I will come back to where I disagree with the Professor on my left who think the Americans do it differently and may not deliver in the Comprehensive Approach. In the early days, and I saw it in 2001 and 2002, and still in 2005 when I was visiting and then 2006, the Americans by and large, certainly from a military perspective, were still focused on a counter-terrorist operation. They were hunting down al-Qaeda and senior Taliban members and, I am generalising, the reconstruction development was a secondary effort. I think now that has changed and based on their hard-won experiences, the blood they have invested in Iraq, the multiple tours of their commanders and longer tour lengths, they have realised that reconstruction and development has got to be probably ahead in terms

of effort and resources than the kill and capture mission. They have recognised that those who will never be reconcilable still need to be surgically removed and that the main effort has got to be convincing the people that you are here to stay and you are going to make a positive difference. Where the American military have the advantage over the British military is that they are resourced and empowered to do it. There is a conceptual difference here to me from what DFID may take in terms of what they would define as poverty reduction in a post-crisis era. That is generally a permissive environment. There may be criminality, you may get your laptop stolen and car jacked, but there is not a raging insurgency around you, whereas if you are trying to deliver aid and reconstruction within a semi or non-permissive environment, which you have got to *à la* the three-bloc war, then you have to have the ways and means of doing it, and currently that is only through the military machine. It does not mean that the military wants to do that, but in my view it is the only capability which can do it until you go down the route of having a dedicated core of people maybe who have been drawn up from reservists or civilians who are prepared and trained and equipped to work in less permissive environments than our current DFID and stabilisation FCO. A lot of them want to but they are constrained by the legal duty of care and health and safety issues. That is the distinction—they may want to; a lot of them cannot. I think the American military has come an awfully long way and has probably overtaken us in this issue of how to deliver reconstruction and development in a counter-insurgency context.

Professor Farrell: Perhaps I may just clarify what I said because I am not suggesting, and I think this is where we are in agreement, that the Americans are not focusing now on this because I think they are. There is a recent study that has been done by a CNA (Centre for Naval Analysis) team, it was published in March 2009, an assessment on three American PRTs in Afghanistan, which reaches the conclusion that it is a very efficient mechanism to deliver stabilisation and development. The point I was making was that for the Americans it is an almost entirely military-led effort with support from USAID, whereas our type of Comprehensive Approach is much more of a co-ordinated effort between civilian and military partners and which has seen improvement this past year in Afghanistan, and that is what I mean by saying we are more comprehensive as opposed to the Americans who accept the model that is much more military led.

Brigadier Butler: I think people would say that conceptually and intellectually you are right but the practicality of operating, as you say, in a semi-permissive or non-permissive environment where one of the main purposes of being there is to make a difference to the lives of the ordinary people you are trying to help is that you have to enable and empower those who can do it. The frustration which we had in 2006, and which I think is shared by my contemporary commanders there now, was that there was a view that the military could not understand or did not have the intellectual prowess

for how to do development operations. My response to that was always, “If you give me the tramlines to work within then we can deliver the aid and the reconstruction”. We are not going to go and do, in the commonly used rebuttal, “You will just build a school but not provide the teachers and the books and everything else within it”. We have all been there and done it. People did that in the Balkans but, as I say, they are more sophisticated in their understanding now. If you said, “This is where we want to deliver education”, for example, “these are the facilities, these are the people, these are the resources. We cannot go out there because of the constraints placed upon us”, then the military (and again it is not their right role but they are the only people who can do it) could deliver that education effect, if I keep it general, until that builds up sufficient consent stability that civilians could then go in there and take on that commitment.

Q79 Chairman: You have talked about semi-permissive and non-permissive environments. When we were last in Afghanistan we saw a map of Afghanistan which showed the permissive nature of the southern part of Afghanistan looking significantly less permissive over the last couple of years than it had done before. Would you say that that was a failure of the Comprehensive Approach or that it was simply a factor of the injection of large numbers of troops into the southern part of Afghanistan, or that was due to some other condition, and, if so, what?

Brigadier Butler: I suspect it is a combination of everything. We certainly recognised in 2006 that if you put a large size 12 boot in the middle of a contested area where neither narco criminals wanted you there nor the former regime nor the warlords and the Taliban did not want you there, those were the opposition groups you were facing; all of those were going to resist you. That is the first factor: there was always going to be a reaction. The point you are making is that reaction has been greater and longer. I think part of that effect is because we built up the expectations from 2002 onwards when the international community pledged (I think Tokyo was \$5 billion) that we were going to come in (the Taliban had been militarily defeated) for the last time and make a difference to them, so those expectations were raised. Four years later we have failed to deliver those from the word go, the first 100 days, because we were not prepared on all fronts—military, development, governance and reconstruction—to go in and deliver things simultaneously. What happened was that the military line of operation accelerated away because it had to, because by that stage, remember, four years on from 2002, the Taliban had re-equipped, re-armed, regenerated itself, rebuilt its organisation conceptually and physically, and it was certainly more than ready, which we knew from intelligence sources and from others who had been there that it was going to be, and they reacted to it. What we did not have was the capability and the capacity and the political appetite, because what we should have done, based on our experiences of the Balkans and

Iraq, was in those areas which were not being contested to fill those with other lines of activity: economic, reconstruction, development, aid and everything else. That was very apparent. What has happened now is those have become smaller in my judgment because the opposition has got stronger. We have not become any more powerful even though we have put in more numbers because we, the UK military, within Helmand, and I think we are going to see a shift change in that with the arrival of American forces, have not put in sufficiently and proportionately more enablers for the numbers of troops we have got on the ground because our numbers of helicopters, information-gathering systems, have not grown at the same rate as our ground forces. I made this point in 2006, that, yes, you could put in two or three more battalions but unless you put the same proportion of helicopters and everything else in behind it those forces would fix themselves because of the terrain, because we knew that the Taliban would go asymmetric, use more IEDs. And regrettably we are seeing this, hence the number of casualties we have, that they have forced us off the roads, as the IRA did in Northern Ireland very successfully, into helicopters. If you look at the proportion between helicopters and ground forces in Northern Ireland, I think at one stage we had over 70 helicopters servicing 10,000, 12,000 or 15,000 troops. You can do the maths yourselves of 8,000 troops on the ground and how many helicopters we have to service them. The problems, the geographics and the threat from the enemy, are the same as we faced 25 years ago when things started hotting up in Northern Ireland.

Q80 Mr Hancock: What is the real downside of the Comprehensive Approach as far as the military is concerned and what effect does that have on their war-fighting capability?

Brigadier Butler: I think conceptually and intellectually, as I have answered before, the military are very much bought into it. Their frustration is that those who are meant to be delivering the reconstruction and development do not have the capability. They do not have their own aviation, they do not have their own vehicles. Those have to be shared out from doing visits and reconnaissance surveys to the delivery of large-scale aid. There is then the regulatory aspect: they cannot go out because they are not empowered to go out without sufficient degrees of security. Who is making that security assessment (which was my point before), the different risk thresholds and security assessments from across government departments? I have not been there so I cannot quantify it, but I do not know whether the two-star civilian is the man who signs off what the current security threats and assessments are in Helmand, and says, "Right; we have now agreed that this part of it is acceptable for civilians to go out there and operate with the appropriate levels of protection". I doubt we have progressed that far because I suspect there is still a blanket approach which says that Helmand, Afghanistan, is still in a high-threat area; therefore you cannot go off the main routes down to your offices in Lashkar Gah.

Q81 Mr Hancock: So as a commander on the ground, and you did not see anybody else coming in to give the local community the reassurance and assistance they wanted, you ended up presumably making decisions to allow your troops to carry out some of that work which then deflected from their war-fighting capability, so the two things really do have to be together, do they not, the whole time?

Brigadier Butler: Absolutely, and that is where you need the consensus. That understanding in Lashkar Gah is now probably far stronger than it was, and I think there are 80-plus civilians in Lashkar Gah now and in my day that ranged between two and six, but that is planning foresight. It is not even hindsight because we had been there and done it in Basra and the Balkans and elsewhere. I think if that understanding of where the priorities are, where the threats are, happens and they agree on those it is then about proportioning resources. Do you send out a company of men to go and defuse improvised explosive devices which are blowing people up or do you go and do an escort or provide the security cover or a military screen for a reconstruction and development team, someone from the PRT to go out and talk to the locals about an agricultural project or the rebuilding of a security checkpoint? There is always that tension because you have insufficient resources to do everything at once.

Q82 Mr Hancock: So, having seen it on the ground with all your experience, can this ever succeed in a place like Afghanistan?

Brigadier Butler: The debate is, are we past the tipping point or not? (And are we now in a different type of mission, but that is a question for another day). If we were to go into somewhere else, then absolutely the Comprehensive Approach, the joined-up approach, should and can work. If you are responding to a crisis, say a failed state and the leader has just gone for example if Gabon went completely pear-shaped because the President has just died and we decided we were going in there because there was sufficient British interest—then you have to pull it together last minute. However, if we said, "Right; we are going back into somewhere like Iraq", and we gave ourselves six months to really understand the nature of the operation, who the people are, really identify what the key local needs are, what the Iraqi requirement is, or the Afghan requirement is, as opposed to trying to superimpose (which we all did; I think most people would stick up their hands on that) a Western solution governance-wise, security-wise, rule of law-wise, and we are probably still guilty of that now in many areas, on the Afghans saying, "This is what you are going to have, wear it", as opposed to accepting that there is an Afghan problem which requires an Afghan solution, an Afghan approach and an Afghan lead. Whether your initial planning said, "Has the host nation government got the capacity, capability and appetite in terms of governance, corruption and everything else to deliver what you want to deliver?", if the answer is no or maybe, then you lower your expectations of what you are going to achieve and you agree cross-government in accordance with your

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foreign policy issues what success looks like. What we need to be doing, and my job was in Afghanistan, is totally recalibrating what that definition might look like, what we can afford to deliver there and then major on it, and that I think will take some fairly radical solutions and some thinking about how we might contribute to what will be a long and hugely important campaign there.

Q83 Chairman: Professor Farrell, do you want to add something?

Professor Farrell: I just have some points to make on this question about the costs of a Comprehensive Approach for the military. There is a very interesting debate going on in the United States about this at present. If by a “Comprehensive Approach” we mean getting involved in operations of this nature and posturing our force for operations of this nature, what is the cost? In the American military it boils down to an issue of how shall we posture the force, what kind of capabilities and platforms do we need to develop, and also, if we develop a force that is postured for these interventions, does this mean we are positioning ourselves strategically in terms of our national strategy for these kinds of interventions? It is all interlinked. It boils down to how you read Iraq also. For a ‘traditionalist’ in the American army, for instance, how they read Iraq is, “We do not want to do that again; that was a disaster”, so do not posture for it because if you do not posture for it you will not have to do it; stick with the heavy war-fighting capability. Whereas what is commonly called the crusader camp says, “The future core is in stabilisation operations. We have to invest more in that capability”. The fight then occurs over the major platforms, for instance FCS (Future Combat Systems), which is their more sophisticated version of FRES (Future Rapid Effects Systems) I think the argument has pretty much been won because Secretary Gates is quite clearly attempting to rebalance the force to give more capability for these (stabilisation operations) areas because in the West we are more likely to be engaged in these kinds of operations, or, even if we do a conventional war in the future, the real lesson from Iraq is that we have to stick around for a stabilisation phase. That raises two final points. One is that it seems to me a really important point that I take away from today is that in Britain we do not really have a very good strategic lesson-learning process. There are individual lesson-learning processes going on in the various government departments. It seems to me that that is one of the things the Government should be focusing attention on, less on what we saw and more on government departments across the board coming together to learn the lessons from the operation. An interesting question from Afghanistan is not where it went wrong in 2006, although that is very important. I personally would not read too much into 2006 as to what we do today, because in 2006 we went into an operation, which the Brigadier has eloquently outlined, where we had some appreciation but at the highest level of government it was not fully appreciated, where it was under-resourced, but also where conceptually we were only at the opening

stages of developing the Comprehensive Approach. We have come along a lot in three years. The question is, if we were to do another operation tomorrow would we have the same appreciation of resourcing and capabilities that we have today in Afghanistan deployed to that operation? That is a very interesting question and the one *caveat* I would have is that if you look at the history of counterinsurgency, for instance, in all historical cases we have time and again gone in, made mistakes, learned from the mistakes, got a lot better, managed the operation, got into another operation and made the exact same mistakes again. We go through these cycles of constantly rebooting our memory and relearning. It is one thing that the British have yet to really get better at—institutional memory. It is about better learning and retaining the knowledge so we do not have to relearn the mistakes we have made.

Q84 Mr Havard: I have two questions. One is related to this whole debate about reconstruction forces, as it is often portrayed. You said a lot of these things to us when we came to visit you in 2006, so, fair play, I can validate the fact that you have been saying something consistent all the way through. In terms of the point about how you do that work, we were having that discussion then. You almost laid out a form of reconstruction forces earlier on in what you were saying, so I would like to talk about that but I would like to do it in the context of the Comprehensive Approach across UN, EU, NATO, all the rest of it. There is a change in Afghanistan from the American point of view. They, pejoratively in my view, now talk about “AfPak”, which I think is bad language and they should shut up about that and talk about the two countries separately but also connected together. If there is a regional approach how is the Comprehensive Approach going to relate to that new approach of dealing with the two together and the whole regional concern? Is the way forward a form of reconstruction-type force that is maybe not a form of military force? What is the way forward for that and how does the Comprehensive Approach fit in that new international context? Two simple questions.

Brigadier Butler: There is a requirement and it has been recognised within the military, certainly within the Army, that there needs to be a reconstruction force, whether it is called a stabilisation brigade or otherwise. We need to challenge our intellectual boundaries far more on that and say why is it just limited to a military force but you put together a capability which harnesses the power of the military and the other government departments, but most importantly, and this is what I see and hear when I talk to more and more businessmen, the business community. If you turn to a businessman and say, “Would you like to invest in Afghanistan with its minerals or other opportunities there?”, whether it is micro, mezzo or macro level, they would say yes. If you get them in at the planning stage, and I have already tested this hypothesis with them, you can say, “How long would it take to build a power facility, telecoms infrastructure, a port”, if it is

appropriate, “a 400-kilometre railway”, they can do that because they stay in these places for 20 years. There is a huge wealth of knowledge, experience and appetite, I judge, where they can come in on some sort of dynamic new joint ventures where they are sharing the risks, sharing the CAPEX which they have got to spend, with the government, and saying, “We can turn this round”. It will be for commercial gain because business does not work otherwise, but what do people want, they want an economic platform, they want jobs to break out of their poverty cycle.

Q85 Mr Havard: So we see an element of that in Basra then, do we?

Brigadier Butler: You could have that. If you want a really comprehensive reconstruction capability do not just restrict it to what you currently have within government or the military, Foreign Office and DFID. Go outside that to business, take an economic approach to it, get in the financial expertise. I would even say why have a serving military man in charge of it, because that is part of the cultural challenge. There are lots of other people you could transfer with the appropriate skills and background experiences into that organisation.

Q86 Chairman: Is this a job application?

Brigadier Butler: On your point about AfPak, the real positive step forward is that people have finally accepted that it is a regional problem. Is Afghanistan in a way a distraction from where the deeper rooted economic security problems really lie across the border in Pakistan? I think we internationally are in a more precarious position in Pakistan than we are in Afghanistan because I do not think we have necessarily understood the strategic dynamics of inter-relationships within that region and the wider region, the geo-political balance within it, and who is playing what tunes to what end.

Q87 Chairman: Professor Chalmers?

Professor Chalmers: I think one of the most interesting things about this whole evidence session is that, although we are talking about the Comprehensive Approach, in practice we are talking about Afghanistan. I think one of the things we need to reflect on most is whether we think Afghanistan is the template for the future or whether it is an exception, and history will tell. Many of the lessons which I think we can draw from this discussion are more generic, but some are not. The generic lesson, it seems to me, is that we need to provide a capacity across government to be ready to plan for future operations which may, as the Brigadier said, be at very short notice. If there is a requirement to go into Gabon tomorrow or if there is a terrorist attack launched on the United States from Somalia tomorrow, or whatever it might be, we need to have the capacity to respond quickly, and that I think does mean some quite fundamental changes in the way in which departments other than the MoD operate and provide capacity and our capacity for planning for that sort of thing. If we had had this session four years ago we would have been talking about Iraq but

now Iraq has disappeared off our radar screens since we no longer have troops there. The final point I would make is in relation to reconstruction, which in the case of Afghanistan is in large measure construction rather than reconstruction. We have got a lot of experience of the limitations of using aid in sub-Saharan African countries where there are not the same problems of conflict and security. The problems of construction and using aid in countries with many more security problems are going to be greater, not less, than they might be in Kenya or Tanzania or Nigeria, so we should not build up our expectations of how much can be achieved in a relatively short period of time in terms of delivering development. In the end, in African countries or in Afghanistan or in Pakistan, the essential thing to moving forward, as the Brigadier was saying, from third bottom to fifth bottom in the human development index is going to be achieving some sort of rough and ready political dispensation which creates the conditions in which you can move forward on development and security. In the end I think probably one of the lessons from our experience of Afghanistan and Iraq is that we have some sense of humility as an international community vis-à-vis the local actors and do not think that by rearranging the way we do things we can change things without leadership from the local political actors.

Q88 Mrs Moon: I have a final question and it is broken into two parts but I want very quick answers. On a scale of one to ten, if one is the Comprehensive Approach in its foundation stages and at ten it is working absolutely fantastically and we have got it all right, where are we? Are we at three, four, five, six? What is your view? Where are we on that scale in terms of developing a Comprehensive Approach?

Professor Chalmers: I think we are at six but for a new operation there is a danger we could slip right back to one.

Professor Farrell: I would agree. I think you need to distinguish between where we are in Whitehall and the departments versus in the field. There has been tremendous progress in the field and in terms of planning and operations, and I think we are making reasonably good progress here, so maybe it is a six in the field and a four here, but then, of course, the key question is increasingly these are going to be coalition operations and where are we with NATO, NATO is back at one or two. That is what I think.

Brigadier Butler: Conceptually as a buy-in it, is probably six. If you look at what has actually been done on the ground, physically delivered, we are probably in the four bracket, and I agree entirely with the NATO coalition piece, it is nudging one and a half.

Q89 Mrs Moon: What is the step to get us from four to five and six to seven? What needs to be done in the field and what needs to be done at Whitehall? What is the next step to move us forward?

Brigadier Butler: You have to have a cultural mindset change, you have to have a political buy-in, you have to look at how you are delivering security,

and you have to finally resource it. If you want to go to these places and make a difference then you have either got to go deep, go long or go home, so think through how much it is going to cost you. I use that business example. They can tell you exactly how long it will take and how much—a billion, two billion a year for 20 years—it will take to build something up based on the experience which is out there. Resource the cross-government plan and that will be the biggest change for it.

Q90 Mrs Moon: And that is in Whitehall?

Brigadier Butler: Absolutely; otherwise realign your ambitions of what you are trying to achieve.

Q91 Mrs Moon: And in the field? What are the changes we need in the field?

Professor Farrell: The two key things I would suggest are if we could somehow get a better integration of folk from the stabilisation unit in the pre-deployment training, particularly the mission rehearsal exercise, it is a bit patchy, that would help build the partnership between the deploying brigade and the PRT before the brigade gets into theatre, and it would presumably help transfer knowledge from the PRT to the brigade as it prepares for deployment. The other thing I would suggest is a better lessons learned capacity which is shared across government.

Q92 Mrs Moon: The human population would be so much improved if we had better learning commitments.

Brigadier Butler: I think that is right. It is training but it is also resources. You only get a handful of experts from development and reconstruction and stabilisation and they get worn out because you cannot keep on sending them back there, so there is resourcing of them again, whether they are military, civilian or a mil/civ mix, but also it is the regulations. It is the health and safety and the duty of care of what you are asking civilians, if that is who they are, to do. In the commercial sector you just pay a higher premium, you pay a higher insurance rate, and these people go out and do it. You can look at companies like KBR, G4S and all those other ones, they have 11,000 policemen on their books who could be used. You have just got to pay the price and they will go and deliver the training. The commercial sector will do it but at a price, but that goes back to the fact that

you have to resource your plan and match your aspirations, your foreign policy objectives, with what you are trying to achieve.

Q93 Mr Havard: So your reconstruction force does not necessarily have to be a standing force of the military, British, US or anyone else, but a combination of perhaps some of that along with these people? Is that what you are saying?

Brigadier Butler: You have got to have more than just a framework there because otherwise you do not get the relationships built up, you do not get the training, you do not learn the lessons, you do not get the doctrine development. If you try and pull it together at the last minute, even over a six-month period, it will not work. That is a balance of having a standing force, but you can have cores of capability which you can then build up fairly rapidly from a pool of reservists.

Q94 Mr Jenkin: And it needs in your view to be under the political command of a single secretary of state?

Brigadier Butler: I think it has certainly got to be under one command. It has to be a political command at the end of the day. Whether that is a PUS or a Secretary of State would be for others to judge but it needs someone who has got the clout and the resources and the authority to say, “This is where we are going”, having had the debate, the discussion and the understanding of what the art of the possible is going to be.

Q95 Chairman: Professor Chalmers, you have not said how we would improve the Comprehensive Approach, what the next step would be. Would you like to do that?

Professor Chalmers: I have just one last observation if I may, which is that it appears as if the Government is about to announce an inquiry into its operations in Iraq and large amounts of government resource will undoubtedly go into preparing and giving evidence to that inquiry. That, it seems to me, is potentially an opportunity for a lessons learned exercise in relation to Iraq and the Comprehensive Approach, and I hope that is something which we will all learn from and it is not simply about the initial decision to go to war, which in itself might have lessons for a Comprehensive Approach, but is about the whole conduct of those operations up to date.

Chairman: Can I say to you all three of you thank you very much indeed. It has been a very interesting session indeed and most helpful as our first evidence session.

Tuesday 16 June 2009

Members present:

Mr James Arbuthnot

Mr David Crausby
Linda Gilroy
Mr Mike Hancock

Mr Dai Havard
Mr Bernard Jenkin
Robert Key

Witnesses: **Sir Bill Jeffrey KCB**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence, **Sir Peter Ricketts KCMG**, Permanent Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and **Dr Nemat “Minouche” Shafik**, Permanent Secretary, Department for International Development

Q96 Chairman: Good morning. This is our Comprehensive Approach inquiry and our second evidence session. I think it may be a unique evidence session—I cannot remember a time when three Permanent Under Secretaries have appeared before this Committee, or indeed any other; it may have happened, but I do not know. It is a very important issue and we are delighted to have all three of you here to give evidence to us. I am going to ask, with a question, which in a sense will be addressed to all there of you—but I hope, given this is a Comprehensive Approach inquiry that you will all give the same answer—what is the Comprehensive Approach and what are its crucial elements? Sir Bill, would you like to begin?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: First of all, having read the evidence that your academic witnesses gave a couple of weeks ago, I would broadly share the view that they gave you of what the Comprehensive Approach is. It stems from the fact, I would say, that complex conflicts in unstable parts of the world sometimes require military intervention but cannot be resolved by military intervention alone. My experience in the MoD certainly is that the military themselves are the first people to recognise that, so the Comprehensive Approach is one in which military and civilian actors work together to stabilise the situation and help to establish or re-establish local governance, including security. I think it has to be flexible because, as we have seen in Afghanistan particularly, over a period of time it could be on a wide spectrum and be very insecure with the military clearly in the lead and having to be so, at one extreme; to the other extreme of something closer to civil governance with the military very much in support. Its common characteristic, I would say, is that it requires extremely close collaboration; common language, which, as I know better than most in a military context one needs to strive for sometimes; a common approach on the ground and a common approach in capital cities like London. It is characterised by outcome-based thinking, a judgment of what is actually likely to work on the ground and what will have a lasting effect. I think a very powerful point that one of your academic witnesses made, with which I certainly agree, is that no two situations are the same and that this is not a blueprint, this is a pragmatic way of thinking about these conflict situations, which you need to adapt to the situation. I would say that these basic principles are ones that we are trying—and it is difficult—to apply across government and internationally.

Dr Shafik: I would be happy to agree with everything that Bill has said, particularly the point about it not being a blueprint but a way of working. Sometimes I think of conflict countries as a bit like unhappy families in Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*—each one is unhappy in its own particular way and one has to approach every situation in its own particular way and understand the specificities of the conflict and what one can do about it. The only thing I would add is that what we have learned from the need for early engagement, shared analysis, joint planning and collaborative ways of working is that we also have to underpin that with pooling of our human resources, pooling of our money and pooling of our decision-making processes in Whitehall and in the field. Over the last few years we have put those things into place—pooled resources through the conflict pools, pooling our people through the PRTs in countries and through the Stabilisation Unit, and pooling our decision-making through joint decision making in-country as well as in Whitehall.

Sir Peter Ricketts: Chairman, I see it in exactly the same way. Put in a slightly different way I think it means for me that each of our three departments have value to add along the spectrum between security to development, and in any post-conflict stabilisation situation we are all three going to need to be working together. I cannot think of a scenario in which there would be a post conflict position where the three of us did not need to work together. If that is true then it needs to be embedded in the way we plan, in our doctrine, in our preparation—and as Minouche Shafik says, in the preparation of our people—and then it needs to be implemented together and we need to learn the lessons from each occasion where we work together so that we do it better next time. One other element from me is that this is not purely something happening in the UK; it is something happening across the NATO Alliance and in the EU and increasingly being thought about in the UN as well. So we are one participant in a wider, multilateral recognition that this Comprehensive Approach goes by different names and different organisations but that it is the same thing is absolutely central now to the way that all countries need to do post conflict work.

Chairman: I suspect a theme that will come out of our questions will be “these words are very good” and to what extent and how do the words translate into reality and practice? Vice Chairman, David Crausby.

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Q97 Mr Crausby: I take the point that the Comprehensive Approach is different in all operations and has to be seen from a different point of view, but is it a valid concept in all operations, in current and future operations; or are there any particular circumstances where the Comprehensive Approach is not appropriate at all?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: In the kinds of things we have been doing recently—and I am looking back to the Balkans as well as Iraq and Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, etc.—it is entirely applicable. If you get into what in MoD parlance—and this Committee knows this as well as I do is referred to as state on state conflict, which is more purely military in character, I think it is less applicable, although as one saw even at the end of the Second World War there was a point at which civil reality has to intrude and military people have to work closely with civil authorities. So even there I think you get to that point if you are going to be successful at all.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I agree. I think in any circumstances where you are using military force or you might have to use military force there is a period of tension and crisis and breakdown beforehand where perhaps the civilian instruments would be more important than the military although there would be planning going on. There will be a period of military conflict and then there will be a period after the military conflict at which, whatever the circumstances, the civilian powers will have to reengage with governance, capacity building and development work, which is exactly what the Comprehensive Approach is all about. I cannot think of a scenario where we would be employing the military instrument without also needing the development and governance capacity building instruments that we bring to that.

Q98 Mr Crausby: How would it work in an operation in defence against piracy, for instance?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: That is an inventive counter example, I agree, because if you look at what we are doing off the Horn of Africa just now it does not have the civilian components in quite the same way, although oddly enough it does raise some issues where we need to draw our Foreign Office colleagues in, for example to consider jurisdictional issues where we have detained people and need to find countries in the locality willing to try them. So even there it spills over into civil life to some extent.

Sir Peter Ricketts: As soon as the Royal Navy detained pirates off the coast of Somalia we were engaged because we needed to negotiate with the Government of Kenya and other countries for a place to which to deliver these people for justice and so again the military were not operating alone, they had to operate in close coordination with the diplomats.

Dr Shafik: Clearly we are also contributing on the development side both on the humanitarian side in Somalia but also in terms of trying to strengthen the very tenuous capacity of the Somali Government in order for them to be able to get a grip on things like piracy.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: Arguably if you go to the root cause of the piracy it lies not on the high seas but in Somalia being a very unsettled country.

Q99 Mr Crausby: What are the difficulties then? What are the fault lines within the Comprehensive Approach? I accept that every Comprehensive Approach is almost a different Comprehensive Approach but where does it start to go wrong?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: You said at the beginning of the session, Chairman, that the real question is that these are fine sounding words but have we done it. I think I know this Committee well enough to be very clear that we are not going to sit here this morning and say that we have cracked this—it is much, much more complicated and challenging than that. My sense from repeated visits over the last few years to both of the principal theatres—quite a number of them with my colleagues from the two other departments—is that we have got much better at it and certainly on our most recent visits to both Iraq and Afghanistan we had a sense that we were beginning to make this approach work more successfully than we had done in the past. But I would not want to over claim for it. There is still a challenge in terms of getting civilians in the right numbers into the right places, although I think we have made progress on that. There is a challenge around the international dimension, as Peter mentioned, because it is harder to deliver this sort of effect when you are working within an alliance with other countries. Whether it is a fault line or not I am not sure, although the point that one of your witnesses made in the earlier session about us learning our lessons and not just going back to square one next time is vitally important and I think we have to do that otherwise we will be at least slow off the mark next time if not worse.

Q100 Chairman: You will have seen from our earlier session that I raised a hobby horse of mine with Brigadier Butler. He was talking about the number of senior visitors he had and you have talked about your visits. The three of you have visited Afghanistan together.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: Twice and Iraq twice.

Q101 Chairman: Have you ever visited with the Permanent Under Secretary of the Treasury?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: We have not but Treasury officials at a more junior level than the Permanent Secretary have visited both theatres.

Dr Shafik: We have taken the Cabinet Secretary.

Sir Peter Ricketts: We have visited with the Cabinet Secretary who is an even more eminent public servant.

Dr Shafik: And a former Permanent Secretary of the Treasury.

Mr Havard: Have you got any money?

Chairman: Nevertheless, I think you have a role here to play to tie in the Treasury to the things that you three are trying to achieve, and I think if you were able to persuade Treasury ministers and Treasury senior officials to go with you it will be to the benefit of this country. That is just a point I make now.

Q102 Mike Hancock: If I can just go back to the answer you gave when you were talking briefly about piracy, was there a Comprehensive Approach put together before we engaged in that activity? Was there a system for referral for dealing with it if you had pirates under your control, or was this something that emerged because the circumstances were that a British ship had taken possession of these people and then we started to wonder what we did with them? Was the Comprehensive Approach considered before we sent that ship to do that job?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: The decision to deploy—and in fact it is unusually a European Union mission, it is an ESDP mission that we are leading off the Horn of Africa now—was a decision taken collectively by ministers and before they did so there was consideration given to some of these jurisdictional and other issues. My recollection is the incident that Peter referred to arose quite early on and while we had custody of the bodies there were then quite urgent discussions with the Kenyan authorities. But the original decision to increase our involvement off the Gulf of Aden by deploying a UK ship and leading a European task force was one that was taken by ministers collectively.

Q103 Mike Hancock: There is one thing taking a decision; there is another thing to have a Comprehensive Approach to how to deal with the emerging situation that comes out of that decision. I want to know whether or not after all your experience in Afghanistan and Iraq when ministers decided to send ships to do this job and to lead the task force was there a Comprehensive Approach of how you would deal with the circumstances that would arise out of that? The answer is obviously no.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I do not think the answer is no; I think the answer is yes, we had thought about what jurisdiction Royal Navy warships would have and what issues would arise if they found themselves detaining a pirate. You cannot, I think, make a precise plan until circumstances arise because any number of different scenarios might have arisen. As soon as a particular circumstance arose we were all in action together to solve it but we had thought before the operation began about the various contingencies that would arise and what legal rights and responsibilities British warships had.

Q104 Mike Hancock: If that is a Comprehensive Approach, Sir Peter, I do not seem to think it was fairly effective in that case and I would be interested to know what approach would be now made in the same situation. Do we now have countries that are prepared to take pirates and to deal with them under a judicial system?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I do not believe that we will ever have countries agreeing in the abstract to take pirates; I think it will only be in particular cases that we will be able to approach countries. I do not think that we will ever get a blanket agreement in advance from a country that they would take any pirate that was detained on the high seas.

Q105 Mike Hancock: In the absence of that we would just release them, would we?

Sir Peter Ricketts: We would do what we did last time, which is when we have a particular case we would then make arrangements with neighbouring countries.

Mr Jenkin: But last time we just let them go.

Q106 Mike Hancock: We just let them go. If I could ask each of you individually how well do your departments work together, given the different roles and the cultures and the objectives that you have set your own departments? Shall we start on the left?

Dr Shafik: Echoing what Bill said, we have learned to work together much better over time. Clearly in the early days there was not a long tradition of DFID working with the MoD—there was a longer tradition of DFID working with the FCO—and we had obstacles to overcome. But I think it is fair to say that over the last few years there has been a huge uptick in the quality of the engagement. I think that can be evidenced by the fact that we now have 311 staff in DFID working in 13 conflict countries and a further 83 staff working through the Stabilisation Unit. I think that can be evidenced by the huge increase in resources that we have put into conflict and fragile states; by the decision that we have taken to put half of our aid budget into what we call fragile and conflict states, going forward; and there has been a steady improvement in terms of the level of interaction with DFID staff actively engaging with the military in terms of pre-deployment and in terms of training programmes. We now have a whole cadre of people in DFID who speak military, which is quite an achievement actually because it takes a while to learn the language and the ways of working with a different organisation. So I think we have a pretty good story to tell and I think that if you see the operations in action in Helmand, for example, or in Basra most people would say that they are some of the best examples of civilian-military collaboration anywhere in the world.

Q107 Mike Hancock: You were suggesting there that there are still issues to overcome. It has been a long time now, has it not, in both Iraq and in Afghanistan? Why has it taken so long and why do they still have these issues that you as a department have to overcome? Why has more not been done to assure your other partners sitting here that you have overcome those problems?

Dr Shafik: If you look at the current situation I think they have been overcome, but one has to remember that this is new territory and one is working in very, very difficult and unpredictable situations. So I think that there is actually quite a good story to tell in terms of the lesson learning and the adaptation that has occurred in terms of the number of people and types of people we have been able to deploy. If you look at the early days there was serious difficulty, for example, in recruiting civilians to go to Helmand. At the moment the vacancy rate in Helmand is well below 10% and we are able to fill every post, and that reflects the fact that we have tapped into lots of different kinds of people and we have trained our

own people and we have systems in place that can support them when they are there so that they can be effective, and I think that is a very good sign of us being able to respond and adapt.

Q108 Mike Hancock: If I could persist with your agreement with DFID. Can DFID really adopt a fully Comprehensive Approach given the priority of your other work, particularly poverty reduction, and in respect of the 2002 International Development Act which actually set you some very high goals to achieve and at times must put you in conflict with your two departmental colleagues?

Dr Shafik: I do not think there is a contradiction; I do not think there is a contradiction for several reasons. First of all, it is important to remember that poverty reduction is a significant government objective and I would argue actually probably one of the best investments we have made in security ever. I think that if we had gotten two million Afghan girls into school 20 years ago we would not be in this mess, frankly. So it is a very low cost and quite cost effective investment in longer term security. In terms of there being a conflict between the poverty objective and the work in conflict countries, if you actually look where the poverty is today the most intractable poverty in the world is in 50 countries which are either in conflict or have been in conflict. Our relentless focus on reducing poverty is actually increasing the focus on conflict countries. In countries that are stable we have actually been able to reduce poverty and so as we continue to push the frontier and focus more on poverty we are actually being taken more and more into countries at risk of conflict. Lastly, on the International Development Act, the Act gives us a fair amount of room to manoeuvre as long as we stay ultimately focused on reducing poverty and much of the work that we have been able to do in Afghanistan—most of the work that we have been able to do in Afghanistan, for example—has been completely legitimate under the Act. There are some things that we cannot do where there is no poverty objective and we have been able to fund these things under the Conflict Pool outside of the Act.

Q109 Mr Jenkin: Can you give an example?

Dr Shafik: Half the funding in the Conflict Pool is not funded under the Act.

Q110 Mr Jenkin: Sorry, can you repeat that?

Dr Shafik: About half the activities under the conflict pools do not qualify as official development assistance. I should say that the definition of what official development assistance is, is an internationally agreed definition set by the OECD—it is not in our gift to determine what that is.

Q111 Mr Jenkin: Could you tell us what that is?

Dr Shafik: The definition basically is that it has to be an activity whose primary purpose is to reduce poverty. It can have secondary purposes which are achieving security, achieving other objectives—environmental objectives, other things—but the primary purpose has to be poverty.

Q112 Chairman: Dr Shafik, Iraq is potentially one of the richest countries in the world. Did you not feel some form of conflict in DFID spending a lot of its time and resources on reconstructing a country that has more oil than virtually any other country in the world?

Dr Shafik: Yes. I think we have always known that Iraq is not a poor country and it would not have been a natural place for DFID focus in the early days. Iraq's revenue last year was \$60 billion, in contrast to a place like Afghanistan, which was \$4 billion—so a completely different scale of resources. The issue in Iraq has never been resources; it has been helping the Iraqis use their own resources better. But in the early days in Iraq we found ourselves doing a lot more large-scale infrastructure than you might expect in a country with that per capita income because of the level of destruction associated with the conflict and also because of the years of neglect of Basra and the Basra Province during Saddam's regime.

Q113 Chairman: But was there not a sense of resentment amongst DFID employees that they were spending all this time and resource on a country that was extremely rich?

Dr Shafik: I do not think I would quite use the word "resentment". I think there was an issue of defining a meaningful role in a country where the issue of resource transfer was not the priority and I think we have successfully defined what that role is. Just to give you an example, we quickly realised that the issue for Basra was not putting lots of DFID aid money into Basra; the issue was helping the Basra Provincial Council to make itself an effective vehicle for tapping into central government money and being able to spend it. As you probably know, in the early years the Iraqi Government had lots of revenues coming in from oil but had an inability to spend most of its budget; so if you look at what happened to the Basra Provincial Council budget in 2006 they spent £23 million. Last year they managed to spend £344 million, so that is almost a 15-fold increase; and they now have 800 development projects that they have managed in the last two years worth \$650 million and those projects are about infrastructure, water, roads and improving the life of Basrawis. It is not DFID money; but what DFID did was work with the Provincial Council to help them develop the capacity to plan, to prepare proposals so that the central government would allocate resources, and to be able to spend it themselves.

Q114 Chairman: But at the end of the day do you not think that in your department many people feel that dealing with Iraq is the complete antithesis of what they are there to achieve?

Dr Shafik: No, I would not agree with that.

Q115 Mr Jenkin: Can I just be very clear what you are saying about your definition of poverty reduction? That if military commanders need more resource to stabilise post conflict areas where they may be taking casualties, civilians may be being killed, may be huge economic dislocation as a result

of the conflict, that because of the Act that is actually not your department's concern and you cannot spend your money on those circumstances?

Dr Shafik: That is not correct. We actually funded a lot of the quick impact projects in the early days and so we did provide resources, as did the MoD.

Mr Jenkin: This is what we do not understand because when we talk to military commanders they are desperate for much more resource. We will come to the Afghanistan picture a little later, but it does seem odd. I can pick this up later.

Chairman: Let us pick this up later.

Q116 Mr Hancock: Can I go back to Sir Bill and Sir Peter for their comments about their departments?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: Your original question, Mr Hancock, was about the issues raised by the three departments working together and the most obvious, if you like, is a cultural one. I live with this all the time, I admire my military colleagues greatly but they have a very special way of doing things and they have a language of their own in the international development world and indeed in the international world. People come at things from different angles and I think that the most challenging thing we have had to do is to build understanding among well motivated people who just approach things in different ways. My sense is that that is where we have made some progress. I do not know what the experience is of individual Committee members but certainly when I go into theatre more and more I meet people who, although they come from different backgrounds, whether it be military, aid or diplomatic, are, broadly speaking, speaking the same language. Just to follow up on the point you elicited in the conversation with Minouche, my observation over the three and a half years I have been doing this job is that DFID's approach to this has changed quite substantially.

Q117 Chairman: It needed to, did it not?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: It is not that they were not contributing three and a half years ago; it is more that in the intervening period they have an even clearer recognition of the inter-relationship between conflict reduction and poverty reduction. And throughout that period the law has been the same, so I think it is more about policy and the attitudes of people and addressing these cultural issues.

Q118 Mr Hancock: But the Chairman's interjection there was that they needed to change, did they not? There was a real problem, was there not?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: I think we have got better at this over the last few years. One cannot underestimate how challenging it is to start with, not least because although, as Minouche says, that there was a substantial and has particularly recently been a very substantial contribution in Iraq. There is no doubt that given its core task DFID was more comfortable in Afghanistan than in Iraq.

Q119 Chairman: Absolutely.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: So generally speaking I think we have come on a long way in the last few years.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I agree that we have. For me in the last 12 years I have been very closely involved with the FCO work in Bosnia, in Kosovo and then in the early days in Afghanistan and Iraq, so I have seen over 12 years a considerable improvement in our capacity to establish ourselves and operate in these difficult and dangerous circumstances. We did not have in 2003 an embassy in Baghdad; we did not have an embassy in Kabul; we did not have anything in Lashkar Gah or anything in Basra, and over the last five or six years we have built up to having one of our largest concentrations of diplomats anywhere in the world actually in Kabul; and very substantial operations in Lashkar Gah and in Baghdad and now a small but remaining mission in Basra. We have learnt how to operate right alongside the military and we have had to learn about duty of care to our staff so that our staff can be out there right behind the front line and working very closely with DFID in doing that. Yes, I am sure that we did not do it well in the early days and I think we did not do as well as we should in learning the lessons of Bosnia for Kosovo and of Kosovo for Afghanistan. I think now, having created this Stabilisation Unit, which is there to centralise and preserve the lessons from this extraordinary decade of involvement in stabilisation work, so that if we had to do it again there are people and there are doctrines and there is experience available for the next time around, I think that means we will be much better placed if we have to do this again then we were starting out from 1995/6 in Bosnia.

Chairman: Can I interject with a point that in case I am seen to be bashing DFID, I must say that we as a Committee have noticed the way that DFID has changed and the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan seems to have been working much more effectively now than it was at the beginning. I just want to make that point.

Q120 Mr Hancock: I would hope that nobody would give that impression or for you to take it; we all have lots of admiration for the work of all three departments. This next question is the one where you should have the earphones on so that you cannot hear each other's answer! I am quite interested to ask which minister do you think has overall responsibility for the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan at the present time?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: The Prime Minister.

Dr Shafik: That is a very good answer!

Q121 Mr Hancock: But he is not dealing day to day, is he? Who is responsible for making sure that the Comprehensive Approach that we have put in place, that you have worked on for a number of years—three and a half years—is actually working in Afghanistan? Who has day to day ministerial responsibility?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I do not think that it would be a good thing to have a single day to day minister. It would be for the Prime Minister to judge, but it is actually a Cabinet Committee of the three Secretaries of State here represented with the Prime Minister in the chair. If you want to have all three

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departments fully committed, seeing this as a core part of their business I think you need all three Secretaries of State as part of a collective ministerial group that is directing it.

Q122 Mr Hancock: Can the three of them give what is needed? Do they have the opportunity to be together that often that they can keep on top of this?
Dr Shafik: They meet quite regularly, as do we.

Q123 Mr Hancock: How often would you say in the course of a month that the three Secretaries of State meet to discuss the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I should think they meet at least once a month—the three of them.

Q124 Mr Hancock: On this specific subject?

Dr Shafik: As do we.

Q125 Mr Hancock: Do you not think it is worthy of more time?

Sir Peter Ricketts: No, because I think that the ministers are giving strategic guidance to people who are then dealing with it every day and we have senior officials who are dealing with it all the time every day. I do not think we need senior Cabinet ministers to be dealing with it all the time every day.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: It is certainly the case, as Peter says, that our three ministers meet very regularly; I would say at the moment every few weeks and certainly once a month and there is a meeting taking place soon. We meet on the same sort of regularity across our three departments. The formal answer to the question in a sense is the one that we have given, which is that the Cabinet Committee responsible for all these matters meets under the Prime Minister's chairmanship and takes the decisions that need to be taken.

Dr Shafik: The only thing I would add is that one of the key lessons of the Comprehensive Approach is the importance of delegating responsibility to the field. So the leadership in-country is a key point where the day to day decision-making about how to implement the Comprehensive Approach is being taken; and, as Peter said, we need strategic guidance on the big decisions in much slower time

Q126 Mr Hancock: But the Comprehensive Approach also has to work in this country, does it not, to the people whose sons and daughters are going out to do the work for us and for the general taxpayers who are paying for it, so surely that does warrant somebody having overall control and day to day political control of what is going on?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: I go back to the point that Peter made a few minutes ago, that if you had a minister who was not the Prime Minister but was in some sense in political command of the whole operation you would then, as a consequence, have a set of separate relationships with three very senior Cabinet ministers. Since the essence of this is to get the three departments to work more closely together I think

that the judgment ministers have made so far is that the PM must be ultimately in the lead and he must operate through his three principal colleagues.

Q127 Mr Hancock: Sir Bill, you told us that you had read the evidence we have had from our academic colleagues and they were of the mind that this was what was needed not just for Afghanistan but there needed to be a specific minister to oversee the whole operation of a Comprehensive Approach, not only being put together but actually being delivered. So I take it that having read that and from what you have all three said today that none of you share that view?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: In the end these are matters for the Prime Minister. I do not want to sound too Sir Humphrey-ish about this but in a sense we mainly help the Committee by describing the situation that exists at the moment. I would simply make the observation that it is an issue in many other areas than this in our system of government where ultimately one has departments of state led by members of the Cabinet—does it help or hinder to have a minister who is not in any one of the relevant departments leading the activity? Sometimes it helps, sometimes not. But the judgment as to whether it will help or not is very much one for the Prime Minister to make.

Q128 Mr Jenkin: In Afghanistan, as my colleague has just pointed out, soldiers are dying and being injured and civilians are being killed and we are spending billions of pounds on a war. Do you feel that Whitehall is on a war footing?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: My personal view is that we could do with being more on a war footing. It depends what you mean by the term. This is clearly not like the Second World War when this country was under direct threat. The threat is real but indirect and inevitably there is less of an atmosphere of war around. I personally would like to see us more in that frame of mind.

Q129 Mr Jenkin: Sir Peter, would you say that the United States was much more on a war footing than we are in the United Kingdom?

Sir Peter Ricketts: No, I do not think I would. I do not see what machinery they have in the United States that would lead you to that conclusion that we do not have here.

Q130 Mr Hancock: The public perception is different there.

Sir Peter Ricketts: They have exactly the same arrangements that we have; the President is in charge and the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defence meet him in the National Security Council and they pursue a collective strategy towards Afghanistan.

Q131 Mr Jenkin: Do you think that the President spends more time on Afghanistan than our Prime Minister?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I do not know.

Q132 Mr Jenkin: I would hazard that he does. Would our effort be better coordinated if the Prime Minister appointed someone, a single person, a person who reported to him, to make sure that this was pulled together? Sir Bill, you said earlier that this is all new territory, but actually Oman, Malaya, they are all previous campaigns that adopted a form of the Comprehensive Approach but they were all under a single command, albeit a military command; and where we see the Comprehensive Approach working best in microcosm is virtually under a single military commander as it is in Helmand. Do we not need to replicate that kind of command at Whitehall level?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Remember that in Helmand, Mr Jenkin, it is not under a single command it is under a joint civil and military command.

Q133 Mr Jenkin: You may kid yourself that that is the case but the brigadier in charge of the brigade effectively commands the entire effort.

Sir Peter Ricketts: The brigadier commands the brigade; the brigadier does not command the civilian activity. It is a joint command at one star level between the brigadier and a civilian and they work together—that is what the Comprehensive Approach is. The brigadier does not command my staff; they are under the control of the civilian head of the civil-military mission in Helmand, who is a joint commander with the brigadier. That works in the field, as far as I know—and certainly the reports I have back are that it works. Of course it is a decision for the Prime Minister and it is not really for Permanent Secretaries to offer a view about whether there should be a single minister but I would just add my point that if you want the wholehearted engagement of all three departments in Afghanistan it is a good thing to have all three Secretaries of State involved in the oversight of it, and in choosing a single minister I think you would risk disengaging other departments, which is the opposite of the Comprehensive Approach really.

Q134 Mr Jenkin: That seems to be a management problem in Whitehall. If we allow departments to go off piste because they will not cooperate and they take their ball away because somebody else is in charge it does not seem to be a good way of running a government.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I offer you my opinion on the subject.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: You are right, Mr Jenkin, in the sense that there is an alternative model for doing this, which is much more military-led. The USA probably does apply that sort of model although one senses under the new administration that they are moving away from it a little. What we have developed, for better or worse—and I would argue mainly better—is a much more shared military-civilian effort where the military operations are clearly under the command of the military commander, as you will have observed in Helmand, but the Comprehensive Approach bit in it is very much a shared enterprise.

Q135 Mr Jenkin: So we do it better than the Americans?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: I am not arguing that; I am saying that it is different and that there are pros and cons in both approaches.

Q136 Mr Jenkin: Are the Stabilisation Unit and reconstruction teams sufficient to ensure that we can adopt a coherent approach across individual conflicts and different situations?

Dr Shafik: The Stabilisation Unit was established precisely to create standing capacity and the capacity to learn lessons across conflicts, so that we would not have to do what we did in Iraq, frankly, which was to put together an integrated team over time, and we had to scramble a bit, to be honest; whereas the Stabilisation Unit provides us with the capacity to have that standing. Do I think it is sufficient? We are still building up our capacity in the Stabilisation Unit. We have 34 staff there now, 16 of whom are DFID. They have developed an extensive call down capacity of staff who can serve in conflict zones around the world and they have provided lesson learning, they have done analytical studies, they provide pre-deployment training and I think the last time we were in Helmand together you could see a noticeable difference in the calibre of the civilians who were deployed. When we first went there were a lot of people who—I do not want to call them brave amateurs who were willing to have a go, but it was a bit like that. Whereas this time if you see the civilians deployed they are people who are both professional experts in the fields they are in, be it engineering or judicial reform or governance, but they are also seriously experienced in having served in places like Bosnia, Kosovo, Sudan, DRC and so on. So I think there has been a distinct uptake in the quality of people we have deployed and that is largely as a result of the efforts of the Stabilisation Unit.

Q137 Mr Jenkin: What is the budget of the Stabilisation Unit?

Dr Shafik: The Stabilisation Unit budget is £7 million and 94% of that is provided by DFID.

Q138 Mr Jenkin: £7 million?

Dr Shafik: That is just for the staffing and the capacity; that is not the entire programme.

Q139 Mr Jenkin: What resources do they have at their disposal?

Dr Shafik: The specific programme budget that they deploy is £4 million, but then they also manage parts of the conflict pool. If I may just make a clarification on something I said earlier? Of the conflict pools, which are currently £171 million only about a quarter of that is not eligible for official development assistance; three-quarters of it counts as aid in the international definition.

Q140 Mr Jenkin: But it seems awfully small compared to how much we are spending on military capability in Afghanistan or how much we are devoting to poverty reduction in Afghanistan and elsewhere, for example. If we want to end this

conflict and the Comprehensive Approach is about having civilian effect to follow on after stabilisation and security so that people can see a gain for allowing these foreign soldiers into their villages and communities the effort seems disproportionately small.

Dr Shafik: If I could give you a sense of proportion? If DFID was treating Afghanistan like a normal country and we try to allocate aid on an objective criteria based on how much poverty there is in that country and how good its policies are and how effectively we think the money could be used we would probably allocate it one-tenth of what we give it now. So that gives you a sense of proportion; we are giving it ten times more than we normally would if we were treating it as an ordinary country. If you look at Helmand, Helmand actually only constitutes about 5% of the population of Afghanistan. We are giving it about a quarter of our aid programme, so again disproportionately putting more effort in given the priority that it has. I think as the IDC in its written submission to this Committee noted, it is very important that we take a whole of Afghanistan approach; so it is important to look at the totality of our aid programme, which in our recent country strategy we announced would be over half a billion pounds over the next four years, which is certainly not small change in the part of the world in which I work.¹ In military terms that may sound small but in aid terms it is quite large.

Q141 Mr Jenkin: But very little of that half billion is available at the front end of stabilisation post-conflict. The conflict prevention fund in Afghanistan, if I remember, last year was £50 million.

Dr Shafik: Yes, that is about right.

Q142 Mr Jenkin: You must have heard the argument that if military commanders could carry suitcases of dollars they might actually be able to avoid having to fight because they could go straight into a village and bargain with the local leaders about how to resolve some of their problems.

Dr Shafik: I think that approach is misguided, if I may say. I think the idea of military commanders handing out cash to buy support is both transient and it is—

Q143 Mr Jenkin: It worked in Anbar, did it not?

Dr Shafik: I do not think it works; I do not think it is sustainable, I do not think it was sustainable in Anbar. There is no dispute that short-term stabilisation measures, well-targeted, well designed can provide some consent for a short period but if you do not follow it by a longer term development it is unsustainable and you do not get anywhere.

Q144 Mr Jenkin: Last year was the stabilisation fund in Afghanistan fully spent?

Dr Shafik: Yes, I believe so. I would have to check on that.

Q145 Mr Jenkin: If you could send us a note on that I would be grateful.²

Sir Bill Jeffrey: If I might just go back to your point, Mr Jenkin, about the Stabilisation Unit? I think the thing to bear in mind about it is that it is essentially the central enabler. It is always going to be quite a small team. Following an announcement the Prime Minister made last year about building up a 1000-strong civilian standby capacity, the three departments, principally DFID, are enhancing the capability of the Stabilisation Unit so that it can deliver more easily more significant numbers of well trained civilians for these purposes. But the central enabler is always going to be much cheaper in the end than either the military spend in theatre or the budget in theatre.

Mr Hancock: When you talked about the way in which DFID spends its money and the disproportionate amount you are spending in, say, Helmand, how does that compare with other countries who are committed to giving aid where they are specifically only targeting their aid where their people are on the ground and they are not giving a Comprehensive Approach to sharing their aid across the country as a whole? Does that not create problems?

Chairman: That is a very large question to which we will come later and I do not want to get into that just yet.

Q146 Dai Havard: Can I have some clarification here because I am getting confused now? The Stabilisation Unit is one thing but stabilisation funds are other things. There is an MoD stabilisation fund, as I understand it, of £269 million; is that right? I am getting confused with you saying from the DFID point of view that 90-odd per cent of the money comes from DFID and yet, as I understand it, the fund is on the MoD budget line, is that correct? So can you clarify the difference between the Unit and the Unit's costs and the funds that it spends and how the MoD is involved in that?

Dr Shafik: The Stabilisation Unit's budget is £7 million, most of which is provided by DFID, but it is a jointly managed unit and the governance is joint and the FCO and the MoD both have directors who sit on the board and oversee the work of that unit. That is a jointly owned unit. The Stabilisation Aid Fund does sit on the MoD budget and that sits alongside the conflict pools and that was agreed in the last CSR. The total of the Stabilisation Aid Fund over the course of the CSR is the 200 plus million number that you mentioned.

Q147 Dai Havard: 269.

Dr Shafik: That is right. Having said that I think that we have also increasingly come to the view that having different pots of money is rather complicated and while we have money in pots we have agreed actually just this week to have a shared management, for which DFID will take responsibility, of the Stabilisation Fund and the conflict pools and the peacekeeping budget; so our three main pots of

¹ See Ev 81.

² See Ev 157.

money for this type of civilian work will be jointly managed by DFID on behalf of the three departments.³

Q148 Dai Havard: Could you tell us what those three numbers are at some point? Could somebody write to us and explain how that is managed?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Is it worth just going through what the numbers are for this year because there are a lot of numbers flying about? These are set out essentially in David Miliband's statement to the House of Commons a few weeks ago. The three pools of money that we were given in the spending round were for assessed contributions to UN and other peacekeeping missions—that is £374 million; the conflict prevention pool, which was supposed to be for longer term conflict prevention work, which was £109 million; and the Stabilisation Aid Fund which was specifically for Afghanistan and Iraq immediate purposes, £73 million. Total £556 million. Our major problem in this area is the growth in our assessed contributions to the UN and others, partly because sterling is weak and partly because there is more UN peacekeeping going on; so of that total of £556 million for everything we estimate that about £456 million is going to be needed for our assessed contributions to the UN, leaving only £100 million for everything else. That is why we delved into our departmental pockets this year and we have found another £71 million to make up the budget that we feel is necessary; that ministers feel is necessary for the discretionary conflict prevention work in addition to our assessed contributions to the UN. So having made a departmental contribution we now have this fund of £171 million, which is to cover all the costs for our stabilisation work in Afghanistan and Iraq, but also in the Balkans and also in Africa and the Middle East. Those are the choices that we have had to make. So the original money that you refer to which was in the spending round we have had to pool to make maximum use of it and we are now managing that jointly. So just to reinforce the point made earlier, the Stabilisation Unit is supposed to be a place where we centralise human capacity, a database of people, a library of expertise—it does not manage the programmes in Afghanistan or Iraq; that is done by the three departments through the Cabinet Office structure.

Q149 Chairman: From which department did the bulk of that increase come?

Sir Peter Ricketts: There was an equal amount from DFID and the MoD and a rather smaller amount from the FCO—not quite pro rata to our departmental budgets but three of us made very generous contributions.

Dr Shafik: There was a healthy exchange!

Q150 Mr Jenkin: I believe the Stabilisation Unit could, if scaled up with sufficient capability, become a very, very important component in security and poverty reduction around the world. What are we doing to ensure that the different personnel from the different departments, particularly military personnel alongside civilian personnel, are trained together so that they better understand each other's perspectives?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: The Stabilisation Unit itself provides quite a bit of training for all purposes. The thing that I am most conscious of, because we tend to provide it but it is proving valuable, is that we now have routinely not many people but a significant number of people from FCO and DFID on the Defence Academy advanced command staff course and on pre-deployment exercises before troops deploy to theatre. All brigade mission rehearsal exercises for Helmand are now with civilians who are likely to be involved in theatre. As I think the paper we sent you brought out, an exercise which takes place every two years on the planning and conduct and joint operations, called Joint Venture, last year focused on the Comprehensive Approach and had something in the order of 1000 people from all around Whitehall involved in it and with an FCO senior responsible officer even though this is normally a military sort of affair. I think one way or another there is a lot more shared experience and shared training among this community.

Q151 Mr Jenkin: We did hear from Shrivenham that the training provided to DFID staff at Shrivenham was not very popular with DFID staff and I think that the Shrivenham personnel expressed—how shall I put it?—some surprise at the attitudes that DFID staff had on some issues. But this kind of cultural hostility is inevitably something that exists and what are we doing to break that down? I can throw that particularly at your own departments. How are you training your own personnel to incorporate the cultures of different departments?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: My other two colleagues may want to comment but I would not overstate it. You might say that we would say that, would we not, but I am not hearing from Shrivenham exactly what you report. As I said earlier, there are, however, differences in approach that you could politely describe as cultural differences and I certainly accept that one of the responsibilities we have is to provide the sort of leadership that will enable these to be overcome and to lead to the kind of greater understanding that I think is happening. One of the reasons, apart from the fact that we quite enjoy each other's company and can talk as we go, why we have chosen in the last couple of years to visit theatre quite regularly together is to give a signal to our people that this is the way we want things to be.

Dr Shafik: If I may add something to Bill, in terms of DFID management we have sent a very clear signal that attending these kinds of courses like the higher command staff course and like some of the ones that Bill mentioned is a priority. I think it is no accident that the Private Secretaries of most of the ministers and my own have all served in Afghanistan

³ Note from witness: this should read: "... have a shared management, for which DFID will take responsibility, of the Stabilisation Aid Fund and the Conflict Pools, funds from which also cover the costs of discretionary peacekeeping; so our funding for this type of civilian work will be jointly managed by DFID on behalf of the three departments.

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and Iraq; so the people who we signal are on the fast track in the organisation, many of them are ones who have served in these posts and we have sent a very clear signal that these are our best and our brightest and that they will be rewarded for reaching out across Whitehall and learning about cultures in other departments and working in these very tough places.

Q152 Mr Jenkin: On the cost of deploying personnel it is far cheaper to put an Army major into the field than a member of civilian staff and which each may be contributing different things where it is so difficult to deploy civilian staff and therefore so expensive should there not be an element of cooperation between DFID and the Ministry of Defence that certain roles might actually be taken by somebody in uniform? Or should we be creating a new cadre of people who might have a military background but nevertheless be operating in civilian clothing?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: On the last point, one of the things that is being done in terms of building up the 1000 deployable civilians that I mentioned earlier, is to plan on a register basis to have 800 or so of the 1000 from outside government altogether—200 will be civil servants forming a kind of stabilisation cadre of people who will do other jobs but will be pretty readily deployable. Among the 800 though I would be very surprised if there were not quite a lot of ex-service people because they do acquire exactly the sort of resilience and skills you would expect to be able to survive in these sorts of environments.

Sir Peter Ricketts: Mr Jenkin, might I just add one point? I wonder whether your two points are slightly in tension with each other because if we transfer more of these roles to military personnel we will deny the opportunity to get more civilians the experience of working out in the field alongside the military and developing this expertise on stabilisation. I think the most powerful thing that has been driving the culture change in the last few years is a number of members of our staff out there doing it. Over the last five years we have cycled through an awful lot of FCO/DFID people in these places working right alongside the military, learning the culture and coming back into Whitehall and then doing relevant jobs, and that is quite valuable. On the cost point I think there is a debate to be had about that because the cost of deploying a civilian to the field includes a lot of cost of security provided to that individual. I am not sure whether the cost of the major to which you refer also factored in the cost of the infantry company that is there providing the security for that officer as well. So I think we need to be careful that we are comparing like with like.

Q153 Mr Jenkin: That is a brilliant riposte and I am now completely confused.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: The other people I would not omit from this are MoD civil servants. There are 150 or so deployed every year and we have put several thousand through in the last ten years. They work very closely with the military and with representatives of other departments as well; so it is a mixed picture. Like Peter I would not assume that

it necessarily in the end costs more to deploy a civilian than a military officer—it depends what you are accounting for.

Dr Shafik: If I could add one thing? We are in practice doing this. We have 165 people in Helmand in the PRT, 80 of whom are civilians and the rest are military doing civilian tasks. The issue is not whether they are military or civilian; the issue is do they have the right skills for the job.

Q154 Mr Jenkin: Absolutely right.

Dr Shafik: It is not an accident that more of our military staff who are working in Helmand tend to be in the forward operating bases, for example, which are some of the most frontline. A third of the people we have working on civilian tasks on the forward operating bases are former officers. Some of the more esoteric tasks, like helping the Governor of Helmand do his budget for next year and figure out the trade-off between investing in irrigation or wheat seeds is something we tend to have more civilians doing. So, again, it is task specific; we cannot be ideological about where they come from.

Q155 Linda Gilroy: In your memorandum but also in the evidence you have given us thus far this morning you are reporting that good progress has been made in making the Comprehensive Approach work, but I think what it would be helpful for the Committee to have is a sense of what different outcomes are happening, perhaps drawn from experience in Afghanistan or Iraq. What is it that is now happening on the ground that, had there been, for instance, a much more military directed approach, would not be happening? Perhaps I could ask Dr Shafik first and then come to Sir Bill afterwards. What one or two things would you point to that you feel would not be happening were the Comprehensive Approach either not to be in place or not to be working as well as you have given us to believe?

Dr Shafik: Let me try and give a couple of examples of that. In Afghanistan the latest reporting is that they have had the best wheat harvest this century in Afghanistan and they have produced 6.3 million tonnes, making Afghanistan self-sufficient in wheat for the first time ever. And poppy seems to be going down. Over the last year we have had a programme with Governor Mangal to distribute wheat seed in Helmand. We do not know—we are doing the evaluation at the moment to assess the causality of that—is it our wheat seed distribution programme with the Governor that has actually contributed to this record wheat harvest or are other factors at play? We will hopefully be able to tell you empirically clearly soon. But I think that that is an example where that is a programme that we develop with the Governor in collaboration with the FCO working closely with the Governor and his advisers and the military were clearly key for providing the security envelope for that distribution programme and we could not have done that unless that had been a collaborative effort. I will give you another example from another place, just for variety, which is Sierra Leone, where Sierra Leone has already been one of

the most successful examples of the Comprehensive Approach. The UK's military intervention there ended the civil war in 2002, which, as you well know, was one of the bloodiest civil wars in Africa. There we had a joint approach across HMG to transform the security sector, both the Ministry of Defence, the Army and the police and the Office of National Security, and that was a joint programme run by the Ministry of Defence through the IMAT Programme; it was led by the British High Commissioner in Sierra Leone who oversaw this team effort. I think it is no accident that as a result of that strengthening of the security sector in Sierra Leone at the last elections there was an orderly transition of power, the Opposition Party won and they took office in a peaceful manner and there were no security incidents as a result. I think that is another good example where the collaborative approach across defence, diplomacy and development resulted in an extraordinary transition in less than a decade in one of the poorest countries in the world.

Q156 Linda Gilroy: Sir Bill, why should what Dr Shafik has just told us not have happened anyway? What is it about the Comprehensive Approach and working with your colleagues that has delivered that that could not have been directly delivered through a much more military led approach?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: It is partly about skills and it is partly, I would say, about flexibility given that, as I said at the beginning, we are talking here about a spectrum. Sierra Leone is quite a good example of something that moved from being a very hot military operation at the beginning through to a much more civilian dominated affair but with the military involved particularly in giving military support for local people. So I think if this works well it should have a flexibility that ought to deliver better outcomes.

Q157 Linda Gilroy: That has been over a period of about a decade, as Dr Shafik said.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: Yes.

Q158 Linda Gilroy: But of course in Afghanistan we have been there for coming on for a decade now and I am just interested in particular in the wheat example that Dr Shafik gave, as to what is it about the Comprehensive Approach that has delivered that either at all or better than a simply military-led approach perhaps with the resources being deployed through military command and control?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: As I said to Mr Jenkin earlier, it is perfectly possible to conceive of this being done entirely by the military, but think it would be a poorer effort if it were, with great respect to the military. To take the wheat example, I think first of all that such progress as has been made in recent times—and as Dr Shafik says there is quite a bit of analysis going on to work out how much it is about the market, how much it is about the distribution of wheat—has also been attributable to the efforts of the Governor, who is a very capable man as anyone who has met him could testify. What I would say is that the fact we have improved our capability over

the last few years collectively means that when someone with Governor Mangal's ability and drive is appointed to a position like that we are better able to provide the kind of support that might, if we were successful, deliver a reduction in poppy and an increase in alternatives. Of course, it is not straightforward—if it was it would have been done before. It is all about marginal advantage and whether we are better placed to achieve results than we would otherwise have been.

Q159 Linda Gilroy: I suppose what Dr Shafik was describing is a sort of spectrum in which at one point the military is very much in the lead because of the need to create that security envelope and that the transition you described in Sierra Leone has yet really to happen, and when the tipping point comes perhaps we will not even necessarily recognise it.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: I agree with that. The other thing I would argue is that in that early stage, if it is going to be successful, where the position is very insecure and dangerous one has to be realistic about what deployed civilians can achieve. In the very early days—and I read Brigadier Butler's evidence very carefully on this—when Brigadier Butler was distinguishing himself in Northern Helmand the situation was dangerous and realistically the scope for the effective deployment of civilians was much more limited in some parts of Helmand than it is now. So it is about taking advantage where it arises and having the capability there to fill the gap.

Q160 Linda Gilroy: When will the report be ready to which you have referred on the wheat example because that presumably will give some more detail about which bits have contributed towards the success of that?

Dr Shafik: I do not know that but I can find out for you.

Q161 Linda Gilroy: Thank you. Again, you have already discussed very much the strategic development and planning in the Comprehensive Approach and you have given us a pretty positive picture, but if it is now established in the right direction of travel what things are standing in the way of it becoming even stronger? What are the barriers to the Comprehensive Approach being better routed, more successful in the future? Perhaps each one of you could say one thing you would change about how your work and the work of ministers is done on the Comprehensive Approach that would deliver results that will be sustainable over time.

Sir Peter Ricketts: To be honest with the Committee budgets are something that we have to work to overcome. My own observation is that Comprehensive Approach works best of all in the field. If you want to see it really working well then Lashkar Gah or Basra is the place to go, or Kabul. We are learning to make it work in Whitehall and I think it is a lot better than it was, as colleagues have said. The fact that we do still all have accounting officer responsibilities to this Parliament and we are all responsible for our own departmental votes

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means that we have to pay attention to how each department's money is spent, and that means that pooling money, working across departmental boundaries is an excellent thing to do but is not always an easy thing to do. Certainly in the case of the FCO we have struggled to find the budget to do the sorts of deployments in Afghanistan that we have wanted to make, and we are now making the pools work better jointly but the accounting officer structure of government accounting does not make that easy.

Q162 Linda Gilroy: Are there ways in which that can be changed or is it just a feature of it?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Unless we ever got to a point of having a single budget for the Afghanistan operation, which is somehow jointly owned by the three departments, we will have to make the current system work where we are each individually responsible for our own budgets, and yet we want to work collaboratively together. We are making it work but the system is not ideal.

Q163 Chairman: You were arguing against that earlier, were you not?

Sir Peter Ricketts: In what respect, Mr Chairman?

Q164 Chairman: In respect of a single budget with perhaps a single minister in charge of it.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I was not talking so much about a single minister; I was talking about a single pot of money, which would make life easier in terms of across departmental working.

Q165 Linda Gilroy: Sir Bill?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: I think I would say that although we have made progress we are still not where we need to be in terms of being able to deploy the right numbers of the right kinds of civilians, appropriately trained, as rapidly may be needed for the purpose. We are a lot closer to it than we were but that is one of the remaining tasks.

Dr Shafik: It is much easier when you do not have to coordinate with dozens of other allies. So Sierra Leone was the situation where the UK military intervened in 2002; we had an integrated HMG effort; we had to sort out the Comprehensive Approach among us but it was not among 32 allies, each of whom had their own Ministry of Defence and Development Ministry and Foreign Ministry. The variable geometry gets very complicated in Afghanistan, if I may say. Ultimately the Comprehensive Approach can be made to work in a Sierra Leone case where it is one country doing the Comprehensive Approach, or maybe a small group of partners, but I suspect if you were dealing with very complex situations with large numbers of participants you need to multilateralise the problem and that is where I think that the work we are doing collectively to get the UN to be a much more effective deliverer of the Comprehensive Approach itself is probably a very important piece of work.

Q166 Linda Gilroy: I think we will probably be coming on to the international links in a moment, so thank you for that. Can I move on to PRTs and how well they do their work? Does their success depend too much on the personalities of those involved? What can each of your contributions do to mitigate against that, starting with Dr Shafik?

Dr Shafik: In terms of the effectiveness?

Q167 Linda Gilroy: Yes and how dependent are they on the leader person and the personality, the leadership of the group? And what are you doing in one way both to encourage that but also to mitigate it?

Dr Shafik: There is no doubt that leadership matters and I think we have seen when we have had good leaders of PRTs that they are more effective. Having a cadre of people who are experienced in these situations is quite important. The future head of the PRT in Helmand, for example, is somebody who used to be head of DFID's office in Iraq, was head of DFID's programme in Afghanistan and is now going back to run the PRT in Helmand and has a strong track record of working in conflict environments. That is good to build up a cadre of leaders who can do that. I think that the FCO also now has a cadre of people who have that experience. But leaders cannot be the whole story and so the work that we are doing through the Stabilisation Unit and building up the civilian cadre and having other people in the PRT who have experience working in this comprehensive inter-departmental way will reinforce the fact when you do not have the strongest leadership. So I think you have to work on both fronts—the leaders as well as the worker bees that are also need to be embedded with a comprehensive spirit.

Q168 Chairman: How many people in your department speak Pashtu, Dr Shafik?

Dr Shafik: None; in terms of the employees in DFID. But to be honest—

Q169 Chairman: Not one?

Dr Shafik: Not fluently. I think a lot of the people who have served have studied the language and can manage, but to say I have a fluent Pashtu speaker, no.

Q170 Chairman: Is that something that you should perhaps be addressing?

Dr Shafik: We have tended, I have to say, to rely on the FCO for being the linguists and we have tended to recruit people on the basis of their development expertise because they deploy all around the world.

Q171 Chairman: And lots of times to Afghanistan. Should you not be addressing it?

Dr Shafik: Clearly it would be a good thing and we encourage our staff if they are interested, but it is a weakness—it is a weakness.

Mr Jenkin: Chairman, it is only fair to ask the Armed Forces the same question.

Chairman: Do not worry, we will!

Q172 Linda Gilroy: If you would like to cover that?
Dr Shafik: The only other thing I would say is that we rely very heavily on local staff; we have more Afghan staff working for us in Afghanistan than we have UK staff, so a lot of the language issues are addressed by the fact that much of our work is actually being done by Afghans.

Q173 Chairman: How long do you assess the military will be in Afghanistan?

Dr Shafik: I hope the military will not be in there as long as we are, but I think for at least 20 years.

Q174 Robert Key: Chairman, might I ask Dr Shafik how many of your locally employed staff, your Afghan staff speak English?

Dr Shafik: Virtually all of them speak some English. Some of the more lower level administrative staff—not the administrative staff but drivers and so on will not speak very good English, but everyone will speak some; and our professional staff are excellent.

Q175 Linda Gilroy: So the same question about PRTs and how they look and whether they are over-dependent on the leadership on the one hand but what you could do to make sure that every PRT has good leadership.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: I agree with what Minouche said. I think the nature of this beast is such that the person you put in charge of it is going to have a profound impact on how successful this is. I think that the PRTs as entities, the kind of model that we saw when we were last in Lashkar Gah is what we ought to be aiming for with a good mix of military and civilian people with the right skills. The way to make it stronger and more consistently effective is by, as Minouche has described, growing a group of staff who have done quite a bit of this sort of thing. The woman who is about to take over in Lashkar Gah is I think known to the Committee and, as Minouche says, is on her third post of this kind; and that must help if we can get that degree of consistency into it.

Q176 Linda Gilroy: And as far as Pashtu?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: I would need notice about how many of our military colleagues speak Pashtu. I do not think the answer is zero.

Chairman: I think it may be.

Q177 Linda Gilroy: Except that presumably in terms of training the Afghan Army, whether it is zero or not it is an important aspect of what should be done. When I was over there with the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme I saw even quite junior marines sitting down with their colleagues from the Afghan Army and conducting almost mini jirgas with elders—it was put on, a presentation for our purposes. So there seems to be a great thirst at the lower levels but whether at the level of fluency where it could matter quite a bit there is sufficient paid to that, and presumably again does it rely on what the Foreign Office have in the way of Pashtu speakers. Perhaps Peter could deal with that?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: If I could just finish off the point? I think in the military context it would certainly help—no doubt about it. What we tend to do is to rely greatly on local interpreters who certainly from my observation are usually very good.

Q178 Dai Havard: The Gurkhas.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: The other limiting fact inevitably with the military is that we are deploying on a six-monthly cycle quite a significant proportion of the British Army and the Marines. Having said all that, though, it would help if we had more fluent Pashtu speakers.

Q179 Linda Gilroy: Of course some people are now serving second, third, fourth and even more terms of deployment there. Sir Peter.

Sir Peter Ricketts: Ms Gilroy, on your point about leadership I agree with what my colleagues have said—leadership is always important in these operations and a good leader will always make a difference and make an operation better. So, yes, we need to make sure that the leader of our PRT is an effective leader and also can work well in this joint structure that we have with the brigadier who is there. But we also need to have systems in place so that it is not totally reliant on any one individual and there is a strong enough system so that cooperation will work in addition to there being a good leader at the top. I think it is very important and a very powerful signal that the next civilian leader of our operation in Helmand will be a DFID member of staff—I welcome that very much. We do have some Pashtu speakers—I would need to find out how many exactly—but I am sure we could always do with more. We certainly expect to be in Afghanistan and the Pashtu region for the long term. So we need to build up a larger cadre of Pashtu speakers. We are trying to keep some of our key staff rather longer in Afghanistan; for example, our Ambassador who recently came back did almost two years and our current Ambassador will aim to do that sort of length of time as well, to give even more continuity in experience of the country.

Q180 Chairman: What on earth has happened to the language training that the Foreign Office used to give?

Sir Peter Ricketts: Until 2002 we did not have an embassy in Kabul at all and so the need for Pashtu speakers lapsed and our cadre dissipated; so we now need to re-establish it.

Q181 Chairman: Are you going to concentrate on that?

Sir Peter Ricketts: We have many other calls—we need also to be generating speakers of the languages where we have to operate around the world—but, among other things, yes, we intend to build up more of a cadre of Pashtu speakers.

Q182 Linda Gilroy: But given the priority that Afghanistan has and the length of time that we appear to be committed to there, surely it should be featuring as a priority for everyone to one degree or

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another, but particularly for the Foreign Office contribution to making this work. Can I just move to one last question in this series on the length of postings on both PRTs and also military postings? Dr Shafik, you have just mentioned that there is to be a new head of PRT; can you just remind the Committee what the length of postings is as head of PRT and what your view on the length of posting is. Is it something that is registered as an issue with you? Is thought given to it? Is there debate about it?

Dr Shafik: Most civilians serving in Afghanistan now are serving for at least a year and many are extending beyond the year, which I think is a good thing. I know that there has been an issue raised by some about the six-weeks on, two-weeks off tours that civilians do. I think actually that that is incredibly important for our ability to have people serve long tours. I often say that the military are running a sprint and the civilians are running a marathon and the longer we can keep the civilians there it is absolutely essential for the nature of their work; the continuity of relationships with their Afghan counter parts are key; the programmes that they are delivering take years to deliver and they are playing a different role to the military. It would not be right to ask the soldiers to serve for more than six months, but anything that we could do to get civilians to stay longer is a good thing. Of course it has to be voluntary and that is the basis on which we deploy people. But I do think we have been more successful. We now have a very manageable level of vacancies and we actually do not have any difficulty filling our posts and I think that reflects the fact that we finally have—it has taken us time—a package which means that the work is both professionally rewarding, safe and is recognised in the organisation.

Q183 Linda Gilroy: Sir Bill, Dr Shafik suggested that six-month deployments are necessary as far as military is concerned but we have had debates with people who have given us evidence on our Afghanistan inquiry particularly previously at which it appears that some of the more senior levels people are thinking that there should be consideration given to longer deployments and that there would be advantages to the success of the deployments from that. What is your current view on that?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: In terms of the generality of ground troops there is no current intention to move away from six-month deployments. What has been recognised by senior military commanders is that there are other key posts at officer level where consistently with the shorter deployments of the ground troops we can arrange for longer postings. The current deputy commander of ISAF is there on a 12-month posting. We will do the same when we take over the command of RC South in a few months' time, and some of the key posts in Task Force Helmand at officer level will be held for longer than six months. The particularly difficult issue is actually the commander of the Task Force because as this Committee knows very well there is definitely a benefit in deploying a brigadier with his brigade, as it were. On the other hand, what we have been trying

to do is to find other senior posts where continuity does make a difference and to have extended tours for the holders of these posts.

Dai Havard: Can I go back to the question of resources on the ground? The PRT: the question I have written down here is do they have access to sufficient funding and authority to make a difference? That is the question. What I would like to understand is, there is going to be a big change in Helmand and we have seen in Helmand when we have visited the improved coordination within and amongst the PRT and with local people over a period of time. The US are now there in numbers and will be there in greater numbers. Their approach to delivering in a PRT is very different to the Brits, so we may have improved our coordination and we may have improved our delivery but it could be somewhat disturbed by a new environment: for example, commanders' funds to certain money that the military have and the way in which our military can actually use money or whether they have any commanders' funds, as they used to be used. So could you say something about what your forward look is about how that is likely to be changed or disturbed because we have one view of a Comprehensive Approach that could well be changed somewhat in the near future?

Chairman: Except that I want to limit the approach to the British area.

Dai Havard: Can we limit it to how the money will work because part of it is how we put money in, is through supporting government organisations and the Americans do not do that either; they have a different way of supporting the local people. So how do you see the money is going to flow?

Q184 Chairman: We are just about to come on to the difference between the British approach and American approaches in other questions.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: If I could say something about Helmand in response to what Mr Havard has just raised? It is undoubtedly the case that we are now seeing the influx of significantly larger numbers of US forces and it is extremely welcome. Precisely how all that settles I do not think we know in any detail yet, but what is already clear is that at the level of Commander ISAF—and I would expect as a new Commander ISAF takes over with a very strong counter insurgency background this will continue to be the case. There is an appreciation of what we have achieved in Lashkar Gah in particular and my sense is that will probably carry on broadly as it is now. But you are right to draw attention to the issue because the arrival of significant numbers of US troops, welcome as it will be, will undoubtedly change the dynamics quite significantly.

Q185 Dai Havard: The PRT currently there is led by the Brits, is it not?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: Yes.

Q186 Dai Havard: There are Danes, Estonians and there is some US there already because we spoke to US aid people over there. So is it going to be led by

the Brits and will it be a Brit approach or will it be something else, in terms of how the money is deployed into that PRT?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: My current expectation is that it will carry on broadly as it is now, but I would like to just check my facts on that and if I am misleading the Committee in any way I will arrange for a note to be provided.

Q187 Dai Havard: So we could have the Brits continuing to use the money in the way we will use the money and alongside it there could be a parallel operation by the US?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: I think there is an appreciation that in the areas in which we have been operating—and there may be some adjustments in these areas as a consequence of the arrival of US troops—we have begun to get traction and have some impact, and that I think will lead to, broadly speaking, the continuation of the status quo.

Q188 Robert Key: Could I just return for one moment to what Sir Peter Ricketts was saying about language? No one expects all our embassy staff in every country of the world to be fluent in the language of the country in which they are working; however, I seem to recall that in years gone by the Foreign Office did have a language school of its own; does that still exist?

Sir Peter Ricketts: No. We closed down our own in-house school and we now train our people using professional language training facilities in universities and specialist organisations around London and out in the field.

Q189 Robert Key: You said that you intend to increase the number of Pashtu speakers, which implies that you are not at the moment, and that this is an aspiration; is that right?

Sir Peter Ricketts: We have some and I want to have more.

Q190 Robert Key: Is that constrained by your budget?

Sir Peter Ricketts: No. We have the funds we need to train people.

Q191 Robert Key: I would anticipate that your staff would be in the lead very often in contact with the local community and therefore it is absolutely key that you should have enough people speaking the language in the country in which you are operating.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I absolutely accept that.

Q192 Robert Key: Could I turn to Dr Shafik and ask how difficult it is for DFID staff to work with local nationals in delivering successful outcomes?

Dr Shafik: I would not say it is difficult at all. It is our priority. Our whole approach is about building Afghan capacity and the fewer UK civilians we have to deploy and the more Afghans we can get to do it themselves the more successful we are.

Q193 Robert Key: But you have to operate within a dominant military environment, do you not? Is that a problem in itself? Does it constrain how easily you can move around and so on?

Dr Shafik: On balance the military is incredibly useful to us in terms of getting us to places where we otherwise would not be able to go. It is an issue for the NGO community who we sometimes work with and I know that the Red Cross submission to this Committee emphasised the difficulties for the NGOs of working in a military environment. It is less of an issue for DFID officials.

Sir Peter Ricketts: Could I interject with one point just to broaden the focus because a lot of our discussion has been about Helmand but the British presence in Afghanistan is not just in Helmand. DFID and FCO staff are also in significant numbers in Kabul where we are working every day with the ministries, with all sorts of groups in Kabul. In Helmand we have improved the capacity of our civilians to get out from the PRT, to get downtown to Lashkah Gar, to get around to Garmsir and Musa Qala and places like that and be operating on the ground. Now several times a day there are journeys out of our staff from the PRT to go and engage, with the governor or the sub-governor, with organisations around the province. Excuse my interjection.

Q194 Robert Key: No; that was very helpful. Last week Professor Chalmers of King's College London and Bradford told us that we had to distinguish between two sorts of NGOs, those who are sub-contracted to provide particular services and those who are operating completely independently and who might be willing to co-ordinate their activity but are independent actors on the ground. How difficult is it to work with those two different kinds of NGOs?

Dr Shafik: Many NGOs, particularly the humanitarian ones, place a very high premium on their independence and neutrality, and it is the key to their own security. We consult with them regularly. They have said quite clearly that it is very important for them not to be seen as agents of the military because their security is then jeopardised. They provide a vital service and the more NGOs we have operating in places like Afghanistan the better off we are, and in order to work with them we have worked with the Scandinavians and developed guidelines for engagement with NGOs in armed conflict for Afghanistan and the ISAF troops have signed up to those guidelines. For example, we do things like we do not meet with them in the PRT; we meet with them outside in neutral territory so they are not seen to be implicated as agents of the military presence. I would not say it is difficult but we do have to be sensitive to their concerns, particularly because it jeopardises their effectiveness if we are not sensitive.

Q195 Robert Key: In terms of our relations with, for example, the Americans, who operate their Commanders Emergency Response Programme; they regard money as an alternative weapon, does

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this lead to a sort of bidding war between the Americans and the British and other players? Is there a real conflict between the two approaches?

Dr Shafik: At some level, yes. Just to give an illustration, the Afghan government's budget this year is about \$4 billion. The CERP programme, the US military walking-around money, as they call it, is about \$750 million. It is equivalent to all the revenues raised by the Afghan state. There is something wrong with that picture, and our view is that unless the Afghan government is seen to be delivering security and basic services to its own population it will never be seen as legitimate and credible and able to have a writ over their country, and so ultimately we feel very strongly that the majority of our aid money should go through the Afghan government and that is a difference in approach from the American approach. We are actively discussing this with the Americans and the new administration is more sympathetic to this approach because they realise that in the end your only exit strategy is for the Afghans to do it themselves, and so unless we get them used to managing money and raising their own revenue and spending it responsibly you will be there for ever.

Chairman: We are just about to come on to the international tensions.

Q196 Robert Key: Could I finish my questions by asking particularly about the role of women in all of this? Security Council Resolution 1325, particularly at Article 8(c), calls on all actors negotiating and implementing peace agreements to adopt a gender perspective ensuring the respect for the human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary. How does this work in a country like Afghanistan, and how do you know whether or not you are getting through to the women, who generally speaking are never asked for their opinion and are never a part of the delivery mechanism, or am I completely wrong?

Dr Shafik: Yes.

Q197 Robert Key: You mean, yes, I am wrong?

Dr Shafik: No, it was more "yes" as I gather my thoughts. As you know, the UK was one of the first countries to have a national action plan for implementing UNSCR 1325 and it is very ably led by the Foreign Office. We implement this in many different ways. The Stabilisation Unit includes training on UNSCR 1325 in all of its training programmes as part of pre-deployment, so before we deploy people we train them and sensitise them to these issues. We have gender expertise in our civilian database. We do lesson-learning on working with women in countries in conflict like Iraq, like Afghanistan, like Sudan, and we share that around. Clearly, in Afghanistan we have to adapt the way we work. Probably the biggest impact we have had is getting two million Afghan girls into schools, although, as you know, that is a struggle because the Taliban consistently target teachers of girls and have assassinated dozens of them in the last couple of years. However, we also do other things. For

example, we have a micro finance programme in Afghanistan which we have been running for many years, the vast majority of the beneficiaries of which are Afghan women who have proved to be incredibly creditworthy and repay their loans and have developed small businesses as a result of that, but clearly we have adapted that programme by having female loan officers who go out and collect the payments. We have found ways to work with women in Afghanistan. We have probably been less successful at having them participate in the political reconciliation and political process. They have probably been less visible. We have been more successful in other countries, like Sudan, where we supported making sure that women were at the table in the Darfur peace talks. We had more room to manoeuvre in that context.

Q198 Linda Gilroy: I wonder if there is an element of conflict between what you were describing just now as the very understandable wish to build capacity amongst Afghans by putting the aid money through the national government but on the other hand narrowly avoiding setback to women under the legal system, largely through the intervention of the UK Government. Is there a tension there in trying to secure women, not just in parliament, where, of course, both Iraq and Afghanistan have got a good record thanks to the work of the NGOs in making sure that happened, and how can you move in the right direction of travel rather than, as was narrowly avoided recently, in the wrong direction of travel in these things?

Dr Shafik: We do not put all of our money through the Afghan government. We also support NGOs and women's groups alongside that to empower women to claim more rights in the country. That is one mechanism and I will let Peter say a bit more.

Sir Peter Ricketts: You are right: there could be a tension because we are putting our money through the Afghan government and the Afghan government will in the end take its own decisions on the policies it wants to adopt, but the fact that we have maintained such a close relationship with the Afghan government in many of these areas means that if there is a problem, like there was over this issue recently, we can raise it with them and press President Karzai very hard to change his mind, which in the end he did. I think that is the way we have to resolve the tension. I do think you are right to point to the role of women in the Afghan parliament, which certainly has been significant, and I would hope to see in the forthcoming elections plenty of women returned to the Afghan parliament so that they can continue to exercise influence there.

Q199 Linda Gilroy: The action plan which Dr Shafik mentioned, which I believe is in the ownership of the FCO to lead, was published I think in 2006. However, because it is of such significance, a Comprehensive Approach cannot be a Comprehensive Approach unless it embraces, in both the civilian population but also in the people who are trying to help them, a good contribution

from women. Has there been an update on the implementation of the 2006 action plan and, if so, can we see it?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I do not know the answer but I would be happy to provide a note on the implementation of the 1325 action plan, particularly in relation to Afghanistan, which I think is the area you are looking at.⁴ I know that we have got some progress to report on, for example, what we have been doing to promote Afghan women in the justice system, in the police force, in the civilian agencies.

Q200 Linda Gilroy: I think a note would be very helpful on that, Chairman.

Sir Peter Ricketts: We will provide one for you.

Q201 Linda Gilroy: May I finally return to Dr Shafik? I think I am right in saying that as of the end of last year, of the then 30 current peace operations going on, which I know you range across, the ones under the UN, there was only female chief of mission to the UN Secretary-General Special Representative to Liberia, Ellen Margrethe Løj from Denmark. Has there been any progress since then? Are you, as a leading person in the international field of reconstruction and peace building, aware of whether the momentum to try and achieve more in that respect is going in the right direction, or is it stalled?

Dr Shafik: We have pressed very hard and we think this is quite a high priority. I cannot say there has been much progress since the one case that you identify, but it is something on which we have pushed the UN system very hard. More broadly, we have pushed the UN system to create a body for gender in the UN system, because at the moment gender issues are spread out and fragmented across a variety of agencies and there is no strong voice for women in the UN system, which is mad given that it is the majority of the world's population.

Q202 Linda Gilroy: And how can a Comprehensive Approach be comprehensive unless there is a very great deal more attention paid to this? Can any of you tell me, for instance, what proportion of the population in Afghanistan is female? After 20 or 30 years of warfare I believe that it is not the 50/50 balance that would exist in a developed country.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I am sure that is true.

Linda Gilroy: Does anybody know?

Q203 Chairman: I think the answer is you cannot because there has not been a census for a long time.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I think your assumption is absolutely right.

Linda Gilroy: I have heard people say that 60 or 70% of the population in Afghanistan is female.

Q204 Mr Crausby: It is highly unlikely, is it not, that we will be involved in any major conflict without at least one coalition partner, so how well does the Government work with international bodies such as the United Nations, the European Union and in particular NATO?

Sir Peter Ricketts: I had better declare an interest to the Committee in that I was Ambassador for NATO so I have a particular interest in and affection for the Alliance. I think you are right that we would assume that any major military commitment these days would be made in conjunction with the United States and other allies. We have learned a lot from the NATO experience of having to build up a really significant military operation in Afghanistan from the slow start five years ago, and I think that the UK is a very influential voice. We are going to go now in NATO to the drafting of a new strategic concept which will update the present one which is now more than ten years old and which I hope will embody the lessons that we have learned as an Alliance, including the implementation of a Comprehensive Approach involving good planning between civilian and military components, and I think in NATO we have now the opportunity. In the EU the European Security and Defence Policy has developed in a slightly different direction from the one we imagined when we set it up ten years ago. We are not talking about the deployment of 60,000 men under EU command. It has tended to go to smaller operations, more of the political/military kind involving civilian and military, classic Comprehensive Approach territory, and the piracy operation that we were referring to at the beginning of the hearing is a good example of the EU taking on leadership of a relatively small but very complex and sensitive mission involving civilian components as well. Again, we are, I think, an influential voice in the development of the European capacity. As for the UN, we are acutely concerned at the pressure that UN peacekeeping is under. More and more UN peacekeeping missions have been created by the Security Council. There is quite a small headquarters staff, nothing like the planning and command capacity that NATO has, and they are very overstretched so we are pressing hard to reform the DPKO, the part of the UN Secretariat that deals with peacekeeping, to cope with the rising number of peacekeeping missions and the complexity of what they are doing, but that is an area of real importance for the future and it is one where we have not yet got the international capacity we need.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: I agree with all of that. The thing I would say is that the thinking we have been discussing throughout this session is increasingly embedded in these big international organisations. I was at an event yesterday evening in Paris involving the new Secretary-General of NATO and in his remarks there was a passage that could have come from any of our exchanges this morning, so I think the general approach that we have been discussing is well understood. As Dr Shafik was saying earlier, trying to operate it within the Alliance across national as well as departmental boundaries is a degree harder, I think. Mr Havard remarked earlier that Lashkar Gah PRT is British led but has Americans, Estonians and Danes, I think, among its members. There may be a model there, that if one country is prepared to lead then others can join in. There is no doubt, as Dr Shafik was implying earlier, and this points to one of your earlier questions, that

⁴ See Ev 160.

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operationally this thinking across alliances is even more challenging than what we have been trying to do nationally in the last few years.

Dr Shafik: We speak the same language more or less. I think the only thing I would add would be on the UN. The UN is clearly moving in the direction of taking a more Comprehensive Approach to the creation of what they call integrated missions, which include peacekeeping and diplomats as well as development efforts. However, it is not there yet, and I think the Foreign Secretary helpfully chaired a session of the Security Council last year which looked at the deficiencies in the UN's approach and focused particularly on the UN's lack of a coherent strategy, lack of capacity and lack of pooled funding for it to support integrated missions. They need to do a lot of the same things that we have tried to learn to do better—better capacity on the ground, better common action against a single strategy, more deployable civilian capacity, faster and more flexible funding. It is a very similar agenda. Having said that, even though we are not there yet it is worth making the investment because the evidence is clear. Academic research shows that peacekeeping missions reduce the probability of conflict by 85%, and if we can avoid a recurrence of war it is worth struggling through the managerial and administrative constraints that we are struggling with.

Q205 Mr Crausby: Thinking particularly about NATO and working on the NATO command, does NATO have any concept of a Comprehensive Approach on the same basis that we would think about it? I know what you say about the new strategic concept, but how could we incorporate a Comprehensive Approach into the new strategic concept? Is that too big a task?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: On the contrary, it is very likely to happen. It is notable how many of recent communiqués after NATO meetings, for example, have included language that very much reflects the Comprehensive Approach thinking. It may not always be described as that but it is embedded to my knowledge in the thinking of many of our partners, including the Danes and the Dutch, to take the most obvious examples. I think it is there and I do not think it will be difficult to reflect it in the new strategic concept that NATO will be working towards now. The issue is more about operationalising it in practice because that is where it gets challenging.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I am absolutely sure that this is going to be a key issue for the new strategic concept and, as Bill says, the new Secretary-General as well as the outgoing Secretary-General are very committed to this. I know at SHAPE it is now the normal practice in planning for operations to plan in the civilian component, so that there is a cell at SHAPE for NGOs, there are civilian cells at SHAPE which are there to ensure that the military planning includes planning for how the NATO military operation will fit with civilian actors. What NATO will not be able to do is, as it were, take under a NATO command the civilian part of the overall

Comprehensive Approach. They will not, I think, do police training. They will not do building governance or development work as NATO but in developing their NATO plan they will make sure that they plan in how they will fit with civilian actors and that is important.

Q206 Mr Crausby: What about working with the Americans? In normal circumstances they have much greater resources, much greater numbers. Are we not in danger of being completely swamped by their Comprehensive Approach rather than our concept of it? Is it possible to work together with the Americans in relation to the size of our contribution?

Sir Peter Ricketts: First of all, I think it is possible, yes. We have been working hard with the Americans since the arrival of the new administration on their new strategy, and their new Afghanistan strategy, which the President announced some weeks ago, I think reflects a lot of discussion and consultation with us and it is a strategy that, as our ministers have said, we are very comfortable with, so the overall framework inside which the Americans are working is one that we are very comfortable with. Their style of operation, as my colleagues have said, can be different. Of course, their scale is much bigger than ours, but they are planning that their own surge will take place across the whole of the south and east of Afghanistan. We will still remain very significant actors in Helmand province and I think the Americans will want to work closely with us and we with them there, so I do not think they are going to overwhelm us in Helmand and I think the direction of their strategy is one that we are comfortable with.

Sir Bill Jeffrey: It is possible, I think, to over-caricature the American approach as an entirely military-heavy one. They too have learned a great deal over the last few years and I sense that the thinking is in fact quite close, as Peter has implied, to ours. They tend to quote the whole government approach but in essence they are talking about the same thing.

Sir Peter Ricketts: For example, they are generating several hundred more state department civilian advisers to deploy across Afghanistan and so they are tackling the same sorts of issues as we have been tackling in terms of increasing the civilian part of their Comprehensive Approach.

Q207 Linda Gilroy: Dr Shafik rightly pointed to the fact that conflict costs an awful lot of money and it was interesting to hear you say that there could well be a place for a Comprehensive Approach within the new security approach. Has anybody done any work on how investing money in conflict, peace-building and reconstruction and those aspects of future conflict prevention is actually a worthwhile investment in terms of avoiding going back to future conflict? I think I am right in saying that about 50% of conflicts become conflicts again within ten years and therefore presumably the whole approach to improving that, perhaps reducing it to 10% of conflicts recurring within a ten-year period, would

be something which would be helpful to governments, not just nationally but in international discussions on trying to put money into this.

Dr Shafik: You are quite right—there has been some work on this. Paul Collier's work shows that the average economic cost of a conflict is equivalent to all global aid in a particular year, and so every conflict you avoid is saving tens of billions of dollars in terms of losses that could be avoided. That is partly why we have created the conflict pools, because, like in the health sector, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. An ounce of conflict prevention is worth many pounds of conflict engagement and the conflict pools were really an attempt to set aside resources for conflict prevention because when you are in a conflict those resources are the first to be raided. Much of the work that we do on conflict prevention under the pools is that kind of slow, painstaking investment in political reconciliation and compromise which is essential for avoiding the very high cost of conflicts which would otherwise result.

Q208 Mr Havard: On the question of where the Comprehensive Approach is going, it builds on some of the things we have just been talking about in a sense. Our definition, as I understand it from your memorandum, is that it is a philosophy, a framework, that has to be adapted and adopted in different operational circumstances, not a prescribed way of doing things, a description of how you do joined-up working and so on, so in a sense pretty obvious—it is a matter of how you do it operationally. However, the first test for how it is going to work is currently in Afghanistan and there is this different approach from the US. Their idea seems to be this whole government approach, be it enabling Afghans, the bottom-up approach, or this business of taking lessons from Iraq. It would seem that building the Afghan Public Protection Force from the Arbaki is a little like the stuff they did with the Sunnis in the north and so on, so there are lessons learned out of all these exercises that we have already been jointly involved in. Can you say what you think is going to be the future of the Comprehensive Approach if we are going to look at things, also not within individual countries but much more on a regional problem basis, for example, Pakistan and Afghanistan together, where there are aid programmes meant to supplement and support one another, so the Comprehensive Approach would be the British one, the American one, it will be in single country, it will also be on a regional basis? How do you see the Comprehensive Approach fitting into that emerging picture?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: I think that if you ask what the future of the Comprehensive Approach is, in Afghanistan there is a job still on and it is principally carrying on doing better, if we can, in terms of the things we have been talking about all morning. For the future, I agree that if we view Afghanistan and Pakistan strategically as being the connected issues that they are, we definitely need to think through what that means, given that in one case we are there in large numbers by invitation of the government; in another

are we talking about a sovereign government (not that Afghanistan isn't such a Government) that is dealing increasingly with its own internal security challenges. The point I would make about the future more strongly is the one that came out of your evidence with the academics, which is that we really must learn the lessons, we must not get to the point where, after all this experience and all this improvement on the job, the next time one of these international challenges comes along we go back to square one. Quite a lot of what among the three departments we are considering at the moment is how we can best learn these lessons and pull them together so that our successors are building on previous experience rather than reinventing it.

Sir Peter Ricketts: For me it is, as you say, essentially a frame of mind. It is an assumption that you will do the job better if you work together, and we do now have ten years' worth of officials who have had to work together through these difficult international crises. I think the key thing is that we do not have to learn that again. If we do we move on now from a phase where we have had two or three major military operations going on at the same time and all the civilian work alongside them to a period where perhaps we have fewer major military operations. We have got to preserve the spirit of joint working and the knowledge of each other and each other's cultures that we have developed over the last decade. That for me is what the future of the Comprehensive Approach should be about.

Dr Shafik: One of the decisions that we took recently was to find a way to upgrade the role of the Stabilisation Unit. We have got a joint team working at the moment discussing what the future of the Stabilisation Unit should be, what capacities it needs to house, and I think that will be one mechanism for us in ensuring that the lessons are embodied in the bit of Whitehall that we jointly own. There is just one other thing I would say in terms of the future of the Comprehensive Approach. One of the lessons we have learned is that the whole security and justice and police set of issues was something that we probably underestimated in the earlier days, and I think we realise that we need to strengthen our capacity in that area. I do think we have to keep pushing on multilateralising some of this capacity, given the complexity of future operations and the need to be able to have multilateral instruments to use in the future. That is why we are investing a lot in the UN Secretary-General's peace building report which will be coming out shortly, which we are hoping will position the UN to be a much more effective deliverer of the Comprehensive Approach in many parts of the world.

Q209 Mr Havard: There seems to be almost a Comprehensive Approach emerging on the security side and a Comprehensive Approach emerging amongst development. Pulling them together is a real Comprehensive Approach. That is the trick; that seems to be the tension. Within doing that, in terms of who can deliver and how they can deliver, have you got anything to say about the development of forms of reconstruction forces, because the

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military clearly are doing tasks that they should not really be doing and there are others who are not doing tasks that they should be doing? What is the way forward? Are there military standing forces that need to be established or is there some in-between model of the sort that Ed Butler was starting to outline for us in our last evidence session? There is a mixture of standing forces, statutory bodies, contracting organisations, that are partly reservist and so on. Is there an appetite for that sort of discussion or is that something that is being dismissed and we are going to continue to work with the current agencies that we have?

Sir Bill Jeffrey: I think there is an appetite for that sort of discussion. We need to be clear about the military doing what the military can do. It is quite striking that we have not spent much time this morning talking about the role of contractors in the private sector. They undoubtedly have such a role and a number of people are thinking perhaps a little more imaginatively about how that can be developed.

Sir Peter Ricketts: I am sure that we need to have that discussion, and certainly we would not dismiss any of those ideas. The idea that we are developing through our Stabilisation Unit is of a deployable cadre of people with experience of these conflict areas, contractors but also civil servants who will be a bigger pool we can draw on when we need to mobilise people, but we are bound to need help from contractors in the private sector and from the military. I think the dosage of those various elements is something that we need to go on working on. Partly it depends on available funding, partly on decisions of principle about how far the military want to be used for these sorts of reconstruction tasks, but I think there is a very open mind in Whitehall on all that.

Dr Shafik: I should also say that we benefit greatly from the military support. There were several projects that we had to deliver in Iraq that we could not have done if the military had not provided us

with a security envelope to move vast water pumps across southern Iraq, and we also work very closely with them in a wide variety of humanitarian situations around the world where we do not have, for whatever reason, commercial options to deliver humanitarian aid. The military on a number of occasions has helped us by providing air lift, ships, whatever we need to get emergency supplies into humanitarian crises, and that is something we are also very grateful for.

Q210 Mr Havard: Do you think that attitude is shared by the NGO community with which you work?

Dr Shafik: I think the NGO community is completely fine about DFID using the military to provide support to humanitarian operations. I think it is more problematic for them in-country for the NGOs themselves to be seen as instruments of or being serviced by the military, although there have been some occasions when they have certainly been very grateful for help on transport, for example.

Q211 Mr Havard: And their relationship with the quasi-commercial organisations being involved in that, would that change the view, as opposed to governmental organisations?

Dr Shafik: How do the NGOs feel about working with commercial contractors? Contractors who are delivering development or military?

Q212 Mr Havard: Possibly both.

Dr Shafik: I do not think they have much engagement, to be honest, on the military side, but they certainly have no issues about dealing with the ones who are delivering development services and work quite closely with them.

Chairman: Thank you all very much indeed for that evidence session. It was extremely interesting, most helpful, and I think we got to the bottom of a number of important questions. For this unique session we are most grateful.

Tuesday 30 June 2009

Members present:

Mr James Arbuthnot, in the Chair

Mr David Crausby
Mr David Hamilton
Mr Mike Hancock
Mr Dai Havard
Mr Adam Holloway

Mr Bernard Jenkin
Mr Brian Jenkins
Mrs Madeleine Moon
Richard Younger-Ross

Witnesses: **General John McColl**, Deputy Supreme Allied Command Europe, **Mr Martin Howard**, Assistant Secretary General for Operations, NATO, **Mr Nick Williams**, Deputy to the NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Kabul, and **Mr Robert Cooper**, Director-General for External and Politico-Military Affairs, General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, gave evidence.

Q213 Chairman: Good morning and welcome to a further evidence session on the Comprehensive Approach. We are very grateful to our extremely distinguished panel of witnesses this morning. We have, I am afraid, a limited amount of time, so we will try to rush through many of the questions, and I hope you will do your utmost to give concise answers, but I wonder whether you could perhaps begin by introducing yourselves. May we start with you, General McColl? You are the Deputy SACEUR.

General McColl: I am the Deputy SACEUR.

Q214 Chairman: Tell us a bit more. You have also been a special adviser to President Karzai?

General McColl: As DSACEUR I am also, in my EU hat, the Operational Commander for the EU operations in Bosnia, which is our theatre. So that is what I am doing at the moment. In previous lives I have been the Prime Minister's Special Envoy to President Karzai for a year, and I commanded the first ISAF deployment.

Mr Howard: I am the Assistant Secretary General for Operations. Before that I was Director of Operational Policy in the Ministry of Defence dealing with Afghanistan, Iraq and other operational commitments. In my current job I provide the POL/MIL end of NATO's planning and conduct of current operations, and that is obviously dominated by Afghanistan but also covers Kosovo, Iraq and also the work we are now doing on counter-piracy.

Mr Williams: My name is Nick Williams. I am currently Deputy to the NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Kabul, before that I was deployed by the Ministry of Defence as a political adviser to NATO forces in Kandahar and before that I had served twice as Political Adviser in Iraq and twice in the Balkans, once for the EU and once for the Ministry of Defence.

Mr Cooper: I am Robert Cooper. I am Director General for External Affairs at the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union. More easily explained, I work for Javier Solana. Mine is the level within the Council Secretariat that brings together the political and the operational. Perhaps I should also say, I also have a little bit of Afghanistan in my history, as I was for a while the

British Government's envoy on Afghanistan, and I have a little bit of British Balkans background as well, because I used to chair the committees on the Balkans.

Q215 Chairman: Thank you. Some of you have given evidence to us before, and we are grateful for you coming to see us again, so it cannot have been too awful! During the course of our inquiry we have put a question to some of our witnesses about how well we are doing on the Comprehensive Approach. On a scale of one to ten, are we doing well, are we just at the beginning stages of the Comprehensive Approach or are we nearly there? Professor Farrell said, for example, that "you need to distinguish between where we are in Whitehall and the Departments versus the field", and he said, "I think we are making reasonable progress in the field, so maybe a six in the field and a four here", i.e. in Whitehall, but then he said, "Where we are with NATO, NATO is back at one or two." Brigadier Butler said, "I agree entirely with the NATO coalition piece; it is nudging one and a half." They suggest that NATO is in the very early stages of the Comprehensive Approach. How would you suggest that NATO should adapt to bring the Comprehensive Approach more to the fore of what they are doing? General McColl, can I start asking you that, and I wonder if I could ask you that—you might give different answers, I do not know—first as the Deputy SACEUR in relation to NATO and, second, the vision that you have had of it as seen as the special adviser to President Karzai? You might have a different perspective on it.

General McColl: Thank you, Chairman. I have read the testimony of others that have appeared before you, so I understand the opinions of Brigadier Butler. The first thing I would say is that the Comprehensive Approach is undoubtedly viewed as being important by NATO. There have been a series of agreements. In April 2008 there was an action plan produced by NATO and there was a Comprehensive Strategic Political Military Plan, which Martin is better able to talk about than I, produced by NATO. In September 2008 there was a meeting between the UN and NATO, an agreement rather, and in April 2009 there was a declaration by heads of state of government which included a

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confirmation of the priority afforded to the Comprehensive Approach. I was at a meeting of all the military commanders in Allied Command Operations and Allied Command Transformation (which makes up NATO) last week, and we were asked what we wanted to see in the new strategic concept, and number one on that list was clarity of the Comprehensive Approach, what NATO meant by it and how we might deliver it. So, in terms of the importance of it, I think there is no doubt that within the military aspects of NATO, on which I am best able to comment, there is huge importance attached to it. In terms of where we stand, I think there is also no doubt that NATO is considerably further back than the UK, if you were to mark them, and that is because it is significantly more difficult for NATO to reach agreement on these matters, and perhaps we can go into that later on. I can go into that, but I do not think you will want me to do it right now. It is far more difficult for NATO to do that than the UK. Whereas from where I sit in my NATO position, I would have to say that when I look at the UK, in comparison to other nations, it is often commented to me that the UK is joined up in this respect. When you look inside the UK and understand the various difficulties that we have in delivering that Comprehensive Approach, it may not appear quite like that to us, and there are difficulties and there are areas where we can make improvement. In terms of where does NATO stand, I would agree, the marking given by Brigadier Butler is quite harsh, and I am not sure that he was quite aware of the commitments given and the progress made since April last year, but given the fact that it has really only been since last year that we have given ourselves a commitment to do this, it is not surprising that the UK—which has been at this for slightly longer—has made far greater progress.

Q216 Chairman: Is it more difficult because it is a military alliance?

General McColl: It is more difficult because it is primarily a political alliance and, in order to move forward on something as complex as the Comprehensive Approach, you need consensus from all nations and there are a number of obstacles to that. The first—and I would describe it as the primary obstacle—is our relationship with the EU. As you go round capitals, you will find capitals outdoing each other in explaining how important they view the relationship between NATO and the EU, and yet the reality on the ground is somewhat different, and the reason for that is because there are some nations who deem it unacceptable for us to sign a security agreement with the EU. What that means, therefore, for example, when the PSC and the NAC meet—I take it we know what the PSC is: it is the European equivalent of the NAC—they only have one item on the agenda, they can only have one item on the agenda, and that is Bosnia, because that is under the Berlin Plus arrangements. They cannot talk about the other theatres into which we are both deployed—Afghanistan and Kosovo—in the counter-piracy arena. Let us Afghanistan: in Afghanistan we have been unable to sign an

agreement between ourselves and the European Police Mission that is deployed. The European Police Mission has had to sign separate agreements with every nation that runs a PRT on a bilateral basis: because we do not have security between NATO and the EU. Similarly, we have not been able to develop a tracker system which shows where the EU vehicles are and NATO vehicles are: because we cannot pass classified information from NATO to the EU. So the only system we are going to be able to develop (and it has taken two years and we are not there yet) is one which demonstrates where EU vehicles are to NATO vehicles, not where NATO is to the EU. I am sorry, I am going on a bit, but I am demonstrating, I hope, that one of the key difficulties we have in developing the Comprehensive Approach within NATO is the fact that, despite the best of intentions and good work on the ground by people who are making this work, there are practical obstacles to the operation because of the issue of a security field. I think I will stop there.

Q217 Chairman: Okay. Mr Howard, can you expand on that or add whatever you would like to the question I asked?

Mr Howard: Let me start with the evidence you had before from Brigadier Butler and others. I thought, like General McColl, that was a rather harsh marking, and I think it does not reflect what has happened since April 2008. General McColl mentioned the Comprehensive Political Military Plan that we drew up and endorsed at Bucharest in April 2008. This is the first time that NATO has actually pulled together a true political military plan, as opposed to a military operational plan, to guide civil military activity in Afghanistan. It was a major undertaking. It was agreed by 28 allies and 14 partner nations and in that sense had a lot of political buy-in and, for the first time, gives a proper POL/MIL framework for the conduct of the campaign in Afghanistan. In that sense I would submit that at the strategic headquarters level it is by no means perfect, but it is not a bad example of the Comprehensive Approach being made to work and it is now guiding what we do. In terms of the distinction between what happens on the ground and NATO headquarters, I recognise the picture that your witnesses talked about in respect of the UK also applies to NATO. I think co-operation on the ground, as General McColl says, is generally pretty good, though it is hampered by some issues that he has raised. At the headquarters level, I still think there is a little way to go, despite the progress we have made on the POL/MIL plan for Afghanistan. On NATO/EU, I agree with the General: I think this is a serious institutional problem. If we are going to make the Comprehensive Approach work well, NATO cannot do everything. We are primarily a military security organisation. We are not a development organisation; we are not in the business of helping to develop law and order. We need to find ways of working with other entities that do that, and in many ways the European Union is one of those. It is not the only one, but it is the one where we have a particular difficulty. This is

something which is very difficult for NATO as an institution and the EU as an institution to solve. It has to be solved by the Allies and Member States, 21 of whom, of course, are the same countries.

Q218 Chairman: You say that one and a half is a harsh mark, but everything you have said suggests that it is not.

Mr Howard: I think it is always difficult to put figures on this. I would have perhaps given us three, or three and a half. I read Brigadier Butler's evidence very carefully, and there are a lot of things that have happened in the last two years which were not mentioned by him, or, indeed, by anyone else in the evidence session, and I feel that in terms of what has happened since then, just to take a more practical example on the ground which Mr Williams could elaborate on, we, last year, generated a NATO-wide policy for PRTs and PRT management, a very practical piece of work, and for the first time the work of PRTs is now being co-ordinated through a committee called the Executive Steering Committee, which is chaired by an Afghan, Dr Popal, and has the NATO SCR on it, has the UN Special Representative and, indeed, also has the EU's Special Representative on it as well as from ISAF. That is working on the ground.

Chairman: We will come on to Mr Williams and what is happening on the ground in just a moment.

Q219 Mr Jenkin: This institutional paralysis between you and NATO has become part of the landscape of European security policy. Should we not just learn how to work within that framework, and is not, in fact, the NATO nation relationship the way forward? Should not the EU simply act as a coordinator and enable and encourage individual nations to have these bilateral relationships with NATO on the ground? Actually it has the advantage that in counter-insurgency warfare you do want a single command and it puts NATO in command of the civilian effort, which sounds to me more comprehensive than having a double-headed monster which the EU and NATO threaten to become when they are operating side by side. I wonder if John McColl would comment on that. Actually the model we have got in Afghanistan should be the model we make to work, instead of pretending one day there is going to be a sort of EU/NATO nirvana?

General McColl: I do not disagree that pragmatism is important, and I do not disagree that we need to make this work on the ground for the benefit of those who are in harms way, and, indeed, that is exactly what is happening. People are doing what they must in order to make sure that co-operation works, and in many ways, to pick up the point that was made by Martin Howard, co-operation on the ground is, particularly in Afghanistan, rather ahead of the policy development that we have in NATO. Having said that, I do not think we should accept it. I actually do not agree that it is part of the landscape that we should just accept: because it gets in the way of opening what could be an extremely fruitful and broad relationship between ourselves and the EU,

and that is not just in Afghanistan, it is in Kosovo, it is in counter-piracy and it is elsewhere. That is all blocked at the moment, and I think that is extremely unfortunate.

Chairman: Yes, but you have got to sort out Cyprus, then, have you not.

Q220 Mr Jenkin: Supposing we did have this ideal relationship, is it not rather frustrating in NATO that you are essentially a military alliance but the EU has a far wider range of policy instruments at its disposal, and so the EU constantly steals roles from NATO which really should be NATO roles because you are in charge of military operation? You are in charge of driving forward the security. You should be in charge of the post-conflict reconstruction and it is where the post-conflict reconstruction gets divorced from the security tasks that we make such slow progress in Afghanistan.

Mr Howard: Can I pick that up? This whole inquiry is about the Comprehensive Approach, and the Comprehensive Approach means that you need to bring together military activity, non-military activity, development and reconstruction, and I would say, actually, a crucial part of that is governance as well: we need to develop governance. With the best will in the world, NATO can only physically do part of that. That is not to say we cannot act in a more co-ordinating role, but the fact is that, if we are going to make a success of the campaign in Afghanistan, things need to happen in those areas—the governance role, the development role—which NATO cannot do directly. NATO can encourage and support and help, but others have to do that.

Q221 Mr Jenkin: So NATO cannot do the Comprehensive Approach.

Mr Howard: NATO, I think, can be part of the Comprehensive Approach but a comprehensive approach would involve, for example, building up courts, building up law and order systems, a proper development programme. NATO is not in that business. We do not have those particular facilities.

Q222 Mr Holloway: I am quite surprised you are bigging up the Comprehensive Approach here. If we think Ed Butler is being generous by giving them one and a half, what score, General McColl, do you think he would give an Afghan farmer living near to the Helmand river (after all he is our target audience, is he not) in terms of increased security, development and political progress since, say, 2006?

General McColl: Are you asking me the question?

Q223 Mr Holloway: Either of you.

Mr Howard: We have actually done some opinion-polling—I do not have them in front of me—in Afghanistan, or nations have done that, which actually shows a rather complex picture of where people have felt the situation getting better and where people have felt the situation getting worse, and in some parts of Afghanistan the perception of security—

Q224 Mr Holloway: I am talking about the south and the east.

Mr Howard: Yes, that is true, but you would have to look at the country as a whole.

Q225 Mr Holloway: Of course. I am starting with the south and the east. What score would they give?

Mr Howard: I think there is a real issue there and there is certainly a view that security has got worse. I do not know what score they would give to the Comprehensive Approach. I am not sure that is a question you could put to an Afghan farmer.

Q226 Mr Holloway: What do they feel about it in terms of security, development, political progress? Would they be negative?

Mr Howard: I think they would be negative on two counts: first, on security—because the security situation has got worse—and the second crucial point where it has got worse is on governance. I think that this is a very important point, that the average Afghan does not feel that his government from Kabul, from a district, is delivering.

Chairman: We are just about to come on to that.

Q227 Mr Crausby: Can I aim my question directly at Nick Williams. Drawing on your current experience in Afghanistan, how well developed is the Comprehensive Approach on the ground?

Mr Williams: I wanted to pick up on the scoring point because of a rather difficult and in a way misplaced question. The point about the Comprehensive Approach is that no organisation does it on its own. Essentially the Comprehensive Approach means that on the ground all elements recognise that they are working towards a common purpose; in effect, are ready to be co-ordinated and are ready to adjust their institutional positions, not their mandates but their positions, in order to achieve a co-ordinated effect. Certainly in the past year I have seen some progress in the Comprehensive Approach, particularly in the strengthening of the UN's co-ordinating role, and also in response to preparation for the elections, for example. Once you get an issue which is almost transcendent in its importance, then you find that the institutions, working to their particular specificities, find their roles in terms of the common endeavour. So I personally would not be negative in terms of the Comprehensive Approach overall, but, as to marking institutions or countries, I think that is a very difficult issue. Could I very briefly say that in my personal experience (and a lot of people have had the same sort of experience as I have had) the Comprehensive Approach is more advanced in terms of its understanding by the actors involved in terms of the intent to apply a comprehensive approach than I saw in Iraq or in the Balkans the first time I was there in the 1990s, and in a way it is a debate about an issue over which there is no debate: everyone agrees there is no alternative to the Comprehensive Approach. The issues, I think, tend to be on the margins of the mandates of the institutions themselves and whether you can achieve

better co-ordination and co-operation between them. I think that is happening, there is more to do, but it is not a 1.5 out of ten type issue.

Q228 Mr Hancock: If we all agree that it is working on the ground because, out of necessity, it needs to but the failure is at the top with regards to the co-operation between the EU and the understanding of their responsibilities and NATO, where is the political lead going to come from? We are a bit late in the day trying to catch up with what is happening in reality. Where is the political lack of will to make the Comprehensive Approach work? I understand that the EU can only talk about the one operation that they are involved in where they are actually sharing responsibility with others. Why on earth is that the state of play?

Mr Howard: Let me say, I am not sure it is complete failure at headquarters level.

Q229 Mr Hancock: It must be, must it not, because otherwise we would have been there by now?

Mr Howard: I think that there are relationships, which, for example, are working much better—the relationship between NATO and the UN is now working much better. We have now a joint agreement with the UN, which would have seemed impossible three or four years ago. There is a particular problem with the European Union, which I think we have all now referred to. How you solve it, Mr Hancock, as I said earlier, I think it is very difficult for me on the NATO side and for Robert on the EU side to solve it together. We could agree what we would need to do, but the EU has its 27 Member States, NATO has its 28 allies and they are the ones who have to decide.

Q230 Mr Hancock: Who is driving it then, Mr Howard? Who politically is not willing to take on that task? Is it the NATO members, or is it the EU members, or is it a total lack of leadership politically?

Mr Howard: There are 21 common members, of course, so there is straightaway a problem. I think it is a very reasonable question. The Secretary General of NATO is very, very firm about the need to improve NATO/EU relations, and I have no doubt Mr Solana sees it the same way, but it needs the Member States themselves, the allies, to make change now. If you are asking me to pick out particular allies, I would find it very hard.

Q231 Mr Hancock: I am not asking you to pick out particular allies; I am asking you to tell us where the problem is in those two organisations. I listened to the Secretary General's farewell speech at the WU a month ago and it was obvious he had no answer to the issue of how he co-operated with the EU. Javier Solana is coming soon to make possibly another farewell speech, and it will be interesting to see what his comment is as to why he cannot make the relationship with NATO work. Why is it that no-one can get to grips with it?

Mr Cooper: Would it help if I were to say something? This is not an institutional problem; this is a political problem. As far as the institutions go, we have as close a co-operation as you could wish between NATO and the European Union. We have worked out at a bureaucratic level the detail of the agreements that we need to function together, but they have not received political endorsement, and, as Martin and General McColl have said, that is because of political problems between one of the members of the European Union and one of the members of NATO, and that is a problem which the institutions are not able to solve. Within those constraints we work together. I would say, I think that we work together much better now than we did three or four years ago. On the staff level the co-operation is extremely close, on the ground everybody does their best, though we suffer from the lack of a formal agreement, but that is a political problem which none of those here is able to solve.

Chairman: Mr Cooper, I do not think you can leave this hanging in the air. When you say “one of the members of the European Union and one of the members of NATO”, I do think you have to say which they are.

Q232 Mr Hancock: It must be Turkey and Greece, surely. Who would you say they are?

Mr Cooper: This is not a secret. This is a question about Turkey and Cyprus, and there is a deep political problem there, for well-known reasons.

Chairman: We will not expand on that.

Q233 Mr Hancock: But that is where the problem is.

Mr Cooper: Yes.

Q234 Mr Hancock: Can I ask possibly Mr Cooper and Mr Howard and then the General, is the Comprehensive Approach a valid concept for all current, and what you would foresee as future, operations? Is the Comprehensive Approach applicable in all future operations and are there particular circumstances where that approach is less appropriate?

Mr Howard: Personally (and this is speaking from my experience of NATO and from before), I do not think there is any purely military operational military campaign. Everything, even going back decades, I think, has a military/civilian aspect to it. It seems to me that some version of a comprehensive approach is going to be needed almost whatever operation that I can foresee is carried out. I suppose you could argue that a single nation very specific special forces operation might not, but anything that has got politics involved with it I think will need it. Having said that, I think a comprehensive approach that you apply in Afghanistan could look very different to the comprehensive approach that you apply in Kosovo, which would look, in turn, different to the comprehensive approach that we would apply to the very narrow problem of counter-piracy, but the basic concept that you need to bring both civil, military and other actors together, I think, you are right, would be valid for current operations and future operations.

Mr Cooper: A comprehensive approach is perhaps an ideal, and one tries to approach it as far as possible. My own suspicion is that the only place at which a fully comprehensive approach will be available is perhaps as it was applied by Britain in Northern Ireland, where you have a single government in control, because you are in political control in Northern Ireland. In other places, inevitably, whatever you do is going to be done in co-operation. In Afghanistan it has to be done, above all, in co-operation with the Afghan Government, because that cannot be replaced by outsiders. So, whatever happens, there are going to be some missing pieces in the Comprehensive Approach, but one can do it better and do it worse and there are things that you can do more comprehensively. I think it was a different operation, but, for example, in counter-piracy it is useful for the European Union to be able to work with the literal governments on law and order issues so that they can take pirates and put them on trial. In Georgia, as well as running a monitoring operation in Georgia, we have a long-term relationship with the Georgian Government in terms of aid and institutional development. So there are a number of ways in which you can be better at doing it without necessarily ever becoming fully comprehensive.

Q235 Mr Hancock: Can we ask the General for his point of view?

General McColl: Yes, first of all, I think the idea of a comprehensive approach is absolutely essential. If you analyse the future threats that we might face, they are largely bracketed around the concept of instability, and the lines of operation that deliver you strategic success in respect of instability problems are economics and governance; the security operation simply holds the ring. It is, therefore, essential that we have a comprehensive approach to these types of problems. Talking to the issue of Afghanistan—I know this has been laid out to you before, but I will do it again because I think it is important, the complexity of that co-ordination task—we have 40 nations in the alliance. Each of them has three or more departments involved in this issue of the Comprehensive Approach. We then have at least ten others who are critical players in the country. We have international organisations—another 20—we then have NGOs, who run into their hundreds. Then on top of that, of course, we have the Afghan National Government. All of that needs coralling and the idea of having one single hand that is going to control all of that is clearly wishful thinking. Therefore, what we have to have is a concept which enables us to co-ordinate our efforts in a coherent way, and the Comprehensive Approach, as we have heard, is the language of common currency in Afghanistan and in many of these theatres, because it is commonly understood that we need to work together. So I think from that perspective it is absolutely essential that we have a comprehensive approach and that we spell it out. To go back to Mr Jenkin’s point about the way in which NATO is organised, that is NATO’s perhaps single Achilles heel, which is that it can be construed as

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being a security organisation, a security organisation which is involved tasks of stability for which it needs access to economics and governance to deliver strategic success. So from NATO's perspective it is absolutely essential that we have the plugs and sockets to allow us to be involved in the Comprehensive Approach. Not to deliver the comprehensive approach, but, as I have said, the plugs and sockets to allow us to influence it.

Q236 Mrs Moon: General McColl, you have painted a fantastic picture of the complexities of the pulling together of the comprehensive approach and the difficulties that we actually have in achieving successful communication and collaboration. Can I get a picture for myself as to how well this is actually playing on the ground with local nationals producing successful outcomes? It is a little bit like Adam Holloway's question about the farmer at the side of the river. Can you give us some examples of how it has actually worked well?

General McColl: I can try. First of all, to go back to the specific example of a farmer on the river, I think that is the wrong snapshot to take. If I might be so bold, I would go back to 2001/2002 when we arrived in Afghanistan, because only then can you understand the progress that has been made in that country and the way in which the Comprehensive Approach has delivered. If I take politics for the first example, when we first arrived there, there was nothing in the ministries—no desks, no people, no middle-class—the politicians were people who had been at war with each other for the last God knows how many years; there was simply no governance at all. Since then we have gone through a series of Jirgas and elections and there is a proper sense of governance, of politics, although I absolutely take the point that the governance at the lower level is extremely corrupt and needs a great deal more work, but there has been political development there. If you go on to the areas of health, education, economic growth in terms of the percentage of growth annually since we arrived in 2002, in all of these areas there has been significant growth, and I think it needs to be taken within that context. You can hone down on areas, and security in the south of the country over recent times is certainly one, counter-narcotics is another where progress has not been satisfactory, and, indeed, just recently in the south there has been a significant increase in the number of incidents, so it is a patchwork, but I think if you are going to get a satisfactory picture of the work of the Comprehensive Approach you need to take it over a significant period of time to give yourself a coherent picture.

Q237 Mrs Moon: Mr Williams, what is your view on that?

Mr Williams: I would like to go back to the example I already gave, which is the elections, which is not the only example, but it is an indication of how each of the institutions are helping the Afghan Government deliver elections by mentoring, training, providing funds and expertise according to their own specificities. For example, ISAF is providing

support alongside EUPOL to the planning for the security of the elections. That involves training and preparing both the Army and the Police. ISAF does not have, nor does CSTC-A, which is the American-led mentoring training organisation, in-depth civil police expertise. EUPOL does, and so by working together and dividing up the task into specific functions, we are approaching an election on August 20 which, for the first time, will be largely delivered by the Afghan authorities themselves. I have just cited ISAF and EUPOL, but the European Commission, working with UNDP and other organisations as well as NGOs, are also playing their part in preparing either observers, monitors, and so on. So I take that as a supreme example of the Comprehensive Approach. In terms of going back to the emblematic Afghan by the side of the river, I think one has to distinguish between the mechanics of the Comprehensive Approach, and the international community does spend a lot of time on the mechanics co-ordinating and working together in order to create policies and strategies, and the effects of the Comprehensive Approach, and certainly what the man by the side of the river will notice is probably the UK, or the Canadians, or the Americans delivering either security or some sort of aid project but which, by now, should be coherent and consistent with the Afghan national development strategy or the Afghan national counter-narcotics strategy, and so on. Again, I go back to my point. Comprehensive means that all the organisations and players, including to some extent NGOs, are working towards a common idea of what has to be achieved according to strategies which, after a number of years, are now in place across a range of development goals. So the man by the side of the river may not notice whether NATO, or the EU, or the UN is delivering something, but the overall effect should be that what is delivered should increasingly be part of a consistent, coherent strategy which has been developed by the Afghan Government with the support of the various international actors.

Q238 Mrs Moon: Mr Cooper, you were nodding. Would you agree with that?

Mr Cooper: Yes, indeed. Nigel, being on the ground, in a way sees a bigger picture, because he sees all of the different organisations involved. I am aware of only one part of the picture, but I know that the European Union aid programmes over the years have actually been building up an Afghan NGO to do election monitoring. There will be European monitors out there as well, but the bulk of the monitoring will actually be done by Afghans, which is the best way to do it.

Q239 Mrs Moon: We have got a picture that there is change in the development, and we have to look at it over a period of time, that there is mentoring, training and expertise being developed through the Army, the Police and the political system, the development of common ideas of what can be achieved and what has been achieved, but no-one has mentioned women. It has all been about the man

at the side of the road. If you talk to the majority of women in this country part of their buy-in to Afghanistan was their very strong heart-felt feelings about how women were treated in Afghanistan. How much of a part does UN Resolution 1325 play in all of this training, this mentoring, expertise, the political system? Is it part of the discussion?

Mr Howard: It is actually. I talked to you earlier about the POL/MIL plan that we developed. We did a revision of that in April of this year and we have a number of items within that which are specifically about UNSCR 1325. In addition to that, going beyond Afghan, the NATO military chain of command have also tried to embed the concepts of UNSCR 1325 into their planning. I know that my military counterpart, the Director of the International Military Staff, has been working very hard on that. That is, again, rather bureaucratic, but it is visible at the NATO headquarters level very clearly. On the ground there are various statistics which are brought out about the number of girls that are going to school in Afghanistan. I know it is at a much lower level, but that, I think, is evidence of progress, and the other thing I would draw attention to was a very specific criticism made by the international community, including at the NATO summit in Strasbourg, of President Karzai when there was an attempt to introduce a new law, the pro-Shia law, which you have probably heard about, and that has had impact, because the President has said, "Hold fire. We will not do that." So I am not suggesting that there is not much more to do, but both the particular issue of UNSCR 1325 and the position of women in Afghanistan and in zones of conflict more generally, I think, are quite high on NATO's agenda.

Q240 Chairman: Mr Cooper, could you give a brief answer?

Mr Cooper: Yes. I just wanted to say that we have specific directives on 1325 and 1820 in the European Union. I think there may be a couple of exceptions, but each of our missions has a human rights and/or gender adviser. In some cases I find that I get continual pleas from the heads of the mission: can they have more women in the mission. For example, we were running the border crossing; we were monitoring the border crossing at Rafah, between Gaza and Egypt. It was essential that we had some women officers there as well to handle the women who were crossing. There are many cases in the Congo where we are dealing with sexual violence, in which we need more women than we have at the moment, and they are vital in what you try to do.

Q241 Mrs Moon: Can I very quickly ask General McColl in terms of this political role with President Karzai, how conscious was President Karzai of the importance of the political dimension of the UN resolution?

General McColl: I am not sure I am able to give you a particularly clear answer to that. He is very aware of the political sensitivities of his international coalition partners, and I think it is fair to say does his

best, in my experience. I am well out of date now, but my experience is he does his best to accommodate that. I think that is the best answer I can give.

Q242 Mrs Moon: In terms of the international organisations and government working with NGOs, is that working? Is that a successful partnership? Is there a common language and a common understanding when you add in the NGOs?

Mr Howard: I will start from NATO headquarters point of view. I think it is getting better, I would say. Certainly in my time in NATO we have had a number of engagements with NGOs on very specific issues, for example to do with civilian casualties in Afghanistan. I think we are now broadening that into a much more systematic relationship with NGOs to talk about the overall plan or the overall sense of progress inside Afghanistan, but I know that actually on the ground in Afghanistan there is pretty regular contact with commanders and NGOs, well recognising that some NGOs will always have difficulties about working with the military, for their own reasons will always be very keen on the concept of humanitarian space and, therefore, the need to keep a certain amount at arms' length. Personally, I think there is quite a long way for us to go in this area, but we are making progress, particularly on the ground.

Mr Cooper: Chairman, if I might add just one word, I think for us the place where we do this best at the moment is in Kosovo, where we have had quite a long preparation time. We have created a kind of forum of NGOs and consulted them, and we work in partnership with the main NGOs on the ground in Kosovo, and that works very well. It is more difficult when something happens rather quickly and you find you move in quickly and a whole lot of other people move in quickly. It takes time to sort it out.

Richard Younger-Ross: How difficult do you find working with the NGOs? Some of the NGOs say they do not wish to engage, they wish to keep you very clear and very separate, and some others like ActionAid are very critical of the lack of engagement.

Q243 Chairman: Mr Williams, you are willing to answer this?

Mr Williams: I think it is precisely as you say: some will want a closer relationship than others. It is not a natural or easy relationship in general, but certainly, as part of the Comprehensive Approach, the UN hosts a forum of NGOs at which ISAF is present and in which some form of co-operation is developed. One issue that has irritated NGOs has been the fact that some ISAF nations have driven around in white vehicles, for example, therefore confusing the status of ISAF with the status of NGOs, but we came to a very amicable solution to that where ISAF has issued instructions for the repainting of its vehicles. So there are mechanisms and fora for working things out. Just by chance, before this session started I met in the foyer Erica Gaston, who works for one NGO¹ who did a very

¹ Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict (CIVIC).

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good study on civilian casualties which I recommend that you read. We had a very close relationship. He had criticisms of ISAF and has lobbied very effectively in terms of ideas on how to reduce civilian casualties. So I would not say there was a huge gap between NGOs, but their purposes and *modus operandi* are slightly different. They need a certain space and distance from ISAF in order to function, in order to be recognised for their specificity. Sometimes on the ISAF side there is a sense of obligation towards the NGOs. If they get in trouble it will be ISAF, often, that may be required to help them out. I think the relationship is balanced, as long as everyone understands what the relationship is. I think the biggest problem the NGOs have is that the military turn-over in ISAF is so huge that, as they develop relationships with particular points of contact, then that point of contact goes and the continuity goes and the ability to build up a fruitful, stable, more co-operative relationship is hampered, not by ideological reasons often, but just by practical reasons of change-over in ISAF staff. NGOs tend to be much more present for a greater period and often have more experience than some of the ISAF officers that they are dealing with.

Q244 Richard Younger-Ross: ActionAid have said in theirs that they do not believe the UK Government is benefiting from the NGOs knowledge and understanding of the Afghan people. Is that a fair criticism?

Mr Williams: I do not know what they think about how the UK Government benefits, but certainly, again, I find on the ground the relationships are reasonable. All NGOs tend to be open, certainly the office for which I work has a good relationship with all NGOs. We are in constant dialogue. If there is any issue that they want to raise, we will raise it with ISAF or with the respective organisation. The particular position from which either NGOs, or nations start, or institutions start from their capitals tends to get modified once you are in theatre.

Q245 Richard Younger-Ross: Are they an equal partner?

Mr Williams: In some places they are not partners at all because of the security situation, and certainly in the south the Canadians and the Dutch, as well as the British, have made significant efforts to get more NGOs deployed in order to be partners. There is no institutional resistance to getting them as partners, but I think they themselves would recognise, as would other institutions faced with an organisation the size and the weight of ISAF, you cannot be an equal partner, but what they need is a listening partner, and, as I say, the problem about being a listening partner, a responsive partner, is more about the turnover of personnel rather than the resistance to listening to what NGOs have to say. That is my experience.

Q246 Mr Holloway: What difference, if any, do you think there will be with the new American strategy in terms of the Comprehensive Approach?

Mr Howard: The American strategy actually is very much based on the principle of the comprehensive approach. Its component parts, insofar as it relates to Afghanistan, are actually very similar to the NATO strategy. Even down to the language, they are actually very similar. I think the distinction I would draw is not so much whether or not it is a comprehensive approach but that it has a broader applicability to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and in that sense it is different from the NATO plan, because NATO has a mandate to operate inside Afghanistan primarily, but it seems to me that the idea of a civilian surge (which is a phrase that is often used by Washington), the idea of working with the Afghan Government, the idea of bringing in the regional dimensions of Pakistan, seems to be completely consistent with the Comprehensive Approach.

Q247 Mr Jenkin: Is it not legitimate that the military, particularly in places like Helmand, should express frustration that they have, albeit limited, access to very large amounts of military capability, but they have very limited access to civilian capability which they desperately need for the follow-on after they have taken somewhere like Musa Qala? If we are going to deliver the comprehensive approach, is not the traditional NGO approach, where there is a strict demarcation between what is a military operation and what are civilian operations, really completely unsuited to what we are doing in Afghanistan?

Mr Howard: I would agree with that, but I would say that in Helmand, having seen it develop from 2006 to how it is now, that lesson has been learnt. Indeed, the integrated civil/military cell which now operates in Helmand is a very good example of the Comprehensive Approach working on the ground.

Q248 Mr Jenkin: I am sorry; may I pick you up on that? The amount of resource available to the military commander and the PRT in Helmand is miniscule for civilian effect compared to what it has access to for military effect. One battle group commander regularly gives a lecture where he actually says, "If only I could have taken a suitcase full of cash entering a village instead of having to take in Apache helicopters, and two companies, and armoured vehicles, and mortars and light artillery, I could have then bargained with the local villagers about what they really needed, rather than having to fight the Taliban out of that village." Have we not just missed the wood for the trees here? I wonder if General McColl would answer, particularly in the light of his experience as adviser to President Karzai.

General McColl: I think there is a difference in the approach to the question of redevelopment, particularly in terms of timeframe in the immediate aftermath of a particularly difficult military action such as Musa Qala. I think the balanced approach the UK has, where there is emphasis on the civil need in delivery of development, is probably right, except where the security circumstances are so difficult that the civilian element have difficulty because of the differences in duty of care and those aspects which govern their use when they have the difficulty of

getting people onto the ground, and in those circumstances—and this is the primary difference between ourselves and the American approach, as you are well aware—I think there is an argument to say that we should review our delivery mechanisms, give the designated commander more access to what I would describe as immediate influence aid, which is not to be confused with the long-term development requirement, which is rather separate.

Q249 Mr Jenkin: I understand that point, but I am saying two things. One is that it is unbalanced how much we are devoting to the long-term when we cannot get the short-term right; the long-term is going to be otiose if we cannot get the short-term reconstruction right. Perhaps a question for Mr Cooper. Given that NATO just does not have this intermediate immediate post-conflict capability at scale in the same way as the Americans do, is that not what the EU should be facilitating Member States to provide to NATO rather than retreating into the longer-term governance issues, which, as I say, are really surplus to requirements at the immediate point at which we are trying to provide security?

Mr Cooper: I think that you are right, Mr Jenkin, that there is really a gap in our capabilities. There is a very well-organised defence sector, there is a very large and experienced development sector and there is a gap in between those two.

Q250 Mr Jenkin: So how do we fill it?

Mr Cooper: Part of the gap, which we attempt to fill but not with enormous success, really consists of police and justice. That is in a way the transition from a situation where you have the military in control to the establishment of civil government. The first things that you have to do to make civil government work are to make justice work and to have police. The resource that it is hardest to obtain for deployment overseas, apart from helicopters, is almost certainly police. It is very difficult on a large scale to run a comprehensive approach when you do not have comprehensive resources, and that means that a number of governments in the European Union, the British Government included, are thinking about how they can make available more readily deployable police and judges, and then you sometimes need other kinds of officials, because it is no good training an army unless you have a defence ministry as well, but actually police and judicial officials are the key people you need.

Q251 Mr Jenkin: So where should the political need come from? Should it come from the NAC or should it come from PSC, or does it need to come from Member States? Where is this lead going to come from?

Mr Howard: I think at the moment it is more likely to come from allies than the states. In the United Kingdom the establishment of the Stabilisation Unit is, I think, an example of how that has been tried and made to work. In NATO we have a very limited amount of money which is available.

Q252 Mr Jenkin: If I may just interrupt you. You made quite a big admission there. Here we have an extraordinary collection of political institutional structures that span Europe and the Atlantic, and when it comes to the crunch you are saying that the delivery of the Comprehensive Approach actually relies on individual nation states. That is quite an indictment of the institutional structures that we have got.

Mr Williams: The resources belong to the Member States.

Q253 Mr Jenkin: Then why do we pretend this institutional structure can deliver something when, in fact, really your best role is as facilitators and encouragers of individual Member States to step up to the piece? Is that not what we should be concentrating on instead of this institution building, where so many Member States, effectively, contract out responsibility for what happens to the international institutions and then wash their hands of the consequences?

Mr Howard: Speaking for the Alliance, the Alliance is an alliance of Member States, and that is where the resources come from.

Mr Jenkin: But this is internationalism not working, is it not?

Q254 Chairman: Would you allow Mr Howard to answer.

Mr Howard: I think it is working, but it is far from perfect. The fact is that NATO headquarters, NATO command structure provides the framework to actually carry out the mission in Afghanistan. The actual resources come from Member States, and that has always been the case. Afghanistan is not unique in that respect.

Mr Cooper: The European Union position is almost exactly the same. It is certainly the same as far as military and civilian resources in terms of police are concerned. There is no European army. The armies are all national. The European Union provides a method by which they can work together. There are European resources when it comes to development through the Commission, but otherwise the human resources are all nationally owned and they are lent to the Alliance and the European Union for particular operations, but I believe most Member States are conscious of the gap in civilian resources.

Chairman: I am afraid we are falling way behind because you are being all too interesting. We will move on to PRTs.

Q255 Mr Crausby: Can I ask Nick Williams how well the different PRTs work? With 42 nations contributing troops and 26 different PRTs, to what extent do they all operate in the pursuit of international objectives and what is the overall contribution to stability in Afghanistan?

Mr Williams: Again, this is a work in progress that has seen some progress in the past year in particular. The PRTs, when they originally deployed, basically deployed with the idea that they were there to fill a gap in terms of governance, support and development in the provinces, given that the Afghan

Government at that time was rather weak and its reach to provinces was rather limited. Therefore, you had a process of province ownership by the nations that actually were present and a sense of PRT's responding, as they would, to the resources and guidance being provided by their capitals rather than responding to a comprehensive coherent agenda set by the Afghan government with the assistance of the international community. I think what has happened in the past year that has been significant is the final putting to bed of the Afghan national development strategy, which, although still rather broad, is nevertheless a strategy which has been agreed by the Afghan Government and which is the framework and the objectives within which they want to see development taking place in their country; and that has allowed us, on the NATO side, to revive something called the Executive Steering Committee, which until January had not met for about 18 months previously, which essentially brings together representatives of the PRT nations, usually the embassies, and attempts to give them guidance as to how to create coherence between them and share best practice. The innovation that we made was that, instead of being chaired by ISAF and the NATO office, it would be chaired by, and is now chaired by, a member of the Afghan Government, in this case Mr Popal, who is the Head of the Independent Department of Local Governance. PRTs have become politically sensitive over the past two years, essentially because Mr Karzai, and not just Mr Karzai, certain elements within the Afghan establishment felt that PRTs were not responsive to Afghan development needs. By putting an Afghan political lead to this process of guiding and giving some sort of policy framework, we have actually made the PRTs more transparent and what they are doing more transparent to the Afghan Government. We have also provided a framework for the Afghan Government to provide guidance and feel that they have some sort of control and influence over what the PRTs are doing. So the PRTs are in some sort of evolution, just as Afghanistan is in evolution. They are now more conscious of the need (to come back to the theme of this session) for a comprehensive approach and a less nationally driven approach, and when I say "national" I mean a NATO member driven approach. So, again, it is an example where, slowly, the effect of the comprehensive approach is being felt, and certainly my contacts with the Afghan Government suggest they now feel more at ease and less critical of the PRTs basically because we have made what they are doing much more transparent to them.

Q256 Mr Crausby: Just a quick question on funding. I think all of our witnesses on 9 June pretty well said that some PRTs were starved of funding, particularly in comparison to the Americans. Is that true and what effect does that have on delivery.

Mr Williams: Starved of funding suggests a rather cruel deliberate policy by Member States. Different PRTs have different functions. Some PRTs do not actually do development, they just oversee development initiated by their capitals, so they may

not have any money because that is not their purpose, and certain PRTs which are not as well funded as the British, or the American PRTs, or the Canadian PRTs certainly do have access to Japanese funds. The Japanese Government has also, very generously, said they are willing to spend their money through PRTs on certain priority projects. From where I sit, the issue, again, is not funding, it is really about, at this stage, now bringing the PRTs into a relationship with the Afghan Government which the Afghan Government feels comfortable with in terms of providing guidance and visibility.

Q257 Mr Holloway: I appreciate that a lot of the questions have been about institutions, and so on, but we have spoken largely about the framework strategy, Steering Committee, institutional relationships and it sounded to me often in the session you were describing a self-licking lollipop that exists and feeds for itself. Can you tell us what is actually being done to improve the score that the ordinary Afghan might give us?

Mr Howard: First of all, you have to have a plan.

Q258 Mr Holloway: But what is actually being done to improve the score, because it is pretty poor?

Mr Howard: Let me speak primarily from a NATO perspective, because that is who I represent. I think that our main centre of gravity (and this is reflected in the plan) is to build up Afghan capacity, particularly in the Afghan National Security Forces and, if I might, I would like to pick up the example that Nick quoted about the election, which has a direct impact on ordinary Afghans. The fact is that security for these elections coming up now primarily will be led by the Afghan Police, supported by the Afghan Army, with ISAF as the third responder. That is something which two or three years ago would have been unthinkable. In that sense that improvement has been made. There is still a long way to go, particularly on the police front, but that progress is being made, so in that sense there are, increasingly, competent Afghan security forces that are able to provide an increasing proportion of the security the Afghans crave. In the south and east is where it is most problematic, and you have pointed out, Mr Holloway, where that was most difficult, but even there you will see more and more Afghans being upfront. I think the area that is weakest, in terms of building the confidence of ordinary Afghans, is in the area of law and order, justice, those systems which lie behind the Police and the Army. I think there is a real problem there, and there needs to be a lot more done. So it is a very mixed picture. I believe that the polling that we have done indicates Afghans across the country, including in the south and east, have quite a lot of confidence in both the Army and even the Police but have much less confidence in the political machinery which lies behind it.

Mr Cooper: I just wanted to recall what General McColl was saying much earlier on. If you had looked at Afghanistan in 2002 and 2009, there are many differences. There is primary healthcare right

across the country now, which did not exist before; education is vastly improved, including education for women.

Q259 Mr Holloway: I am sorry, the Pashtun Belt where the insurgency is?

Mr Cooper: In the insurgency, of course, there are major difficulties, but what has been delivered for the Afghans is actually enormous improvements in some areas.

Q260 Mr Holloway: I am sorry, in areas where there is peace, that is just development; you do not really need a comprehensive approach. The Comprehensive Approach is about winning the military struggle and the battle for the people. What are the benefits that you are in the process of describing within the Pashtun Belt since 2002?

Mr Cooper: I think I would rather pass the question to Nick Williams, who has lived there.

Q261 Mr Holloway: But you were describing how things had got better, so tell us how they have got better in the Pashtun Belt?

Mr Cooper: As I say, a specific question about the Pashtun Belt I have difficulty in answering, because I know the global statistics but what is clear is there are more schools, more hospitals, more roads, so to say that nothing has been done—

Mr Holloway: It is about the Comprehensive Approach where there is conflict.

Q262 Chairman: Mr Williams, do you want to answer that question on the Pashtun Belt?

Mr Williams: It depends where in the Pashtun Belt, because not all parts of the Pashtun Belt are equally insecure, but it is true that the sense of insecurity felt by the population in the Pashtun Belt has increased. Nevertheless, you can point, in the major conurbations, to the same sorts of improvement in mind, health and education that you see elsewhere, but they are in a very restricted protected space. One of the existential effects of our presence is actually to give reassurance, and it is not what you can call welfare benefit or social benefit, that the Afghans will not be abandoned and the Pashtuns will not be abandoned, and, despite all the losses we have taken and the increase in the insurgency and the fact that we are sticking it out, that is an element of stability, even within the insurgency.

Chairman: I understand that you have to go in five minutes, so we have got to wrap up with Madeleine Moon.

Mrs Moon: Very briefly from each of you, if you would, you have outlined the difficulties and some of the successes that the Comprehensive Approach has brought. Where do we go? What do we need to do to make it more effective? What is the next step on this road?

Chairman: Who would like to start? General McColl, you have been too quiet for too long.

Q263 Mr Jenkin: Can General McColl draw on his experience in Kabul and, as adviser to President Karzai, just tell us what you think NATO really needs in order to deliver a comprehensive approach?

General McColl: I will try and keep it simple. Firstly, in the new strategic concept we need clarity on an agreement from all allies of what they mean by the Comprehensive Approach. At the moment people are consenting and then evading. For example, there are allies who will be quite happy to agree to the Comprehensive Approach and then become obscurant as we move down the road, mainly because of the competition with the EU, I have to say. The second issue: we need to resolve this block in our ability to communicate with what is, I think, our principal partner in terms of delivering, and that is the EU, and that is to apply some of the intellectual and political energy that is devoted to building castles in the air about NATO and EU co-operation to solving the problem which is stopping it happening. That is it in two bullets. I could give you a lot more, but I leave it there.

Q264 Chairman: That is extremely helpful and very also very nicely brief. Mr Howard.

Mr Howard: I will it keep it brief as well. You were talking, I think, about Afghanistan specifically, I believe. It seems to me we need to do two things. Firstly, we need really to boost the international effort to build a clean accountable government in Afghanistan at both the national and provincial level. Easily said, hard to do, but that has got to be the priority. The second thing we need to do over the next 12 to 24 months is to find a way in which we can genuinely start to transition security responsibility away from ISAF to the Afghans.

Mr Cooper: Might I go a little bit wider? I said earlier, and I think I want to repeat it, that the Comprehensive Approach needs comprehensive resources, and we are not organised for that at this moment. The second thing I would like to say is that, at the heart of whatever you do, there has to be a political strategy, that is to say a strategy, in this case, with the Afghan Government, or with whoever, but because General McColl has underlined the problems between the EU and NATO I wanted to mention one forgotten EU/NATO operation which has been so successful that everyone has forgotten it, which is what was done in Skopje in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia jointly by Javier Solana and George Robertson. NATO resources were deployed, rather small resources because we were preventing a conflict. The EU has been involved since then in aid programmes and all kinds of things. You do not hear about it because it was a success, and that was comprehensive but, at the heart of it, it had a political deal between the two communities in Macedonia.

Q265 Chairman: Thank you. Mr Williams finally.

Mr Williams: Very briefly, I think it should be understood that, insofar there are obstacles within existing resources to applying the Comprehensive

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Approach, it is really still due to the weakness of UNAMA and its inability still, despite the quality and the increase in its staff, to play a leading co-ordinating role, which means that you spend a lot of time on the bureaucracies of the Comprehensive Approach rather than the effect. My main point would be strengthening the UN even further so that it has an ability to help governance and help develop governance in a more effective way than is

happening. ISAF cannot do that. We can do our bit, but the UN has to be strengthened in order that it can do its bit better.

Chairman: Thank you. I know you have to be away at 11.50; it is now 11.49. I should be wrong to say anything other than this has been a fascinating first part of this morning. We are most grateful to all of you for having given so freely of your evidence. Thank you very much indeed.

Witnesses: **Mr Daniel Korski**, Senior Policy Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations, **Mr Howard Mollett**, Conflict Policy Adviser, Care International, and **Mr Stephen Grey**, journalist, *Sunday Times*, gave evidence.

Q266 Chairman: Thank you very much for coming to help further with our evidence session. Would you like to tell us a bit about yourselves, please, and what relationship you have had with the Comprehensive Approach? Daniel Korski, do you want to start?

Mr Korski: I am Daniel Korski; I am a Senior Policy Fellow at a think-tank called the European Council on Foreign Relations. Before that I worked for the British Government as the Deputy Head of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit (now called the Stabilisation Unit), I ran the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Basra, spent some time advising one of President Karzai's ministers, and worked for four years for Lord Paddy Ashdown in the Balkans on what we then did not call the Comprehensive Approach but it probably was that very thing.

Mr Mollett: Good morning, my name is Howard Mollett and I work for Care International, which is a multi-mandate non-governmental organisation. We work across development, recovery and humanitarian work in about 70 countries worldwide. I work in the conflict and humanitarian team at the international level, providing technical support to our country officers on both the programme quality side and also research to inform our engagement with different policy issues, such as the Comprehensive Approach. Civil military relations is a really important issue for us, obviously, on the ground, particularly in countries affected by conflict, but we are also seeing some of the implications of the Comprehensive Approach playing out at the international level in terms of donor policy and how funding is managed, and so on. So that is where our interest stems from.

Mr Grey: Thank you for having me. I am a journalist working as a freelancer primarily for *The Sunday Times*. I have covered operations in Afghanistan, both under the Taliban and, more recently, in Helmand after the British involvement. I am also the author of a book, just published, called *Operation Snakebite*, which is largely about Musa Qala but looks at the overall strategy that we have pursued in Afghanistan and involved 230 interviews with personnel, military and civilians, both on the British and American sides at all levels. I have no particular expertise on the Comprehensive Approach but I can offer you some insight from many of those that are involved in implementing that approach.

Q267 Chairman: Could we begin with that then, please. Could you give us a summary of how you think it is working, in your experience, on the ground in Afghanistan?

Mr Grey: I have to say, I think we owe it to all those that are sacrificing themselves in Helmand, to be brutally frank about what is going on there and what is going wrong, because it is only with that frankness that I think certain things can be put right. From the perspective of those on the ground, I think the Comprehensive Approach has largely been a parody of reality. In some ways the failure to get that right has done as much to stir up conflict and cause what is happening as it has to bring peace to Afghanistan, which surely is the ultimate objective there. There is a lot that is talked about the mechanics of these things. I was reading the evidence of your permanent secretaries, who you had last time round, who spoke about an outcome-based approach, but I have read very little in what they have said that seemed to reflect that. It seemed to be mainly about the mechanics of it; whereas the picture on the ground you get is varied. There have certainly been great improvements in co-ordination recently, particularly in the centre of Helmand, but in their application, for example in Sangin and in Musa Qala (and I can go into detail) the view certainly from the military is that very little of what is talked about is actually being put into practice. It might just be an illustration. I have brought with me an email that I was sent by an officer who has just returned from Musa Qala, if you would permit me to read what he said.

Q268 Chairman: Please do.

Mr Grey: He referred to the governance strand, and I will just summarise that, a sense of total lack of delivery of promises. A governor there in Musa Qala who was frequently absent for months on end and absent without anyone knowing where he was. Intelligence (and I will not go much into that), but the sense of a severe lack of any continuity and situational awareness, even at a very local level, about the opinions and the make-up of the people with whom they were working. I will read you exactly what he said about the Comprehensive Approach. "The Comprehensive Approach was the biggest set back. Once the security bubble was established, there was little to back it up to create the

ink-spot theory. Yes, there was a 'rebuilt' school, a few ditches dug and a medical centre which will be the best for miles around if it is ever finished, but that is it. The FCO lead in Musa Qala did not leave the base in the entire six months I was there, as it was decreed too dangerous by their standards. This meant it was left to an underfunded CIMIC team of five people. In conclusion, it felt as if we were doing things half-heartedly. Intelligence and CIMIC are a most important aspect, but underfunded. All we really did was to fight and kill the Taliban. The numbers are staggering, and why is that? Because we are good at it, structured for it and resourced for it, but that should not be the centre of gravity of our efforts." I suppose I would argue that there are three ways in which you can see fault, and I only look for fault because we need to get it right, not because there are not people who are trying to resolve these things and making some progress. First of all, strategic synchronisation is a phrase I have heard at the top of Whitehall and I think it is a very good phrase. This is not about criticising one department or the other; it is about only moving in one direction where the resources and capability are there to back them up, and what we have seen very often is the military moving ahead, extending their reach, without account of the civilian infrastructure and capability and, indeed, political will back here in Whitehall to that over extension. So you are left with the military pushing out on their own, and that is as much a fault of the military as it is of the other agencies that have not provided the back-up.

Q269 Chairman: Did you get involved in Iraq at all?

Mr Grey: Absolutely. I spent months in Basra.

Chairman: Do you think the same thing happened there, or do you think that lessons of things that happened there were not applied, or were applied but in an inefficient way, or what?

Mr Holloway: Mr Grey is one of the very few Western journalists who is wandering around southern Iraq outside the security bubble of foreign military.

Q270 Chairman: I am sure he is about to tell us that.

Mr Grey: In some ways the problem about Iraq is that some of the lessons were learnt right at the end, but we were deployed into Helmand before, if you like, the lessons learned kicked in, and what you saw in Iraq was an enormous total lack of long-term planning where we made short-term deals with militias essentially to hand over great responsibility for the power structure to them. The fundamental lesson there was: do not put all the bad guys in power if you expect to win over the population, and, unfortunately, we repeated that mistake in Helmand, where we arrived to ally ourselves with a great deal of people who brought only disrespect to us from the population. Many of the established interests we were working with, for example, were connected to the drugs trade, and such like and, therefore, failed to do anything to enhance our reputational ability to deliver effect with the population. The only thing I would urge you to do when you look at the Comprehensive Approach—because, after all, it is

just the foundation of any counter-insurgency, political, military unity—is to look at it in three dimensions. One is the joined up nature of UK efforts, where the whole operation has been plagued, despite what is said publicly, by squabbling between departments and a real sense of people not pulling together, and that is only one aspect, but also, the second dimension is the vertical integration: what are we doing as far as the overall plan for Afghanistan? In some ways everything we do in Helmand is about influencing the Afghan Government and the US Government, which has control over the strategy. Our point-men at the moment are Sherard Cowper-Coles, influencing at a diplomatic level, and Jim Dutton in Kabul in terms of the military strategy. Those are why people fight and die in Helmand, to give these people power to influence the broader picture. The third element, I think, that is often missing from the three-dimensional aspects of the dysfunction is over time. I think one of the key problems with the British approach has been these very short-term deployments and appointments which allow no continuity and joined-up effort over a long period of time. We have had commander after commander, very bright, but unable to get to grips with the problems before moving on, and Iraq was the epitome of that problem, where we had commanders of British forces in Basra some of whom were only there three months. It reflected a total apparent lack of interest in developing a long-term strategy. I think it is impossible to see how you can join up government efforts unless you have single individuals who are made accountable for those efforts, and that means not just at any one time, but over time. One is left thinking like the famous general in Vietnam who said, "I am damned if I am going to let this war destroy my Army." The structure of rotation and appointment seems much more designed around the career structures of people within the Army than it is about actually winning the war.

Q271 Mr Hamilton: Just following up on that last part. We have had evidence before where that has come up. Indeed, when we were in Afghanistan that point came up. Maybe we should change the structure of the commanders so they do not go in with the regiments, they actually stay when the other regiments start to come through and give that continuity. You are emphasising that does not happen even now after, what, two years. I think we discussed that two years ago and that is still happening, the rotation just goes on and on and on.

Mr Grey: I think it was a key recommendation of the After Action Report of 52 Brigade at the beginning of last year, 2008, and it was another key recommendation, I believe, in the most recent from Brigadier Gordon Messenger, continually repeating this message. This is not about combat troops, who arguably should be going for shorter tours, but about the brigade and the commanders who run this thing. There seems to be a flat refusal at the top level of the military to accept this. The one improvement is a deployment of a headquarters to Regional

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Command South by General Nick Carter, who is coming in in October for a year, which is a lot better, but that has to be reflected in the overall British plan.

Q272 Chairman: But there is a balance, is there not, between deploying a brigadier with his brigade and having, therefore, the entire brigade serving a period in Afghanistan which might be considered to be unacceptably long and deploying a brigadier for a long time?

Mr Grey: Absolutely.

Q273 Chairman: How would you resolve that?

Mr Grey: The key people that require continuity are the intelligence officers, political officers, in other words those people that interact with Afghans. They have to develop relationships. It is impossible to develop a relationship over six months. By the time you have made the relationship you are leaving, and then the headquarters elements of the brigade. That does not mean the individual soldiers who are fighting. I would argue that they are too long, actually, many of the combat units. They are totally overstretched.

Mr Korski: I wonder if I could add a civilian element to this. There is obviously no point in longer rotations of senior military officers if their civilian counterparts either stay in the shorter rotations or have leave rotations that do not coincide with their military counterparts. Just to complement what Stephen was saying, I think it would be necessary to think much more comprehensively about deployment, including deploying military and civilians together for longer periods at the higher level.

Q274 Chairman: A totally different question. Have you had any difficulty, as a journalist in Afghanistan, getting access to the frontline in order that the message about what is happening there should be well delivered to the British public who need to know about it?

Mr Grey: It is extraordinarily difficult to get access. It is just the nature of the war rather than the Government. This is very different from Iraq. In Iraq, albeit in some danger at points, I could live independently in a hotel in the centre of Basra even while the insurgency was erupting. This is a rural and more violent conflict, which makes access intrinsically more difficult for any independent observer. The supply of places to go out with them, as I am sure, Chairman, you found, is highly regulated and, whilst there are people who are willing to express their minds, it is obviously quite difficult to get to the bottom of what people think sometimes because particularly commanders are very regulated in what they can say to the military. I remember in Iraq, when I was there last, which is 2006, I believe, the lines-to-take book had got up to 130 pages. I remember hearing soldiers being briefed for the visit of the Prime Minister, and they were choosing junior officers, certainly young soldiers, who would be in line to talk to the Prime Minister

and what they should tell him. The whole thing seemed completely circular—basically politicians going out to be told what they wanted to hear.

Q275 Chairman: I am sorry, were you there for that briefing, or were you told about the briefing afterwards?

Mr Grey: I was there when I overheard discussions by staff in headquarters about how they planned to organise this Prime Minister's visit.

Q276 Chairman: What you are telling us is that when the Prime Minister goes there he gets no ground truth; he gets some pre-organised line-to-take cooked up in advance by the Ministry of Defence?

Mr Grey: That is the objective of certain officials. Of course, I just add that there are soldiers who speak their mind regardless of any briefing they receive, but there is a tendency in that system certainly and people there who do try to cook up that sort of viewpoint.

Q277 Mr Holloway: Do you think generally with both Iraq and Afghanistan that the politicians have been well or ill served by the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office in terms of what the Chairman refers to as ground truth? I have often felt, when we have been in Afghanistan and when we have evidence sessions here, we are dissembled too. Do you think the Prime Minister and the Ministers have had a good deal?

Mr Grey: I do not know what briefings you have received, but I just know that there is almost a professional optimism that is provided to yourselves which is not borne out by the private opinions of many of the same people that make these public statements.

Q278 Chairman: You have seen the evidence that the permanent under-secretaries gave us. Do you think that was just words?

Mr Grey: I do not know their private views; I have never met any of them. I remember they made a similar report. In the spring of 2007 they made a fact-finding trip to Helmand in Afghanistan and they wrote a report, which you might try and get hold of. I think the summary was headlined "Overall we are optimistic", and it seems that in the intervening period things have got considerably worse, but overall they remain optimistic, as far as I can tell.

Q279 Chairman: From what you are saying, the truth is different from what they were telling us in terms of the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Approach.

Mr Grey: I do not wish to question those particular conclusions.

Q280 Chairman: I am not suggesting that they were in any sense lying to us. What I was suggesting was that the Comprehensive Approach is more in words than in reality. Is that right?

Mr Grey: Absolutely, and the impression you get from very senior people within the military is that they are confronted with other departments who

have no genuine belief in the value of this conflict; there is a sense in which they are not sure there is a real will to win in other departments. You get a sense in the diplomatic service, for example, that the military have pushed ahead of the political will that exists in this country. So that adds up to a dysfunction between those departments which, despite great efforts by a number of people to pull together, has not been resolved.

Q281 Mrs Moon: Do you think we have learnt anything? Has anything improved? Are we making any progress at all?

Mr Grey: Yes, I believe so. You have heard people describe efforts to pull things together. I think the Stabilisation Unit and the Afghan Taskforce are examples of attempts by people to pull together what is being done, but the measure is not those organisational efforts but the actual effect I heard earlier talk about on the farmers on the ground. You cannot say that the strategy is right until you actually see those positive benefits. You can talk about this as a long-term effect, a long-term campaign, but I think as General Petraeus said in Iraq, unless you are winning in the short-term, there is no long-term, and unless at every point in every military and political operation you deliver a positive benefit to the Afghan people in that tiny hamlet, you are contributing to an overall worsening of the situation rather than an overall improvement. I do think there are places in central Helmand where things are working much, much better and certainly outside of Helmand in the wider Afghanistan, which I do not know too much about, people point to a great many successes, but the struggle is to work out how to do things where security is not present at all, and that is where I do not think anyone has found a correct solution how to deliver the Comprehensive Approach, if you like, when the mortars are still landing.

Q282 Mrs Moon: I would like the other two gentlemen to comment on the same question, and I would like to then come back to Mr Grey with another question, if I may, Mr Mollett.

Mr Mollett: We at Care International have also made a written submission. I have got it in front of me. We put in there that the comprehensive approach seems to reflect some of the lessons identified, if not perhaps yet lessons learned, emerging from Iraq and Afghanistan in terms of how operations on the ground have been ineffective, partly, in the experience of both countries, reflecting the extent to which they have been driven by short-termist strategies centered around some questionable orthodoxies and ideas around using aid in a short-term way to win hearts and minds through emphasis on the military side, and then with the lack of clarity over the relationship between the military piece and politics in the context of what aid can realistically achieve and on what basis aid can be sustainable, whether you are talking about longer-term work on livelihoods, or education on the development side, or in terms of meeting basic needs and saving lives on the humanitarian front as well.

Reflecting on the experience in Afghanistan, when the British military first deployed into Helmand there was (and Stephen referred to that) this rather unseemly spectacle, that once the British military had been deployed and they had been apparently requested by the Afghan Government to go out into the more remote rural areas, there were public announcements calling, "Where are the UN? Where are the NGOs? Where is DFID?", to come in almost perhaps with a band wagon in the Wild West and do big impact projects in the areas where the troops had been deployed and not really understanding, at least from the perspective of aid agencies, or agencies like my own, that we can only work in conflict affected contexts like Afghanistan on the basis of community acceptance and being understood as distinct from, and not aligned with, one of the parties fighting in the conflict. That is no disrespect to the military in what they are doing in their operation; it is about understanding the basis on which we can operate without our staff's lives being put at risk, and, indeed, not only our staff, but the actual communities that we are trying to work with as well. What we have seen since then, but also prior to that, in some of the discourse around the Comprehensive Approach, when you hear the discussions around the mechanics if you like, and the policy at the international level, there is increasing recognition of some of those issues and the need for agencies like Care to work on the basis of independence from any of the belligerence involved in the war and on a neutral and impartial basis. For instance, someone above my pay grade was recently in a meeting in a forum at which the Deputy Secretary General of NATO was present and said something to the effect of, "NATO is now aware that we need to engage with aid agencies on a sort of co-ordination with, not co-ordination of, basis for it to work", and I think that is progress, if you compare it to, say, the earlier period in Afghanistan and the previous experience in Iraq as well, but I think it is still a little bit unclear whether the mechanics and understanding of some of the realities for aid agencies working on the ground is really translated down into the practice on the ground or is understood in a consistent way across different parts of government departments or across some of the international institutions that are involved in contexts like Afghanistan and in the Comprehensive Approach. For some it does seem a genuinely new way of working, for others it is a new label for the same old way of working and framing civil, military relations basically as a way to instrumentalise aid to deliver on a short-term tactical objective.

Mr Korski: I think the brutal truth that the committee is gradually unearthing is the fact that our institutions nationally, our alliances internationally are ill-equipped to deal with these interconnected security challenges in a comprehensive manner, whether they be stabilising areas such as Helmand after an immediate combat operation or perhaps, more broadly, engaging with aid, the diplomatic tools and military tools in the run up to conflict. What we are gradually seeing is how things are coming apart at the seams as government

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departments try their best to cobble solutions together on the ground, frequently under fire, with limited resources and insufficient training. So I think in direct answer to your question, “Did we learn and what have we learned?”, first we have to acknowledge that, in succession, we failed to learn from an initial operation in Afghanistan to the operation in Iraq, we then failed to learn what we learnt in Iraq back on to Afghanistan when the UK took the lead in NATO’s phase three deployment into the south and perhaps at that stage we also struggled to transfer some of those lessons back on to Iraq as the situation changed there following General Petraeus’ arrival. So there is a series of stages where we have failed to learn, not because people are wilful, not because senior officials want to disassemble, but, frankly, because the institutions that we created 60 years ago to undertake national security assignments are simply not structured for this task: they do not incentivise people, we do not train them the right way, we do not resource appropriately. So what we are trying to do is cover the gaps between the institutions leading to all the problems that Stephen has so eloquently described.

Q283 Mrs Moon: Can I ask a very simple question. I just want a yes or no answer from you. We were told that UNSCR 1325 was part of the Comprehensive Approach that was being pushed forward throughout Afghanistan. Would you agree?

Mr Grey: I am afraid I am ignorant of what 1325 is.

Q284 Mrs Moon: It is about the closer involvement of women in political decision-making, peace-building and capacity-building.

Mr Grey: I think, at the sharp end, in the most insecure areas it is the last thing on most decision-makers’ minds.

Mr Mollett: It is something that at Care we are working with other agencies on developing some field research in due course, which I would be happy to share with you. Otherwise at the moment I could not really speak from Care’s experience, but I do know that, for instance, Womenkind Worldwide, also Amnesty, are two NGOs that have done work in support of women’s rights and gender activists in Afghanistan, and it would be worth contacting them.

Mr Korski: I think that it is something talked about at Whitehall level and occasionally thought about in the field, but I do not think, especially in places like Helmand, it is considered a priority. The Swedes, on the other hand, in northern parts of Afghanistan do take it very seriously. At the risk of being incredibly unpopular, I would say talk about the Comprehensive Approach at some stage also has to be a conversation, I suggest, about what it is the West can achieve in various places and how quickly we can achieve it. While everybody, I think, would like to see the progressive realisation of liberal ideals, including women’s rights, achieved in places like Afghanistan, the incredibly difficult context of an insurgency in southern Afghanistan, I think most people conclude that this is not a priority.

Q285 Mrs Moon: Fine if you are a man.

Mr Grey: Women want security too!

Mr Mollett: Just one other reflection on that, drawing on some other work that we have been involved in in other countries, which I have not been directly involved in, which is why I will make it very brief, one of the issues that has come out is some of the work around Resolution 1325 has focused on women’s roles at the higher levels in peace processes, and so on, but what we have found in some of the countries where there is on-going violence on the ground, actually one of the real issues is the access that women have that are caught up in violence and exposed to violence, particularly gender-related violence, to actually safe interlocutors where they can turn for referral just in terms of immediate medical needs, let alone any other kinds of needs related to security, or justice, or following up on that front. I understand that there has been some work done on that, for example, in Afghanistan in terms of female policing and so on, but it is very limited. So some of the discussions on 1325 tend to focus very much at the higher level, whereas for ordinary women in Afghanistan perhaps one of the first priorities is actually just access to a safe place to turn whatever the issue it is related to.

Mr Korski: Very briefly, in the previous session you talked about the extent to which these issues are taken into consideration as the international community helps the recruitment of the police and the military. When I was in Afghanistan most recently and had a chance to discuss with some of the Americans working on the development of the Army. I was quite surprised at how much effort was put into some of these issues at the very lowest level, but not so much at the higher level when it came to the question of how to recruit the Afghan Army. So there clearly is a series of discontinuities talked about in Whitehall and perhaps in the northern parts of Afghanistan, but not necessarily when it comes to the development of the Army or the Police.

Q286 Mr Crausby: Not everybody is convinced that the Comprehensive Approach is the solution in all circumstances. The blurring of the lines between military and the delivery of humanitarian aid is seen, certainly by some in the eyes of the local population, as negative. Are there situations where you would say the Comprehensive Approach is inadequate, and can you tell us how you see the difficulties that are involved within the Comprehensive Approach in different circumstances?

Mr Korski: To my mind, I think we have to make a very clear distinction between what is humanitarian assistance—aid that we give for people in dire need and for humanitarian reasons—and what we do for developmental reasons. One is absolutely an area that needs to be cordoned off from political, military and diplomatic engagement, and I think there is now a multi-year history of developing the rules between the military and NGOs, and I am sure that Howard can talk about more, but we should definitely respect that. At the same time, as General Rupert Smith said in his book, development is inherently political, and I think we have to acknowledge, in places like

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Afghanistan, where we are facing an insurgency, the dispersal of assistance that is not humanitarian is going to be seen as developmental. But that, of course, creates huge problems, and perhaps one of the interesting ones is what is happening now in Pakistan, where two and a half million people have been internally displaced as a result of military activity. It is absolutely clear that a number of charities like Lashkar-e-Taiba are developing assistance programmes using funds and also having nefarious relationships with various terrorist organisations. How to get in there and develop assistance and give it but ensure it does not go to the wrong place is an incredibly difficult question, but I think the important thing to hold on to is to say there is a lot of blurring between humanitarian assistance and development, and I would say what we are talking about when we talk about the Comprehensive Approach in places like Afghanistan, in places like Iraq, is development, and that, to my mind, should be governed by a number of principles but definitely be part of a cross-governmental approach that involves other instruments.

Mr Grey: I would argue that where a civilian worker cannot but get somewhere with the assistance of the military, then the best person to deliver whatever effect that is, for example development, should be wearing uniform as well, should be militarised: because if not that development worker will be tainted, will be regarded as military and will hamper the work they try and do elsewhere. I think you have seen increased, for example, militarisation of DFID where it now considers investment in security as part of its poverty reduction strategy and where they are seen to be working alongside soldiers constantly. It undermines the work of people doing development when the military are not present. They are regarded as part of the military. As soon as you say that the well that you dig is part of the strategic effort, then the well becomes a target and the well digger becomes a target and it is a very dangerous course of events. It is far better in the most insecure areas, if it is too dangerous, not to send a civilian forward. The military need to have the people that can do this side of the work. It is very interesting looking at what the Soviets did. We always talk about them sowing mines everywhere, but they also did experiments in the ink-spot theory and the Comprehensive Approach and all these things. They were actually far more successful at the ink-spots in that that they maintained security in the major towns and ignored the countryside in many places. There was a story from one worker in a Helmand PRT described as going to spend time with an Afghan official who said, "You know, it is great what you do", I am paraphrasing, obviously, "but why can you not be a bit more like the Russians? Because you sit here for one hour a day before you are whisked away by your security. The Russians used to stay with us day after day and mentor us in a comprehensive way." We have a different attitude to risk than the Russians did, and that is right, but we have to change our policies to reflect the reality of that. Rather than saying, "Oh, civilians, they should have the same

security rules as us", we need to say the reality is that they do have different rules and what are we going to do about it?

Mr Mollett: On this issue of what is development in a situation like Afghanistan, particularly in the southern part of the country, the most violent conflict-affected part of the country, I think that throws out some really important and challenging issues that need to be rigorously looked through and then understood in terms of what is aid in the context of Helmand? I do not recall now whether it was you, Daniel, or one of your colleagues from your organisation, but there was an event at RUSI about a year ago where someone said, "We need a concept of opposed development", and the very term itself froze up the kind of paradoxical nature of what is being discussed there, because what is a school in the middle of a war zone that is immediately a target for an insurgency? What is a well? There are certain dilemmas there, or certain things, or there is an incompatibility between the context and then the aspiration of doing a developmental project in the middle of a war zone. Development is framed by governance and, in the context of completely contested governance, what kind of legitimacy or sustainability will that project have? Interestingly, at the end of 2007 into early 2008 we participated in a research project with other NGOs in Afghanistan where the research team was an Iranian woman and five Afghan researchers who had access across Helmand and Kandahar, indeed, the research team had also worked with British military and others on research for the UK Government and others but had access outside of the PRTs, met with Afghan interlocutors, community representatives. The research particularly focused in Uruzgan and Paktia, and, apart from the issues around the extent to which the military involvement in aid was blurring the lines with humanitarian work, they also threw up very challenging issues for the military zone, or the interests from the military side in terms of getting involved in development, and there are three or four sets of issues. One is around the impact of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams and the heavy military footprint in these provinces, their consequences for Afghan governance at that level, and the extent to which local leaders became perceived as disempowered or puppets for the foreign integrators of a military presence. Another really worrying issue from our side was the extent of inappropriate interactions between the military forces on the ground or these integrated civil, military operations, the PRTs and some NGOs that were desperate for money and perhaps fell into the category of what some Afghans called "briefcase NGOs", or "Come N'GOs" that have been set up post 2001 to make a lot of money, these sort of entrepreneurial things not really having links to the communities or interested in work that is about sustainable development or humanitarian relief. Military funding to those NGOs, or co-operation with those NGOs was eroding the safe space for other NGOs to operate in those same areas, and so there was a blurring, if you like, between some of the, shall we say, less professional principled NGO's

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work funded to deliver on short-term, quick impact project type objectives and the work of other NGOs that had been in Afghanistan for a long time and were working on a different basis. There were lots of concerns around the lack of transparency or accountability around projects that were implemented through those kinds of relations, all of which suggested that often the extent to which some of these projects were being funded or directly implemented by international forces in Uruzgan or Paktia were not actually really meeting their own hearts and minds objectives, were ineffective even in their own terms, because they were not based on a sound understanding of the context and the local political dynamics within the community where they were implementing these projects, let alone the negatives with knock-on consequences for the NGOs that have been working that area for a long time. My understanding is that the British military also conducted an evaluation of its QIPs Programme (Quick Impact Projects Programme) in Helmand just over a year ago, I think, and although that is classified, and I have not read the evaluation, but there were presentations drawing on the evaluation in various fora which suggested some remarkably similar findings around how doing development projects in an area that has not been secured in any sustainable way in Helmand or Kandahar just does not make sense because they become targets. The gap, to return to Mr Jenkin's question earlier, between the military and the development side is about the politics and the grievances or the different political factors that are driving the violence; it is not about some other form of opposed development.

Mr Grey: I was going to say, there are ways of tailoring development projects so that they can be both doable in terms of advancing security and development, for example, road building. Roads are much more difficult to completely destroy than a new clinic, for example. They both enhance security and they boost the economy, allowing people, for example, to take legitimate crops to market as well as allowing a much more efficient security deployment.

Mr Mollett: Can I come back on the road building issue, because that is one issue that was raised by our research. I understand your point about access to markets and livelihoods, and so on, but our research did find, at least in Uruzgan and Paktia, some evidence that the local contractors and international contractors that were hired by the international military and Afghan Government to construct these roads often had rather direct linkages with militias that were involved in some of the violence in the area as well, and so the extent to which some of this road building was feeding into a war economy and security, or insecurity, along these routes being manipulated by the very organisations involved in constructing the roads, I think, is a serious issue that merits further research and careful understanding.

Mr Korski: Since I am coming in for a lot of stick for having used the word "opposed development", I think the point here is that we need to look at the way in which to disperse and use a series of instruments, taking due cognisance of the complex political

context that we are operating in. That is what I intended with the words "opposed development"—no different from what General David Petraeus, I think, talked about when he talked about counter-insurgency. It is true, though, that we should not think that this is the development as we have always done it, and the really important thing to acknowledge is that a place like Afghanistan is no longer one country. Some of you have travelled extensively, and we face vastly different situations in the north, in the centre and in the south, and some areas are perfectly right for a developmental approach absent a comprehensive one and others require a different take on development.

Chairman: As I understood it, you were not coming under stick. What you were doing was reporting somebody else's phrase, was my understanding.

Q287 Mr Holloway: Howard, can you think of any examples where the Comprehensive Approach has had any tangible effect on local Afghans in conflict areas?

Mr Mollett: Some of my reflections are based on on-going direct working relations with colleagues in a country office but do mostly draw from research that is happening now about well over a year ago. That is a caveat. Things may have changed since then. The point I wanted to make was in that research one thing that came out was that, for all the discussion of civilianisation and stabilisation and an enhanced civilian lead at the policy level, at the time we did the research in Uruzgan and Paktia that had yet to translate into any discernible changes on the ground for Afghan interlocutors that we spoke to, and that fed into that research.

Q288 Chairman: So the answer is essentially, no.

Mr Mollett: To be fair, I think it is probably quite early to come to any kind of definitive judgment, and I think it would be very easy from an international level, reflecting now, for instance, on other reform methods within international institutions in the humanitarian sphere where if they have not solved all the issues within a year some commentators are very quick to say, "Right, rip that up. We need something completely different and radically different." I do not know whether there is perhaps a parallel here, but I think the evidence is certainly mixed and there is no clear evidence that it has resulted in changes that have addressed us. All of the issues or concerns from a humanitarian perspective from a couple of years back may.

Q289 Mr Holloway: USAID are aware that it can operate very easily itself in Helmand. It uses the services of a private company, Central Asian Development Group. How do you feel about aid agencies using private companies to get locals to do the work for them when they cannot do it themselves?

Mr Mollett: I referred just now to some of the findings around road construction in Afghanistan. That is one example of where, if international forces commission international private security companies or private sector agencies involved in

stabilisation related reconstruction work, you will then typically work in partnership with local contractors. There are all kinds of issues around where are these companies coming from, what is their background in militias, how it relates into the war economy, the extent to which they work on the basis of armed deterrents essentially and, perhaps, buying access into areas where they work: the contrast between that and the basis on which, for instance, we work as Care, which is on the basis of community acceptance and the trust and good relations with communities where we work, whether it is on the basis of negotiating humanitarian access or longer-term development work, whereas sustainability, participation, all of those, if you like, might sound like jargon terms, just like any sector has jargon terms, but these relate to our principles and our values and the basis on which we work. It is a very different basis to that of some of the private sector contractors and private security companies that are operating in Afghanistan, and the unsustainability of their projects, their contribution to the war economy, has been well documented by other NGOs such as, I believe, Transparency International. There was a study about a year ago looking at private sector involvement in reconstruction in Afghanistan.

Q290 Mr Holloway: Finally in this section, directly to you. Do you feel that the international community and the aid agencies spend a long time deciding what local people in particular areas need, and do you think there is an argument for getting local communities, in the case of Afghanistan village elders, more involved in saying what they want and, therefore, they would be a bit more likely to protect it when they got it?

Mr Mollett: I cannot speak for all NGOs or aid agencies. Certainly within Care we have had some really interesting experiences in working both with traditional shuras and then establishing community development committees or councils in Afghanistan, also partly as an implementing partner of the National Solidarity Programme. In a way it goes back to the point I was making in my previous response to your previous question, which is on what basis is aid sustainable in Afghanistan or, indeed, elsewhere and where I drew the contrast between private sector contractors that may be hired to work to deliver a project to meet a short-term objective set by the military or a political actor at the international level, or agencies that are trying to work with communities on the basis of the needs and the interests that they articulate, and that is the basis on which we work. We are also doing a review of our experience with the National Solidarity Programme and some of these different approaches to working with local governance structures, traditional governance structures, and we would be happy to share the details of that after this session.

Q291 Mr Hamilton: Chairman, I am a bit puzzled. Howard talks about corruption within the contractors, but it is a choice, is it not? It is a choice between Western corruption and what happens

within Afghanistan. The point you made earlier on is really important, but that is what they have to face, and that is what they have to deal with and surely that is the way it goes. In Northern Ireland everybody knew, in the 30 years work in Northern Ireland, whenever we entered into contracts that were taking place the IRA, the UDA and everybody else had their hands in it. There is talk about the progress being made, but there is no alternative. You have to work with somebody on the ground, and surely working on the ground is the right way forward. The bit that puzzles me is you have got to win the peace before you can begin to bring the developments and that into operation. You have got to make the area secure before you can start to get the other parts into operation. What we seem to be doing is going round in a circle. The evidence the last time and the evidence this time is we seem to have gone in a circle all the way round and I am beginning to get worried that the progress is not going to be there. Chairman, I say that in the background that we have all these countries involved, all of which are facing a financial crisis in their own right, and I have got a real worry that this goes off the agenda at some point unless we get it right. If this continues the way it seems to be going at the present time, what seems to be happening from our point of view is people will turn their back on it and say, "Okay, it is taking far too long to resolve", and at the end of the day it starts to walk away from you. That is the worry, surely.

Mr Grey: I am not as depressed as you are.

Q292 Mr Hamilton: I am just depressed.

Mr Grey: I think the foundation of this is good intelligence, and finding out who you are dealing with is all very well, but if you have not got any intelligence, if you walk into a village with a suitcase of cash, you probably hand the money to the drug lord. I would say the biggest source of finance for the insurgency is actually NATO and its contracts, not any money coming from Al Qaeda or the Gulf or something like that, because we often deal with people who are corrupt. It does not mean there are not good people out there. The Russians had a very good idea. They educated thousands of people and brought them back. We do not seem to be doing that. When you look at Basra, for example, Basra went wrong not because there were not good people there, they were all driven away, and we actually handed power in the Police and the Government to the extreme Islamist militias. That was a deliberate decision made. We thought we were not going to be there long and we allowed them to take over the apparatus of state there. That was not because it was inevitable, not because there were not good people there: it was because of really bad intelligence and really bad short-term decision-making. One example which might be useful to you about total dysfunction within the UK Government system, arguably the whole approach was thrown back by the very way we went into Helmand in the first place. What we did was we engineered in Kabul the removal of the Governor of Helmand, Sher Mohammad Akhundzada (SMA, as he is called). That was a UK

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Government operation. Whether it is right or wrong I am not discussing. He was removed in December 2005. British combat troops arrived in force in April 2006. In between a whole revolt happened in Helmand. There is no other better example of dysfunction between departments than the diplomatic service organising a political change and the military organising its change four or five months later. The new Governor, Governor Mohamed Daoud, thought he had an army to back him up and he had nothing for four or five months. Meanwhile the whole of the province went up in flames.

Mr Korski: The history of what went right and wrong in Helmand will be written and rewritten a number of times. This story, I am sure, will be included, but another important aspect is the fact that while, for the first time, in 2005 a range of departments sat together and tried to develop a comprehensive plan, and I think I would go so far as to say probably the first time they ever did that, once they handed that plan over to the teams that were meant to implement it, whether that be General Brigadier Butler or the civilian team, everybody went down into their stow pipes and carried on doing their work as they saw fit rather than working to a joined-up plan. So part of the answer to this difficult conundrum is sticking to this kind of comprehensive cross-departmental approach from the beginning, in the middle and to the end. It is not going to get around some of the corruption issues—they are clear, they exist in all the conflict zones—the real question we have to answer is how do we operate in these areas where Care is not interested in operating because it is simply too dangerous? Where there is a political commitment to go somewhere, how do we go about it? Is it true that using contractors is a less advantageous model? Yes. Is there another model? Not necessarily in some of these areas. So we are dealing with not the perfect scenario but what we do in this incredibly imperfect set of circumstances.

Chairman: We are going to wrap up with the final question that we asked earlier.

Q293 Mrs Moon: The one thing we have not had from each of you gentlemen is where you see the Comprehensive Approach being now on that scale of one to ten. It would be helpful if you could give us your scale, but also where do we go from here? Can it be improved and, if so, how?

Mr Korski: I think there is a realisation that we need to be comprehensive in the way that we were not before. So points for effort and understanding the challenge. As I articulated before, the way we structure our departments, recruit our staff, plan for missions needs to fundamentally change. People have realised the extent of the problem, made some changes, but have not yet taken the full step forward, I believe.

Q294 Mrs Moon: On that scale of one to ten where are we?

Mr Korski: Six.

Q295 Chairman: You are a generous man.

Mr Mollett: Rather than answer with a score card mark, I make one brief point. Back in 2001/2002 the international community, the UN, the donors, including our Government, were very keen to push Afghanistan as this post-conflict development context, and UNAMA was established as the integrated mission with humanitarian co-ordination and leadership as a tiny subcomponent of the aid department within the mission. Last year already that was so flagrantly not the situation, the security situation was so dire, the humanitarian access situation so dire, just a complete lack of information on what the situation was for the people affected by conflict in the southern part of the country and elsewhere, that finally there was a buckling and there was an agreement to establish a new OCHA office, a UN humanitarian co-ordination office, in Afghanistan, recognising that you need a strong, legitimate and credible humanitarian capacity in Afghanistan which can then engage in dialogue or co-ordination with, whether it is political or military, actors on the ground to enable an effective response to the humanitarian situation. So I think there has been some progress and, in terms of what needs to be done, I think we need to build on that recognition; that appropriate and effective co-ordination between the aid, peace and then the political and the military intervention certainly in contexts like Afghanistan does not require total integration or subordination of aid to short-term political or military agendas but requires proper resourcing and an ability to engage on an equal and a credible footing and, therefore, enable relief operations to happen in Afghanistan in an appropriate way.

Q296 Mrs Moon: Mr Grey?

Mr Grey: The score that Brigadier Butler gave was one, was it not?

Q297 Chairman: It was different. He said it was one and a half for NATO, but he was talking about NATO.

Mr Grey: If we said at the beginning it was one and a half on the Comprehensive Approach, I would say it is three now, so doubly as good but a long way off, or three as of last year, last spring, when I was probably best informed.

Q298 Mrs Moon: Are you talking about on the ground?

Mr Grey: Yes.

Q299 Mrs Moon: Others have told us six on the ground, but you put it at three.

Mr Grey: I disagree, yes. As to the solutions, obviously there are many, but the only thing I would highlight is that at the moment the strategic commander of all UK agencies is the Prime Minister, and there is no other place where it comes together. I think that came out from your briefing from the permanent secretaries. So there was no-one in charge

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apart from the Prime Minister. I think the Prime Minister of Britain has got other things on his mind, and that is the real problem. So I think there needs to be someone, not quite a General Templer of Malaya who had full civilian powers dealing with a sovereign country, but there are so many agencies involved, so many countries involved here that Britain's interests need to be combined into one role, an ambassador that combines the role of both military commander and civil commander.

Chairman: Thank you very much indeed. Mr Grey, you said you were not as depressed as we were, but the reason we are depressed is what you have told us. The most discouraging thing we heard was from you, and the most encouraging thing we heard was also from you. Thank you all very much indeed for your evidence. It has been a extremely helpful. It is a bit like a dash of cold water on some of the evidence that we have heard in previous evidence sessions, so we are most grateful.

Tuesday 7 July 2009

Members present:

Mr James Arbuthnot, in the Chair

Mr David Crausby
Linda Gilroy
Mr David Hamilton
Mr Dai Havard
Mr Adam Holloway

Mr Bernard Jenkin
Mr Brian Jenkins
Robert Key
Mrs Madeleine Moon

Witnesses: **Bill Rammell MP**, Minister for the Armed Forces, Ministry of Defence, **Rt Hon Lord Malloch-Brown**, a Member of the House of Lords, KCMG, Minister for Asia, Africa and the UN, FCO, **Michael Foster MP**, Under-Secretary of State for Development, DFID, **Mr Richard Teuten**, Head of the Stabilisation Unit, **Brigadier Gordon Messenger DSO, OBE, ADC**, Royal Marines and **Mr Nick Pickard**, Head of the Security Policy Group, FCO, gave evidence.

Q300 Chairman: Welcome to our evidence session on the Comprehensive Approach. I do not know what a collection of ministers is called but, nevertheless, maybe a government of ministers, you are welcome. You do not each have to answer every question, in fact I would slightly rather if you did not. Can I begin with the main question about whether the Comprehensive Approach is working, and this is really addressed to the ministers. In your memorandum you say the Comprehensive Approach works well. We have the impression it is getting better, but not that it works well as such. I wonder whether you could say why you think it is working less well than you would like it to. I am going to call you by your name instead of minister because that would get confusing. Bill Rammell, would you like to begin?

Bill Rammell: Thank you, Chairman. Can I start by informing the Committee of what I have just informed you and the Vice-Chairman as a courtesy. We are today at midday tabling a commitment to a strategic defence review early in the next Parliament. I wanted you to be aware of that and with the agreement of the Chairman, I think you are going to ask some questions at one minute past twelve. I am comfortable with that, but I want to make sure the Committee are aware of that.

Q301 Chairman: Thank you very much.

Bill Rammell: In terms of the Comprehensive Approach, I would describe it as a work in progress. Having been a minister at the Foreign Office and now a Minister of Defence, it gives me an overview and perspective on this. When this started there was a frustration within the MoD that initially there was a perceived lack of engagement on the part of DFID and FCO, particularly with regard to Iraq and Afghanistan. Conversely, expectations of what could be achieved over what timescales were too high within the MoD. Probably the MoD was too prescriptive at that stage. As time has gone on and through things like the development of the National Security Strategy, through our experience in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere and through the development of the Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy, things have moved much more in the right direction. Clearly the establishment of the conflict pools, the

Stabilisation Unit have helped, joint training initiatives have helped and also a coming together of understanding of the way different people in different organisations work. If you look at our three separate recent capability reviews, I think all of them with external challenge, indicate there is much more joined-up-ness and much more cohesion than was the case in the past.

Q302 Chairman: Do you think you have the strategy right in Pakistan and Afghanistan?

Bill Rammell: I think we do. It was announced back in April. It is about recognising there are shared challenges between those two countries, but they are countries at a very different stage of evolution and development. We have got a much more substantial footprint on the ground in Afghanistan, the aid programme is particularly important in both countries but certainly with Pakistan. It is how in looking at the two together, but recognising the different circumstances, we can overcome the challenges.

Q303 Chairman: The question I asked was how is it working less well and you have told me how it is working more well. How is it working less well?

Bill Rammell: If I am honest, I think there are still cultural challenges between all of our three departments in that the military, aid workers and diplomats have a different mindset when they come at a problem initially but some fundamental shared interests. I think we still need to do more to ensure we can break down those barriers. We still have some challenges, although I think we can overstate them in terms of the accounting officer function, which I do not think creates an insurmountable problem, but it sometimes means decisions take longer than they would otherwise take because of those justifiable responsibilities. This is something which, again, will develop over time as more people within DFID, the FCO and the MoD have direct contact and experience with this kind of engagement and develop the appropriate skills. Is that a self criticism? I think it is a recognition that this is a learning process and it will take time to follow it through.

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Lord Malloch-Brown: You have to look at this at probably three levels: the on-the-ground level in a place like Helmand; the London level; and then what I would argue is by far the most important level, which is the international level of how we work with allies and partners, either through the vehicle of the United Nations or narrower coalitions where that is the case. If you take each, on the ground I think in terms of the philosophy and administrative arrangements, a comprehensiveness of a Comprehensive Approach, it is working well and the shortcomings, which are considerable, are not shortcomings of those administrative arrangements but shortcomings imposed by a highly insecure situation where the practical difficulties of doing development while there is still a war on are very, very difficult. It is those features of the environment itself which limit the comprehensiveness in terms of impact. At the London level, I think a huge amount is being done. Bill has touched on the arrangements. I have no doubt there are still cultural issues to be resolved, but the area where I would argue, perhaps, we have fallen well short is at global level. When I first heard about this I was serving in the UN and I thought it was an important initiative by the UK but a modest first step because it is nice for the UK to co-ordinate better across these departments, but it does not really give you the bang you are looking for unless it is co-ordination across all of your allies and partners so that the civilian effort is mounted in a coherent way by all, as well as military effort. While I think in Afghanistan we are now starting to see real progress with the new US administration in its focus on both a military and development surge, if you step back and look globally, an awful lot of these operations are still bedevilled by a lack of clear command and control structures, if you like, at the international level and a lack of strategy and priority setting.

Q304 Chairman: You danced lightly over the London level there. Would you not agree with some of our previous witnesses that London is speaking the words of the Comprehensive Approach but really not bedding it in to reality?

Lord Malloch-Brown: What I would agree is it is a work in progress. I do not think we are all the way there, but there is steady progress. The fact is in the crucible of operations themselves, like in Helmand, this thing goes a lot faster and easier, friendships and comradeship is built by people who are working and living together through intense assignments. Perhaps in London it is a lot harder to get that sort of fluency of arrangements. What I think I can tell you is it is going in the right direction.

Michael Foster: Chairman, I echo what both Bill and Mark have said, it is work in progress. When I worked in industry I was a believer in continuous improvement and I think that is what we have seen from the early experiences of joint working. For example in Bosnia in the 1990s compared with where we are now, there has been a real improvement in the relationships and how the three departments and different personnel work on the ground. If I can take

a caricature: the military wanted a quick win, a bag of cash taken to a village and that sorts the problem out, against DFID, long-term development only and that is the way forward. I think there has been more of a meeting of minds now which has taken place borne of the creation of some structures, like the Stabilisation Unit, borne of experience on the ground and learning from what actually happens day in, day out and also shared experiences at a training level, for instance Operation Joint Venture last year where the three departments undertook a large training exercise. There can be an exchange of ideas which will bring what are characterised as two extremes closer to one uniform policy.

Q305 Chairman: You mentioned Bosnia, and it is obviously an inquiry about more than Afghanistan, but do you think in Afghanistan compared with Bosnia we are devoting the right level of resources to the Comprehensive Approach?

Michael Foster: I do not think there is any doubt that there is intent on behalf of the Government in terms of the amount of resource and as far as DFID is concerned, I think when the Permanent Secretary gave evidence before this Committee she made it quite clear that in Afghanistan, if you were to take Afghanistan as a country with developing needs but without the conflict compared with the situation now, there is ten times the amount of financial resource going into Afghanistan than there would be if it was just a country with the challenges of poverty. I do think the Government is putting forward more resource and more intensively than perhaps it did in the past.

Q306 Chairman: It is 1/50th of the resources that we put into Bosnia.

Michael Foster: Is that DFID? I was just referring to the DFID resources.

Chairman: Okay.

Q307 Mr Crausby: My question is aimed specifically again at Michael Foster and DFID in relation to the 2002 International Development Act, which provides your authority for expenditure and defines the core power for DFID as to contribute to a reduction in poverty. Given that DFID's main priority is the reduction in poverty, can DFID fully become involved in the Comprehensive Approach?

Michael Foster: Yes, I think it does and it can and I have seen arguments that there needs to be a review of the Act and an amendment of the Act and we do not believe that is necessary. Can I remind you what the Act in 2002 said—and obviously it came in following, repeal of the 1980 Act where there was conditionality tied to aid—in effect, the 2002 Act set two tests for development expenditure. First, it should be for the purpose of promoting the welfare of people or sustainable development and, secondly, there is an expectation that the assistance will contribute to a reduction in poverty, but the poverty reduction test—which I think is used by some people to suggest that somehow you cannot use DFID funding to deliver in conflict and fragile states—can

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be long-term and it can be indirect. I think there is a greater recognition now on the ground that dealing with conflict, dealing with fragile states all add to the case for poverty reduction, it is just that it is not a direct link as would be the case of providing education to a primary school pupil. There is a very clear link then between an education a child has and the reduction in poverty. Indirectly, it can make sure schools are not destroyed by conflict, people are not injured or killed by conflict because all of those add to poverty reduction. Anything which prevents injuries, deaths, damage to infrastructure is by its nature poverty reduction and, therefore, can fulfil part of the Act quite comfortably.

Q308 Mr Crausby: The International Development Committee has argued that support should go to the whole of Afghanistan and in that the more peaceful parts of Afghanistan. Is there not a conflict effectively with Defence in the sense that Defence would be more concerned about the conflict zones in the whole of Afghanistan? How does that all fit together in a Comprehensive Approach?

Michael Foster: We made our position very clear back in 2007 with a policy paper we launched called *Preventing Violent Conflicts* where we very firmly made the clear link between conflict and poverty reduction. That was part of DFID's policy change, if you like, from what had been assumed to be the case in the past. Yesterday's White Paper again had a chapter specifically on building fragile states and dealing with conflict and that is the new direction of emphasis. As far as our commitment financially to back-up that support, what we said in the White Paper yesterday was half of the new money which was going to be announced would be spent on conflict reduction. It is about £140 million in 2010/11, again securing our commitment to deal with the poverty angle caused by conflict.

Q309 Chairman: Last week we heard from several witnesses about the political difficulties between NATO and the European Union. It became clear there were political problems which made formal co-operation between the European Union and NATO more difficult. Mr Howard said: "The Secretary General of NATO is very, very firm about the need to improve NATO-EU relations. I have no doubt Mr Solana sees it the same way, but it needs the Member States themselves, the allies to make change now". Mr Cooper said: "We have worked out at a bureaucratic level the detail of the agreements that we need to function together, but they have not received political endorsement and that is because of political problems between one of the members of the European Union and one of the members of NATO". Is there any role for the UK in resolving political problems which seem to be causing serious difficulty?

Lord Malloch-Brown: I am going to ask Nick Pickard in a moment to comment, but I think the short answer is yes, we have very intense

relationships with both countries, and obviously this is a longstanding sore which we have to work on and resolve.

Q310 Chairman: Would you accept the description of the problem I have just read out as being accurate? **Lord Malloch-Brown:** I would certainly accept the Turkey-Cyprus dispute has made difficulties between the EU-NATO relationship on a long-term basis. Both have gained their membership of the one organisation in a way which has made co-ordination between the two difficult, but I am not sure I think to reduce the difficulties between the EU and NATO to just that issue is fair or to suggest that despite that issue there is not a growing and quite dynamic degree of co-operation across a range of operations.

Q311 Chairman: It is clearly a fly in the ointment if you are trying to get a military alliance to work with a political alliance to produce a Comprehensive Approach if the two cannot meet in the same room together, that makes it a bit tricky.

Lord Malloch-Brown: It is a fly in the ointment. How do we get the fly out!

Q312 Chairman: Take our fly out of the ointment!

Mr Pickard: You are right to identify that at the formal level in terms of exchange of classified information, in terms of meeting together in the same room, the Turkey-Cyprus issue is a major problem, which will only be resolved by the Cyprus settlement and clearly the UK is doing a lot in that effort. Underneath that very formal role there is an awful lot of informal activity which the UK is playing a big role in generating. Partly the dynamic has changed dramatically because of French reintegration into NATO, and as the ESDP has moved from an institutional focus to a much more operational focus and is acting on the ground, the US has changed position from one of tolerance to one of strong support. That, together with the French, has made a very different dynamic. Previously countries like France were able to hide behind the Turkey-Cyprus problem, now there is no willingness to do that. Staff to staff contacts between EU and NATO are much stronger and much more regular. There is progress on bringing together the defence planning mechanisms of both organisations, the UK is leading that. For capability development, there are increasing meetings of the two organisations working together. The UK, for example, launched its helicopter initiative in both organisations so that all countries, whether members of one or the other alliance, could take part.

Q313 Chairman: How many helicopters did that produce?

Mr Pickard: 17 extra support helicopters for Afghanistan. They have not all arrived in theatre yet because most of the programme is about upgrading them and that upgrading is going on. They are matching the funds with the programmes, but there have been bids from Eastern European countries to provide 17 extra helicopters as a result. As well as

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that in theatre where military and civilian guys just frankly get on with the job and do not worry about the politics behind it, the progress is very good. In Kosovo, for example, we have seen KFOR act in support to EULEX, the EU Rule of Law mission in the north of Kosovo, we have seen EUPOL working with ISAF on a new tracker system together in Afghanistan and in piracy we have seen co-operation as well through a maritime co-ordination centre.

Q314 Chairman: I think we would accept in theatre things work on the ground because people simply do work together, but would your assessment of the political reality be that this is going well, improving the relations between the EU and NATO over Cyprus, or going badly? Which direction would you say the trajectory was going in?

Mr Pickard: It is undoubtedly improving because the willingness of both organisations to co-operate together is much better than it was a few years ago, there is much greater willingness.

Q315 Chairman: The membership of the southern part of Cyprus in the European Union is not really helping that, is it?

Mr Pickard: The difficulties which Cyprus have and Turkey have on the other side remain a major political sore.

Q316 Chairman: A challenge.

Mr Pickard: A real challenge.

Q317 Robert Key: Chairman, can I come in briefly on that. France's reintroduction into the NATO military structure has been very beneficial from our point of view I am sure, but given France's opposition to any arrival of Turkey into the EU, what is their position in NATO on Turkey? Is there any evidence the French are either being obstructive about NATO or on the contrary, is their familiarisation with Turkey's role in NATO going to help their opposition to the EU?

Mr Pickard: France remains a strong advocate of European defence and working together, therefore its position in NATO is inevitably coloured by that, as is that of a number of other countries. I have not seen any evidence in NATO of them attempting to block things because of a Turkey issue; I do not think they operate like that in NATO at all.

Q318 Chairman: Bill Rammell, do you want to add anything to what has been said?

Bill Rammell: The only thing I would observe is we cannot get away from the fact that the Turkey-Cyprus problem is a problem and it affects a whole range of multilateral fora. I remember when I was the Higher Education Minister chairing the Bologna Conference about mutual recognition of higher education qualifications, half the conference was taken up with the Cyprus-Turkey dispute. Naively, with a burst of optimism, I thought I could broker a deal and I was sadly disabused. We would be deluding ourselves if we did not recognise that it is

an impediment but, as has been outlined, real effort practically in terms of co-operation on the ground is undertaken to try and overcome that.

Q319 Mr Jenkin: Can I ask about the machinery of government which supports the Comprehensive Approach and, if I may, I will direct my questions to Lord Malloch-Brown, others may want to chip in, but for the sake of brevity. If there is a single minister responsible for the Comprehensive Approach it would be the Prime Minister, yes?

Lord Malloch-Brown: Yes.

Q320 Mr Jenkin: How often do the Secretaries of State meet to discuss the Comprehensive Approach?

Lord Malloch-Brown: There is a meeting between the three Secretaries of State once a month which previously dealt with Iraq and Afghanistan, it is now reduced to just Afghanistan. I think I am right in saying it is once a month or it is thereabouts. There is also the NSID structure which is, when appropriate on Afghanistan, chaired by the Prime Minister.

Q321 Mr Jenkin: How often does NSID meet because that is the formal Cabinet structure?

Lord Malloch-Brown: NSID meets regularly, but I am not sure. Probably the better question which I think you mean is how often does it take up Afghanistan.

Q322 Mr Jenkin: No, I am asking about the Comprehensive Approach generally.

Lord Malloch-Brown: NSID meets frequently, not always under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister and sometimes at the sub-committee level dealing with different regions.

Q323 Mr Jenkin: I am informed that NSID meets infrequently and almost all its business is transacted by correspondence.

Lord Malloch-Brown: The NSID sub-committee I am a member of, which is the Africa one, meets probably every couple of months.

Q324 Mr Jenkin: Is there any sub-committee of NSID which oversees the Comprehensive Approach or is this a tripartite meeting of the three departments?

Lord Malloch-Brown: The tripartite meeting is really the principal vehicle for overseeing in the case of Afghanistan.

Q325 Mr Jenkin: Is that part of the formal Cabinet committee structure?

Lord Malloch-Brown: No, it is not.

Q326 Mr Jenkin: Does the Cabinet Office provide a secretariat?

Lord Malloch-Brown: The Cabinet Office is represented. There are two forms of meeting. Very usefully the three Secretaries of State sometimes

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meet just alone but a note is made of the meeting, but when it is a broader meeting the Cabinet Office is at that meeting.

Q327 Mr Jenkin: NSID tries to meet once a month but does not always meet once a month. When did the Prime Minister last chair NSID?

Lord Malloch-Brown: I am told the Foreign Secretary chaired last week, but NSID met last week and it was on Somalia, so it was a Comprehensive Approach discussion.

Q328 Mr Jenkin: Just to summarise, the Prime Minister does not always chair this committee. This committee has obviously got something like eight sub-committees but not one of those sub-committees has a title the Comprehensive Approach. The tri-departmental meeting which meets once a month does not have a secretariat, though the Cabinet Office does provide some support but there is no formal secretariat. This does not sound like a very comprehensive approach to the Comprehensive Approach, does it?

Lord Malloch-Brown: You would have to accept that NSID meeting on a geographic basis to deal with issues is a perfectly logical way of conducting its business. The Afghanistan issues require Afghanistan teams to be at the meeting and briefs. I am not sure to deal with it thematically as a comprehensive approach would necessarily contribute. Let me be clear that the meeting of the three Secretaries of State is intended to supplement and give urgency and momentum to decision-making, not to replace NSID.

Q329 Mr Jenkin: I have to say in our other evidence sessions we have not seen much evidence of urgency of decision-making and implementation, it just has not been there.

Bill Rammell: May I comment. I was at the NSID meeting last week which looked at tackling piracy of the Horn of Africa. It was chaired by the Foreign Secretary and I have to say, and I am saying this genuinely, it was one of the most searching and challenging meetings as a Government Minister I have been through in that we were looking across the piste in terms of what more we could do to tackle piracy. Yes, from the military perspective, but also in terms of development in Somalia and also in terms of building judicial capacity within the region. I think that is a practical example of it working.

Q330 Mr Jenkin: May I follow up that example. You had a meeting, looking at the sub-committees of NSID, presumably you made some policy decisions which will be followed through, which sub-committee does that go to? Given that you have got to deal with the land component in Somalia, the naval component, the legal component, the diplomatic component, the Home Office component with the potential for all the immigration questions, et cetera, et cetera, which sub-committee does it go to?

Bill Rammell: It will not. All those bodies and departments you have mentioned were represented at the meeting and now the outcome of that meeting is being concluded and I believe it is quite substantive. If I can anticipate where I think you are going with this question, I think were we to have one ministry and one minister responsible for the Comprehensive Approach, seven years as a Government minister has taught me, whether this be right or wrong, whichever ministry you went for and whichever minister, the other two departments would then see it as a second-order priority. I do not think structural re-organisation is the solution to all the problems.

Q331 Mr Jenkin: It is kind of you to anticipate my questions, but that was not it. What I was going to put to you is there should, in fact, be an NSID sub-committee which is devoted to maintaining and promoting the machinery which can deliver the Comprehensive Approach through overseeing the three departments sitting in front of us here. It seems there is only an informal structure without a secretariat and we are fighting a war on this basis.

Mr Teuten: Can I elaborate on that, NSID (Oversees Defence) sub-Committee does have that responsibility.

Q332 Mr Jenkin: It has many, many other responsibilities.

Mr Teuten: Indeed, but, for example, in January this year it did consider a number of papers on these issues and its secretariat is in the Cabinet Office in the Foreign and Defence Policy Secretariat, so there is a capacity there.

Q333 Mr Jenkin: May I end with an open question, how do you think the machinery of government could be improved in order to improve the buy-in of all the necessary departments and the overall political direction of the Comprehensive Approach?

Lord Malloch-Brown: Let me, just for factual accuracy, make sure that—as you obviously are aware—the Committee is aware that officials coming out of this work have been asked to develop a cross-government conflict strategy to guide interventions that seek to prevent or reduce conflict. At the beginning of this year, Ministers endorsed an interim document, the Strategic Framework for Conflict. While it is correct that there is not an NSID committee specially tasked with this, and with the word “comprehensive” in its title, this effort to pull the strands together to get a commonality of approach, which can then be put through the prism of different geographic situations, in the NSID sub-committees, I think is in place. If I might say so, Mr Jenkin, you and I have discussed this quite a bit, and I think we both share some of the reservations about a three-departmental approach. I came from an institution, the UN, where in a situation like this we would have put one individual senior official in charge. But having wrestled with this now for a couple of years, and having seen the way the UK Government has organised with the permanent

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secretaries of departments, having financial responsibility for the affairs and expenditures of those departments, having seen the Whitehall machinery at work, with a great bureaucratic skill for making things work through a committee structure, I have become persuaded that it is the best of the alternatives. It is not perfect, and one hankers for a Patton occasionally—General, not Chris—to do this kind of thing. In truth, this is the way Whitehall works, and it does it well.

Q334 Mr Jenkin: I am bound to say that when we had the permanent secretaries in front of us it was difficult to divine a firm sense of direction from the three of them sitting in front of us. They tried valiantly, but it was like stirring treacle.

Bill Rammell: I think practically they have demonstrated leadership on this issue, by, for example, undertaking joint visits where they are demonstrating physically to the people who report to them that the Comprehensive Approach is a real priority. I respect where you are coming from, but I am just not a fan of structural reorganisation as a solution to the problem. I think if we went down that route, you would have a capacity gap of quite a period of time whilst the organisation built up to living with that structure. I do not actually think, over the urgent timescales that we need to improve results, that we would get the best outcome.

Q335 Mr Jenkin: We have been in Afghanistan for six years now and we do not seem to have cracked it yet. You say the Prime Minister is in charge, of course; how can he possibly have the time to take a sufficiently active interest in this subject to make the machinery work more effectively?

Lord Malloch-Brown: Let me say to you, he has made several visits there.

Mr Jenkin: If visits was the outcome—

Q336 Chairman: Allow the Minister to answer.

Lord Malloch-Brown: So to say he does not have time, he has given this really significant priority and has involved himself in decision-making. I follow very closely the American efforts to grapple with this, where an envoy has been appointed, who reports directly to the President as well as to the Secretary of State, Richard Holbrooke. As a good friend, I do not think he would feel I was breaching any confidence if I said he struggles to get the US system to respond to somebody who is in that case based in the State Department but has a presidential reporting line. It is very difficult, you have very powerful figures, General Petraeus at the Department of Defense and others. Ultimately, he would argue, I think, that the only way you can make this work is through the different departments committing together, through some kind of committee approach, to a clarity of decisions. That last phrase is the difficulty, because obviously committees do not always comport themselves in that way. The American example shows there is not

an easy fix. It is not just a matter of appointing a big beast, you have got to support it with committee systems that allow all departments to work.

Q337 Chairman: What, then, do you say about Sherard Cowper-Coles's position?

Lord Malloch-Brown: Well, it is not analogous to that of Richard Holbrooke's. He reports to the Foreign Secretary. It is an FCO appointment. It is not the same as the American position in that regard.

Q338 Chairman: Bill Rammell, you said that if there were a single minister in charge of this, the other departments would treat it as a second order question. Do you believe that the Prime Minister treats it as a second order question?

Bill Rammell: No, I do not. What I was trying to do was to be very candid with the Committee about my perception of the way Whitehall works. If you remove it from that frontline responsibility for a department, inevitably you do not have the push within the department to give it the priority it should have. I am very convinced that the Prime Minister is behind this. I know from—how do I describe this—regular promptings that come from Number 10 on the Prime Minister's behalf about how we are facing up to particular elements of this, this is given a high priority.

Q339 Mr Jenkin: When it comes to homeland security, we have a very senior official in the Cabinet Office who co-ordinates homeland security: why do we not have the same for the Comprehensive Approach? Thank you!

Bill Rammell: I am hesitating because I do not think you add value necessarily through that approach.

Q340 Chairman: Even for homeland security.

Bill Rammell: I am talking specifically within this remit and I am not at all convinced that by appointing a senior official within the Cabinet Office you would add value to what is being done. Ultimately, this is about political will. It is about the relevant secretaries of state coming together and pushing and persuading their Whitehall departments to break down the barriers, to cut through the bureaucracy, to challenge the cultures and say, "you have got to work at it in this way". No amount of structural re-orientation is a substitute for that.

Chairman: I think we would accept it is about political will. What we are trying to get at is whether that political will exists.

Q341 Mr Holloway: Political will! Call it leadership. Who is leading?

Lord Malloch-Brown: Look, the country is at war: the Prime Minister is leading it.

Mr Holloway: If so, it has not been very successful. On the political level we have had a tribal revolt since 2006. If you talk to an ordinary person in Helmand—I have done it—they would say there has been nothing meaningful to them. Violence is massively up in Helmand since 2006. We are losing

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the consent of the people and there is a great drive of radicalisation, not just in southern and eastern Afghanistan but also across the region. There is an urgent need for leadership, not promptings and meetings and persuading, but leadership. Where is it coming from?

Q342 Chairman: Minister, can you answer the ministerial question within that because we will be coming on to some of the other issues?

Lord Malloch-Brown: First, I really would dispute that description of the current situation. Britain went into Helmand because Helmand had become a crisis for ISAF and for the government in Kabul. It has had tremendous difficulty getting on top of the situation, there is no doubt about that, but remember this was a late developing front, and the conflict in Helmand has characterised the last few years. It is not something that has been a feature of the conflict from the start. In recent weeks and months, a US/UK operation has demonstrated a huge military surge to expand control and provide security to people, and that is being backed up by, again, a US/UK and allies' development push. In that sense the problem that you describe, Mr Holloway, has been recognised and addressed. Frankly, the politics of co-ordination of that has very much come at the level of President Obama and his conversations with our Prime Minister, backed up by the conversations of the two Foreign Secretaries and Defence Secretaries. This turning of the corner, if that is what it proves to be—and I hope it does—comes from agreements at that top level of government, between the two governments.

Q343 Mr Holloway: Who is providing leadership? That was my question. There is no way the Prime Minister can be focused on this the correct amount, and then it just becomes a sort of amorphous mass of people having meetings telling one another what they have been doing in the past few weeks.

Lord Malloch-Brown: Look, I say again, I do not think that when you have a war of this scale on it is something that is easily delegated. You have the Prime Minister and the three Secretaries of State who, in a sense, have put themselves on the line for the quality of our engagement for leadership—

Mr Holloway: It is our soldiers who are putting themselves on the line, and we are failing to provide leadership to sort this problem out. They are the ones on the line.

Chairman: Allow the Minister to answer.

Mr Holloway: Can I just—

Q344 Chairman: No, allow the Minister to answer.

Lord Malloch-Brown: Look, I just do not accept that interpretation. What we hear is the soldiers feel that there is additional support coming through in terms of equipment, despite the tragic deaths of this week, that there is a sense of us getting on top of this problem.

Q345 Mr Jenkin: Can I just point out, you keep mentioning the three Secretaries of State but, with the greatest respect to the three Ministers present in front of us, the Secretaries of State have sent their Junior Ministers to this Committee, which underlines that this is not regarded in Whitehall as a top issue and yet we are losing our soldiers on the front line in Afghanistan because there is a failure of direction.

Bill Rammell: In my experience as a Minister, most of the work at select committees is done by ministers of state and parliamentary under secretaries. Rightly or wrongly, it is not the practice generally for secretaries of state to come to select committees.

Lord Malloch-Brown: I would just add that there are the travel schedules of the Ministers as well, the Secretaries of State. The Defence Secretary was in Afghanistan last week. The Foreign Secretary is in Pakistan today. I do not think there is any lack of commitment to this.

Michael Foster: Can I just add that in terms of how DFID is structured, country responsibility for Afghanistan is my responsibility, as is the Stabilisation Unit, which is the reason I am appearing.

Q346 Robert Key: Chairman could I turn to the nuts and bolts of this and turn to Richard Teuten for some questions about the Stabilisation Unit. Back in 1974, when the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit was set up, it was all very focused; and then in 2007 it was renamed the Stabilisation Unit, and it was in support of the management of the Ministry of Defence's budget called the Stabilisation Aid Fund, which had a budget of £269 million that year. What is the budget today of the Stabilisation Unit?

Mr Teuten: It was set up in 2004. When it was set up, it had only a small catalytic budget of its own, though much of its work is in support of the design and delivery of programmes funded by the Stabilisation Aid Fund. As was discussed at the briefing with Permanent Secretaries, the value of the Stabilisation Aid Fund and the Conflict Pools is now £171 million in 2009-10.

Q347 Robert Key: How many staff in each of the three departments are working on the Comprehensive Approach?

Mr Teuten: I would say somewhere between 500 and 1,000, inasmuch as there are over 500 individuals in conflict-affected and fragile states across the globe. That figure of 500 does not include those working in Whitehall on those issues.

Q348 Robert Key: How are they recruited for this function? Are they all volunteers, saying, "I really, really want to get involved in the Comprehensive Approach", or is it part of the line management process that this year you are going to do the Comprehensive Approach stuff? How does it work?

Mr Teuten: All are volunteers. In the Ministry of Defence, for example, they have certain categories of people working in hostile environments, for which individuals are encouraged to apply, and then they

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are vetted for their suitability for working in that categorisation. In the case of addressing the needs across Government, the Stabilisation Unit has been given approval to set up a cadre of civil servants who would work in the most hostile of environments and, as it so happens, we are launching that this week at Civil Service Live with an initial objective of having 200 people available for deployment as a pool at the end of this year. They will receive specific training in advance of any assignment, and then additional training specific to the assignment for which they have successfully applied.

Q349 Robert Key: Do all these people have a basic introduction and training, and, if so, who does it, and then they go on to the specific one for your cadre of 200 people?

Mr Teuten: In the case of the people for whom the Stabilisation Unit is responsible, we recently had a substantial uplift in resources to provide additional training. We are aiming to ensure that at least 40% of the thousand people on the databases, that we will have achieved by the end of this year, will receive core training, which comprises training to work in hostile environments and training to understand the issues that relate to stabilisation and working across government in a hostile environment. We will aim to achieve that objective by the middle of 2011. Already, we have trained a substantial number of people from across government and from our database of experts on these courses, and we will increase further the number who will be trained.

Q350 Robert Key: Who does the training?

Mr Teuten: The training is outsourced, so in the case of those three courses I mentioned—there are two stabilisation courses and the hostile environment course—it went out to limited UK competition, and two British companies won each of the two bids.

Q351 Robert Key: It is basically a privatised operation. Which companies are these?

Mr Teuten: Coffey/GroundTruth won the most recent bid for the hostile environment training course, and Cranfield University the stabilisation planning course. We did design the stabilisation planning course in-house over a two-year period. Once we felt we had got the content right, it was felt that it would offer much better value for money to enable the private sector, or the not-for-profit sector in this case, to provide the course.

Q352 Robert Key: Is the UK Defence Academy at Shrivenham involved in this?

Mr Teuten: The UK Defence Academy has been involved in designing the syllabuses, yes, and we continue to engage with them in the development of their own courses, so there is a very good two-way mutual exchange of knowledge between ourselves and them.

Q353 Robert Key: How many of your trained personnel are currently deployed in Afghanistan?

Mr Teuten: There are about 40 individuals from our database and our own unit in Afghanistan. There are also four members of DFID in the Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Q354 Robert Key: The conditions under which they are going to live and operate in, in for example Afghanistan, are very harsh and very difficult. How big is, if I may put it like this, the drop-out rate from those who initially are assigned to Afghanistan and who find that it is hard to cope?

Mr Teuten: Between 5–10%.

Q355 Robert Key: That is very low.

Mr Teuten: Well, we go through a process of interviewing and checking the individuals before they are deployed. We also test their resilience to stress on the hostile environment training course, which includes some quite unpleasant scenarios such as kidnap, so those who are not suited to stressful situations would normally be screened out through that process.

Q356 Robert Key: How many of these people who are deployed in Afghanistan from each department are fluent Pashtun speakers?

Mr Teuten: We have two members of the Stabilisation Unit database who are deployed at the moment in Helmand who are Pashto speakers. We have a total of 19 on our database.

Q357 Robert Key: So do you rely on locally recruited interpreters?

Mr Teuten: They play a very important part, yes.

Q358 Chairman: How many Dari speakers?

Mr Teuten: I would have to write to you on that.¹ The unit is focused at the moment on working in the south where Pashto is the prime—

Bill Rammell: Bill Jeffrey, who gave evidence to you, is just in the process of writing to you. The figure for Pashtun is 264 amongst the military and amongst—

Q359 Mr Holloway: Fluent?

Bill Rammell: No, there are a range of—

Q360 Mr Holloway: Fluent—

Bill Rammell: With respect, I am trying to answer the question, and we will set out the categories of proficiency for each one. In addition to that, we use local translators.

Q361 Robert Key: Can I finally ask a question about pay. Is there a differential pay for those who are being inserted under the Stabilisation Fund? Do the personnel on the ground who go to Afghanistan get extra money?

Mr Teuten: People get compensated for the hazardous environment in which they work regardless of the source of their recruitment.

¹ See Ev 157.

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Q362 Robert Key: Who decides what that figure should be?

Mr Teuten: The Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office have schedules for their staff and, generally speaking, DFID and the Foreign Office will have the same figures. There is a slightly different structure in the case of the Ministry of Defence.

Q363 Robert Key: I imagine you have to have a care to the differential between the salaries and benefits available to your people and soldiers.

Mr Teuten: I have never heard that as an issue in terms of the amount that individuals are paid, no.

Robert Key: It might come to that.

Q364 Mr Holloway: This was on a question that Robert asked. Just coming back to Bill: 260 sounds awfully impressive, but I would imagine the majority of those are short courses. How many people actually speak the language fluently and can conduct the kind of conversation we have had today?

Bill Rammell: I have very helpfully had a note passed to me. There are 124 at basic level, 45 at intermediate level and 95 at a higher level. It actually cuts across all three.

Q365 Mr Holloway: Fluent.

Bill Rammell: The higher level will give you a reasonable degree of fluency to be able to conduct a conversation. But, in addition to that, we employ local translators.

Mr Holloway: If that is true, that is much more impressive than I thought it would be.

Chairman: It is certainly more impressive than I thought it was.

Q366 Mr Jenkins: Following on from Robert Key's questions, what is the length of tour—

Bill Rammell: Forgive me, can I just clarify that? The figures I am quoting are per year, so actually the total output of courses.

Q367 Mr Holloway: That is the number of courses, is it?

Bill Rammell: The number of individuals who have gone through that capability issue.

Q368 Mr Holloway: Right, that is the number of people who have been on a higher course, but I ask the question again: how many people do you have in theatre at the moment in the FCO who speak Pashtun fluently, I do not mean who have done a higher course but who speak it fluently, or the MoD and the FCO?

Bill Rammell: The letter is coming from Bill Jeffrey and it will set that out in detail, but certainly the higher course proficiency, in my understanding, gives you an ability to converse with people on a reasonable basis.

Q369 Mr Jenkins: Following from Robert Key's questions, what is the length of tour that your people will spend in Afghanistan?

Mr Teuten: The majority will spend 12 months. A few have gone as far as 18 months. A number are required only for a few weeks for a specific purpose.

Q370 Chairman: What are the rest/recuperation and recovery periods within, say, a 12-month tour?

Mr Teuten: Most people working on that length of contract will have two weeks off in every eight weeks.

Q371 Chairman: Does this cause any problem with the contrast with the Armed Forces, which do not?

Mr Teuten: On my two most recent visits it was not raised as a significant issue because the Task Force recognised that civilians were working for more than six months and that the pace of activity without more than one break that military officers were working to would not be sustained if applied over a 12-month period.

Bill Rammell: Although, it is fair to say, we are looking and grappling with the issue at some of the senior levels in the military about how we can get people to stay for longer than six months where you need continuity in order particularly to build working relationships with your counterparts. If I am honest, over time this is an issue that we will have to get right so that it does not create tension.

Q372 Mr Havard: You talk about the Stabilisation Unit and there is a lot of discussion about stabilisation forces, which we will also be exploring. The IPPR report last week talked about the possibility of setting up—the Brits setting up, never mind whether others are going to do it, the Germans or whatever—a stabilisation force which will have a permanent headquarters element but the rest of it being a mixture of private sector and maybe people from the Stabilisation Unit, whatever, coming out of all of that. Can you say something about whether that is an active debate and a real prospect, as part of what your lessons learned are showing you?

Mr Teuten: Across Government there is agreement that civilian and military stabilisation and recovery capability needs to be enhanced. The work that is underway in the Unit and HQ Land will achieve the same ends as the IPPR proposal, but in a quicker way, and one that is less complicated and offers better value for money. On the part of the Stabilisation Unit, we are already meeting the demands that are placed on us for deploying civilians to work in hostile environments, and we are on track to reach the 1,000 target that I mentioned for a pool of civilians able to work in these environments. This 1,000 target is made up of 800 people on our database and 200 people that we are creating across the Government as a civil service cadre. We have been working very closely with HQ Land as they develop the Army's own capability for providing military officers who work in support of stabilisation. There are already successful examples of this on the ground where, in the five Forward Operating Bases in Helmand, we have civilians providing overall direction of the engagement with the civilian authorities in Afghanistan, supported by teams of five military officers called the Military

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Support Stabilisation Teams. That combination is proving to be a very powerful means to promote the Comprehensive Approach in each of these districts. The Cabinet Office Task Force that was set up last year to look at delivering the Comprehensive Approach across the UK did examine the proposal for a civilian reserve corps akin to the Territorial Army and found that it would be more expensive than the initiatives that I mentioned, and it would not give any offsetting guarantee of an increase in the quality of the personnel.

Q373 Mr Havard: Was that the overriding factor, then, the expense, rather than utility?

Mr Teuten: No. As I say, it also did not give any evidence that there would be an increase in the quality of the personnel. What we have on our database are individuals who are able to redeploy to Afghanistan or to a similar environment after a few months or maybe a year. If you have a TA type arrangement there is an expectation of a deployment of only once in every five years, so the approach we are taking provides better continuity.

Q374 Mr Havard: Can I ask you a question about legal authority, as it were, or protection for the individuals involved in these processes. One of the things that the IPPR report talks about is the possibility of amending the International Development Act 2002 so that it just does not deal with poverty reduction but also deals with security and safety, and that legal definition may be changing, if the approach is evolving in the way you are all describing, where effectively people are in these combined in a way that changes their remit somewhat. This is the UK definition as opposed to the EU, UN or anybody else's definition of a Comprehensive Approach. If we are going to deploy that way, is there a need to change the legislation in order to allow that to happen?

Mr Teuten: Certainly not.

Chairman: I think that Michael Foster answered that question in relation to the Vice Chairman's question. I do not know if there is anything that anyone wants to add to that. No.

Q375 Linda Gilroy: A question to Lord Malloch-Brown and Mr Foster. How does what we have just been hearing about look like from the FCO and DFID points of view in terms of having staff ready to deploy at short notice to areas of need? We have not talked a great deal, although we touched on it, about the health and safety issues and the extent to which you have been able to resolve those and the duty of care to your staff.

Lord Malloch-Brown: The duty of care was in the old days a terrible restraint on being able to get the staff out doing the development and political work that needed to be done. Frankly, coming from outside the UK system, I was shocked at how restrictive it was, or had been. There really has been dramatic progress. Looking at the numbers in advance of this, we had a situation where we had increased the number of staff seven-fold essentially, and that refers

to both DFID and FCO staff. If you look today in Lashkar Gah or in Kabul, as of literally today we have no vacancies in either place. We have now got 64 UK-based staff in Kabul and 11 in Lashkar Gah, making a total of 76. We have also been able to get them out and about. I know it has been raised with this Committee and some witnesses suggested that they appear to be under siege and unable to move, but actually there are now an average of eight movements per day out of the camp working on these PRT and political issues, and able not just to go to project locations but also to visit government institutions and talk to government partners. There was also an issue that civilians got bumped off the helicopters in favour of military, but that also is not happening. We think we have given mobility to the mission. It is getting out and about and is able to provide the development and political support to the military side that was not, frankly, happening a few years ago.

Q376 Linda Gilroy: So when Professor Farrell told us that there was a yawning gap between the risk appetite of the military and other partners to the Comprehensive Approach, how fast would you say that gap is closing? Clearly, I do not think you would say it is closing completely, would you?

Lord Malloch-Brown: No, I would not say it has closed completely, but I think the view he expressed is out of date.

Q377 Linda Gilroy: On a scale of one to ten, if it starts off round about zero or one, which is roughly where I think it was put, how far do you think it has progressed?

Lord Malloch-Brown: I would be interested in my colleagues' views, but my guess is it is around 7 or 8 now.

Michael Foster: I will add to what Mark said with some of the detail. Of the five most difficult environments that we are currently working with, that seven-fold increase is from 14 to 98 HCS staff, which is the seven-fold increase that Mark referred to. For DFID, when we compare the Afghanistan general posts, there is a greater rate of applicants to those posts in Afghanistan than there is to DFID as a whole. I am not saying that there is this overwhelming appetite to go into risky environments, but it is now very clear that people are moving that way because they are fulfilling posts. We have also changed our promotion system within DFID to give a greater pool of candidates that can be available for senior posts. As the Permanent Secretary said, we have just completed a study called Meeting Workforce Demands of Hostile and Difficult Environments which was commissioned to look at exactly what further steps we would need to take to work with staff in those particular environments, but we have not completed the study of those findings yet.

Q378 Linda Gilroy: My next question was going to be: what needs to be done? You have partly moved in the direction of answering that, but can I just say

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that when we had Professor Farrell before us he pointed to the difference between the American approach, where work is going on on a joint doctrine. Are we anywhere near approaching that? He said that we do not have a cross-government doctrine on the Comprehensive Approach; the doctrine we have was developed by the doctrine command DCDC in January 2006, and it was referred to as a joint discussion note. That is three years ago of course, but in closing that gap I do not know if you want to give a rating on a scale of one to ten! I tended to think that was a little bit optimistic from what the Committee has been hearing from other witnesses.

Michael Foster: I am reluctant to give a rating of one to ten, Ms Gilroy.

Q379 Linda Gilroy: Why is that, because it has not passed the five mark yet?

Michael Foster: I am genuinely not in a position to give an assessment where I could score and know what would be the perfect score. If I do not know what ten is, then I cannot work out where we are in relation to that ten.

Lord Malloch-Brown: Perhaps I could. Forgive me, Chairman, but there is an apples and oranges comparison here because our soldiers are there to undertake direct military activity and put themselves in harm's way in pursuit of that mission. What we have to do for our civilians is send them out when the risk is reasonable because the objectives there are not fighting objectives for them; they are political and development objectives. The issue therefore is less if the criteria is can they move as freely and do exactly what soldiers can do, you are never going to get to a ten because, as I say, it is an apples and oranges comparison. You have to get to the point where, if you are going to have a strategy where the development and political side of things matter as much as the military, you have to reach a point where you have enough flexibility and mobility and freedom to carry out those second and third prongs of development of the political. Talking with Richard Holbrooke, who is envisaging a situation where America will triple its development spend in Afghanistan and get into extensive things in the south like agricultural development, this issue is not going to go away. He imagines a lot more civilians spread out across the south of the country, delivering these services, and we are going to have to keep our game up with that. If I might, though, on your other point, the issue of a doctrine, the reason we were all slightly hesitating I think was obviously it is a different point: have we got a strategy that pulls us all together? Here, I would refer you again to the documents signed off in Government on the Conflict Strategy earlier this year and that is our equivalent of what the US is calling a doctrine.

Q380 Linda Gilroy: So you have reached that. Can I just ask one more question, however. The role of the military is to create a security environment and the other partners then come in to do the development within that security environment, but do you think

there is now a better common understanding of how much risk within that security environment people should be willing to tolerate in order to go out and be there and be flexible enough to move forward? Is that in the right place now or is it still moving to the right place? How does the joint training that goes on beforehand, which we have heard in the case of the Americans goes on for six months and is much more intense together before deployment, are we moving in that direction and is there still a goal to be reached in that respect?

Lord Malloch-Brown: Well, look, before each of these seven-a-day trips out that I have mentioned, there is a risk assessment made. The thing is heavily risk-managed, and all of our staff who go there do get security training before they go. The key changing factor now is the goal of the current operation underway by US and UK troops, which is not to win victories but hold territory. By holding territory, you create a secure environment in which there can be a fill-in of development and political activities. The increase in American troops and the increase in our own, on obviously a much more modest scale, has created the opportunity to tip the military campaign in favour of a situation where there will be enough security both for development of political activities and most immediately for the upcoming elections.

Q381 Linda Gilroy: Does not what you have described as risk management become in some circumstances risk aversion because there simply is not the capacity before deployment to get to know each other's language, culture and shared goals sufficiently to be able to just do it when you are there, rather than risk manage and risk assess it on every single outing?

Lord Malloch-Brown: There are two things. I certainly agree with the critique. As I acknowledged, coming in from the UN side of things I was astonished at how much more restrictive we were in civilian deployments than we had been in the United Nations. The cost is that we have lost in the UN hugely more civilians in these kinds of situations than the UK has lost. I come away from this experience of having watched both thinking there has got to be a middle way and this issue of risk management must be done in a balanced way. The thing that sets back deployment most is when you have people killed because that throws everybody into reverse, understandably, and people get more cautious. I think it is right to assess each of these movements, at least until the situation is improved considerably, but to assess them not to find a reason to say "no" but for a reason to say "yes" and allow it to happen. Again, the fact that we are now up to seven or eight movements a day indicates that the system is working many times better than was the case a year or so ago.

Q382 Mr Hamilton: Chairman, just an obvious point. In answer to the question earlier on, I think Richard turned round and said there is a 12 to 18-month turnaround of staff personnel out there, but

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that contrasts with a turnaround of the Armed Forces of just six months. That does not help, surely? The point you made, Bill, that it is under review at the present time that came out very clearly in evidence we took earlier on, that senior officers should be staying there a lot longer and not just going on a six-month tour, because no sooner have they built a relationship up than they are coming back out again. The DFID workers are out there for 12 and 18 months, and they must have a long-term view, and indeed far better relationships. How does that impact against the Armed Forces' cycle of six months against a 12 to 18-month cycle? Surely that cannot be helpful?

Bill Rammell: The pressures are different. What was described in terms of the ability of civilian personnel to go backwards and forwards is a clear difference. I acknowledged earlier that this is an issue we are looking at. We are looking at how we can provide some additional incentives to senior military personnel to stay for longer than six months because we do acknowledge and recognise that if you--- I was looking at something last night where somebody was describing the mentoring role that they had taken on with members of the Afghan national army, and this individual was the eighth mentor that this individual within the Afghan national army had had. That is clearly not optimal, but at the same time, realistically, we would not want to, and we are not going to get people to stay over there forever and a day, but we are looking at what incentives we can build in to get people to stay for longer than six months.

Q383 Mr Jenkins: Just a quick point, but not a small point, about comments on the amount of civilians you have lost. People have said to us that if our aid workers were not so closely linked with our military personnel and not getting lifts with them, they could walk round the poppy fields quite happily and the locals would see them and clap their backs and say, "thank you for turning up; we need any help we can get", but your comment that we have lost more civilian workers in the United Nations that do work in that manner than British aid workers who do not operate in that manner would give a lie to that illusion, would it not?

Lord Malloch-Brown: Yes, and no, because where the United Nations has most lost civilian workers is where, in the eyes of local populations, it is too close to the US and the UK, so it lost a lot in Baghdad. There was a similar attack on it recently in Algeria. I do not want to stray too far into this but in the UN this feeling that politically it has been too close in recent years to the US and the UK, particularly in Iraq, is felt to have cost it its political independence in the eyes of at least parts of the Islamic world. That has led in turn to this argument by NGOs and UN humanitarian agencies, which they make as strongly inside the UN as to you as a Committee, which is for this need for humanitarian separation and space, I am sympathetic to it, although in truth I do not think it is altogether practical, because I am not sure that people who want to kill a foreigner in these

situations stop first to ask, "Are you from DFID or Oxfam?" Also, the indiscriminate nature of the weaponry now being used, these IEDs kill everybody who is in a vehicle going across that area. While I respect the argument, I do not think it would give them as much protection as they assert. They would not be treated as neutral combatants, very sadly. Further proof of that is that even the Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross, which are the most neutral, if you like, and most humanitarian, have in recent years come under attack and lost lives.

Q384 Mr Holloway: Brigadier Messenger, does the big difference between the scale of the military and civilian resources that are available make delivery in the Comprehensive Approach rather more difficult?

Brigadier Messenger: No, because we are finding that we understand each other's place rather better. Where before perhaps we had viewed security growing at the same time as reconstruction and development at the same time as developing capacity, we very much follow the approach whereby it is security enabled stabilisation and, frankly, stabilisation finds it very difficult to take root anywhere where security is not already being provided. Providing security requires a great deal of military resource to do it. The approach we have adopted, which is very much a governance Afghan-led approach, requires relatively little stabilisation methods in terms of resources and people, and therefore I do not think it is contradictory at all.

Q385 Mr Holloway: Do individual accounting officer responsibilities impede the Comprehensive Approach?

Brigadier Messenger: In terms of what is happening at Whitehall?

Q386 Mr Holloway: Yes.

Brigadier Messenger: That is not something that I personally witnessed.

Q387 Mr Holloway: Did you feel the effects of it?

Brigadier Messenger: I did not, no, to that extent. I would say that the delivery of supporting Afghan governance is not as resource-intensive and manpower-intensive as some perhaps believe. When we went out and did a clearance operation, in the same way they are currently conducting a clearance operation, in advance we identified two stabilisation advisers, and critically the provincial governor identified the district governor who was going to go in. Two days after that clearance operation had finished those stabilisation advisers and the Afghan district governor were in place and acting as a focal point for that effort. In due course there was some sort of duty of care requirements that needed to be put in in terms of protected mobility and protection to their living accommodation, but it was not the impediment nor the enormous drain on resources that perhaps has been envisaged elsewhere.

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Q388 Mr Holloway: In 2005 or 2006 you were building up the PRT and so on, what benefits do you think that an ordinary Afghan living alongside the Helmand River has seen since then?

Brigadier Messenger: It depends where he lives. If you were to ask I would say there are three states of security and society in Helmand. The first is where we, the international community and the Afghans, have provided enough security to allow normality to broadly return. We see that in Lashkar Gah and Gereshk and in Garmsir, where commerce is thriving and there is a local government. People are looking to their district governor very much for support, and very much the Afghan Government is still touching the people in those areas. That would be categorically what your Afghan local would choose. The second is where we have not been, and there there nefarious influences in society, the Taliban and others, and the more unsavoury aspects of Sharia law and the like; but there is broad stability. That is the second state they would choose. The third is when we have either been there and left, or inadequately invested in those areas, where we have tended to attract instability, and if you were to ask a local in that area, that would be very much the third of the three and he would not necessarily agree it would add value. It very much depends on where you are and what our approach has been to that area. I do not think one size fits all.

Q389 Mr Holloway: Finally, General Richards in a speech at RUSI the other day said “Substance not spin is key to winning. To achieve this, while placing much more emphasis on the prevention and the design of our armed forces, non-military activities must be given greater weight, but they must be re-engineered as security instruments and properly integrated into strategy, not viewed as international versions of domestic welfare programmes.” Can I ask the Ministers what would we need to change in order to do that?

Bill Rammell: I think we are doing that because we have an integrated approach. I started out this evidence session by saying that if you go back to the beginning of this debate I think there were far more substantial tensions between the military, between DFID and the FCO. Again, if I am candid with you, when I first became a junior minister at the Foreign Office in 2002, and I am sure Mike will take this in a collegiate way, I was challenged by the scepticism within DFID about its role within conflict management and prevention, and yet we are now in a situation where DFID is going to commit over half of its bilateral resources to conflict arenas. I think the situation has moved on remarkably. Have we still got further to go? Yes, we have, but I think there has been significant progress.

Q390 Mr Holloway: Do you agree with people like General Cross who say we should have a sort of PJHQ for the Comprehensive Approach?

Bill Rammell: No, I am not convinced of that. Again, I express my prejudice, if you like, about structural reorganisation being the solution to these

problems. I think ultimately it comes down to political will from the top, from the Prime Minister, and within the three separate departments. Mr Holloway, you were earlier quite sceptical about the progress that is being made, and I am the first to admit that we have still got real, significant ongoing challenges in Afghanistan; however, when you make the judgment you need to factor in what the alternative would be if we were not there, and the situation for both Afghans and for ourselves would be significantly worse. I think that is a view that is supported by a majority of the Afghan population and by a majority of people in this country.

Mr Holloway: It is not either you are there or you are not there; there is plenty in between, but that is a conversation for another time.

Q391 Mrs Moon: Brigadier Messenger, can I ask you how you see the difference both in Whitehall and in the field, because you have worked in both and obviously had responsibilities in Afghanistan. In terms of the Comprehensive Approach, on that scale of one to ten that we have talked about, and Bill has talked about the progress that has been made, do you see a difference in the field and in Whitehall in terms of the scale of one to ten and where are we? If one is that it is hopeless, that nobody is talking to each other and it is just not working, and I know we have had a slight description of some of that, to “we are there and we have got it sorted” at ten, where are we? Where would you say we would be for in Whitehall and in the field?

Brigadier Messenger: I am slightly out of date on the Whitehall, but certainly from my experiences of several months ago I would say we are five or six but rising, as has already been said. In terms of where we are on the ground, where, frankly, the inter-departmental issues are simply not an issue, I would say we are eight to nine and rising.

Q392 Mrs Moon: One of the things that I have been trying to pursue is how much within the Comprehensive Approach UN Resolution 3025, which talks about the protection of vulnerable women, children and promotion of women and children within civil society and conflict resolution is promoted. How much of that is taking place on the ground? How much is it understood on the ground in Afghanistan?

Brigadier Messenger: It is certainly understood on the ground. From the Helmand perspective it is certainly understood and there are gender equality specialists as part of the PRT. I would caution that there needs to be applied some pragmatism here in that it is a deeply conservative Pashtun area and, whilst we are seeing much more gender equality in some of the more enlightened areas such as Lashkar Gah and Gereshk, there are areas, including some stable areas, that are deeply, deeply conservative, and where the role of women in society has not changed much. Trying to effect a change in that relationship is something that will take some time.

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We are sensitive to the issue, but I think insisting on perhaps unrealistic aspirations would be unhelpful in certain areas.

Michael Foster: Can I add to that, Mrs Moon, to clarify that due to the impact that has gone on the ground for women, there are two million more Afghan girls in school despite teachers of girls being targeted by the Taliban to be killed. We support women in businesses through micro-finance, and there is a great take-up there of the availability of small credit to enable them to grow their own businesses. As Brigadier Messenger said, in terms of the political involvement, we are some way away from where we are, say, in a country like Nepal, which came out of ten years of civil war but there was a far bigger take-up of the role for women, so much so that the Constituency Assembly that was recently elected comprised 33% women, which was a real improvement from where they had been. There is a balance and there is a movement, but we are not—

Q393 Chairman: Michael Foster, you said there are two million more girls in school. How do you know?

Michael Foster: That will be done from assessments and basic headcounts that we would undertake through the programmes that we contribute to, in the same way as we know that in Helmand there was a 10% increase in the number of children at primary school.

Q394 Chairman: When was the last census done in Afghanistan?

Michael Foster: I do not think there has been a last full census for a while, but that is not necessarily the same as working out how many extra children go into school.

Q395 Chairman: Do you know how many girls are out of school?

Michael Foster: Not off the top of my head, but I can certainly get that information, the best assessment we have for you.²

Q396 Mrs Moon: Mr Teuten, you talked about the 500-1,000 civil servants with a particular pool that you hope to have 200 by the end of 2009, 40 in Afghanistan and 45 in Helmand. How many female staff have you got on the ground?

Mr Teuten: The proportion of women in the Provincial Reconstruction Team is about 20%, which reflects the number of people we have on our database.

Q397 Mrs Moon: Brigadier, how much are you handicapped by what you are able to do in terms of security for women and children by a lack of women in the military? Is that something you are aware of and need to develop?

Brigadier Messenger: No. What we have done, though, is use women specifically in the role of engaging with Afghan women, but I have never felt hampered by the numbers of women in the services there.

Q398 Linda Gilroy: Brigadier Messenger, in an earlier evidence session we heard some discussion about the TCAF (Tactical Conflict Assessment Framework) tool. Can you tell us what your experience of that was on the deployment you led, and what your observations are on it?

Brigadier Messenger: No, I cannot. It is not a tool that I am familiar with.

Q399 Mrs Moon: I am just wondering how successful the Provincial Reconstruction Teams have been in engaging women in the management and promotion of some of the projects that you have been working on. Do you have any figures on that, either Mr Foster or Mr Teuten?

Mr Teuten: I do not have any figures to hand on the proportion of beneficiaries that have been women. The material that you are going to receive from Bill Jeffrey includes some examples of efforts specifically targeted at women, including setting up a provincial women's group, focusing on the rights of women and children, programmes to develop the understanding of the justice shuras in each of the districts on the rights of women, and mentoring female officers in the police force.³ There are a number of initiatives to specifically address the needs of women. We can see whether we have any data on access to education and health facilities. Michael Foster has already mentioned the progress on providing girls with schools.

Q400 Mrs Moon: In terms of developing and promoting the Comprehensive Approach, how essential do you think it is to focus on some of the more entrenched views in terms of the role of women in civil society in Afghanistan? Do you think it is something that is crucial to get some of the peace and reconciliation that you are searching for, or is it a luxury on the way to having a military, stable and secure region? Which is the priority?

Mr Teuten: It is neither a luxury nor the single most important thing. It plays a role. Certainly, the attempts that have been made in one of the districts that Gordon Messenger mentioned to involve women in the bottom-up governance arrangements through the shura offer the potential for contributing significantly to promoting better governance and greater stability. So efforts are being made, but it is not the number one priority. But equally, as I say, it is not a luxury.

Mrs Moon: Finally, can I ask you how difficult has it proved for the NGOs to be working so closely with the military? Is that Comprehensive Approach realistic in terms of the security for NGO members,

² See Ev 160.

³ See Ev 158.

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and do the stabilisation teams have enough money to do the job they need to do? Are we giving them enough cash to be successful on the ground?

Q401 Chairman: I think Lord Malloch-Brown answered the first point in answer to a question from Brian Jenkins, so if you do not mind concentrating on the second point.

Brigadier Messenger: Which is the amount of money available?

Q402 Chairman: Do you have enough cash?

Brigadier Messenger: The stabilisation teams are there, and there is money which is devolved to me which is then devolved to the commanders on the ground to spend limited sums in support of small consent-winning projects. That happens, and to my mind works adequately. Where you are looking at slightly bigger projects then obviously you are looking to the Stabilisation Aid Fund (SAF), and, again, to my mind that is devolved sensibly down to the various levels in Kabul and Lashkar Gah. Again, I never felt that a lack of immediate funds was an impediment to bringing security. I do not think that these relatively small projects in terms of road clearing and small buildings and the like are a critical factor in generating stability. Key was using the Afghan Governor as the front man and channelling it through him, and that was better done from funds from Lashkar Gah rather than the stabilisation teams.

Q403 Chairman: Did you look with any jealousy at the CERP funds available to American commanders?

Brigadier Messenger: I did not. To my mind it would have been an additional burden on the commanders. I feel that the commanders on the ground had quite enough advice co-located with them from the stabilisation advisers. I felt that they had enough pull on the sorts of resources that, frankly, it is appropriate that commanders have. I do not buy into this “go in with cash and you might avoid the need for combat” because to my mind to go in with cash, there is no guarantee that that cash will go to the right place. In some ways, having that approach rewards instability and may even be counterproductive in certain areas. While we would in no way go into an area expecting or wishing a fight, nor I think would a rather covert looking brown envelope be the answer.

Q404 Mr Havard: On this question of the PRTs, you are describing an evolution of where we have got to in terms of perhaps the utility of how it is working particularly in Helmand Province. However, the question of the changed environment in the whole of the south and the change of approach by the US, and Richard Holbrooke’s declarations about what he is going to do with local economies and how they are going to spend their money and the scale of that, is going to prove challenging in terms of how does the British PRT presumably continue to operate in a very narrow area in a different overall environment?

What thinking is being done about how those two things could be complementary to one another as opposed to clash in some way?

Brigadier Messenger: I think we are beyond thinking. It has already started to happen.

Q405 Mr Havard: I hope so!

Brigadier Messenger: The news is encouraging. Firstly, the PRT is not a British PRT, it is the Helmand PRT, and it is currently British-led but there are a number of nations that contribute. More recently, with the American inflow into Helmand, we have seen a much greater number of Americans in there. The very encouraging news is that the Americans are absolutely prepared and are currently channelling their support to Helmand Province through the Helmand PRT.

Q406 Mr Havard: Does that mean through Governor Mangal as well?

Brigadier Messenger: Through Governor Mangal, exactly. The Helmand PRT—and I repeat it is not a British PRT—is the single point of contact through which the international effort supports and channels its engagement through Governor Mangal. That is absolutely right, and it is something that was discussed well in advance of the Americans arriving, but it is something that is played out on the ground.

Q407 Chairman: That is a very successful alteration of American policy.

Brigadier Messenger: I think that is right.

Q408 Mr Jenkins: On resources, one of the things that struck me is that I know, Bill, in the MoD we had this constant debate with the Treasury, especially with things like urgent operational requirements where they could tell us where the cost falls and we should have read the small print when we signed the deal. Every department has got a negotiation with the Treasury, but now you have an added complication because you have got negotiations between each other and the accountancy officer has got to sign this off. When the allocation of cost falls is there much argument between the accountancy officers in whichever department it falls upon, whose budget it falls upon and, if there is, who is the umpire?

Bill Rammell: The Lord Chancellor and the Prime Minister in that respect. The MoD—I will put this up front—is in a slightly different position in that the cost of conflict has never been a mainstream part of our budget, and therefore we have got to call on the urgent operational requirement and the reserve. But I do think within this context that sometimes there is a misleading impression that you can therefore trade off the security elements into the other areas. I do believe, and I would say it, would I not, but I think it is true, the military component is fundamentally necessary before you can move on into the other areas, so I do not think you can actually trade that military component.

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Q409 Mr Jenkins: Michael, would you like to make any comment on where the cost falls?

Michael Foster: The difficulty with this, Mr Jenkins, is obviously the Government structure and having the accounting officer responsibilities in each case, and I am not saying it is perfect. It is one that the accounting officers are learning to work with, and that is the best description. Rather as we have learnt to work in a better way for the Comprehensive Approach on the ground, we are learning, quite frankly because we are having to, to work together better to overcome the restrictions of the accounting officer structural relationship and deal with where we have got a joint funding operation.

Mr Jenkins: Work in progress, then, if it happens.

Q410 Mr Hamilton: A couple of years ago when the Secretary of State was in front of us giving evidence, I made the point that when we were involved in Iraq and Afghanistan the vast majority of the British public did not know the difference between the two of them, so therefore we were not winning their hearts and minds. People who knew the difference understood that, but the vast majority of the British public in my opinion were of the opinion they were both the same and did not follow it through. My question now is are we getting the message across to the British people about the need for us to be in Afghanistan? I will follow up with a supplementary, but I would like to hear the first part of your comment.

Bill Rammell: I disagree with that contention. I supported both the conflict with Iraq and Afghanistan, but actually my perception of public opinion is that the conflict with Afghanistan has always been better understood and better supported in general amongst the population than was Iraq. We are getting the message across. We have undertaken some structural initiatives like a joint communications unit in Afghanistan to achieve that end. There is a disjuncture. We face a very difficult situation in Afghanistan and the loss of life is extraordinarily concerning, but I think there is a disjuncture sometimes between the media perception of what is happening in Afghanistan and actually where people are at. I was quite surprised, doing some work for this hearing this morning, looking at the latest evidence, both amongst the Afghan population, where something like 70% still support the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan, and amongst the British population where 64% support a role of the UK in tackling terrorism in Afghanistan. I think you need to separate out those two issues. I think there is, in general a broader level of understanding and support for what we are doing in Afghanistan than is sometimes commented upon by the media.

Q411 Mr Hamilton: I disagree, I think there is a distinction between Afghanistan and Iraq. You believe the general public out there believe in the objectives of what you are involved in in relation to Afghanistan. I do not believe the vast majority of the British public understand what the objectives are.

They understand we should be there in an anti-terrorism role, but I do not believe that they understand the long-term objectives of being involved there. Could I suggest that as we move towards increased activity, as we have done in the last couple of weeks, and intensify the number of people who will be killed and injured, and indeed as we move out of Iraq, people will focus on Afghanistan far more now and you have a job of work to do to tell them why we are involved. I do not think you are doing that at the present time.

Bill Rammell: I am not in any sense complacent. I know we have got an ongoing challenge, and I think we need probably to be just more simple and clear about why we are there. It is the point I made to Mr Holloway earlier, that actually were we to withdraw from Afghanistan today, then the threat to our national security in this country I genuinely believe, based on the evidence, would be much more significant. I think we have got to get that across more effectively.

Mr Hamilton: I agree with the last part.

Q412 Mr Jenkin: May I ask what are the impediments to a Comprehensive Approach to Afghanistan and Pakistan?

Lord Malloch-Brown: Do you mean by that a strategy which covers both?

Q413 Mr Jenkin: The Government did produce what you call a doctrine. I do not know whether the Brigadier would recognise a policy document as a doctrine, and there may be a cultural difference as to what the word "doctrine" means, and you might like to comment on that in a moment, but we are presumably trying to take a Comprehensive Approach to both theatres, even regarding them possibly as one theatre. What are the impediments to achieving that?

Lord Malloch-Brown: That was really what I wanted to understand. The core of the question is to what extent can one treat it as one theatre, because obviously they are interlinked. The obvious but nevertheless driving insight of recent months has been the recognition that you are unlikely to ever secure a stable Afghanistan unless the issues in Pakistan can also be addressed. However, Pakistan requires a very different response. If you could crudely say that in Afghanistan it is an MoD lead in terms of volume of effort, with DFID and FCO in support, in Pakistan that is very much reversed, where it is an FCO and DFID lead, and where a very large DFID programme is going into sectors like education, and where we, on the FCO side, are deeply involved in the politics and diplomacy of the Pakistan Government's effort to root out the insurgency and address causes of radicalisation, such as the madrassas. It goes to our earlier point that you cannot deal with comprehensiveness as an abstract, you have to deal with it through the lens of the different geographic situations, but deal with it you must, and with an equally robust strategy, different though that might be for the two halves with a recognition that you will not win in one half

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without winning in both. Are we working it as one? I think, again, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the other two Secretaries of State very much do see it as one theatre, if you like.

Q414 Mr Jenkin: Could I ask Brigadier Messenger about this word “doctrine” because I sense in military parlance at DCDC that this word has a much tighter meaning. Would you agree with that? The military has been at the forefront of developing the Comprehensive Approach, and informing the whole of Whitehall about the Comprehensive Approach, but do you think that Whitehall has a doctrine of operations across the whole of Whitehall with regard to the Comprehensive Approach?

Brigadier Messenger: I do not know where the Joint Discussion Note got to but I know that people were consulted very widely in its production and it was not seen as simply there for the military audience, it was seen for the cross-governmental audience and it was exercised and worked through on the various Ex Joint Ventures that had happened. I believe that it was consultative. It captured the way things had been done and captured best practice. I would say that the degree of granularity of doctrine particularly in something like this is an issue, and what we have seen is that different structures and approaches fit different countries. That is not to say there are not some guiding principles and there are not some common themes that need to be captured, and that note attempted to do that. I would just caution against being too prescriptive in following the model we did in Afghanistan and the model we used in Sierra Leone or the Balkans or whatever.

Q415 Mr Jenkin: If each of you could have a last word, what particular improvements in the application of the Comprehensive Approach are you looking for and would you like us to recommend in our report?

Michael Foster: We think one of the guides to success is to make sure that the objectives that are set for the Comprehensive Approach are realistic and that they are resourced appropriately. If we had those two then I think that would help deliver the Comprehensive Approach.

Bill Rammell: I am not sure what the recommendation is, but I think the key ongoing challenge is the further breakdown of cultural barriers between the three departments. I have made clear that I am not in favour of a centralised approach, but anything that can be done to give people in the military, people in the aid department and people in diplomacy more common contact with each other can only help to improve things.

Mr Pickard: I would agree with that. I am actually an MoD civil servant who is currently working in the Foreign Office, and to a degree you learn by bringing departments together. I agree with Mr Rammell that creating a separate department and a separate central structure would actually divorce the departments from that structure rather than bring the whole weight of the departments and all the people who are involved in this effort closer together.

Mr Teuten: Incentives and guidance are necessary to ensure that we are all joined up in having the same understanding and same purpose for the next Afghanistan and Iraq so that it does not take as long as it did in those cases to reach that point.

Lord Malloch-Brown: Thank you for giving me the last word! I think what you can usefully do is put us on probation on this point. I said to you earlier that I felt on balance this approach works better than the single tsar in overall charge, but I think we need to prove that. We need to show that this structure can deliver enough dynamic, flexible, on-demand support, and enough integration of strategy across the different departments to show it works. I do not think there is any case for complacency on our side. I think we have made the best judgment, but you should put us, as I say, on probation to prove it.

Chairman: I suppose in theory we could ask you, Bill Rammell, to go through the Strategic Defence Review announcement that has been made today, but I think that would be inappropriate in the circumstances, frankly, because it might take us a little bit off the point of the Comprehensive Approach, so I will not do that.

Q416 Mr Jenkin: Can I ask one very brief question? This is quite a significant statement. Why did the Government choose not to make an oral statement to the House about it, and why was it leaked to the *Sunday Times* in advance of the statement?

Bill Rammell: My clear understanding is that it was not leaked by the Government. There has been a debate in Parliament and a debate in the media, frankly, for months about whether and how there was going to be an SDR. I do not think that was news. We are making it clear today what we are doing. We are also making clear through the statement that there will be a process of involvement and consultation for everybody within this process because it is a very significant event leading to a Green Paper setting out some of the issues that need to be addressed within the SDR and then after the election within the SDR itself.

Q417 Mr Jenkin: It is a very significant event. Why was it not announced in the House of Commons in an oral statement?

Bill Rammell: There is always a judgment in terms of the most effective way to make a statement and we clearly communicated that to Parliament. I went out of my way this morning, and I apologise I was not able to seek out the Chair of the Committee, so that I could inform you, given that we were going to be having this discussion. You were not about when the announcement was made.

Chairman: One of the reasons you were not able to was that I was doing a speech at RUSI about a possible defence review. I must say, I am very pleased that there is a defence review looking as though it is coming, come hell or high water.

Q418 Mr Havard: Effectively you have been having work for some period of time, it seems to me, and you are going to have one in a coherent process,

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which is a good thing. In terms of us doing our work, it is quite significant for us and how we respond to that. I have not seen it yet. Can you say over what period of time this is likely to take place and when it is likely to be published?

Bill Rammell: We made clear that we are going to publish a Green Paper before the election which will address a number of the questions that we want the SDR to consider. There will then be at the start of the next Parliament, and I think that is the right time to do it, the Strategic Defence Review which will look at those questions in principle and then start moving it in the direction of what that means for hard nuts and bolts decisions, and particularly the allocation of—

Q419 Mr Havard: So there is a consultation process to produce a Green Paper, which is essentially from October through to February.

Bill Rammell: My understanding is those are approximately the timescales, and I think we are going to be starting sooner than that.

Q420 Mr Havard: Then there is a Green Paper published in February, and then a policy established in the new Parliament following on whenever.

Bill Rammell: That is right, and there is obviously the opportunity for this Committee to input its views and examine witnesses, I would have thought, in the run-up to the Green Paper.

Q421 Chairman: So you are ruling out an October election!

Bill Rammell: I never rule anything out, Chairman!
Chairman: I am not meaning to be in the least insulting when I say that I was not expecting this evidence session to be nearly as interesting as it has proved to be. I am, and we are, very grateful to all of our witnesses for being extremely helpful. It has been most interesting, and you were as open as you can be in the circumstances about an extremely important and difficult issue. Thank you very much indeed to all of you.

Written evidence

Memorandum from the International Development Committee, House of Commons

Thank you for your letter of 24 March. The International Development Committee welcomes your Committee's inquiry into joint working between military and non-military agencies.

As you know, the International Development Committee published its Report on *Reconstructing Afghanistan* in February 2008 (Fourth Report of Session 2007–08, HC 65). As part of the inquiry, we visited Afghanistan in October 2007. Our itinerary included Helmand and Balkh Provinces as well as Kabul, and we were able to observe the operation of Provincial Reconstruction Teams in two contrasting regions. We thought it would be helpful to your Committee's inquiry to draw out our findings on the effectiveness of joint civilian-military working (which are mainly contained in Chapter 8 of our report).

- In relation to Helmand, we observed that the UK-led Provincial Reconstruction Team was trialling new methods of joint civilian-military co-operation in what were clearly very difficult circumstances. We believed that the co-location of civilian and military teams was a good practice which helped ensure joined-up decision-making. Our view was that it was of the utmost importance that military operations did not outpace the capacity of civilian members of the PRT. In its response to our Report, DFID accepted “the importance of civilian and military actions being planned and delivered in concert behind a unified political objective” (Third Special Report, Session 2007–08, HC 509, p 19).
- We found that Quick Impact Projects, aimed at bringing about a rapid “peace dividend” were valid although it was important that the views of development advisers were sought before any such project proceeded. QIPs could never be a substitute for long-term development and reconstruction which involves full engagement with local people and with national and local governance structures. In saying this, we of course acknowledged the difficulties of providing development assistance in insecure environments. As far as possible, development in Afghanistan should be “Afghan-led”, supported rather than driven by the international community.
- We were keen to emphasise that the UK's strategy for Afghanistan should be a “whole of Afghanistan” one which recognises the significantly different challenge of supporting development in insecure provinces such as Helmand compared to the opportunities provided in the more peaceful provinces including Balkh, which we visited, where aid can be delivered effectively by development agencies and where the Provincial Reconstruction Team approach may not be the most appropriate one. We recommended that there should be a clear exit strategy for PRTs, as envisaged when they were originally set up.
- In our Report we highlighted that the UK's commitment to Afghanistan “in terms of development assistance, is likely to last at least a generation”. DFID drew attention in its Response to the 10-year Development Partnership Agreement which it signed with the Afghan Government in 2006; and its annual funding commitment to Afghanistan was recently confirmed to 2013. The UK military is less likely to be able to plan to such a long-term timetable. Joint working needs to take account of the implications of this difference.

We welcome DFID's new Afghanistan Country Plan which forms part of the new UK Policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan, launched by the Prime Minister on 29 April. We are pleased that the new policy recognises that “military force alone will not solve the region's problems” and that a joint civil-military approach is one of its guiding principles. However, neither document has much to say about how a comprehensive approach to joint civilian and military working will operate in practice. I am sure this is an issue which you will pursue with the Government in the course of your inquiry.

We will follow your inquiry closely and look forward to reading your eventual report.

12 May 2009

Memorandum from the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum addresses the subjects raised by the Defence Committee¹ on the validity of the Comprehensive Approach and how well the government is working internally and with external partners to “enhance the likelihood of favourable and enduring outcomes”.² This memorandum covers the background and development of the Comprehensive Approach within the UK and explains the work that is ongoing within relevant government departments and in the wider international community.

¹ *New Inquiry: The Comprehensive Approach*, Defence Committee, Select Committee Announcement, 25 March 2009.

² *The Comprehensive Approach*, Joint Discussion Note 4/05, January 2006, Ministry of Defence, p 1–5.

The main focus of this memorandum is the delivery of a Comprehensive Approach within the context of stabilisation and conflict prevention operations. It is predominantly focused on the relationship between government bodies, though the contribution of and engagement with Non-Governmental Organisations are briefly covered. Making the comprehensive approach work in practice is hard work for all concerned. It involves learning to understand and accommodate the different priorities and expectations of partners across government and beyond. The government is not complacent about the room for further improvement, but it is convinced that good progress has been made and the foundations for maintaining and building on what has already been achieved are sound.

BACKGROUND

The government has always worked cross-departmentally; this is evident from policy development work through to policy/operational delivery. The Cabinet Office, in particular, plays a key role in bringing departments together to deliver against specific outcomes. Examples include work on counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation and the recently published UK policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan.³

In recent years, the Balkans has been the best example of how what was initially perceived as a principally military task, subsequently evolved into a comprehensive approach. From 1991, it was increasingly apparent that operations in Bosnia involved a complex interplay of civilians, para-military and military groups and individuals, international organisations and international media. The Ministry of Defence recognised the roles played by and importance of Other Government Departments and Non-Governmental Organisations, but noted that they added to the complexity and that efforts were rarely coordinated or focused on a common set of objectives.⁴ Nevertheless, the progress made when activity was coordinated reinforced the importance of an holistic approach. These views were reinforced by subsequent engagement in West Africa, East Timor as well as the wider Balkans.

Cross-Whitehall work between the Ministry of Defence, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development resulted in the establishment of tri-departmental funding arrangements for Conflict Prevention, Stabilisation and Peace-Keeping activities. The Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit (now called the Stabilisation Unit), also owned by all three Departments, was established in 2004. Concepts such as Defence Diplomacy, Stabilisation and Conflict Prevention were introduced into individual Departmental Plans, sitting underneath overarching outcome-focused Public Service Agreements. A Stabilisation Guidance Note was agreed and published⁵ to provide best practice in stabilisation operations.

The significant deployments of UK forces and resources to Afghanistan and Iraq encouraged further development of this area. The Ministry of Defence responded in 2005 by producing a Joint Discussion Note on the Comprehensive Approach.⁶ This stated that:

The realisation of national strategic objectives inevitably relies on a combination of diplomatic, military and economic instruments of power, together with an independent package of developmental and humanitarian activity and a customised, agile and sensitive influence and information effort.⁷

This highlights the fact that the Comprehensive Approach is a philosophy and a framework that needs to be adapted for each situation. It is not a prescribed way of doing things nor about creating homogeneity across government departments and systems. Rather, it is a common framework for assessment and planning of goals, specific objectives and, above all, a unified effort in delivery.

Stabilisation operations are usually focused on protecting people from violent conflict, enhancing the legitimacy and capability of a state and allowing its government and people to work towards a better, fairer future through non-violent political processes. Activity will normally cover four main strands: Governance, Security, Political and Development/Reconstruction. These strands cover a great deal of activity from the training of effective armed forces to developing an independent justice system as well as establishing or reinforcing the system of national and local government. This requires leadership from (and of) the diplomatic, military and development communities to support local processes and to help the state fulfil its functions. As such activity often takes place in situations where efforts are severely impeded by armed violence, stabilisation usually requires significant military contributions (often from UN-mandated forces) to provide the essential security to allow non-military actors to operate.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

In order to deliver a comprehensive approach the government developed a number of key policies that influenced and developed the UK's approach to preventing and resolving conflict. Effort is focused not only at joining up UK activity, but on improving the effectiveness of the wider international community. Key developments include:

³ *UK policy for Afghanistan and Pakistan: the way forward* published on 29 April 2009 http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/204173/afghanistan_pakistan.pdf

⁴ *The Comprehensive Approach*, Joint Discussion Note 4/05, January 2006, Ministry of Defence *Ibid*, p 1–1.

⁵ http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/resources/Stabilisation_guide.pdf

⁶ *The Comprehensive Approach*, Joint Discussion Note 4/05, January 2006, Ministry of Defence.

⁷ *The Comprehensive Approach*, Joint Discussion Note 4/05, January 2006, Ministry of Defence, pp 1–2—1–3.

*The National Security Strategy*⁸ was published by the Prime Minister in March 2008. It outlined the threats to the UK and its interests, together with the UK's responses. It states that:

4.47 To improve integration at the multilateral level, we will work to ensure that the UN delivers its commitment to genuinely integrated missions, and support the UN Peacebuilding Commission, which works to ensure integrated effort by all donors on strategy and delivery, and to provide immediate support for postconflict reconstruction. We advocate the development of a stronger international capacity, including through the EU and UN, to deploy civilian stabilisation experts, including judges, lawyers and police, at short notice and in larger numbers and to make them available for multilateral deployment...

5.5 Building on recent experience at home (for example on counter-terrorism) and overseas (for example in Afghanistan, where security, policy and development officials now work together in joint teams), we will continue to seek greater integration and responsiveness at the operational level. The new Stabilisation Unit will have a key role.

Public Service Agreements (PSAs)

Initially, PSAs were focused on individual departments and on the effective and efficient generation of departmental outputs. This has now evolved into a framework of outcome-focused PSAs "owned" by more than one department. As part of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review process, Public Service Agreement 30 Delivery Agreement: *Reduce the impact of conflict through enhanced UK and international efforts* was produced in October 2007.⁹ The FCO is the lead department for the delivery of PSA 30, supported by the MoD and DFID along with other departments and agencies. This work focuses on how we use key tools/resources including the tri-departmental funding for discretionary conflict activity, including support to international capacity building and regional support.

Capability Reviews

The government has driven an agenda to help departments work better together and approach problems in a more comprehensive way. Building on the initial Capability Reviews conducted in 2006, all three key departments have just been re-reviewed and the results published in March 2009. The recent reviews, which covered both policy formulation and operational delivery, commented that:

- For the DFID: "Stakeholders have seen a step change in Whitehall working and DFID's relations with other government departments have significantly improved. This focus has helped shape wider-government policies that advance UK and international development interests, for example on trade, climate, security, migration international collaboration and responses to the global financial crisis. Stakeholders, including other departments, want DFID to go further in doing this. The review team also saw some good examples of the Department working well with other government departments at country level."¹⁰
- For the FCO: "At senior level, the working relationships with the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) have improved noticeably. This is as a result of concerted efforts by the Permanent Secretaries in particular, who, for example, now undertake joint trips to key posts to gather evidence of progress on the ground."¹¹
- For the MoD: "The [MoD]'s update of the Defence Strategic Guidance in 2008 to include lessons from operations is applauded by other government departments, and it is continuing to support improved ways of working between the military and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development on operations. Government departments and key stakeholders widely praise the efforts that MoD has made to tackle perceived insularity, as highlighted in the 2007 Capability Review. The Department is credited for its important roles in a number of cross-departmental initiatives, such as . . . the National Security Strategy."¹²

Doctrine

In addition to the 2006 Joint Discussion Note quoted earlier, a Joint Doctrine Note *Countering Irregular Activity within a Comprehensive Approach* (JDN 2/07) was published in March 2007 and is informing the development of the Joint Doctrine Publication 3–40, Security and Stabilisation; The Military Contribution.¹³ The current edition of British Defence Doctrine (BDD) was published in August 2008.¹⁴ BDD sets out that a Comprehensive Approach is based on four guiding principles:

⁸ *The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom: Security in an interdependent world*, Cm 7291, March 2009 http://interactive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/documents/security/national_security_strategy.pdf

⁹ http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/pbr_csr07_psa30.pdf

¹⁰ Department for International Development: Progress and next steps (Capability review), March 2009, http://beta.civilservice.gov.uk/Assets/DFID-WEB_tcm6-6655.PDF

¹¹ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Progress and next steps (Capability Review), March 2009, http://beta.civilservice.gov.uk/Assets/FCO-WEB_tcm6-6654.PDF

¹² Ministry of Defence: Progress and next steps (Capability Review), March 2009, http://beta.civilservice.gov.uk/Assets/MOD-WEB_tcm6-6653.PDF

¹³ Due for publication later in 2009.

¹⁴ BRITISH DEFENCE DOCTRINE, Joint Doctrine Publication 0-01 (3rd Edition) August 2008, Ministry of Defence p v. http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/9E4BA75A-8E9F-4A52-983B-44A0226C4906/0/20080924_jdp0_01_3rdEd_U_DCDCIMAPPS.pdf

Proactive Engagement, if possible ahead of a crisis, enables coordinated approaches to complex situations. This requires a shared approach to the collection and interpretation of crisis indicators and warnings in order to inform planning and increase the time available for reaction.

Shared Understanding between parties is essential to optimize the effectiveness of their various capabilities. Where possible, shared understanding should be engendered through cooperative working practices, liaison and education in between crises.

Outcome-Based Thinking. All participants involved in crisis resolution need to base their thinking on outcomes and what is required to deliver a favourable situation, when planning and conducting activities. Planning and activity should be focused on a single purpose and progress judged against mutually agreed measures of effectiveness.

Collaborative Working. Institutional familiarity, generated through personal contact and human networking, enhances collaborative working and mutual trust. Integrated information management, infrastructure and connectivity enable information sharing and common working practices.

Above all, a Comprehensive Approach requires those dealing with a crisis to be predisposed to cooperation and structured to develop a shared understanding of a situation and its dynamics. This approach should aid the formulation of an agreed collective intent and output-focused objectives, leading in turn to the implementation of mutually supporting activities. Where it is not possible to coordinate or regulate all participants, actions and effects, then steps should be taken to achieve deconfliction at least.

DELIVERING THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

There are a number of good examples of UK teams working together to deliver our objectives in a comprehensive way, some of which are covered in the back of this memorandum. The way in which those objectives are defined and delivered has changed over time to ensure that results are achieved faster and more effectively with a view to sustained and long-term benefits to the UK.

At the strategic level, the interdepartmental work on a Conflict Strategy has developed the principles and commitments made in the National Security Strategy to deliver an integrated approach that cuts across traditional boundaries. We continue to develop our understanding of the effectiveness of various military and civilian tools in different circumstances; and are identifying areas where UK and international capability needs to be developed (such as UK civilian capabilities, UN leadership, civilian capability and flexible funding mechanisms).

STABILISATION OPERATIONS

On the specific issue of stabilisation-type operations, the glue that binds our stabilisation efforts together is a sufficiently common culture among staff, and leaders who are able to collaborate effectively across departments. This comes from training and exercising together (see below) as well as developing understanding of each department through interchanges and posting.

On 6 March 2009, a Conference was held specifically to address Stabilisation Operations, attended by Ministers and senior officials. It concluded that the relative roles of Whitehall and the in-country team will vary with the nature of the operation. But, in the broad sense, Whitehall should focus on high level aims, a division of responsibility for their delivery, accountability, provision of resources and support to the UK political debate. In-country teams should focus on operational planning to deliver those aims. Difficult questions such as the authority of a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) need to be solved in the context of a specific operation as will the issue of which Department should provide the SRO and what their remit should be. There is general agreement that an SRO should be in theatre but also a recognition that such an SRO will have to deliver some of their objectives by influence rather than executive authority.

One element of the Cross-Departmental Review on Lesson Learning in Conflict Prevention, Management and Stabilisation remit covers how better to integrate lesson learning. It builds on the work undertaken by the Comprehensive Approach Working Group, chaired by the FCO.

The Stabilisation Unit continues to fulfil its three roles of: facilitating cross-departmental assessment and planning; developing and deploying civilian expertise; and, lesson learning. It is the primary source of civilian experts to the Helmand mission and has deployed experts elsewhere such as Iraq, Kabul, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Staff from the Unit supported a refresh of the integrated Helmand Roadmap and continue to support military exercises and planning in Whitehall for future UK engagement on conflict, bilaterally and multilaterally. The Unit is developing itself as a repository of expertise and lessons on stabilisation. It is coordinating cross-Whitehall work on improving joint assessment and planning at the strategic level and operational level. The Unit is also establishing a UK Civilian Standby Capacity (over 1000 civilians and police) to be able continuously to deploy up to 350 personnel. This will primarily be achieved by:

- enhancing the existing database of Deployable Civilian Experts, so that it holds around 800 quality assured personnel;
- forming a cross-government Civil Service Stabilisation Cadre (of around 200);

- as well as appealing to a wide range of volunteer networks, and making better use of the relevant civilian skills of our Armed Forces Reservists.

A Stabilisation Implementation Team (SIT) was established earlier this year to deliver these Ministerial commitments and determine the nature and extent of additional Stabilisation Unit planning capability and how best to implement it. It will also consider the terms and conditions of service, as well as risk and safety considerations, for deployed civilian staff.

Operational and exercise experience has highlighted the need better to align and link departmental Information Technology and Information Management systems to ensure connectivity and improved communications. This is particularly important in theatre as it will allow better knowledge and information management. The three Permanent Secretaries have tasked their Chief Information Officers to identify options for tackling these constraints.

Additionally, departments meet regularly with International and Non Governmental Organisations both in-country and in London to ensure they are aware of the international community's and the UK's objectives in particular countries or regions. These meetings are valuable in exchanging perceptions, de-conflicting initiatives and, where appropriate, identifying common objectives and how best to coordinate in their achievement. The NGO-Military Contact Group also meets regularly to cover generic issues, including enhancing mutual understanding and, where appropriate, better ways of working together and the development of a more comprehensive approach to issues.

OPERATIONAL DELIVERY IN-COUNTRY

One good example of the Comprehensive Approach being used in practice is the UK Civil-Military Mission Helmand (CMMH) in Lashkar Gah. The CMMH is the integrated structure that brought together the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and the military led Task Force Helmand (TFH), and it coordinates the efforts of DFID, FCO, MoD, and other international partners, including the US, Denmark and Estonia, in a comprehensive approach to stabilisation including a seamless package of reconstruction assistance for Helmand province. Staff are also based in five Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) across Helmand Province in Gereshk, Musa Qala, Garmsir, Nad-e-Ali and Sangin.

The structure is based more on cross-team working than on traditional lines of management. The mission is neither a traditional FCO-style "post", nor a headquarters in the formal military sense. It provides a mechanism, through joint teams, for tracking and driving implementation across the thematic and geographical strands of the Helmand Roadmap.

The Basra PRT was established in April 2006 under UK leadership. Since September 2007, the PRT has been located with the military divisional headquarters and UK Consulate on the Contingency Operating Base, Basra Airport. The Basra PRT transferred to US leadership on 1 April 2009, the day after UK forces handed over coalition divisional command in southern Iraq to the US.

The PRT's specific objectives have been to:

- build the capacity of the institutions of government in Basra to deliver for the people of Basra;
- put the economic enablers in place to allow private sector growth; and
- improve the ability of the legal establishment and the media to act as checks on the Iraqi Government and illegal groups.

In order to deliver its diverse set of objectives, the Basra PRT has drawn its staffing from a range of UK Government departments, UK military, US military and Foreign Service, and contracted consultants. It has also worked closely with a wide range of interlocutors in these and other institutions (the United Nations, for example).

The PRT's key achievements have included:

- helping the Basra Provincial Council to increase by 10 times the budget it manages and the services provided to the people of Basra;
- formulating the Basra Economic Development Strategy;
- establishing a scheme to provide jobs and training to unemployed youths, and
- setting up a project to provide credit to small businesses.

US Commander in Iraq, General Odierno, commented "They are completely integrated down there, and that really is the future if we are going to support the Iraqis in the right way next year. Basra is the way forward."

The comprehensive approach is also highly developed away from Afghanistan and Iraq; the British Embassy in the Democratic Republic of Congo is a good example. Its efforts were formally recognised last year, winning both the Joined Up Government Award and the Cabinet Secretary's Award at the Civil Service Awards 2008.

The key to this success was the fact that the DFID, MoD and FCO team recognises no border between development, military and political issues. They have pushed the boundaries for joined up work not just by having joint policy teams but also creating joint management functions and a joint communications unit to

handle press and public affairs. The UK earned a reputation for speaking with one voice and linking political pressure and programmes to influence partners towards a positive result. The departments continue to work together to deliver our contribution to international efforts to secure a lasting peace in DRC by pooling analysis, ideas and problem solving and shifting funding flexibly to take advantage of opportunities.

Such collaboration does not end with the cross-Whitehall conflict prevention initiative. A recent example of how closely the departments work together has been as part of a project to re-build a vital bridge in eastern DRC. Although funded through DFID's infrastructure programme, much of the expertise needed to deliver the project is being sourced through MoD's links with the military engineer community. This comprehensive approach has contributed to providing the leverage needed to encourage the UN locally to provide the construction manpower. Overall, this means the project can be delivered quicker, more effectively and at less cost than would otherwise be the case.

Further details on these examples are set out at the back of this document.

FUNDING AND RESOURCES

The government has established joint funding arrangements for Conflict Prevention, Stabilisation and Peace-keeping activity with the aim of obtaining a global and regional reduction in conflict and its impact through improved UK and international efforts to prevent, manage and resolve conflict, and to create the conditions required for effective state-building and economic development. Additional funding for operations that are delivering objectives by means of the Comprehensive Approach are funded in the normal way, with departments either finding resources from within existing allocations or by drawing on the HM Treasury's Reserve to fund Urgent Operational Requirements for the military.

INTERNATIONAL WORK WITH ALLIES

The UK has been one of the strongest advocates of the Comprehensive Approach across a wide range of international organisations, in order better to combine civil and military measures and coordination within any given operational environment.

United Nations

The UN has taken some steps to move towards a more comprehensive approach to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Measures include joint assessments, joint programme frameworks, and the adoption of integrated UN Missions in a number of countries, such as Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. There is also the Peacebuilding Commission, an intergovernmental advisory body of the UN, which supports peace efforts in countries emerging from conflict. Its role includes bringing together all relevant actors, marshalling resources, and supporting the development of integrated peacebuilding strategies. In addition, the UN is working to improve joint working with other partners. For example, in 2008, it signed the UN-World Bank Partnership Framework for Crisis and Post-Crisis Situations and a Joint Declaration on Post-Crisis Assessments and Recovery Planning with the World Bank and the European Commission.

However, more needs to be done. Prompted by a UK-led debate at the UN Security Council in May 2008, the UN is now looking at how it can provide more effective and well coordinated support to countries emerging from conflict. The Presidential Statement that followed the debate highlighted the following gaps:

“The Security Council encourages efforts to address the urgent need for rapidly deployable civilian expertise and stresses that the critical role for such expertise is working in co-operation with national authorities to strengthen national capacities. The Security Council highlights the need for the United Nations to play a leading role in the field in co-ordinating international efforts in post-conflict situations. The Security Council stresses that coordination between national authorities and others involved in longer-term reconstruction and development, including organs of the UN system in accordance with their respective mandates, the international financial institutions, as well as with civil society and the business sector, is vital for the success of UN and international engagement in post-conflict situations. The Security Council stresses the need to ensure that finance is available from the outset for recovery and peacebuilding activities to meet immediate needs, and to lay a solid foundation for longer-term reconstruction and development.”¹⁵

A Secretary-General's report on this subject is due out this summer (2009). We hope this report will set out a clear plan for addressing the above gaps. We will work closely with the UN and other partners to support the implementation of this report.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

In April 2008 NATO agreed an Action Plan with pragmatic proposals to develop and implement NATO's contribution to a comprehensive approach. The plan states that NATO—the Headquarters, the Command Structure and the nations—want to bring together all the resources at their disposal—military and civilian—to deal with the problems that face us. It also focused on improving NATO's co-operation with other actors,

¹⁵ S/PRST/2008/16 of 20 May 2008: Post-conflict peacebuilding <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/9311495.html>

including other international organisations and NGOs. The Comprehensive Strategic Political Military Plan for Afghanistan, agreed at the same time, embodied this. This approach was reaffirmed at NATO's Strasbourg-Kehl Summit in April 2009:

“experience in the Balkans and Afghanistan demonstrates that today's security challenges require a comprehensive approach by the international community, combining civil and military measures and coordination. Its effective implementation requires all international actors to contribute in a concerted effort, in a shared sense of openness and determination, taking into account their respective strengths and mandates. We welcome the significant progress achieved, in line with the Action Plan agreed at Bucharest, to improve NATO's own contribution to such a comprehensive approach, including through a more coherent application of its crisis management instruments and efforts to associate its military capabilities with civilian means. Progress includes NATO's active promotion of dialogue with relevant players on operations; the development of a database of national experts in reconstruction and stabilisation to advise NATO forces; and the involvement of selected international organisations, as appropriate, in NATO crisis management exercises.”¹⁶

NATO-UN

UN Security Council resolutions have provided the mandate for NATO operations in the Balkans and in Afghanistan, and the framework for NATO's training mission in Iraq. NATO has also provided support to UN-sponsored operations, including logistical assistance to the African Union's UN endorsed peacekeeping operations in Darfur, Sudan and in Somalia; support for UN disaster relief operations in Pakistan, following the earthquake in 2005; and escorting ships carrying World Food Programme humanitarian supplies off the coast of Somalia. The September 2008 NATO-UN Declaration committed both organisations to work together more closely and establish a framework for consultation and co-operation, and reaffirmed their willingness to provide assistance to regional and sub-regional organisations as requested. This marked real progress in the NATO-UN relationship. A NATO civ-mil liaison office is now being established in New York. This should increase staff contacts across the range of disciplines. UN OCHA, UNHCR and DPKO will this year participate for the first time in the Alliance wide crisis management exercise. All of this helps both organisations work together at the strategic HQ level.

Cooperation to deliver the comprehensive approach in theatre (on specific operations) is generally further advanced than between Headquarters. In Afghanistan UNAMA and NATO are working together on the ground, as over the past 6 months they have jointly developed an integrated planning process to focus civilian and military resources on key districts in a coordinated way.

NATO-EU

There are standing arrangements agreed for consultation and co-operation between the EU and NATO including the “Berlin Plus” arrangements whereby the EU has guaranteed access to NATO planning capabilities (aimed at avoiding unnecessary duplication) and can use NATO's command and control arrangements for running operations. EU military operations thus fall into two categories, “Berlin Plus” operations using NATO command and control arrangements, like EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia, and “autonomous” operations using command and control provided by one or more Member States, like Operation ATALANTA in the Gulf of Aden.

Permanent military liaison arrangements have been established to facilitate cooperation at the operational level. A NATO Permanent Liaison Team operates alongside the EU Military Staff and an EU Cell is based in SHAPE (NATO's strategic command for operations in Mons, Belgium). We continue to engage actively to encourage progress, including through a NATO-EU capabilities group that brings together nations and staff from both organisations.

European Union

The European Union (EU) has a powerful set of civilian and military resources which enable it to apply a comprehensive approach to crisis management: civilian expertise, judges, police officers and customs officials; military force, economic might and the most extensive diplomatic network in the world, as well as the EU being the biggest donor of development funding. Since the launch of the first European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) mission in 2003, the EU has deployed civilian and military personnel in three continents in areas of UK strategic interest. Of the 21 ESDP operations launched to date most have had a more civilian than military focus—helping to build the rule of law, support peace agreements or monitor borders.

In the wider context of the EU's ability to adopt a Comprehensive Approach, the existing pillar structures of the EU institutions precipitate a somewhat fragmented approach to crisis management, post-conflict reconstruction and development. There is a gap in culture, working practice and political direction, between the Commission and the Council Secretariat, and within the Secretariat between the policy and operations arms. Constitutional amendments proposed in the Lisbon Treaty would, if ratified, offer a potential solution

¹⁶ Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg/Kehl on 4 April 2009 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52837.htm?mode=pressrelease

to this fragmentation through the creation of the post of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, responsible for conducting the EU's foreign and security policy and for ensuring consistency of the Union's external action. The High Representative would be supported in his role by the creation of the European External Action Service, helping to improve some of the structural issues.

Improving the ability of the EU to plan and conduct operations that include both civilian and military elements remains of significant importance and the UK welcomed the European Council agreement in December 2008 of a joint civilian-military strategic level planning structure: the Crisis Management Planning Directorate. Within the military domain, the EU Military Staff initiated a study in March 2009 to consider the Military Implications of the Comprehensive Approach at the theatre level. The study's aim is to identify any military capability requirements to support the Comprehensive Approach and to inform deliberations at the strategic level within the EU in due course. The UK fully supports and helps to influence and accelerate EU thinking on this subject, through the active participation of the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, the Joint Force Headquarters and the Stabilisation Unit.

TRAINING

The opportunities for joint training involving civilians and military together have increased greatly and all Brigade mission rehearsal exercises for Helmand now include a civilian component to assist the realism of military training and to help prepare the civilians themselves. The civilian contribution to Staff College training is significant, as is the civilian input to the doctrine taught on the College's courses. In addition to preparation for Helmand and routine training, our cross Whitehall aim (operational commitments allowing) is to support one major exercise per year for the purpose of test comprehensive approach concepts and capturing lessons. Last year this exercise was Joint Venture 2008 (JV08).

Exercise Joint Venture is the UK's biennial exercise in the planning and conduct of joint operations in a medium scale stabilisation intervention. It is a predominantly military command-post exercise designed to test our expeditionary capabilities in dealing with a complex regional scenario and series of political-military events.¹⁷ JV08 aimed to set the military aspects of the stabilisation operations in the wider context of a cross-government "Comprehensive Approach". It focused upon the interaction between the 3* Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTFHQ) and 2*/1* Component headquarters (Maritime, Land, Air, Logistic and Special Forces), an inter-Departmental steering group and an inter-Departmental planning team (Stabilisation Planning Team or SPT), each incorporating staffs from the key Whitehall Departments, International and Non-Governmental Organizations and other players.

An FCO official was appointed the Senior Responsible Officer in order that civil-military co-operation could be tested, with the objectives of building on existing models from Helmand and elsewhere, and thus learning lessons that could apply to real-world scenarios. Participants included representatives of the FCO, DFID, the Stabilisation Unit and other parts of government, representatives of NGOs as well as from a number of international partners. Work is now in hand to develop the next ARRCADe Fusion (the annual Allied Rapid Reaction Corps exercise). This exercise, which will take place later this year, already involves officials from the FCO and DFID in its development.

CONCLUSION

The Comprehensive Approach is a philosophy and a framework that needs to be adopted but adapted for each situation and operation. It is not a prescribed way of doing things but a description of how a joined-up and cross-government/organisation helps to reach common goals. The benefits are greater responsiveness and effective use of limited resources through flexibility based on common analysis and planning towards goals and objectives. The UK uses a Comprehensive Approach to operational issues that is based around a number of key principles—proactive engagement, a shared understanding of the goals and issues, outcome-based thinking and collaborative working between the military and civilians, including the wider international community and non-governmental organisations.

In improving our capability to work this way, Ministers and senior officials have visited deployed teams and re-organised functions within their departments. This has resulted in the development of the tri-departmental Stabilisation Unit and funding mechanisms, together with working groups and inter-departmental units in London and the creation of civilian-military teams in Iraq, Afghanistan and other embassies. Each operation or team has resulted in changes to the approach to and ways of working together, with improvements introduced covering unilateral and multilateral operations. As the UK is likely to be part of a multinational operation, it is vital that the UK works with its allies to see that the wider international effort is delivered in a comprehensive way. It is for this reason that the UK has spent time and effort helping to shape the policy within international organisations, such as the UN, NATO and EU, for a Comprehensive Approach. While it would be fair to say that progress has been made within the UK inter-departmental processes and their capability to deliver on the ground and, to a more limited extent, within the wider

¹⁷ The aim of Ex JV08 was "to maintain and promote the UK's ability to conduct medium scale expeditionary operations across the spectrum of conflict with a focus on integrating and developing Joint Military Capability within a Comprehensive Approach".

international community, there remains a considerable amount that still needs to be done. There are tensions and issues such as authority, funding, data sharing/communications that currently limit progress and they are acknowledged as such. But they are being addressed and our approach is becoming more comprehensive.

CASE STUDIES

*Helmand*¹⁸

The UK Strategy for Afghanistan is owned and overseen by NSID(OD) (Cabinet Committee for National Security, International Relations and Development), with the objectives and guiding principles set out in the *UK policy for Afghanistan and Pakistan: the way forward*¹⁹ published in April 2009. In addition to the normal Departmental support provided by officials to Ministers there are two Cabinet Office chaired committees—the Afghanistan Strategy Group (ASG) and the Afghanistan Senior Officials Group (ASOG) who have oversight of the delivery against objectives and the prioritisation of efforts. All Departmental stakeholders are represented in these committees, including Her Majesty’s Ambassador in Kabul and the Civil-Military Mission Helmand. The Cabinet Office and the ASG have been recently enhanced by the creation of a cross-government Afghanistan Strategy Team (AST) whose primary roles are to develop long term strategy and to undertake regular periodic reviews. In addition, two other cross-government teams have been established to support co-ordinated delivery: the Afghanistan Strategic Communications Team (ASCT) and the Afghan Drugs Inter Departmental Unit (ADIDU).

The Afghan Delivery Group (ADG) is the primary governance body in-country and co-ordinates activities on the ground in Afghanistan. It is made up of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Department for International Development (DFID) and is chaired by HM Ambassador in Kabul. It reports to Ministers through the ASG. Funding for ADG-approved activities come from a number of sources: the tri-departmental funds, FCO programme budgets (Strategic Programme Fund (SPF) and Bilateral Programme Budget) and DFID’s Country Plan for Afghanistan.²⁰

UK Civil-Military Mission Helmand

The UK assumed control of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Lashkar Gah, Helmand Province in May 2006. In June 2008 the UK PRT became part of the Civil-Military Mission in Helmand. Despite difficult working conditions, in the toughest of environments, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Department for International Development and Ministry of Defence, supported by staff from the Stabilisation Unit, the US, Denmark and Estonia are working hard alongside UK and other armed forces in Helmand Province to provide a seamless package of reconstruction assistance. Staff from the FCO and Stabilisation Unit are also based, with the military, in five Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) across Helmand Province in Gereshk, Musa Qala, Garmsir, Nad-e-Ali and Sangin.

Structure

The Civil-Military Mission Helmand is an integrated structure bringing together the PRT and Task Force Helmand and is charged with delivering our comprehensive strategy in Helmand. Its creation followed the decision that UK efforts should concentrate on delivering a comprehensive, politically-led, counter insurgency campaign. It is a permanent organisation, providing continuity into which the deployed Brigade will plug for its six month tour. It is tasked to provide clear political leadership; direct our support to Afghan reconstruction and reconciliation efforts; and plans, co-ordinates and delivers civil-military counter-insurgency activities.

It is headed jointly by the UK Senior Representative and the Commander Task Force Helmand. The UK Senior Representative reports to HMA Kabul. The Brigade remains under the command of ISAF for all operational military matters. The Commander of TFH takes military direction from Commander ISAF and from Chief of Joint Operations (CJO) at Permanent Joint Head Quarters (PJHQ) in Northwood, but consults and seeks guidance from the UK Senior Representative in mounting military operations.

Under this civilian-military structure tasks such as intelligence, political analysis, planning, district level stabilisation, media and communications, which previously were carried out by civilians and military in parallel, are now conducted jointly with the aim of achieving more integrated operations, using cross team-working rather than traditional lines of management. While physical co-location is heavily constrained by the available accommodation, the structure itself provides a framework in which the military and the growing number of civilian staff can integrate their work more effectively.

The mission is neither a traditional FCO-style “post”, nor a headquarters in the formal military sense. It provides a mechanism, through joint teams, for tracking and driving implementation across the thematic and geographical strands of the integrated plan for delivering HMG’s priorities in Helmand, the Helmand Roadmap. It has required a significant cultural shift for both sides, and resulted in better transparency and teamwork at all levels plus leadership that resolves differences co-operatively.

¹⁸ Part of the information in this annex was originally submitted to the Foreign Affairs Committee in response to their request for information as part of their inquiry Global Security: Afghanistan in January 2009.

¹⁹ *UK policy for Afghanistan and Pakistan: the way forward* published on 29 April 2009 http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/204173/afghanistan_pakistan.pdf

²⁰ Announced 29 April 2009.

What does the Civil Military Mission Helmand do in Helmand?

The Civil Military Mission Helmand supports the Afghan Government to promote counter narcotics, security, good governance, rule of law and social and economic development in order to promote a more developed, secure and stable Afghanistan.

It is focused on establishing an effective police force, improved access to justice and sound provincial administration in the province. The Mission is also facilitating development assistance and delivery of Afghanistan's National Drug Control Strategy in Helmand and helping to create a sustainable legitimate economy capable of providing livelihoods for the local population.

Officials work with a wide range of people in the province, from the Governor of Helmand, Mohammad Gulabuddin Mangal, to local non-governmental organisations to deliver the UK strategy in Helmand. Governance, police reform, counter-narcotics and justice sector experts are in place to work with provincial officials and help strengthen and reform local governance structures.

Development is necessarily a long-term activity but the Civil Military Mission Helmand, working within the improved security environment provided by the Task Force Helmand and Afghan National Security Forces, is balancing this with more immediate stabilisation projects to deliver security through stabilisation in the key population areas of Helmand.

Progress²¹

The joint civilian-military team in Helmand now numbers 165, of which approximately 80 are civilian experts, a two-fold increase in the last year. The civilian-military mission in Helmand is based in Lashkar Gah, and has outposts in the other five districts Gereshk, Garmsir, Sangin, Musa Qala and, since December 2008, Nad-e-Ali each with a civilian-military stabilisation team of up to 10 staff, co-located with the relevant Battlegroup HQ.

The Afghan Social Outreach Programme (ASOP), led by the Independent Directorate for Local Governance, is an attempt to build better links between the Afghan Government and communities in areas where the former has been limited or non-existent. In Helmand we are supporting Governor Mangal to use the ASOP to roll out cross-cutting shuras (community councils) in all six of the key population centres. These aim to build a bridge between the lowest level of formal governance (District Governors) and the enduring grass-roots tribal system, by creating councils that take charge of local development, empowering "local solutions to local problems". They have been established in Nad-e-Ali, Garmsir and Gereshk, with Musa Qaleh and Sangin to follow during the summer of 2009 and we will allocate at least £20 million to this over the next four years. We are providing capacity-building support to the provincial offices of key national line ministries, the office of the Provincial Governor and the Lashkar Gah Municipality. We are also supporting Afghan-led efforts to promote reconciliation at a local level, in line with the national approach to encourage insurgents to reconcile to local legitimate government, and to renounce violence.

We are helping to establish informal justice shuras and commissions to provide traditional, accessible dispute resolution by local elders, under the overall tutelage of District Governors. These shuras are a legitimate, working alternative at the grass-roots to 'Taliban justice', while also being linked to the formal justice system. They have been established in Lashkar Gah, Garmsir and Gereshk, and a separate prisoner review shura has been established in Musa Qala. Helmand Provincial Court is operating more effectively, convictions have risen 400% since June 2008 and legal representation, including a legal aid office, has been introduced. As part of our wider efforts in support of the formal justice system, we are also assisting with the construction of a new prison in Helmand province, with training support from a team of four officers from HM Prison Service.

Helmand province, with its abundant natural resources, has the potential to be a centre of agricultural production and growth for Afghanistan. To help realise this potential, we will invest £68m over the next four years in agriculture, rural enterprise development and infrastructure. This assistance has built nearly 2,000 wells benefiting over 400,000 people, contributed to 160 district infrastructure projects reaching over 300,000 families and provided paid work for nearly 19,000 people. Current projects include: a major road-building programme linking Lashkar Gah to Garmsir, Nad-e-Ali and Gereshk; the refurbishment of the Gereshk hydropower plant (as part of a wider programme to double electricity production in 2009–10); and agri-business infrastructure in Lashkar Gah (funded by the US).

Successful military operations by ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces have brought more of Helmand under the control of the Afghan Government. In 2008 progress was made along the Helmand River valley—from Kajaki in the north to Garmsir in the south. Whilst challenges remain, a good example of progress was the clearing of Taliban in December 2008, by the Afghanistan National Security Force, supported by Task Force Helmand, from the town of Nad-e-Ali and its environs. The provision of a well-qualified and experienced Stabilisation Adviser one day after the end of kinetic operations was a good example of the implementation of the Comprehensive Approach.

²¹ Detail can also be found in *UK policy for Afghanistan and Pakistan: the way forward* published on 29 April 2009 http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/204173/afghanistan_pakistan.pdf

Basra

It is only through concerted progress on security, political reconciliation and economic reconstruction that lasting stability in Basra and elsewhere in Iraq can be brought about. Our strategy has therefore been to take coordinated action across the military, diplomatic and economic lines of development, using all of the tools at its disposal.

Provincial Reconstruction Team

In April 2006, the Basra Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) was established under UK leadership, to act as a hub for multinational capacity-building in governance, the economy and infrastructure and rule of law. The formation of the PRT—operating alongside the UK-led Multi-National Division (MND) (South East) and the UK Consulate—completed the structures for the combined application of military and civilian effort in Basra which have remained in place until the transition of the mission in 2009. Since 2007, the PRT has been located with the MND (South East) headquarters and UK Consulate on the Contingency Operating Base (COB) at Basra Airport. The precise make-up of the PRT and mechanisms for civil-military coordination in Basra have evolved over time in response to conditions on the ground; the evolution of coalition and UK Government priorities and the lessons we have learned. Prior to the transfer of the Basra PRT to US leadership on 31 March 2009, the work of the PRT and MND (South East) was coordinated through joint plans for the development of Iraqi capacity and civil-military assistance—the Basra Development Plan—with leadership and direction provided by a steering group comprising the Head of the PRT, Consul General, UK military commander in Basra and head of the US Regional Embassy Office in Basra (which is also based on the COB). The Basra Development Plan also formed a central element of the MND (South East) campaign plan.

Aims and Objectives

Our initial aims in Basra were to provide basic levels of security; to prevent the collapse of basic infrastructure, which had been severely neglected under Saddam, and to foster the development of Iraqi sovereignty and democracy. As Iraqi institutions formed, increasingly our primary objective has been to build the capacity of the Iraqis themselves so that they can take the lead and develop longer-term, sustainable solutions to the challenges faced in Basra and elsewhere. As UK forces have trained and mentored the 10th Division of the Iraqi Army in southern Iraq, the 14th Division of the Iraqi Army in Basra and other Iraqi Security Forces, the PRT and UK Consulate have led work to develop the ability of the Basra provincial council to manage the economy and financial resources more effectively and in turn deliver better public services. As a result of these efforts, the provincial administration's ability to spend its own money has doubled in each of the last three years, and they have now contracted over 800 reconstruction projects since 2006, worth over \$650 million.

Capacity building and economic development activities were hampered by the deterioration in the security situation in 2006 and the first half of 2007, which saw the PRT withdraw from Basra city to Kuwait at the end of 2006 until its return to the COB. However, as our strategy of handing over responsibility to the Iraqi Security Forces we had trained was implemented in the second half of 2007, the security situation in Basra improved. Security improved still further after the Iraqi-led Operation Charge of the Knights from March 2008, and has been maintained since then. The improvements in security have allowed us to focus on encouraging the growth of a thriving private sector and attracting foreign direct investment to Basra, which will be essential to the creation of jobs; work to rebuild Basra's outdated infrastructure, and to help Iraq fulfil its potential.

Achievements

Overall, the UK Government has facilitated more than 30 investor visits (for 20 companies) to show international companies the opportunities available in Basra and elsewhere. These visits have led to proposals potentially worth up to \$10 billion being submitted to the Iraqi Government. The visits themselves have been organised by the PRT and Basra Support Office—a combined Department for International Development, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and military organisation in Baghdad tasked with supporting Basra at a national level—with facilitation and logistical support from Consulate and Embassy staff and UK forces. Umm Qasr, Iraq's only deep water port, provides a good example of the practical implementation of a comprehensive approach. Royal Navy and British Army mentoring and training teams have helped the Iraqi Navy and Marines protecting Umm Qasr to establish a secure environment at the port, making it more attractive to potential international investors. The PRT has subsequently organised two major investment visits to Umm Qasr, with a view to financing an increase in the port's capacity to handle cargo and container ships, which would then contribute to economic growth and the creation of jobs in and beyond the region. This programme of activity in Iraq has been complemented by high profile investment conferences HMG has helped to organise in Kuwait, Istanbul and most recently in London on 30 April. The latter was attended by over 200 of the world's leading companies and saw the signing of a trade agreement; the establishment of an Iraq-UK business council and the announcement of new contracts worth \$1 billion.

In parallel to our work to attract foreign direct investment, the PRT has established, trained and mentored the Basra Investment Commission (BIC), an Iraqi institution which now has lead responsibility for promoting and securing international investment in Basra. The BIC recently granted a licence for a

\$107M hotel and leisure complex, which was the first of its kind in Basra and will help to persuade international companies that Basra is ready for investment. In this and other work, the PRT has relied upon the support of the British military and FCO. Complementing the PRT's work to promote and secure foreign direct investment in Basra, the Senior British Military Representative in Iraq, who is based in Baghdad, holds the economics portfolio on behalf of the coalition. He has sought to influence the Iraqi Government and coalition efforts on key economic initiatives, including those in Basra province such as the redevelopment of Umm Qasr.

As Basrawis' security concerns have reduced, their demands for improvements in essential services as well as employment prospects have risen. Therefore, in parallel with these efforts to stimulate private sector investment, UK forces (and more recently, US forces) and HMG civilians in Basra have continued to work together to help the Iraqi authorities deliver grass-roots reconstruction and basic services. In 2008, Joint Reconstruction Action Teams were formed under a mixture of civilian and military leadership, to support the Iraqi authorities to deliver improvements to services, focussed on sewerage, water, electricity and waste (or "trash").

The successful provincial elections in January 2009 provide another positive example of effective, coordinated support to the Iraqis, with coalition assistance in Basra managed through a working group led by the Consulate but involving the PRT, UK and US militaries. Since then, UK forces have completed their remaining military tasks with 14 Division and the leadership of the PRT has been passed to the US. British service personnel and HMG civilians have played a significant role in the transformation of Basra. We have learned a number of valuable lessons about implementing a comprehensive approach on stabilisation operations, and these same lessons are now being applied as appropriate in Afghanistan.

The British Embassy Kinshasa

The comprehensive approach is also highly developed wherever the MoD is contributing to post conflict stabilisation and conflict prevention work. One such example away from Afghanistan and Iraq is in the Democratic Republic of Congo where the British Embassy works in a highly collaborative way across departmental boundaries to deliver effect. Its efforts were formally recognised last year, winning both the Joined Up Government Award and the Cabinet Secretary's Award at the Civil Service Awards 2008.

The key to this success was the fact that the DIFD, MoD and FCO team recognises no border between development, military and political issues. They have pushed the boundaries for joined up work not just by having joint policy teams but also creating joint management functions and a joint communications unit to handle press and public affairs. The 108 staff work to one set of objectives under one roof and as one team.

As a result MoD, FCO and DFID worked extremely closely to coordinate military analysis, diplomacy and development funding to support the successful elections in 2006. The UK earned a reputation for speaking with one voice and linking strong analysis, political pressure and programmes to influence partners towards a positive result. During fighting in Kinshasa in August 2006 and March 2007, all Embassy staff worked together to ensure an effective response to the political, safety and consular consequences, again working across departmental divisions.

The Departments continue to work together to deliver our contribution to international efforts to secure a lasting peace in DRC by pooling analysis, ideas and problem solving across the three departments, shifting funding flexibly to take advantage of opportunities and speaking with one voice to partners. Whilst in-country projects are managed by individual departments to satisfy accountability requirements, they benefit from the collective engagement of all three, with each department bringing complementary skills and experience to bear.

Such collaboration does not end with the cross-Whitehall conflict prevention initiative. A recent example of how closely the departments work together has been as part of a project to re-build a vital bridge in eastern DRC. Although funded through DFID's infrastructure programme, much of the expertise needed to deliver the project is being sourced through MoD's links with the military engineer community. This comprehensive approach has contributed to providing the leverage needed to encourage the UN locally to provide the construction manpower. Overall, this means the project can be delivered quicker, more effectively and at less cost than would otherwise be the case.

This is not to say of course that much more work remains to be done. Recent events in the east mean that the DRC is approaching a turning point in its history, with lasting peace a possibility. But the security situation remains complex and fragile, and there is still considerable potential for progress to be derailed. The shared analysis to date points to three critical issues where engagement is needed: 1) dismantling the armed groups; 2) improving security and 3) generating economic opportunities. The UK is active in all three areas and will play a critical role as the largest bilateral contributor to stabilisation and security, and the DFID, FCO and MoD team in Kinshasa will be at the forefront of that.

We remain particularly engaged in the eastern DRC where problems caused by armed groups are a continuing source of national and regional instability, involved in a wide variety of projects from

disarmament, demobilisation and repatriation, to roads, to humanitarian assistance, to community recovery programmes, to action against sexual violence. Progress on security sector reform remains pivotal to the core state survival function of delivering security and rule of law, and to providing the right conditions to allow the large UN presence in DRC to be drawn down.

12 May 2009

Memorandum from the NAO (National Audit Office)

1. In Spring 2009 the Defence Committee announced it was undertaking an inquiry into the Comprehensive Approach in which it would examine to what extent UK military and non-military agencies work effectively through a Comprehensive Approach “with commonly understood principles and collaborative processes that enhance the likelihood of favourable and enduring outcomes within a particular situation”.²²

2. To inform its inquiry, the Defence Committee asked the National Audit Office (NAO) to undertake research to identify the views of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) about the Comprehensive Approach. This Paper provides the results of research undertaken by the NAO in June 2009 which included receiving papers from three NGOs, interviewing seven other NGOs and one body responsible for representing NGOs operating in Afghanistan,²³ and summarising the main points made during the interviews.

3. The NAO agreed, with the Defence Committee, the terms of reference for this research, including the range and type of NGOs that were invited to take part and the broad themes that each of the NGOs were asked to address. Appendix A to this Paper sets out the NAO’s methodology (page 20).

4. Each of the NGOs involved in this research is, or has been, operating in one or more countries in conflict. Most of the NGO staff who took part in this research were based in the UK but a number were based in countries currently in conflict. The majority of the UK-based staff had previously operated in countries in conflict.

5. The first part of this Paper provides a summary of the views of the ten NGOs and the NGO representative body (pages 2 to 4). It then discusses in more detail the views of the NGOs and the NGO representative body under ten broad themes (pages 4 to 18). This discussion is supported by Appendices B-K, which provide summaries of the key points arising from each of the interviews the NAO conducted and papers prepared by NGOs (pages 22 onwards). Due to security concerns, one of the NGOs asked not to be identified in this Paper and thus throughout it is referred to as “NGO 10”.

6. The information presented in this Paper is drawn exclusively from the papers submitted by the NGOs, the interviews the NAO held with NGOs and the NGO representative body, and publicly available documents referred to by NGOs during interviews. Neither the research, nor this Paper, has been discussed with the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Department for International Development (DFID) or any other government department. The views contained in this Paper, therefore, are solely those of the NGOs (or their representatives) that contributed to this research.

VIEWS OF NGOs—SUMMARY

7. NGOs were generally aware of the Comprehensive Approach as a concept and understood the logic behind the UK Government seeking to bring to bear, in a co-ordinated or integrated manner, the range of instruments (eg defence, diplomacy and development) at its disposal to achieve an overarching objective. Five NGOs told us they were either not aware of any MoD or UK Government definition or guidance on the Comprehensive Approach or that there appeared to be no shared or common understanding of the term across UK Government (paragraphs 17 to 20).

8. Six NGOs identified a number of potential or actual benefits of the Comprehensive Approach. These include the potential for the Comprehensive Approach to bridge the gap between insecurity and security and thus create a stable environment in which humanitarian and development activities can be conducted. The Comprehensive Approach can also address both the initial stabilisation of a country and the subsequent risk of the country slipping back into conflict (paragraphs 21 to 22).

9. Each of the ten NGOs raised concerns about the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Approach when it is applied to a country in conflict (paragraph 21). NGOs told us that the Comprehensive Approach can:

- distort aid flows, with resources being moved away from meeting the greatest humanitarian and development needs towards stabilisation activities (paragraph 23);
- reduce the effectiveness and overall value for money of aid spending (paragraph 24);

²² www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/defence_committee/def090325_no_26.cfm

²³ In total the NAO held seven meetings. One of the meetings was attended by both an NGO and the body responsible for representing NGO views in Afghanistan.

- blur the lines between military and humanitarian organisations. This blurring can impact on the local population’s perceptions of the neutrality, impartiality and independence of NGOs, and thus NGOs’ ability to operate effectively and safely in countries where there is a conflict. Consequently, NGO access to vulnerable and /or remote populations in conflict situations can be hindered (paragraph 25 to 27);
- increase the militarisation of civilian settings or facilities, such as hospitals, in the host country. For example, the presence of armed private security providers in Afghan hospitals (to protect DFID staff) can turn the facilities, and the Afghan users of those facilities, into targets for belligerents (paragraph 28); and
- result in governments, including their military organisations, undertaking a greater role in the provision of humanitarian assistance. This increased role can be at odds with international guidelines and agreements (for example, authored by the UN) on the provision of humanitarian assistance in general, and the relationship between humanitarian and military actors in particular. Amongst other things, the guidelines and agreements seek to ensure that differences between humanitarian and military actors are recognised and respected and there is space for humanitarian organisations to operate safely and effectively (paragraphs 29 to 30).

10. These five general concerns about the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Approach are linked, in part, to the view expressed by six NGOs that the UK had not achieved the right balance between the different elements of the Comprehensive Approach. Defence was viewed as being dominant at the expense of development and, to a lesser extent, diplomacy (paragraph 33).

11. NGOs demonstrated different levels of willingness to engage with UK Government on the Comprehensive Approach. Two wanted greater involvement in the planning of particular engagements so they could influence the Comprehensive Approach. One of these NGOs said UK Government should make better use of the NGOs’ local knowledge. Seven other NGOs said they would not engage in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach. Their main reasons for not engaging were a lack of shared objectives with UK Government and the need to maintain their independence, impartiality and neutrality. Two of these seven NGOs did, however, say that they might engage in some co-ordination with UK Government, and three others said they might engage in dialogue with UK Government. One NGO explained that it might work with government to de-conflict their respective activities but would not be part of a fully co-ordinated and regulated approach where parties were working to a single plan. Another NGO said dialogue with government “may be needed at the operational level, strictly provided that it poses no security issue, particularly for beneficiaries and local partners, and that it is necessary to save lives, protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition and minimise inconsistency” (paragraphs 35 to 40).

12. Seven NGOs were clear that they did not wish to engage in the delivery of the Comprehensive Approach, and the three other NGOs did not say whether or not they would engage in delivery (paragraph 41).

13. Five NGOs commented on gaining local ownership of the Comprehensive Approach. In general, these NGOs considered that local ownership was difficult, if not impossible, to achieve as typically the Comprehensive Approach is applied to local people in the host country, and they have limited or no opportunity to influence it. NGOs believed, however, that local people might accept a Comprehensive Approach, but this would require:

- the Comprehensive Approach to address issues which are important to local people. Research undertaken by one NGO shows that in Afghanistan the local people’s priorities are improved governance and establishing the rule of law (paragraphs 44–45); and
- UK Government and the wider international community to engage effectively with local people and their representatives (paragraphs 44 to 45).

14. NGOs identified a number of lessons to be learned from the application of the Comprehensive Approach to date. These included lessons for improving the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan, for example, by putting Afghan people at the centre of the Comprehensive Approach and by the international community gaining a better understanding of the Afghan people so that it is better placed to design development and other programmes. There were also more generic lessons, such as political pressure for rapid results being unhelpful and unachievable. One NGO identified the need for caution in seeking to apply lessons from Afghanistan and Iraq to other countries in conflict as there are substantial differences between conflicts, for example, in their causes and nature. The NGO told us that “as UK Government recognises, the Comprehensive Approach can not be a prescribed set of procedures, but must be applied flexibly to reflect the specific circumstances of the conflict. Across most of Whitehall this appears to be accepted conceptually, but there is little evidence of it being operationalised effectively.” Two other NGOs argued that the UK Government and other governments have not evaluated the impact of the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan and Iraq in general, or the role of the military in particular (paragraphs 46 to 52).

15. One of the NGOs²⁴ captured comments made to us by many of the NGOs when it concluded that “if the Comprehensive Approach is going to be an effective way of addressing the problems of a country in conflict it needs to:

²⁴ British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid (supporting material included under Theme 3 of the meeting).

- be civilian lead;
- be operated in way which respects the boundaries and mandates of different organisations;
- reflect the context of the country where it is being applied, and be based on a good understanding of the local people;
- support the development objectives of the host country and the priorities of the local people; and
- take account of the range of international governments and international bodies involved in the host country.”

VIEWS OF NGOs—BY THEME

16. The following paragraphs discuss in more detail the points made by the NGOs under the different themes we asked them to address.

Theme 1: From a UK perspective, what does your organisation understand by the term “Comprehensive Approach?” (Theme addressed by nine NGOs)

17. The large majority of NGOs were aware of the Comprehensive Approach as a concept before we contacted them. Two or more NGOs referred to the following key dimensions of the Comprehensive Approach:

- an integrated, co-ordinated or coherent approach and policy across government and possibly the private sector and NGOs;²⁵
- application of defence (or military), development and diplomatic instruments;²⁶ and
- focus on a single policy objective or agreed objective(s).²⁷

18. The dimensions of the Comprehensive Approach identified by NGOs were in general reflected in MoD’s extant 2006 joint discussion note on the Comprehensive Approach.²⁸

Theme 2: Has the MoD and/or the UK Government effectively communicated what it understands by the Comprehensive Approach and the merits of such an approach? (Theme addressed by nine NGOs)

19. NGOs have differing views on the adequacy of communication. World Vision was encouraged that MoD’s joint discussion note on the Comprehensive Approach separated “diplomatic, military and economic instruments of power” from an “independent package of developmental and humanitarian activity”. World Vision told us “that this separation, however, has not been maintained on the ground in Afghanistan.”²⁹ Three of the other NGOs that addressed this theme said that prior to this research they were not aware of any MoD or UK Government definition or guidance on the Comprehensive Approach.³⁰ Another NGO—British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid—told us “UK Government has not effectively communicated its understanding of the Comprehensive Approach. In part the absence of communication may reflect the lack of a shared or common understanding across UK Government on the Comprehensive Approach.” A similar point was made by CARE International UK who told us “Different military and government officials maintain quite varied understanding of the term’s definition.”

20. In preparing its paper for this research, War Child identified and reviewed guidance prepared by MoD and the Stabilisation Unit³¹ on the Comprehensive Approach. War Child concluded that “Both documents were very limited in terms of communicating the merits of a Comprehensive Approach”. Particular weaknesses identified by War Child included: no example of how the Comprehensive Approach has or might be applied; no consideration of cross-government capability; limited assessment of the challenges to the practical implementation of the Comprehensive Approach; and no consideration of how adopting the Comprehensive Approach will require the buy-in and commitment, as well as capability development, among other nations, not least NATO and EU member states.

²⁵ NGOs referring to this dimension were War Child, MSF, British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid, CARE International UK.

²⁶ NGOs referring to this dimension were Tearfund, World Vision, Islamic Relief.

²⁷ NGOs referring to this dimension were MSF, ActionAid.

²⁸ Joint Discussion Note 4/05 “The Comprehensive Approach”, January 2006.

²⁹ Supporting material included under Theme 1 of the meeting with World Vision.

³⁰ Tearfund, Mercy Corps, War Child.

³¹ The FCO website states that “The Foreign Office, Ministry of Defence and Department for International Development jointly own the Stabilisation Unit. The Unit’s role is to support countries emerging from violent conflict through its specialist, targeted and rapid assistance. By creating a ‘stable’ environment, longer term development can begin.” The Units key tasks are: Assessment and planning, deployment into conflict areas and learning lessons. www.fco.gov.uk/en/fco-in-action/conflict/peacekeeping/

Theme 3: *Does your organisation see the Comprehensive Approach as an effective way of addressing international crisis? (Theme addressed by 10 NGOs)*

21. Whilst six NGOs recognised actual or potential benefits to the UK Government of adopting a Comprehensive Approach all ten NGOs raised significant concerns about its application to countries in conflict.³² NGOs were particularly concerned about how the Comprehensive Approach impacted on:

- the effectiveness of humanitarian and development aid in general;
- the NGOs' ability to undertake their role safely and effectively; and
- governments' involvement in providing humanitarian aid.

BENEFITS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

22. The benefits of the Comprehensive Approach identified by NGOs included:

- co-ordinated activity across defence (military), development and diplomatic arms of government (ActionAid);
- “coherence of government policy is an obvious and important objective” (CARE International UK);
- “creates conditions for a more inclusive consultation of key stakeholders in a way that could make an intervention more responsive to the needs of the civilians on the ground” (War Child);
- “the Comprehensive Approach is a valid experiment to address the political process and bridge the gap between insecurity and security in order to create a stable environment in which to conduct humanitarian aid and development activities” (Tearfund); and
- has the potential to address both the initial stabilisation of a country and the subsequent risk of the country slipping back into conflict (World Vision, War Child).

IMPACT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT AID IN GENERAL

23. The Comprehensive Approach can distort aid flows away from meeting the greatest humanitarian and development needs. Tearfund told us that “the close coordination of development objectives and strategies with military and diplomatic ones should not be limited to those areas or populations which are foreign policy priorities for the MoD or FCO”. Four NGOs told us, however, that in practice an increasing amount of UK aid in Afghanistan is being used in Helmand to assist with stabilisation rather than being distributed according to need.³³

24. The Comprehensive Approach may reduce the effectiveness and overall value for money of aid spending. In commenting on Afghanistan, NGO 10 argued that “Hearts and Minds projects do not work and do not deter insurgency attacks”. It told us that:

“Individual quick impact development projects often do not address key development challenges. Moreover, with full consideration given to the particular history and context of Afghanistan (especially the south and south-east), namely, the history of foreign military interference, persistent poverty and unemployment, corrupt and unjust government, excessive use of force by international military forces, widespread illiteracy, Islamist propaganda, and the systematic use of terror and intimidation by militants, it is clear that limited assistance projects will have little impact on support for, or engagement in, insurgent activity.”

Mercy Corps told us that “It does not consider that Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are the right approach for delivering humanitarian and development assistance and views them as inappropriate and ineffective.”³⁴ Mercy Corps concerns included:

- “communities want long-term development assistance based on transparency, accountability and local ownership. Such approaches are not compatible with the short-term imperatives which drive the military's stabilisation strategy. The military's use of often costly, ineffective and unaccountable implementing partners is also highly problematic”;
- “PRTs do not distribute humanitarian assistance within Afghanistan according to need”;

³² The six NGOs recognising actual or potential benefits were World Vision, War Child, Tearfund, ActionAid, CARE International UK and British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid.

³³ ActionAid, World Vision, NGO 10, British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid (supporting material included under Theme 10 of the meeting with British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid).

³⁴ The FCO website says the “Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are at the heart of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission and embody a joint military and civilian approach to stabilising Afghanistan. They are a combination of international military and civilian personnel based in provincial areas of the country extending the authority of the Afghan Government, supporting reform of the security sector, and facilitating development and reconstruction. Each is tailored to the prevailing security situation, socio-economic conditions, terrain, and reach of the central government.” www.fco.gov.uk/en/fco-in-action/uk-in-afghanistan/security/prt/

- “PRTs are not a cost effective mechanism for delivering humanitarian or development aid. For example, PRT staff undertaking humanitarian or development activities are often escorted by armed personnel which increases cost and can reduce the willingness of Afghans to take-up the assistance provided”.

IMPACT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH ON NGOs’ ABILITY TO UNDERTAKE THEIR ROLE SAFELY AND EFFECTIVELY.

25. The Comprehensive Approach can blur the lines between military and humanitarian organisations, impacting on local people’s perceptions of the neutrality, impartiality and independence of NGOs and thus their ability to operate effectively and safely. Consequently, the Comprehensive Approach can hinder NGO access to vulnerable and /or remote populations in conflict situations. Between them, eight NGOs provided a range of examples of how the Comprehensive Approach could put their independence and impartiality at risk, including:³⁵

- if an NGO is seen to be engaging with overseas governments involved in a country where there is conflict;
- by the engagement of other NGOs with an overseas government as local people may see NGOs as a homogenous group; and
- by direct overseas government provision of aid, for example through the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan, as local people may not distinguish between the Teams and humanitarian agencies.

Thus the direct or indirect involvement of UK Government and other governments in providing aid could reduce the scope, in both the short run and long run, for independent NGOs to operate in a country without putting their staff at unacceptable levels of risk. MSF told us that:

“in Iraq humanitarian NGOs were seen by many as part of the wider western military effort and were presented by the US military as such. This false representation of humanitarian action as part of the military effort increased the security risks faced by NGO staff operating in the field and, as a result, MSF and many other humanitarian NGOs withdrew from Iraq. If MSF, and similar organisations, are squeezed out by the Comprehensive Approach, the population is deprived of life-saving assistance in its hour of greatest need. As an alternative the military will undertake relief activities, not only for altruistic purposes but also for the benefits of hearts and minds, but only in the areas under their direct control, which may result in large numbers of the civilian population receiving no support. And a withdrawal of NGOs will only increase the length of time that the military needs to undertake this direct provision of relief.”

Tearfund supported MSF’s position. It told us that “it is imperative that the proponents of the Comprehensive Approach do not see NGOs as ‘force multipliers’ of HMG’s strategy in conflict areas.”

26. NGOs referred to specific instances where their field staff had been threatened, attacked, kidnapped or killed. CARE International UK explained that “Our commitment to humanitarian principles is not inspired by abstract theory, but rather our need to ensure the safety and security of field staff, partners and beneficiaries.”

27. CARE International UK also told us that NGOs’ operations and safety are also threatened by the priority given to military interests on the ground. It said:

“NGOs maintain serious concerns about potential impacts of Comprehensive Approach implementation for their operations, and the safety of their staff and beneficiaries. At field level, experience of military operations in Afghanistan suggests that international forces will continue to assert a military pre-eminence in hostile environments in which they are conducting combat operations. This partly reflects both the level of authority delegated to the force commander in-theatre, and the imbalanced spread of resources between military and civilian actors involved. Such an approach threatens the space for NGOs or other agencies to deliver independent, neutral and impartial humanitarian assistance.”

28. MSF told us “that the Comprehensive Approach can increase the militarisation of civilian settings or facilities, such as hospitals, in the host country. Many armed private security providers are being used to protect DFID staff working in Afghanistan. The presence of armed security providers in civilian facilities can turn the facilities, and the Afghan users of those facilities, into targets for belligerents. In Afghanistan, the UK Government has described armed private security providers as armed civilians, which risks militarising the “civilian status”. Under the Geneva Convention civilians are individuals who take no part in hostilities.”

³⁵ War Child, Mercy Corps, MSF, Tearfund, NGO 10, CARE International UK, British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid, Islamic Relief.

 IMPACT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH ON GOVERNMENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN AID

29. Three NGOs raised general points of principle regarding governments providing humanitarian aid. Mercy Corps said that "Humanitarian action is not an instrument of conflict resolution or crisis management or a tool for fighting terrorism as established clearly in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid".¹⁵³⁶ War Child said that:

"International Humanitarian Law dictates that humanitarian assistance, which is currently seen as an element of the Comprehensive Approach, should be given regardless of the political affiliation of a person, their ethnicity, religion and so on . . . If humanitarian action is sourced in a "whole government" owned strategy and subsequently delivered through a Comprehensive Approach then it is not impartial. Consequently, the humanitarian delivery agents will not be perceived to be neutral within a conflict or post-conflict situation."

War Child also told us that "Humanitarian assistance delivered through a Comprehensive Approach diverts funds away from the established humanitarian aid architecture." World Vision told us that "The UK's application of the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan has not followed the concepts set down in MoD guidance. The split between "diplomatic, military and economic instruments of power" and an "independent package of developmental and humanitarian activity" has not been maintained. Aid has been used to achieve stabilisation objectives."

30. NGO 10 and British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid raised specific concerns about the military not respecting the independence and mandate of humanitarian organisations in Afghanistan. They both referred to the 2008 "Guidelines for the Interaction and Coordination of Humanitarian Actors and Military Actors in Afghanistan". NGO 10 said:³⁷

"These Guidelines, which amongst others have been signed by the United Nations Assistance Mission and the International Security Assistance Force, state that the use of 'military assets' for 'humanitarian relief operations' should only be used if a number of conditions are met including:

- "there is no comparable civilian alternative";
- "to the extent possible there is civilian control over the operation"; and
- "military assets (used for humanitarian relief operations) are clearly distinguished from those used for military purposes".

In a number of areas, the military have undertaken development or humanitarian operations where there are civilian alternatives."

Theme 4: Has the MoD and/or UK Government worked effectively with the international community to adopt a Comprehensive Approach? (Theme addressed by eight NGOs)

31. The NGOs that addressed this question, raised a range of points:

- There were different views on whether the international community had worked well to adopt a Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan. ActionAid told us that "In Afghanistan, the UK Government has worked effectively with other donor countries, the UN and NATO in adopting a Comprehensive Approach". British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid said that the UK had "sought to bring the US round to the UK's way of thinking on the Comprehensive Approach, which has been helpful". However, it also said that "currently different actors and countries are coming to Afghanistan with their different approaches. Ideally, all actors should come together to achieve the objectives of the host government and people under the oversight of a single body, such as the UN";
- NGO 10 and British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid told us that there was inadequate liaison between international governments which increases the burden on the Afghan government of interacting with donors;
- On a related point, Islamic Relief commented on the capacity of the Afghan government to manage the aid it was receiving. It said "in line with the Afghan government's wishes, the UK Government and other donors have increasingly moved funding away from projects to the multi-donor funded National Solidarity Programme. This change has the potential to increase the credibility of the Afghan Government. However, insufficient resources have been available to administer these large flows of aid and ensure they are well spent and effective, and that local delivery mechanisms do not become corrupt";³⁸
- CARE International UK and NGO 10 commented that the UK Government should do more to improve the capability of the UN. CARE International UK told us "UK approaches to the Comprehensive Approach are highly influenced by wider international efforts. For this reason,

³⁶ "The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid" was issued as a Joint Statement by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission on 30 January 2008. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:025:SOM:en:HTML>

³⁷ Supporting material included under Theme 6 of the meeting with NGO 10.

³⁸ The National Solidarity Programme is funded by a number of donors and is managed by the Afghan Government.

DFID should invest in strengthening UN humanitarian leadership and coordination structures, in particular, UN OCHA [Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs]. At present, UN OCHA is frequently constrained by inadequate human resources and political backing to effectively engage in coordination with political and military actors on an equal and independent footing”.

Theme 5: Has the MoD and/or the UK Government built the UK's capacity to engage in a Comprehensive Approach to a crisis? What more could be done? (Theme addressed by seven NGOs)

32. Two of the NGOs addressing this question referred to the establishment of the Stabilisation Unit (formerly the Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit). World Vision said that “to date (the Stabilisation Unit) has primarily focused on Iraq and Afghanistan, thus reducing the UK’s ability to contribute to other stabilisation activities where it has potential important influence.” World Vision also noted positively that the UK Government was raising the civilian capacity of the Stabilisation Unit by increasing the number of civilian experts it could call upon. Tearfund commented, however, “that the aims of these posts seem very foreign policy and military-led as opposed to being led by the development needs of the population affected.”

33. Six of the NGOs which addressed this theme were concerned that the UK had not achieved the right balance between defence, diplomacy and development in applying the Comprehensive Approach.³⁹ The NGOs told us that:

- the application of the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan had “placed too much emphasis on defence, with diplomacy and development being subordinated” (ActionAid);
- “UK Government effort [in Afghanistan] needs to be co-ordinated in a way which does not subordinate the role of development” (NGO 10);⁴⁰
- the majority of funding DFID directly manages⁴¹ in Afghanistan “is now used by DFID for projects in Helmand which are supporting the military intervention. By focusing the aid it directly manages on a single province, DFID is going against its general principle that aid should be distributed according to need, with the aim of reducing poverty.”⁴² The increasing focus on Helmand has also “reduced the amount of UK funding available for NGOs working elsewhere in Afghanistan” and led to the cancellation of some successful projects (British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid);
- “the UK Government should ensure that development of the Comprehensive Approach respects the distinct mandate and priorities of the Department for International Development (DFID); in particular in relation to humanitarian action” (CARE International UK).

34. At a policy level, NGOs saw the UK Government as wishing to have a dialogue with NGOs on aid issues in general, and the Comprehensive Approach in particular. This was welcomed by NGOs, but four mentioned that NGOs’ ability to engage was limited by their resources.⁴³ NGOs and NGO umbrella groups find it difficult to raise funds to engage in policy work. The four NGOs told us that if UK Government wants an intelligent debate with NGOs on the Comprehensive Approach it may need to support them to do so. One of these four, CARE International UK, recommended:

“The UK Government should invest in NGO capacities and mechanisms to enable effective and appropriate NGO engagement in policy dialogue on issues related to the Comprehensive Approach; trainings and exercises with the military to sensitise them to humanitarian principles; and programmatic learning on effective NGO approaches to civil-military interaction at field level.”

Theme 6: What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might the MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges? (Theme addressed by 10 NGOs)

35. NGOs demonstrated different levels of willingness to engage with UK Government in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach.

36. Two NGOs identified potential benefits from greater involvement of NGOs in the planning of particular engagements so they could influence the Comprehensive Approach. ActionAid told us that there should be regular meetings with UK Government in Afghanistan so that NGOs could “engage in planning

³⁹ CARE International UK, British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid (supporting material included under overview and context section and Theme 10 of the meeting with British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid), NGO 10 (supporting material included under Theme 10 of the meeting with NGO 10), War Child, World Vision, ActionAid (supporting material included under Theme 3 of the meeting with ActionAid).

⁴⁰ Supporting material included under Theme 10 of the meeting with NGO 10.

⁴¹ British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid told us that in Afghanistan, DFID’s aid is used in two ways. A high proportion of DFID’s aid—around 80 %—goes through multi-donor trust funds. The remaining 20 % is directly managed by DFID. Multi-donor trust funds are supported by a number of donors and are managed by the Afghan Government.

⁴² The increasing focus on Helmand was also identified by other NGOs see paragraph 23.

⁴³ British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid, Islamic Relief, CARE International UK, World Vision (supporting material included under Theme 6 of the meeting with World Vision).

and in-country decision making, and provide feedback including constructive criticism.” ActionAid argued that “NGOs have a much better understanding of the Afghan people, and UK Government should make better use of NGOs’ local knowledge.” Tearfund told us, that to maintain NGO independence, “the most appropriate route for NGOs to engage with the planning of the Comprehensive Approach would be through DFID. [But] There has to date been little outreach from DFID to NGOs regarding this.”

37. Seven NGOs told us they would not engage in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach.⁴⁴ The main reasons for not engaging were a lack of shared objectives with UK Government and the need to maintain their independence, impartiality and neutrality. Commenting on the lack of shared objectives, MSF explained that “The UK Government wishes to resolve conflict in a way which best suits the interests of the UK. MSF does not share that objective and maintains its complete independence from it, wishing only to provide impartial humanitarian assistance to civilians caught up in a conflict situation regardless of which side of a frontline they may reside.”

38. Two of the NGOs (World Vision and British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid), who said that they would not engage in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach, said that they might engage in co-ordination. World Vision identified two broad ways of operating the Comprehensive Approach:

- a fully co-ordinated and regulated activity with all parties working to a single plan; and
- more limited co-ordination to ensure that the activities of different agencies do not conflict.

World Vision told us “MoD and other military organisations may prefer the former, but World Vision would not be part of a fully co-ordinated approach. World Vision can however work with military organisations to de-conflict separate activities so that they do not work against each other or duplicate each other.” World Vision had developed a tool “to assist its staff to think through difficult operational and policy decisions they may face when interacting with military actors. The tool identifies that there is a spectrum of possible interactions between humanitarian and military operations, ranging from a humanitarian NGO curtailing its presence, through co-existence, co-ordination to co-operation.” World Vision sees an opportunity for the NGO community to work together to strengthen and develop standard rules for engaging with the military. It told us, however, that such development work was likely to require funding from government or international sources and additional support to the often marginalised Civil-Military Coordination Section within the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.⁴⁵

39. Another three of the NGOs, that said that they would not engage in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach, told us that they had or might have dialogue with governments with regard to a particular situation.⁴⁶ One of these, Mercy Corps, said that:

“Humanitarian workers and programmes may be placed at risk if local populations, or warring parties, perceive ties between military and humanitarian workers, Mercy Corps believes that coordination between humanitarian actors and military/combatant should be avoided. Yet, dialogue may be needed at the operational level, strictly provided that it poses no security issue, particularly for beneficiaries and local partners, and that it is necessary to save lives, protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition and minimise inconsistency.”

CARE International UK summarised its position on relations between UK Government and NGOs and concluded that:

“The UK Government should respect the non-governmental and independent character of civil society and specifically NGOs involved in humanitarian assistance in conflict-affected contexts. For this reason, it should not seek to incorporate NGOs into a Comprehensive Approach framework, but rather identify means to enable appropriate and effective dialogue with NGOs on related policy and operational issues.”

40. World Vision and Islamic Relief identified that the long-term nature of the development agenda can be at odds with the shorter term focus of some in government. World Vision stated the “horizons of different government and non-government agencies can make it difficult to establish a common long term plan which both addresses stabilisation and tackles the longer term risk that a country slips back into conflict. For example, diplomats focus on short term opportunities, the military often have a two to three year horizon, whilst government aid agencies and development NGOs are often focused on a 10 year development agenda.” Islamic Relief gave a specific example. It said “encouraging Afghans to grow alternative crops to poppies requires a long term commitment of ten years or more. But aid agencies may only provide funding for short projects and there are risks that projects do not get renewed, for example, because there is a change in political leadership of the agency, or the agency decides to channel its money through a multi-donor pool (eg the National Solidarity Programme in Afghanistan) rather than use it to fund its own projects.”

⁴⁴ MSF, World Vision, British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid, Mercy Corps, NGO 10, Islamic Relief, CARE International UK.

⁴⁵ This paragraph draws on material included in the following three parts of the meeting with World Vision: Theme 2, Theme 6 and the overview and context section.

⁴⁶ Mercy Corps, Islamic Relief, CARE International UK.

Theme 7: *What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the delivery of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges? (Theme addressed by 10 NGOs)*

41. Seven NGOs were clear that they did not wish to engage in the delivery of the Comprehensive Approach.⁴⁷ The other three NGOs did not say whether or not they would engage in delivery.

42. The reasons given by the seven NGOs (who were clear they would not engage in delivery of the Comprehensive Approach) generally repeated points made previously, such as the lack of shared objectives with the UK Government and the risks to NGO independence, impartiality and neutrality (see paragraph 37). The NGOs did, however, make some additional points regarding the challenges they might face working in environments which had adopted a Comprehensive Approach:

- There can be tension between governments wishing to demonstrate the positive results of development or humanitarian activities they have supported and the need for NGOs to maintain their independence. Tearfund and Islamic Relief raised this point, with Tearfund telling us that:

“Whether or not HMG (Her Majesty’s Government) considers increased political stabilisation to be a *de facto* result of humanitarian NGO work (for example through improved health, food security, or income in a given area), that work should never be made a component of an explicit “hearts and minds” campaign, in which infrastructure or other benefits are explicitly claimed as an achievement by one of the parties to the conflict. HMG can assist NGOs by recognizing this differentiation and adopting a low profile approach to monitoring and publicizing NGO projects in conflict areas.”

- NGOs are not always able to operate in areas the military think they should do. British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid, which does not engage in the delivery of the Comprehensive Approach, explained that “if a location is being ‘held’ by the military it does not mean that it is safe for unarmed NGO staff to start to deliver programmes in what may well be an unfamiliar setting.”

Theme 8: *What are the challenges faced in moving between different stages of a Comprehensive Approach, for example from stabilisation to reconstruction? (Theme addressed by six NGOs)*

43. Theme 8 proved difficult for NGOs to respond to. Four did not address the theme at all.⁴⁸ Two said it was difficult to comment on the challenges faced in moving between different stages of the Comprehensive Approach either because they did not engage in the Comprehensive Approach (MSF) or because those outside UK government have not been made fully aware of the different stages (Tearfund). Three NGOs told us that a conflict may not pass through distinct stages or there may be overlap between those stages.⁴⁹

Theme 9: *How can local ownership for a Comprehensive Approach be established? (Theme addressed by five NGOs)*

44. The consensus of the five NGOs that answered this question was that local ownership was difficult to achieve.⁵⁰ The Comprehensive Approach was typically applied to local people in the host country, and they had limited or no opportunity to influence it. ActionAid told us that in Afghanistan “Neither the Afghan people, nor their elected representatives (the members of the Afghan parliament), have been directly consulted about the Comprehensive Approach.” World Vision said that “Local ownership is very difficult, if not impossible, where the Comprehensive Approach is conceived of, developed and introduced from the outside by the international community rather than by representatives within the host country.”

45. Three NGOs referred to local acceptance rather than local ownership of the Comprehensive Approach.⁵¹ Local acceptance is possible but it would require:

- the Comprehensive Approach to address issues which are important to local people. British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid told us that its “sponsored research identified that, whilst development is important, the priorities of the Afghan people are improved governance and establishing the rule of law.” The NGO told us that neither of these priorities were being delivered currently; and
- UK Government and the international community to engage more effectively with local people and their representatives. Three NGOs identified that better engagement would help.⁵² World Vision told us, however, that “dialogue and planning can in fact put local people at risk of attack by those resisting the presence of the international community.” NGO 10 told us that “excessive

⁴⁷ MSF, Mercy Corps, World Vision, NGO 10, British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid, Islamic Relief, CARE International UK.

⁴⁸ ActionAid, CARE International UK, NGO 10, Islamic Relief.

⁴⁹ Mercy Corps, World Vision, British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid.

⁵⁰ ActionAid, British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid, World Vision, Tearfund, War Child.

⁵¹ World Vision, British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid, ActionAid.

⁵² War Child, ActionAid, British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid.

use of force by foreign military forces in air-strikes and house-raids, especially by the US in the early days, continues to undermine the Afghan people's support for the international presence in their country".⁵³

Theme 10: *What lessons have been learnt from the application of the Comprehensive Approach in Iraq, Afghanistan or other countries? (Theme addressed by ten NGOs)*

46. This question elicited a range of responses from NGOs, with some emphasising points they had made to previous questions, such as the risk that the Comprehensive Approach can make it more difficult for humanitarian NGOs to operate effectively and safely. The additional points raised by NGOs fell into two main categories.

LESSONS FOR DEVELOPING THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH IN AFGHANISTAN

47. ActionAid told us that "The Afghan people need to be put at the centre of the Comprehensive Approach. The current focus on security and wider geo-political objectives will not benefit the Afghan people in the long run." This view was consistent with the position of NGO 10 which identified the following five actions that were required to improve development and stability in Afghanistan:

- "The International community must make a sincere commitment to state building";
- "Additional support is needed for agriculture" as around 80% of Afghans depend on agriculture, and connected occupations and trades;
- "The international community needs to build the capability and professionalism of the Afghan security forces";
- "Overseas military forces need to change their emphasis. Rather than tracking down insurgents, the overriding objective of military forces should be protecting local Afghans so that they can get on with their lives"; and
- "The international community must get a much better understanding of the Afghan people so that it is better placed to design development and other programmes".

48. Three NGOs told us that experience to date has demonstrated that short term "hearts and minds" approaches do not work but one NGO said that in some regions of Afghanistan there was some evidence that the work of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) was welcomed by local people. CARE International UK said that "lessons identified", if not 'lessons learned', emerging from Iraq and Afghanistan have underlined the ineffective nature of short-termist and military-dominated approaches to stabilisation and reconstruction efforts in such contexts." British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid said that research it had sponsored in Afghanistan "shows that the "hearts and minds" philosophy and projects do not work as they do not address the priorities of local people." NGO 10 commented on the performance of PRTs in Afghanistan which it sees as operating along the lines of the Comprehensive Approach. It told us that it was "not aware of any PRT that has brought greater stability to its province".⁵⁴ World Vision, however, told us that "amongst the Afghan people there are different views of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams. There is, for example, anecdotal evidence that the local people's perspectives of the PRTs operating in Western Afghanistan are relatively favourable and local people have been reported as being frustrated with PRTs for not undertaking enough development work."

49. In summarising its position British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid told us that "Afghanistan is a very difficult operating environment and all organisations, whether government or NGOs, will make mistakes. There is a need for different actors engaged in Afghanistan to understand each other better and support each other more".⁵⁵

LESSONS FOR DEVELOPING THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH MORE GENERALLY

50. NGO 10 raised a question "over whether the Comprehensive Approach is wrong in principle, or whether the wrong polices have been used to implement the Comprehensive Approach in practice". It went on to identify that:

- "there can be tension between who should take credit for improvements made, for example, in security and development in the host country when a Comprehensive Approach is adopted. For example, if the international community in Afghanistan takes credit for development work this can help bolster its support amongst Afghans and the populations of donor and troop contributing countries. However, this would do little to provide the Afghan government with greater legitimacy, which is a necessary condition for conferring legitimacy on the international forces in the eyes of many Afghans";
- "the Cabinet Office may not have the capacity or expertise to undertake their role of co-ordinating UK Government activity as effectively as is required"; and

⁵³ Supporting material included under Theme 3 of the meeting with NGO 10.

⁵⁴ This quote is taken from the overview and context section of the meeting with NGO 10.

⁵⁵ This material is taken from the overview and context section of the meeting with British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid.

— “there can be political pressure for rapid results which can be unhelpful and unachievable”.

51. World Vision identified the need for caution “in seeking to apply lessons from Afghanistan and Iraq to other countries in conflict. There are substantial differences between conflicts, for example, in their causes and nature. As UK Government recognises, the Comprehensive Approach can not be a prescribed set of procedures, but must be applied flexibly to reflect the specific circumstances of the conflict. Across most of Whitehall this appears to be accepted conceptually, but there is little evidence of this being operationalised effectively.”

52. Two NGOs argued that there have been weaknesses in evaluation. Islamic Relief said “the UK Government and other governments are now focusing on what should be done to rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan. They are not looking to evaluate how their interventions have impacted on:

- the humanitarian and development agendas. Would the sums spent by the West on military action have delivered better outcomes if the money had instead been used for humanitarian and development programmes in Afghanistan and Iraq; and
- the safety of the people in the West.”

War Child argued more generally that “whenever military actors are involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, very little effort is made to learn and evaluate effectiveness”. This NGO also told us that “neither the MoD nor any other element of the UK Government in Afghanistan has sought to monitor the excess mortality of Afghan civilians . . . , nor has this been championed as a necessity to ensure informed policy and decision making within the delivery of a Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan”. It recommended that “a genuinely independent monitoring and evaluation capability must be established to evaluate and bear witness to the effects of military actions on civilians and the delivery of humanitarian assistance (directly or indirectly) within a Comprehensive Approach.”

APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGY

Selection of NGOs to include in this research

1. We agreed with the staff of the Defence Committee that we would aim to get views from a cross section of NGOs, including large and small NGOs, humanitarian and development NGOs, UK and international NGOs, faith based NGOs and NGOs representing different population groups, such as children. The ten organisations that contributed to this research (see list on previous page) provide a good cross section of NGOs. In addition to the ten NGOs we also spoke to the British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group, which is an umbrella group covering 26 NGOs.

Themes covered with NGOs

2. After consulting the staff of the Defence Committee, the NAO established ten broad themes to explore with NGOs (see next page). In addition to the themes, NGOs were given the opportunity to raise any other matters they wished regarding the Comprehensive Approach.

Meetings with NGOs and papers provided by NGOs

3. NGOs were given the option of providing their views by submitting a paper or meeting NAO staff. Three NGOs provided papers. Seven NGOs held meetings with the NAO. NAO staff prepared summaries of those seven meetings. The summaries were then provided to the NGOs for agreement. The meeting with one NGO was also attended by the British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and both organisations have been asked to agree the summary.

4. Two of the papers and all of the summaries of meetings have been organised around the 10 broad themes identified by the NAO. The paper submitted by one NGO was provided in a different structure but it addressed the majority of the themes raised by the NAO.

Presentation of NGO views

5. The NAO’s analysis of NGO views (pages 2 to 18) was based solely on the papers submitted by NGOs, the interviews NAO held with NGOs and the NGO representative body, and publicly available documents referred to by NGOs during interviews.

Timing

6. NGOs provided papers, or met the NAO, in June 2009. At the end of June 2009 the NAO prepared a draft of this Paper which was shared with the Committee (with all references to NGOs anonymised). The draft Paper was also shared with NGOs and changes were made to reflect the comments they made.

The ten themes NGOs were asked to address

- (i) From a UK-perspective, what does your organisation understand by the term the “Comprehensive Approach”?
- (ii) Has the MoD and/or the UK Government effectively communicated what it understands by the Comprehensive Approach and the merits of such an approach?
- (iii) Does your organisation see the Comprehensive Approach as an effective way of addressing international crises?
- (iv) Has the MoD and/or the UK Government worked effectively with the international community to adopt a Comprehensive Approach?
- (v) Has the MoD and/or the UK Government built the UK’s capacity to engage in a Comprehensive Approach to a crisis? What more could be done?
- (vi) What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might the MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?
- (vii) What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the delivery of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?
- (viii) What are the challenges faced in moving between different stages of a Comprehensive Approach, for example from stabilisation to reconstruction?
- (ix) How can local ownership for a Comprehensive Approach be established?
- (x) What lessons have been learnt from the application of the Comprehensive Approach in Iraq, Afghanistan or other countries?

APPENDIX B

ACTION AID

NAO summary of meeting with a representative of ActionAid 10 June 2009

Present from ActionAid:

Mudasser Hussain Siddiqui—Manager—Policy Advocacy and Research, based in Kabul

OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

ActionAid considers that, in principle, the Comprehensive Approach could be an effective way of tackling crises, but it has not been applied successfully in Afghanistan. The Comprehensive Approach followed by the UK Government and the international community in Afghanistan has focused on security and wider geo-political objectives, rather than meeting the needs of the Afghan people. The UK Government has not treated NGOs as an equal partner. NGOs have not been involved in planning the Comprehensive Approach and, as a consequence, UK Government has not benefited from NGO’s knowledge and understanding of the Afghan people.

ActionAid has been operating in Afghanistan since 2002. It initially operated in the north and now also has a presence in Kandahar, Bamiyan and Kabul. ActionAid is currently undertaking a wide range of projects in Afghanistan which, for example, address Women Rights, Disaster Management, Food Security and HIV/Aids. ActionAid also does research and advocacy work. ActionAid’s work is funded in a number of ways. For example, it currently receives funding from several Ministries of the Afghan Government who themselves are supported by the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund.⁵⁶ In the past, ActionAid has run projects in Afghanistan which have been funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. ActionAid also has individual supporters in UK who make a small monthly contribution towards its work.

Theme 1. From a UK perspective, what does your organisation understand by the term “Comprehensive Approach”?

ActionAid understands that the Comprehensive Approach involves the international community in general, and donor countries in particular, intervening in a host country using defence, diplomacy and development (the 3Ds) to achieve a commonly agreed objective. ActionAid also understands that UK Government and other governments want to include NGOs within the Comprehensive Approach. To date, however, NGOs have been treated by the UK Government as “contractors” rather than organisations to be involved in decision making.

⁵⁶ Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund is funded by international donors such as the UK Government and is administered by the World Bank.

Theme 2. *Has the MoD and/or the UK Government effectively communicated what it understands by the Comprehensive Approach and the merits of such an approach?*

UK Government has not effectively communicated its view of the Comprehensive Approach to ActionAid.

Theme 3. *Does your organisation see the Comprehensive Approach as an effective way of addressing international crisis?*

ActionAid understands why the UK Government and international community wish to adopt a Comprehensive Approach. And, in principle, ActionAid believes the Comprehensive Approach—with its emphasis on co-ordinating the efforts of different actors—could be an effective way of addressing an international crisis. However, ActionAid does not believe the application of the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan has been successful as it has:

- been too focused on security and wider geo-political objectives. The interests of the Afghan people have been secondary to stabilisation and combating the insurgency; and
- placed too much emphasis on defence, with diplomacy and development being subordinated. For example, increasing amounts of UK aid are being allocated to Helmand rather than being distributed according to need.

Theme 4. *Has the MoD and/or UK Government worked effectively with the international community to adopt a Comprehensive Approach?*

In Afghanistan, the UK Government has worked effectively with other donor countries, the UN and NATO in adopting a Comprehensive Approach. However, the UK Government has not worked effectively with other interested parties, such as NGOs. (see Theme 6)

Theme 5. *Has the MoD and/or the UK Government built the UK's capacity to engage in a Comprehensive Approach to a crisis? What more could be done?*

ActionAid is not in a position to comment on this question.

Theme 6. *What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might the MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?*

NGOs have not been given sufficient opportunity to be involved in the planning of the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan. The UK's NGO-HMG Contact Group for Afghanistan meets outside Afghanistan. This forum needs to be supplemented by meetings in Afghanistan, as many decisions are taken in-country. To date, contact between the UK Government and NGOs in Afghanistan has been *ad-hoc*. ActionAid would like regular meetings so that it can engage in planning and in-country decision making, and provide feedback, including constructive criticism. Through their work on the ground, ActionAid and other NGOs have a much better understanding of the Afghan people, and UK Government should make better use of NGOs' local knowledge.

Theme 7. *What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the delivery of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?*

ActionAid and other NGOs are working to different objectives from the UK Government and the international community in Afghanistan. NGOs wish to meet the needs of the Afghan people. The UK Government is focused on tackling the insurgency.

Theme 8. *What are the challenges faced in moving between different stages of a Comprehensive Approach, for example from stabilisation to reconstruction?*

ActionAid is not in a position to comment on this question.

Theme 9. *How can local ownership for a Comprehensive Approach be established?*

Local acceptance of the Comprehensive Approach can only be achieved by engaging Afghan people. To date this has not happened. Neither the Afghan people, nor their elected representatives (the members of the Afghan parliament), have been directly consulted about the Comprehensive Approach. Greater encouragement by the Afghan government and overseas governments for elected representatives, civil society and NGOs, would bring the Comprehensive Approach closer to the needs of the people of Afghanistan.

Theme 10. *What lessons have been learnt from the application of the Comprehensive Approach in Iraq, Afghanistan or other countries?*

The Afghan people need to be put at the centre of the Comprehensive Approach. The current focus on security and wider geo-political objectives will not benefit the Afghan people in the long run.

APPENDIX C

MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES

NAO summary of meeting with a representative of Médecins sans Frontières 10 June 2009

Present from Médecins sans Frontières:

Vickie Hawkins, currently MSF-UK's Head of Programmes, previously MSF's head of mission in Afghanistan

OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) does not engage with governments in the planning or delivery of the Comprehensive Approach. MSF's position on, and views of, the Comprehensive Approach are framed by its role as an exclusively humanitarian, medical NGO that delivers emergency aid according to need. Its prime objective is to save lives and alleviate immediate suffering. MSF's focus on immediate humanitarian assistance can give it a different perspective on the Comprehensive Approach from NGOs who undertake development work (or a mix of development and humanitarian work) and may thus receive funds from UK Government or the wider international community for the purposes of building up local/governmental capacity. MSF does not engage in capacity-building as an objective in itself (although in stable settings it can be a by-product of our action).

If MSF is to be well-placed to meet the needs of people caught up on both sides of a conflict, and maintain the safety of its staff, it must be independent of governments and be perceived by local people to be independent, neutral and impartial. To maintain its independence, neutrality and impartiality, MSF limits its contact with governments taking part in a Comprehensive Approach. As a matter of policy, and in order to preserve independence, MSF relies on private funding for the majority of its income. It generally does not take government funding in areas of conflict (eg Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Iraq), particularly not from governments who are undertaking military operations (including peace keeping operations) in a country where MSF is operating.

The application of the Comprehensive Approach by the international community, and the inclusion (real or perceived) of NGOs in that Comprehensive Approach, can make it more difficult for MSF to deliver humanitarian aid in environments that are already hard to operate in. In Afghanistan, for example, there are large numbers of western NGOs who have close links with western governments and undertake activities that could be perceived as part of a state building agenda. With NGOs being generally perceived as a fairly homogenous group, the (real or perceived) association of some with a western state-building agenda leads to increased risks for all (including MSF staff who are operating in-country).

Until 2004, MSF operated in Afghanistan. MSF closed its operations after the Afghan authorities responded inadequately to (and were even implicated in) an attack in the west of the country which killed five MSF employees. MSF are now looking to return to Afghanistan.

MSF initially operated in Iraq after the 2003 invasion but withdrew because of the security risks faced by its staff. MSF is now again present in Iraq and plans to expand its activities.

MSF are also operating in a number of other countries where there are conflicts including Sri Lanka and Columbia.

Theme 1. *From a UK perspective, what does your organisation understand by the term "Comprehensive Approach"?*

UK Government sees the Comprehensive Approach as coordinating and unifying all UK Government departments and non-government bodies (ie private sector organisations as well as NGOs) under a single overarching foreign policy objective.

Theme 2. *Has the MoD and/or the UK Government effectively communicated what it understands by the Comprehensive Approach and the merits of such an approach?*

The UK Government has provided information on, and some opportunity to discuss, the Comprehensive Approach. MSF gave two examples:

- NGOs were invited to the launch of the Stabilisation Unit;
- Via the UK's NGO-Military Contact Group. MoD, FCO and DFID attend these meetings.

However, implications of the Comprehensive Approach and specifically how to ensure that space exists outside of it for independent humanitarian action, need continual discussion and attention.

Theme 3. *Does your organisation see the Comprehensive Approach as an effective way of addressing international crisis?*

From the perspective of the UN or UK Government, the logic of bringing together different instruments (eg defence, diplomacy, development) into a cohesive whole is understandable. But the Comprehensive Approach can compound the difficulties MSF face trying to operate in a conflict zone, and can make it more difficult for MSF to carve out the space necessary for it to provide independent humanitarian, medical assistance to those most in need. For example, in Iraq humanitarian NGOs were seen by many as part of the wider western military effort and were presented by the US military as such.⁵⁷ This false representation of humanitarian action as part of the military effort increased the security risks faced by NGO staff operating in the field and, as a result, MSF and many other humanitarian NGOs withdrew from Iraq. If MSF, and similar organisations, are squeezed out by the Comprehensive Approach, the population is deprived of life-saving assistance in its hour of greatest need. As an alternative the military will undertake relief activities, not only for altruistic purposes but also for the benefits of hearts and minds, but only in the areas under their direct control, which may result in large numbers of the civilian population receiving no support. And a withdrawal of NGOs will only increase the length of time that the military needs to undertake this direct provision of relief.

The Comprehensive Approach can also increase the militarisation of civilian settings or facilities, such as hospitals, in the host country. Many armed private security providers are being used to protect DFID staff working in Afghanistan. The presence of armed security providers in civilian facilities can turn the facilities, and the Afghan users, of those facilities into targets for belligerents. In Afghanistan, the UK Government has described armed private security providers as armed civilians, which risks militarising the “civilian status”. Under the Geneva Convention civilians are individuals who take no part in hostilities.

Theme 4. *Has the MoD and/or UK Government worked effectively with the international community to adopt a Comprehensive Approach?*

MSF is not in a position to comment on this question.

Theme 5. *Has the MoD and/or the UK Government built the UK's capacity to engage in a Comprehensive Approach to a crisis? What more could be done?*

MSF is not in a position to comment on this question.

Theme 6. *What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might the MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?*

MSF does not get involved in the planning or the delivery (see Theme 7) of the Comprehensive Approach as i) it does not have the same objectives as UK Government or other governments and ii) thus it wishes to maintain its independence from their efforts. The UK Government wishes to resolve conflict in a way which best suits the interests of the UK. MSF does not share that objective and maintains its complete independence from it, wishing only to provide impartial humanitarian assistance to civilians caught up in a conflict situation regardless of which side of a frontline they may reside

Theme 7. *What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the delivery of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?*

MSF does not engage in the delivery of the Comprehensive Approach (see Theme 8).

MSF's objective to provide impartial humanitarian assistance based on need could put it at odds with governments seeking to apply the Comprehensive Approach. MSF gave the example of a country which was partly controlled by the host government and the international community (both of whom were seeking to apply the Comprehensive Approach) and partly controlled by belligerents. To assist the stabilisation of the whole country, the host government and the international community may wish to see NGOs involved in the Comprehensive Approach, helping to provide “hearts and minds” assistance to people living in areas controlled by the host government and international community. In such a situation, however, MSF would wish to provide services according to need and thus it may wish to also provide assistance to civilians living in areas controlled by belligerents. However, by providing humanitarian assistance in parts of the country controlled by belligerents, MSF would be demonstrating that the international community and host government did not have a monopoly on aid or service delivery and thus undermine the “hearts and minds” strategy. It is also likely that, to provide humanitarian assistance, MSF would need to have (direct or indirect) contact with belligerents. The host government and international community might judge such contact as inappropriate.

⁵⁷ For example, prior to the invasion of Iraq, Colin Powell called on NGOs to act as “a force multiplier for us . . . an important part of our combat team”.

MSF see the UK Government, and the international community more generally, making greater use of private sector to deliver aspects of the Comprehensive Approach. MSF noted that there can be limits on the locations where the private sector can and would be willing to operate. For example, contractors do not work impartially—they are driven by profit—and thus would generally not be willing to provide services in areas of Afghanistan not under the control of the international community.

Theme 8. *What are the challenges faced in moving between different stages of a Comprehensive Approach, for example from stabilisation to reconstruction?*

MSF is not in a position to comment on this question as it does not engage in the Comprehensive Approach. However, MSF emphasised that the application of the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan post 2001 had made it difficult for MSF to separate itself from the wider state building agenda which a large number of NGOs were perceived to be involved in (see Theme 7).

Theme 9. *How can local ownership for a Comprehensive Approach be established?*

MSF is not in a position to comment on this question.

Theme 10. *What lessons have been learnt from the application of the Comprehensive Approach in Iraq, Afghanistan or other countries?*

The conflict in Iraq left no space for humanitarian NGOs, such as MSF, to operate in a safe way. NGOs in general were seen by many as part of the wider western military effort, and thus there was limited recognition that individual humanitarian NGOs could be independent of, and have different objectives from, western governments. MSF generally proves its adherence to humanitarian principles (independence, neutrality, impartiality) through its work. But where initial distrust is high, it is very difficult for MSF to negotiate a way in so that they can deliver services and prove their strictly humanitarian character to local people by the way they operate on the ground.

APPENDIX D

MERCY CORPS

NAO summary of meeting with a representative of Mercy Corps 5 June 2009

Present from Mercy Corps: Fernando Soares, Director of Programmes

OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

Mercy Corps has been encouraged that military organisations, as part of seeking to develop and apply the Comprehensive Approach, have entered into greater dialogue with NGOs. Yet, combining and/or confusing the mandates of humanitarian and military/combatants, may have severe consequences, and considerably hinder access to vulnerable and/or remote populations in conflict settings. For instance, the use of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan and Iraq to provide relief and development assistance, blurs the lines between military and humanitarian actors, thus increasing risks to NGO staff operating in the field, and reducing humanitarian access. Furthermore, the aid provided by PRT's is not cost effective and is not provided on the basis of need. Humanitarian action is not an instrument of conflict resolution or crisis management or a tool for fighting terrorism as established clearly in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

Mercy Corps has operated in Iraq since 2003. Mercy Corps implements humanitarian and development projects, strengthening communities and promoting the rights of vulnerable populations, like women, youth, and persons with disabilities. To date, its programmes have reached over 4.5 million beneficiaries, throughout Iraq.

As Mercy Corps has operated in Iraq with European funds channelled through the agency's European HQ, it has not had regular contacts with UK Government. Yet, since 2008, Mercy Corps has chaired the UK NGO Iraq Advocacy Group and engaged in a dialogue with DFID and the FCO.

Mercy Corps has been present in Afghanistan for 20 years. Its current work includes an agriculture livelihoods programme in 16 provinces in north, west and east Afghanistan funded by USAID. It also runs an agricultural programme funded by DFID in Helmand. Mercy Corps is the only large international NGO working in Helmand province. Mercy Corps attends the UK's NGO Contact Group for Afghanistan.

Mercy Corps is also a member of the UK NGO-Military Contact Group and a member of the civil and military group of the European humanitarian NGO platform, VOICE.

Theme 1. *From a UK perspective, what does your organisation understand by the term “Comprehensive Approach”?*

Mercy Corps is not aware of any UK (see Theme 2) or international document which provides NGOs with a clear explanation or definition of the Comprehensive Approach.

Mercy Corps attended a NATO exercise in 2007 in which Civil-Military co-ordination was discussed among other topics. It was encouraged that the military were reaching out to NGOs to have a dialogue. The conference, however, demonstrated that there was no consistent view of the Comprehensive Approach within NATO. The conference also indicated that the military did not fully appreciate the diversity of the NGO community.

Theme 2. *Has the MoD and/or the UK Government effectively communicated what it understands by the Comprehensive Approach and the merits of such an approach?*

Mercy Corps is not aware of a UK Government-specific definition of the Comprehensive Approach.

An emerging consensus is that conflicts, such as the one in Afghanistan cannot be won by military means alone. And so the UK Government has increased cross-departmental collaboration to enable a more “comprehensive approach”. And the main role of the UK Stabilisation Unit—a joint venture between DFID, the FCO and the MoD—is to enable this approach. The UK Government’s aim is political: to reach stability by helping establish and sustaining a legitimate government.

Theme 3. *Does your organisation see the Comprehensive Approach as an effective way of addressing international crisis?*

Stabilisation is an inherently political process involving state building, development and at times military activities; whereas in principle, humanitarian and development assistance is independent, neutral and impartial—provided on the basis of need alone. Blurring the lines between political and humanitarian/development objectives can have negative implications for the acceptance of humanitarian actors, with real consequences for humanitarian access. Further, local perception of agencies as stabilisation actors can have security implications for aid organisations and beneficiary communities.

Besides, Mercy Corps see the Comprehensive Approach as being epitomised by the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan and Iraq. It does not consider that PRTs are the right approach for delivering humanitarian and development assistance and views them as an inappropriate and ineffective. In particular:

- Communities want long-term development assistance based on transparency, accountability and local ownership. Such approaches are not compatible with the short-term imperatives which drive the military’s stabilisation strategy. The military’s use of often costly, ineffective and unaccountable implementing partners is also highly problematic;
- PRTs do not distribute humanitarian assistance within Afghanistan according to need;
- PRTs undermine the work of humanitarian and development NGOs and put NGO field staff at risk, thus reducing humanitarian access. By providing relief and development assistance, PRTs blur the lines between military and humanitarian actors. Afghans and Iraqis see military personnel and civilians undertaking the same work. This increases the risk to NGO field staff as they are seen as legitimate targets in the conflict, and thus hinders humanitarian access;
- PRTs are not a cost effective mechanism for delivering humanitarian or development aid. For example, PRT staff undertaking humanitarian or development activities are often escorted by armed personnel which increases cost and can reduce the willingness of Afghans to take-up the assistance provided.

Theme 4. *Has the MoD and/or UK Government worked effectively with the international community to adopt a Comprehensive Approach?*

Mercy Corps is not in a position to answer this question.

Theme 5. *Has the MoD and/or the UK Government built the UK’s capacity to engage in a Comprehensive Approach to a crisis? What more could be done?*

Mercy Corps is not in a position to answer this question.

Theme 6. *What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might the MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?*

Humanitarian workers and programmes may be placed at risk if local populations, or warring parties, perceive ties between military and humanitarian workers; Mercy Corps believes that coordination between humanitarian actors and military/combatant should be avoided. Yet, dialogue may be needed at the operational level, strictly provided that it poses no security issue, particularly for beneficiaries and local partners, and that it is necessary to save lives, protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition and minimise inconsistency.

Mercy Corps willingness to coordinate with the military depends on context. Mercy Corps thinks that military assets and capabilities are to be used only in very limited circumstances in support of humanitarian relief operations as a “last resort”—where there is no comparable civilian alternative. For a disaster, Mercy Corps may engage under established civilian-led humanitarian coordination mechanisms if:

- this is essential for the delivery of humanitarian aid;
- the use of military assets are under civilian control, thus avoiding any association between humanitarian aid and a military or political objective which could hinder the overall humanitarian efforts; and
- this coordination will not be to the detriment of what Mercy Corps wishes to achieve.

In most conflict situations, Mercy Corps will not coordinate with the military in the field as this can jeopardise the NGO’s own objectives (eg can reduce Mercy Corps’ scope to operate in the host country). However, when necessary, Mercy Corps can engage in a dialogue with the military in the field and HQ level in Europe.

There are limits on the amount of information that can be exchanged between Mercy Corps and the military. As a matter of standard practice, Mercy Corps, like many NGOs, put substantial information in the public domain. However, Mercy Corps would not provide information which could be used to inform military operations or which might put Mercy Corps own operations at threat or risk.

Liaison at all levels between NGOs and the military can be hampered by the absence of a common, well understood language. Mercy Corps referred to the number of abbreviations used by military personnel at the NATO conference it intended on Civil Military relations (conference mentioned under Theme 1).

Theme 7. What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the delivery of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?

Engaging in the delivery of a Comprehensive Approach would risk compromising Mercy Corps’ independence, impartiality and neutrality. Thus even in circumstances where Mercy Corps wanted to achieve the same objectives as a military organisation it would be very difficult for Mercy Corps to be involved with, or be seen to be involved with, the delivery of a Comprehensive Approach.

UK policy makers and military need to comply with the existing international rules and guidelines and respect that humanitarian action cannot be part of a military or politically motivated operation. Besides, as involvement by the military in development can place beneficiaries, projects and project implementers at risk, and given doubts about the cost effectiveness and sustainability of military “quick impact” projects, it is imperative that military assets are used in areas where they have a comparative advantage in terms of expertise and knowledge, for example in developing the capacity of the national security and law enforcement agencies. The role of PRTs should therefore be redefined accordingly. Their resources should be devoted to build up the capacity of the security and law enforcement agencies by providing adequate and sustained training and mentoring, material and logistics support.

Theme 8. What are the challenges faced in moving between different stages of a Comprehensive Approach, for example from stabilisation to reconstruction?

Stabilisation and reconstruction are likely to happen concurrently in a country and thus there may not be a need to manage a change between two distinct stages. It is not realistic to wait for the conflict to be over before reconstruction begins.

Theme 9. How can local ownership for a Comprehensive Approach be established?

Mercy Corps is not in a position to answer this question.

Theme 10. What lessons have been learnt from the application of the Comprehensive Approach in Iraq, Afghanistan or other countries?

The PRTs are an expensive and inappropriate way of delivering humanitarian and development assistance. For example, Mercy Corps could deliver an animal vaccination programme cheaper than a PRT which typically uses armed support.

APPENDIX E

WORLD VISION

NAO summary of meeting with representatives of World Vision 5 June 2009

Present from World Vision:

Ian Gray, Head of Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs

Dr Edwina Thompson, Senior Civil-Military-Police Adviser

 OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

World Vision recognises that, in providing emergency relief and protecting vulnerable people in conflict-prone and unstable environments, NGOs often work in close proximity to host government forces, police, armed non-state actors, foreign troops and international peacekeepers. It sees that growing insecurity on the ground and policy developments, such as “winning hearts and minds” campaigns, are creating an increasingly pressing need for appropriate NGO policies and operational guidance on how to interact with armed groups at both field and headquarter levels.

In 2008, World Vision prepared a report addressing “Principled Pragmatism”⁵⁸ and it has developed a tool—HISS-CAM⁵⁹—to assist its staff to think through difficult operational and policy decisions they may face when interacting with military actors. The tool identifies that there is a spectrum of possible interactions between humanitarian and military operations, ranging from a humanitarian NGO curtailing its presence, through co-existence, co-ordination to co-operation. Despite the potential for co-operation, World Vision is clear, however, that it does not have a role in either contributing to a military organisation’s planning of a specific deployment or directly working with a military organisation to deliver a comprehensive approach.

World Vision has experience of operating in both Iraq and Afghanistan. It began operating in Iraq in 2003, but withdrew in 2005 because of poor security. It is currently assessing whether to return to Iraq. World Vision currently operates in the west of Afghanistan. It has contacts with foreign governments, such as Spain, Italy, Lithuania and the USA, who operate the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in the west of Afghanistan. It has limited contact with the UK government in relation to Afghanistan.

Theme 1. From a UK perspective, what does your organisation understand by the term “Comprehensive Approach”?

The Comprehensive Approach has evolved from the “3Ds” approach to security which incorporates Defence, Diplomacy and Development. World Vision is encouraged that MoD’s 2005 guidance on the Comprehensive Approach (see Theme 2) separates “diplomatic, military and economic instruments of power” from an “independent package of developmental and humanitarian activity.” This separation, however, has not been maintained clearly on the ground in Afghanistan (see Theme 3).

Theme 2. Has the MoD and/or the UK Government effectively communicated what it understands by the Comprehensive Approach and the merits of such an approach?

World Vision is aware of MoD’s guidance on the Comprehensive Approach (Joint Discussion Note 4/05). It is not aware of any UK government-wide guidance on, or definition of, the Comprehensive Approach.

MoD guidance gives the impression that there are two ways of operating the Comprehensive Approach:

- (i) fully co-ordinated and regulated activity with all parties working to a single plan;
- (ii) more limited co-ordination to ensure that the activities of different agencies do not conflict.

MoD and other military organisations may prefer the former, but World Vision would not be part of a fully co-ordinated approach. World Vision can however work with military organisations to de-conflict their separate activities so that the activities do not work against each other or duplicate each other.

Theme 3. Does your organisation see the Comprehensive Approach as an effective way of addressing international crisis?

Yes, but only to a point. World Vision welcomes the aim of the Comprehensive Approach to first stabilise a country and then stop it slipping back into conflict. However, the time horizons of different government and non-government agencies can make it difficult to establish a common long term plan which both addresses stabilisation and tackles the longer term risk that a country slips back into conflict. For example, diplomats focus on short term opportunities, the military often have a two to three year horizon, whilst government aid agencies and development NGOs are often focused on a 10 year development agenda.

The UK’s application of the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan has not followed the concepts set down in MoD guidance (see Theme 1). The split between “diplomatic, military and economic instruments of power” and an “independent package of developmental and humanitarian activity” has not been maintained. Aid has been used to achieve stabilisation objectives. For example, increasing amounts of UK aid is being allocated to Helmand for stabilisation purposes rather than being used to meet pressing humanitarian needs in other provinces. World Vision’s position is that aid should be distributed on the basis of need, rather than as a tool to stabilise a country.

⁵⁸ www.worldvision.org.uk/upload/pdf/Principled_pragmatism.pdf

⁵⁹ www.worldvision.org.uk/upload/pdf/HISS-CAM_Explanation.pdf

Theme 4. *Has the MoD and/or UK Government worked effectively with the international community to adopt a Comprehensive Approach?*

The UK's record is mixed. UK has led efforts for reform and coherence in the humanitarian arena with, for example, the UK pushing for greater use of pooled-funding across donor countries. However, on the ground the UK has not been effective in some of the activities it has taken the lead on for the international community such as the Counter Narcotics Strategy for Afghanistan.

Theme 5. *Has the MoD and/or the UK Government built the UK's capacity to engage in a Comprehensive Approach to a crisis? What more could be done?*

The establishment of the Stabilisation Unit (formerly the Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit) has increased the UK's capacity to engage in unstable countries. However, the Stabilisation Unit to date has primarily focused on Iraq and Afghanistan thus reducing the UK's ability to contribute to other stabilisation activities where it has potential important influence. The Government is in the process of substantially increasing the civilian capacity of the Stabilisation Unit by increasing the number of civilian experts it can call upon to be deployed at short notice to conflict and post-conflict areas.

DFID is not seen as equal partner to MoD and FCO. There is a risk, therefore, that under a Comprehensive Approach DFID's aid agenda and objectives are squeezed by the priorities of MoD and FCO. (Theme 3 refers to the increasing use of UK aid for stabilisation purposes in Helmand.)

Theme 6. *What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might the MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?*

To maintain its independence, World Vision's policy is not to engage with Government organisations which are planning military operations. It therefore does not undertake "deployment specific" training but would be willing and well-placed to provide generic training to military and non-military staff. However, it has not done so to date in the UK. DFID funding is not available for such training and World Vision's policies do not enable it to accept funding from MoD.

World Vision sees an opportunity for NGOs to work together to strengthen and develop standard rules for engaging with the military, and additional support to the often marginalised Civil-Military Coordination Section within the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. These rules could build on World Vision's HISS-CAM model (see Overview and context section). However, it is likely that such development work would require funding from government or international sources.

Theme 7. *What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the delivery of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?*

World Vision does not have a role in delivering a Comprehensive Approach. Theme 2 explains that World Vision may work with military agencies to de-conflict their separate activities. However, World Vision would not operate under the control of military agencies or take funding from military agencies.

Theme 8. *What are the challenges faced in moving between different stages of a Comprehensive Approach, for example from stabilisation to reconstruction?*

Conflicts may not pass through distinct phases as implied by the question. Stabilisation and reconstruction activity can often be undertaken at the same time, for example.

Theme 9. *How can local ownership for a Comprehensive Approach be established?*

Local ownership is very difficult, if not impossible, where the Comprehensive Approach is conceived, developed and introduced from the outside by the international community rather than by representatives within the host country. At best a Comprehensive Approach may gain the acceptance of the host country. Early joint engagement in the planning stage of specific institution-strengthening, such as security sector reform, would certainly help to increase host government ownership and leadership, which are crucial to success. From the perspective of local communities, however, as is the case in Afghanistan, dialogue and planning can in fact put local people at risk of attack by those resisting the presence of the international community.

Theme 10. *What lessons have been learnt from the application of the Comprehensive Approach in Iraq, Afghanistan or other countries?*

Care needs to be taken in seeking to apply lessons from Afghanistan and Iraq to other countries in conflict. There are substantial differences between conflicts, for example, in their causes and nature. As UK Government recognises, the Comprehensive Approach cannot be a prescribed set of procedures, but must be applied flexibly to reflect the specific circumstances of the conflict. Across most of Whitehall this appears to be accepted conceptually, but there is little evidence of it being operationalised effectively.

Amongst the Afghan people there are different views of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams. There is, for example, anecdotal evidence that the local people's perspectives of the PRTs operating in Western Afghanistan are relatively favourable and local people have been reported as being frustrated with PRTs for not undertaking enough development work.

APPENDIX F

ISLAMIC RELIEF

NAO summary of meeting with representatives of Islamic Relief 4 June 2009

Present from Islamic Relief:

Haroun Atallah, Finance Director (and former CEO)

Jamal Al-Din Belke, Head of Middle East and Eastern Europe (Country Director of Islamic Relief Afghanistan 2002-2004)

OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

Islamic Relief has had an interest in the Comprehensive Approach and similar concepts such as the 3Ds (Diplomacy, Defence, Development) over the last five to six years. Islamic Relief staff have, for example, attended relevant forums and Islamic Relief has had some engagement at a policy level with the European Union as well as the UK Government.

Military engagement in the provision of aid, or contact between military organisations and NGOs, blurs the distinction between military and civilian organisations and can bring serious risks to NGO staff. In some cases, such as the Asia/Kashmir earthquake in 2005, military engagement in humanitarian activities, may be welcomed as the military have logistics and other support which NGOs do not have. However, where countries are in conflict or are unstable, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, contact with the military, and western governments who have military forces operating on the ground in combat roles, can damage the reputation of an NGO as impartial, neutral and independent, and consequently NGO staff can be seen as spies or collaborators. Reputational damage can be long lasting and can increase the risk to NGO staff (from both local and international NGOs) of intimidation and serious attacks, including kidnapping. Association with the UK military and in certain circumstances the UK Government can not only bring risks to Islamic Relief's staff in the field but can also increase the risk that the NGO and its UK staff are seen domestically as "selling out".

Islamic Relief has been operating in Iraq since the 1990's. After 2003, Islamic Relief reduced its presence in Baghdad because of concerns over the safety of its staff who, for example, had received threatening messages and were being watched. Its main office in Iraq is now in a more stable location in the North. Islamic Relief has not highlighted the level of work it has been doing in Iraq as this can endanger its staff. For example, if Islamic Relief is viewed in Iraq as a large NGO which may have substantial resources, this increases the chance of its staff being kidnapped so a ransom request can be made.

Islamic Relief does not seek funding from the UK Government, or other western governments, for its work in Iraq as it does not wish to increase the risks to its staff, or be seen to be an organisation which has benefited from the conflict.

Islamic Relief was operating in Afghanistan before the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001. Since 2001, Islamic Relief has undertaken a range of work in Afghanistan. This work was initially focused on the south of the country but it has now extended its operations more in the north. Islamic Relief has received funding from DFID for some of its projects in Afghanistan.

Theme 1: From a UK perspective, what does your organisation understand by the term "Comprehensive Approach"?

The Comprehensive Approach is a development of the 3Ds approach. In Afghanistan, it uses hearts and minds activities to try and buy-in local community support for the central government as well as military operations that are taking place within the country. The Comprehensive Approach seeks to demonstrate to the local population that there are benefits (eg such as reconstruction) to be gained by the international community undertaking activities in their country.

Theme 2: Has the MoD and/or the UK Government effectively communicated what it understands by the Comprehensive Approach and the merits of such an approach?

Islamic Relief has not received any communications from the UK Government defining the Comprehensive Approach and its merits. It was not aware of MoD guidance on the Comprehensive Approach.

Theme 3: *Does your organisation see the Comprehensive Approach as an effective way of addressing international crisis?*

Islamic Relief does not see closer cooperation with the military as desirable. Rather there is need for greater clarity on relations between NGOs and the military in conflict situations (such as Afghanistan and Iraq). NGOs need to be (and be perceived to be) neutral, independent and impartial where there are conflicts between warring parties. NGOs should not be asked or encouraged to take sides with one or other of the parties in a conflict. One of the drawbacks of the Comprehensive Approach has been that western governments and their militaries (in particular, the US military) have implemented the Approach as if NGOs are either 'with us or against us'. NGOs wish to be impartial and neutral and provide services to poor people independent of where those people reside.

The risks to NGOs of operating in unstable countries are significantly increased where overseas military are involved and, especially, where this involvement leads to a blurring in the roles between military organisations and NGOs. For example, when military organisations get involved in the provision of aid it is very difficult for local people to separate this from activities undertaken by NGOs.

Islamic Relief provided examples of the risks their staff have faced when working in countries where the Comprehensive Approach was being applied. These examples included Islamic Relief's then Head of Emergencies being arrested and tortured by the Saddam Hussein regime in Spring 2003. The regime accused the Head of Emergencies of acting as a spy and he was lucky to get out of the situation alive.

In general, the level of funding available from governments to support humanitarian and development work in Afghanistan has increased significantly since 2001. However, the environment for delivering that work has become more difficult as the security situation, including general law and order, has deteriorated.

Theme 4: *Has the MoD and/or UK Government worked effectively with the international community to adopt a Comprehensive Approach?*

With respect to NGOs, the UK Government's engagement with the wider international community has been inadequate and sporadic. NGOs are viewed and governed in very different ways by the UK, by other European countries and by the US. A more consistent or standard approach would yield significant benefits for governments and NGOs.

In accordance with the Afghan Government's wishes, the UK Government and other donors have increasingly moved funding away from projects to the multi-donor funded National Solidarity Programme. This change has the potential to increase the credibility of the Afghan Government. However, insufficient resources have been available to administer these large flows of aid and ensure they are well spent and effective, and that local delivery mechanisms do not become corrupt.

Theme 5: *Has the MoD and/or the UK Government built the UK's capacity to engage in a Comprehensive Approach to a crisis? What more could be done?*

Islamic Relief is not well-placed to comment on the capacity of the UK Government.

From an NGO perspective, the level of engagement with Government, including the EU, has increased significantly on aid-related topics in general. For example, Islamic Relief has been asked to contribute to government white papers. It has also been asked to contribute to opposition party documents. This increasing amount of policy work has implications for Islamic Relief as it has to develop its own capacity and research units so that it is able to have an intelligent discourse with UK Government. It is difficult for NGOs to obtain funding for such policy work, and if UK Government wants and expects a greater debate with NGOs, then it should assist this by providing funding, for example, through umbrella bodies which represent NGOs.

Theme 6: *What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might the MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?*

Islamic Relief does not engage in planning the Comprehensive Approach as it:

- (i) does not share the same overriding objectives as UK Government. Islamic Relief is not interested, for example, in regime change but wants to provide services to poor people who can be hurt by belligerents and government forces;
- (ii) wishes to maintain its independence, neutrality and impartiality.

Islamic Relief may, however, have a dialogue with the UK Government and other governments regarding particular countries and situations. Reasons for dialogue include:

- Self preservation. Islamic Relief may wish to make governments aware of where they are operating within a country;
- To exchange information and knowledge on humanitarian issues, in particular, with DFID.

Any dialogue will, however, usually take place outside of the country concerned by, for example, bringing Islamic Relief's in-country staff to Europe. This reduces the risk that the nature of the contact is misconstrued.

There can be a difference between the planning timescales of government and the time required to deliver development objectives. Islamic Relief ran a programme aimed at reducing poppy cultivation. This showed that to encourage Afghans to grow alternative crops to poppies requires a long term commitment of 10 years or more. But aid agencies may only make short term commitments of funds to projects. Thus there are risks that projects do not get renewed, for example, because there is a change in political leadership, or the agency decides to channel its money through a multi-donor pool (eg the National Solidarity Programme in Afghanistan) rather than use it to fund its own projects.

Theme 7: What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the delivery of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?

Islamic Relief does not engage in the delivery of the Comprehensive Approach. In some countries where the Comprehensive Approach is being applied, Islamic Relief may, however, undertake programmes which are funded by the non-military arms of government participating in the Comprehensive Approach. As explained in the “Context and overview” section Islamic Relief has undertaken work funded by DFID in Afghanistan but it has not undertaken UK Government sponsored work in Iraq.

Where Islamic Relief is undertaking work funded by governments involved in a Comprehensive Approach this has the potential to create tension. Islamic Relief may not wish to make public the identity of its funder as this could increase risks to its staff. However, the funder may wish to generate publicity for the projects it is supporting in the host country, and in its own country to serve the government’s domestic agenda. To date, this problem has not arisen on DFID funded projects as the Department has recognised the risks to NGO independence.

Theme 8: What are the challenges faced in moving between different stages of a Comprehensive Approach, for example from stabilisation to reconstruction?

Not addressed.

Theme 9: How can local ownership for a Comprehensive Approach be established?

Not addressed.

Theme 10: What lessons have been learnt from the application of the Comprehensive Approach in Iraq, Afghanistan or other countries?

The UK Government and other governments are now focusing on what should be done to rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan. They are not looking to evaluate how their interventions have impacted on:

- the humanitarian and development agendas. Would the sums spent by the West on military action have delivered better outcomes if the money had instead been used for humanitarian and development programmes in Afghanistan and Iraq?;
- the safety of the people in the West.

APPENDIX G

BRITISH AND IRISH AGENCIES AFGHANISTAN GROUP AND AFGHAN AID

NAO summary of meeting with representatives of British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid 2 June 2009

Present from the British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and Afghan Aid:

Elizabeth Winter Vice Chair Afghan Aid, Special Adviser to BAAG on Policy and Advocacy

Basir Abdul, Director of BAAG

OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG) is an umbrella group covering 26 NGOs. It seeks to engage in issues of policy and good practice and get the Afghan voice represented, wherever possible, by Afghans themselves.

Afghan Aid (AA) is a UK based charity. It is the largest single country NGO operating in Afghanistan. Its current work in Afghanistan includes agriculture and rural development programmes and it is one of the implementing partners of the Afghan National Solidarity Programme.

BAAG/AA see the UK’s Comprehensive Approach as being military driven. BAAG/AA do not engage in the planning or delivery of the Comprehensive Approach as they do not share the same goals as the MoD and they wish to maintain their independence and impartiality. BAAG/AA do, however, liaise with MoD and the UK Government on policy matters, in particular, where they see opportunity which has the potential to benefit the Afghan people.

BAAG/AA have a significant interest in the Comprehensive Approach and civil-military-relations. For example, BAAG jointly commissioned⁶⁰ research, published in 2008, exploring Afghan perceptions of civil-military relations. BAAG/AA have also had substantial contact with MoD and other UK Government Departments on the Comprehensive Approach. This has included participating in pre-deployment discussions with MoD at Shrivenham (the MoD's Defence Academy). BAAG has also had engagement on Afghanistan with international organisations, including ongoing engagement with NATO's public policy department.

In summarising their position, BAAG/AA said that Afghanistan is a very difficult operating environment and all organisations, whether government or NGOs, will make mistakes. There is a need for different actors engaged in Afghanistan to understand each other better and support each other more.

Theme 1: From a UK perspective, what does your organisation understand by the term "Comprehensive Approach"?

The UK Government's approach to the Comprehensive Approach is Whitehall focussed. It centres on getting UK Government Departments to collaborate and coordinate their objectives, strategies and tools. This is laudable but it has two key weaknesses:

- in practice UK Government departments are sometimes hostile to each other rather than working together. If the Comprehensive Approach is going to work in Whitehall there is need for the key people in each department to want to collaborate and co-ordinate. The Stabilisation Unit has had success in breaking down some of the barriers to effective joint working;
- it is too UK-focused. There is inadequate engagement with other governments and international institutions, such as the UN.

Internationally, organisations, such as the EU and NATO, have been seeking to internationalise the Comprehensive Approach as a concept.

Theme 2: *Has the MoD and/or the UK Government effectively communicated what it understands by the Comprehensive Approach and the merits of such an approach?*

No. UK Government has not effectively communicated its understanding of the Comprehensive Approach. In part, the absence of communication may reflect the lack of a shared or common understanding across UK Government on the Comprehensive Approach.

Theme 3: *Does your organisation see the Comprehensive Approach as an effective way of addressing international crisis?*

The Comprehensive Approach adopted by the UK has not worked in Afghanistan. UK Government departments have not worked sufficiently closely together and there has been a disconnect between the Comprehensive Approach as seen in Whitehall and the realities on the ground in Afghanistan. The Comprehensive Approach has not been informed by the views of the Afghan people and is not addressing their priorities which are improved governance and establishing the rule of law (see theme 9). The Comprehensive Approach has not been tackling the root causes of the insecurity in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the UK Government's Comprehensive Approach is not adequately co-ordinated with the approaches of other countries and international organisations.

Military forces in Afghanistan have not consistently respected the independence and mandate of humanitarian organisations, which can compromise the safety and effectiveness of NGOs working on the ground. In 2008 the Afghanistan Civil-Military Working Group approved a set of "Guidelines for the Interaction and Coordination of Humanitarian Actors and Military Actors in Afghanistan". This built on major conventions and procedures. These Guidelines have been signed by United Nations Assistance Mission and the International Security Assistance Force, amongst others. The Guidelines have led to some improvements. For example, NATO ordered their troops to stop using white painted vehicles for military use as they should be exclusively for non-military actors. However, there remain examples of where the Guidelines have not been complied with by military forces. The main violators of the Guidelines have been US troops. Violations blur the distinction between civil and military organisations, increasing the risks faced by those NGO staff working on the ground.

If the Comprehensive Approach is going to be an effective way of addressing the problems of a country in conflict it needs to:

- be civilian lead;
- be operated in a way which respects the boundaries and mandates of different organisations;
- reflect the context of the country where it is being applied, and be based on a good understanding of the local people;

⁶⁰ Afghan Hearts, Afghan Minds—Exploring the Afghan perceptions of civil-military relations 2008: Research conducted for the European Network of NGOs in Afghanistan and the British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group. Elizabeth Winter is also a Special Adviser to ENNA.

- support the development objectives of the host country and the priorities of the local people; and
- take account of the range of international governments and international bodies who might be involved in the host country.

Currently different actors and countries are coming to Afghanistan with their different approaches. Ideally, all actors should come together to achieve the objectives of the host government and people under the oversight of a single body, such as the UN.

Theme 4: Has the MoD and/or UK Government worked effectively with the international community to adopt a Comprehensive Approach?

UK Government has tried to work with other countries. For example, the UK has sought to bring the US round to the UK's way of thinking on the Comprehensive Approach which has been helpful.

Some key organisations in Afghanistan, however, do not operate in an integrated way as advocated by the Comprehensive Approach. For example, BAAG/AA has seen no evidence that the Joint Co-ordination and Monitoring Body⁶¹ operates along the lines of the Comprehensive Approach.

The absence of effective co-ordination across the approximately 40 donor countries, the 38 troop contributing countries and international organisations (such as the World Bank) places burdens on the Afghan Government. Each country and organisation wants its own relations with the Afghan Government.

Theme 5: Has the MoD and/or the UK Government built the UK's capacity to engage in a Comprehensive Approach to a crisis? What more could be done?

BAAG/AA were not able to comment on the capacity of the UK Government.

From an NGO perspective, UK Government could do more to fund NGOs so that they can engage in policy debates on the Comprehensive Approach and civil-military-relations. Currently, BAAG/AA does not have the resources to respond to all the requests they receive from UK Government. It is very difficult for NGOs, and NGO umbrella groups, to raise funds from private sources to support policy discussions. Thus, if the UK Government wishes to have input from NGOs who have had the time to consider policy issues, the Government may need to support NGOs through DFID.

Theme 6: What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might the MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?

BAAG/AA drew a distinction between integration and co-ordination. Because of their different mandates, NGOs maybe willing to co-ordinate with UK Government as part of a Comprehensive Approach, but most NGOs will not want to integrate activities as this would compromise their impartiality and independence.

BAAG/AA do not engage in the planning of the Comprehensive Approach as

- (i) they do not share the goals of MoD or the UK Government; and
- (ii) they do not want to get too close to what is a military dominated concept as this could impact on their independence and neutrality.

BAAG/AA do, however, liaise and engage with MoD, and UK Government in general, at a policy level, and are particularly interested to do so when they see an opportunity which has the potential to benefit the Afghan people.

MoD's efforts to consult and engage with BAAG/AA and other NGOs have been sporadic and haphazard. When consultation happens, it usually takes place ahead of the deployment of forces. The level of consultation and engagement can be dependent upon the views and interest of the individuals who hold key posts in the MoD.

The short duration of some military postings in Afghanistan can make it difficult for NGOs to establish and maintain effective liaison in-country.

Theme 7: What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the delivery of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?

BAAG/AA do not engage in the delivery of the Comprehensive Approach for reasons set out under theme 6.

BAAG/AA said that NGOs are not always able to operate in areas the military think they should do. If a location is being "held" by the military it does not mean that it is safe for unarmed NGO staff to start to deliver programmes in what may well be an unfamiliar setting.

⁶¹ "The Afghan Government and the international community established the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board for overall strategic coordination of the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact after the endorsement of the Afghanistan Compact and the interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS) at the London Conference and the ensuring Security Council Resolution No.1659." <http://www.ands.gov.af/ands/jcmb/site/index.asp?page=info>

Theme 8: *What are the challenges faced in moving between different stages of a Comprehensive Approach, for example from stabilisation to reconstruction?*

There is likely to be significant overlap between the phases of the Comprehensive Approach. For example, some reconstruction activity is likely to be involved during each of the stages typically identified by the military—that is “take, hold, develop”.

Theme 9: *How can local ownership for a Comprehensive Approach be established?*

First the UK Government and the international community need to be clear about which Afghans they would like to see take ownership of the Comprehensive Approach. If it's the Afghan people, then the UK Government and other governments need to engage with the real representatives of the Afghan people, and not just those in positions of power such as senior governors and police authorities. Engagement with the local people can be difficult to achieve, but it would be assisted by UK Government and other governments building up civil society. DFID's work on civil society is generally well regarded. However, in Afghanistan DFID has rather neglected the development of civil society.

Local acceptance is only likely if the Comprehensive Approach addresses issues which are important to local people. BAAG sponsored research (see overview and context 1) identified that, whilst development is important, the priorities of the Afghan people are improved governance and establishing the rule of law.

Theme 10: *What lessons have been learnt from the application of the Comprehensive Approach in Iraq, Afghanistan or other countries?*

- (i) The Comprehensive Approach should deliver what the Afghan people want first (ie improved governance and establishing the rule of law). BAAG sponsored research shows that the “hearts and minds” philosophy and projects do not work as they do not address the priorities of local people. Currently, it could be argued that the focus of the international community's efforts is not on state building but on image building for their military intervention.
- (ii) The application of the military driven Comprehensive Approach to Afghanistan has presented DFID with significant challenges:
 - Allocating aid. In Afghanistan, DFID's aid is used in two ways. A high proportion of DFID's aid—around 80%—goes through multi government trust funds. This is seen by many, including the Afghan Government, as an effective way of providing aid. Of the remaining 20%, however, the majority is now used by DFID for projects in Helmand which are supporting the military intervention. By focusing the aid it directly manages on a single province, DFID is going against its general principle that aid should be distributed according to need, with the aim of reducing poverty.
 - Operating projects in insecure environments. Due to the level of insecurity, development projects have been difficult to establish and deliver in Helmand. The consequent slow progress has frustrated local people, including those in provincial government, as they had expected development to happen quickly.

The increasing focus of DFID on Helmand has reduced the amount of UK funding available for NGOs working elsewhere in Afghanistan. For example, DFID has stopped funding a “livelihoods programme” Afghan Aid had been running in a number of drug producing areas of Afghanistan. The programme had been successful and was supporting the UK Government's objective to reduce the availability of narcotics.

Rather than being Helmand focused, DFID should allocate its funding according to need and aim for a more geographically balanced programme of support. Such a programme would improve the outcomes achieved from aid spending and reduce the risk that perverse incentives are generated (ie increasing flows of aid to insecure provinces could encourage instability elsewhere in Afghanistan).

- (iii) Inadequate attention has been given by the international community and UK to strengthening the education system in Afghanistan. Education should have been a priority at the start of the international community's involvement in Afghanistan. Improving the education of Afghans is a key building block to improving the capability and capacity of the Afghanistan state.

APPENDIX H

NGO 10

NAO summary of meeting with representatives of NGO 10 3 June 2009

Present from NGO 10: Staff based in Afghanistan and the UK

OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

Experience in Afghanistan challenges the assumption that an integrated approach between military and civilian actors is a good thing. Rather NGO 10's in-country team sees the integrated approach adopted in Afghanistan as jeopardising the prospects for improving security, reducing poverty and establishing a just and functional government.

The British Government's objective for Afghanistan is to tackle counter insurgency. NGO 10 argue that it is therefore important to look at the root causes of insurgency which are:

- (i) local Afghan communities are not protected;
- (ii) high levels of poverty and unemployment; and
- (iii) the absence of just and functional Government.

NGO 10 has not seen evidence that the Comprehensive Approach is successfully addressing these three issues. For example, the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) operate along the lines of the Comprehensive Approach. NGO 10 is not aware of any PRT that has brought greater stability to its province.

By bringing the military closer to development efforts in Afghanistan, NGO 10 see the Comprehensive Approach as compromising the effectiveness of development activity and jeopardising the safety of civilians (both Afghans and foreigners) undertaking development activities.

Note on this summary. Most of the discussion focused on NGO 10 concern's over the validity of the Comprehensive Approach, and its application in Afghanistan. As a consequence some of the themes (set out below) were not directly covered during the meeting.

Theme 1: From a UK perspective, what does your organisation understand by the term "Comprehensive Approach"?

Question not addressed during discussions.

Theme 2: *Has the MoD and/or the UK Government effectively communicated what it understands by the Comprehensive Approach and the merits of such an approach?*

Question not addressed during discussions.

Theme 3: *Does your organisation see the Comprehensive Approach as an effective way of addressing international crisis?*

NGO 10's in-country team identified the following reasons why the Comprehensive Approach had not proved successful in Afghanistan.

(i) *Hearts and minds projects do not work and do not deter insurgency attacks.*

Afghan people are suspicious of foreign military forces. Many within the international community, including the UK, assumed that they were starting with a blank slate. This view, however, ignored the years of foreign interference in Afghanistan, and the decade of neglect in the 1990s when Afghanistan was no longer perceived as useful.

Individual quick impact development projects often do not address key development challenges. Moreover, with full consideration given to the particular history and context of Afghanistan (especially the south and south-east), namely, the history of foreign military interference, persistent poverty and unemployment, corrupt and unjust government, excessive use of force by international military forces, widespread illiteracy, Islamist propaganda, and the systematic use of terror and intimidation by militants, it is clear that limited assistance projects will have little impact on support for, or engagement in, insurgent activity.

In addition, in some cases insurgents view military-sponsored construction/development projects as attractive and more legitimate targets for attack.

(ii) *As indicated above, excessive use of force by foreign military forces in air-strikes and house-raids, especially by the US in the early days, continues to undermine the Afghan people's support for the international presence in their country.*

(iii) *In this context of Afghanistan, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for any organisation associated with military forces to achieve sufficient levels of local ownership. Local people need to take on and implement or use the facilities or resources provided by development projects. Without local ownership development projects will not reach the root of the problem, or build local capacity, and will therefore not succeed. Any organisation (eg NGO) associated with military forces, particularly in the south and south-east, will not be able to build sufficient local ownership for their work to have a significant development impact.*

(iv) *Corruption is manifest and the Afghan people see individuals who are predatory succeeding. This undermines the Afghan people's confidence in their Government.*

The international community initially decided to work with Afghan nationals who were in positions of power, regardless of their record or background. This has resulted, for example, in the Afghan cabinet including warlords. Also the international community has had little appetite to get to grips with corruption. Development activity will not bring security or significant development gains, if the Afghan people do not have some trust in their government.

(v) *High levels of poverty and unemployment can make Afghan people susceptible to insurgents. It is a source of dishonour to Afghan men if they are not able to look after their family.*

(vi) *The destabilising tactics of the insurgents. The insurgents are increasing their attacks on local security forces, staff of NGOs (both Afghans and foreigners) and overseas military forces. The number of attacks on NGO staff, for example, in the period June 2008 to September 2008 was at its highest level since 2001.*

In respect of resources, the UK Government has rightly supported programmes with national impact. However, in terms of political efforts the Government has focused too much on Helmand province and given too little attention to activities which would affect Afghanistan as a whole.

The National Solidarity Programme⁶² (NSP) has been successful in engaging elected Afghan community councils in development projects. The Programme involves national and international NGOs and is led by the Afghan Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. Many NGOs are, however, considering withdrawing from the Programme: the blurring of the civil-military distinction in Afghanistan means that NGOs are increasingly targeted by insurgents where they have an association with the Afghan Government.

Theme 4: Has the MoD and/or UK Government worked effectively with the international community to adopt a Comprehensive Approach?

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (established in 2002) and UN agencies, such as UNICEF, initially had too light a footprint across Afghanistan. For example, UNAMA only established its provincial offices from around 2007. UK Government should use its position as a major funder of the UN, to expand and improve the effectiveness of UN operations in Afghanistan.

There is poor co-ordination of international donors in Afghanistan with no shared approach to the identification of gaps and balancing of resources. The lack of co-ordination increases the burdens on the Afghan Government of interacting with donors.

Theme 5: Has the MoD and/or the UK Government built the UK's capacity to engage in a Comprehensive Approach to a crisis? What more could be done?

The ability of UK Government to understand the situation in Afghanistan and liaise effectively with stakeholders, including NGOs, depends on the experience and expertise of its staff. The short duration of some postings, particularly in the military, can make it more difficult for staff to operate effectively.

Theme 6: What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might the MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?

NGO 10 see the Comprehensive Approach as blurring the distinction between military and NGO activity, making it more difficult for NGOs to operate effectively and securely.

In Afghanistan, the military's (including the PRTs') role in humanitarian and development projects blurs the distinction between military and civilian organisations. The blurring happens because:

- (i) military authorities/PRTs are working closely with some NGOs. There is a diverse range of NGOs in Afghanistan. Some NGOs (often US) have been happy to work closely with military organisations. Most UK NGOs however do not want to be seen as working in an integrated way with the military authorities;
- (ii) PRTs are directly undertaking some military and humanitarian/development projects. If military authorities are clearly associated with humanitarian and development work there is a risk that all people that undertake such activities will be seen by Afghans as part of, or closely associated with, the military. This jeopardises the safety of people working for NGOs—they can be seen as legitimate targets for insurgents (see above). Declining safety increases the risk that NGOs pull out from providing humanitarian and development activities and consequently can increase the demands on foreign governments and their military organisations.

The military's involvement in humanitarian activities is at odds with the "Guidelines for the Interaction and Coordination of Humanitarian Actors and Military Actors in Afghanistan". These Guidelines, which amongst others have been signed by the United Nations Assistance Mission and the International Security Assistance Force, state that the use of "military assets" for "humanitarian relief operations" should only be used if a number of conditions are met including:

- "there is no comparable civilian alternative";
- "to the extent possible there is civilian control over the operation"; and
- "military assets are clearly distinguished from those used for military purposes".

In a number of areas, the military have undertaken development or humanitarian operations where there are civilian alternatives.

⁶² The National Solidarity Programme (NSP) was created in 2003 by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development to develop the ability of Afghan communities to identify, plan, manage and monitor their own development projects. <http://www.nspafghanistan.org/>

Theme 7: *What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the delivery of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?*

Covered by Theme 6

Theme 8: *What are the challenges faced in moving between different stages of a Comprehensive Approach, for example from stabilisation to reconstruction?*

Question not addressed during discussions.

Theme 9: *How can local ownership for a Comprehensive Approach be established?*

Question not addressed during discussions.

Theme 10: *What lessons have been learnt from the application of the Comprehensive Approach in Iraq, Afghanistan or other countries?*

NGO 10's in-country team identified the following key actions required to improve development and stability in Afghanistan:

- (i) The International community must make a sincere commitment to state building. Action is needed to build capacity at national, provincial and district level. The international community's top down approach, which focuses on national government, will not work on its own.
- (ii) Additional support is needed for agriculture. The subsistence or employment of around 80% of Afghans depends on agriculture, and connected occupations and trades. International support for this sector has been low and relevant Afghan Government organisations at a national and local level are under resourced.
- (iii) The international community needs to build the capability and professionalism of the Afghan security forces. The international community has not provided the level of support for the security sector, especially the police, that it had promised.
- (iv) Overseas military forces need to change their emphasis. Rather than tracking down insurgents, the overriding objective of military forces should be protecting local Afghans so that they can get on with their lives.
- (v) The international community must get a much better understanding of the Afghan people so that it is better placed to design development and other programmes.

NGO 10 made the following general observations on the application of the Comprehensive Approach drawing on experience in Afghanistan and other countries:

- (i) There is a question over whether the Comprehensive Approach is wrong in principle, or whether the wrong policies have been used to implement the Comprehensive Approach in practice.
- (ii) There can be tension between who should take credit for improvements made, for example, in security and development in the host country when a Comprehensive Approach is adopted. For example, if the international community in Afghanistan takes credit for development work this can help bolster its support amongst Afghans and the populations of donor and troop contributing countries. However, this would do little to provide the Afghan government with greater legitimacy, which is a necessary condition for conferring legitimacy on the international forces in the eyes of many Afghans.
- (iii) UK Government effort needs to be co-ordinated in a way which does not subordinate the role of development. In Afghanistan, increasing levels of aid have been ring-fenced and targeted at provinces where international forces are operating at the expense of other provinces. This creates development gaps, which insurgents can exploit, and may even generate perverse incentives. Although the distribution of the UK's aid is more balanced than that of many other donors, there is no proper system for communicating commitments among donors and with the government in order to ensure that gaps do not occur.
- (iv) The Cabinet Office may not have the capacity or expertise to undertake their role of co-ordinating UK Government activity as effectively as is required. This observation is related to the previous point (under Theme 5) about high turnover of military and civilian staff in Afghanistan, and the corresponding difficulty in building knowledge and expertise.
- (v) There can be political pressure for rapid results which can be unhelpful and unachievable. The political focus on short term results can divert attention away from important longer term projects which aim to build the capability of the host country. The Stabilisation Unit's new manual on QIPS (Quick Impact Projects) is however seen as pragmatic and realistic.

APPENDIX I

CARE INTERNATIONAL UK

Paper prepared by CARE International UK (see memorandum from CARE International UK⁶³).

APPENDIX J

TEARFUND

Paper prepared by Tearfund

OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

To set the scene please provide an overview of your organisation's involvement in Iraq, Afghanistan or other areas of conflict, and engagement you have with the MoD and /or other UK departments in these conflict zones?

Tearfund is a Christian relief and development agency. We have over 40 years' experience of working in over sixty countries with local partners and through disaster management teams, supporting them to respond to the needs of local communities and to ensure that governments and international policy-makers listen to the voices of the powerless.

The Disaster Management Teams are currently operational in South Sudan and Darfur, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Afghanistan. Our operational team in Afghanistan has current field bases in Kandahar, Kapisa, Jawzjan and Kabul since 2001 with nine expatriate and 113 Afghan staff managing projects of up to £2 million. This programme has DFID funding from 2005–08 for Disaster Risk Reduction work across three provinces and from 2007–11 for innovations in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). In Afghanistan, Tearfund is a leader amongst the humanitarian community in the areas of Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction, household water treatment through BioSand filters and Community Led Total Sanitation.

Tearfund staff have contributed to Mission Training exercises for NATO as Subject Matter Experts for the civilian cells for Regional Command South. Our UK staff have provided an NGO perspective for three Commando Brigade, 19 Light Brigade and 11 Light Brigade during study weeks as they prepare to go to Helmand. Our civil focal point has attended the Peace Support Operations week at the Defence Academy in Shrivenham in 2008 and 2009 and contributed to the CIMIC course taught at Longmore Camp with Lt Col Dr Stuart Gordon.

Theme 1. What does your organisation understand by the term the "Comprehensive Approach"?

Tearfund understands the Comprehensive Approach to describe the approach taken by the MoD, DFID and FCO when approaching conflict or post conflict scenarios in which they are involved. The aim of this cross government work is to ensure collaboration and close coordination of HMG objectives, strategies, and activities in the military, development, and diplomatic spheres. The work of the Stabilisation Unit largely contributes to this as well. The work of the MoD within the Comprehensive Approach uses the language of "civil effects" that is, activities carried out with and for the civilian population and civil society that are in line with the Commanders' objectives for the mission. These include Quick Impact Projects: "hearts and minds" activities for consent winning, reconstruction of infrastructure and capacity building of government ministries including security sector reform.

Theme 2. Has the MoD and/or other UK Government effectively communicated what it understands by the Comprehensive Approach and the merits of such an approach?

Tearfund is not aware of any formal communication from the UK Government setting out the adoption of this approach. Tearfund's understanding of the Comprehensive Approach is based simply on being aware of these policy developments due to our membership of various coalition groups: NGO Military Contact Group, BOND Conflict Policy Group and British Agencies in Afghanistan Group (BAAG) etc. The merits of such an approach are little communicated and little evidence has been offered to support them. Tearfund would recommend a more concerted communication by HMG, possibly through DFID, of the benefits of the Comprehensive Approach and how they envisage NGOs and humanitarian agencies are to engage effectively.

Theme 3. Does your organisation see the Comprehensive Approach as an effective way of addressing international crises?

Tearfund recognises that there is a vacuum, especially in settings like Afghanistan, which must be filled by the building of government and political institutions. Addressing this vacuum will require coordinated security, development, and diplomatic work, and is not within the mandate or expertise of humanitarian agencies. At the same time, there is an on-going debate between military and some humanitarian agencies about the appropriate level of security needed for NGOs to operate after the 'take, hold and develop' activities of the forces and a more fundamental debate about the appropriateness of NGOs to operate in

⁶³ See Ev 136.

this way given their commitment in the Red Cross Code of Conduct “not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.” Tearfund believes that the Comprehensive Approach is a valid experiment to address the political process and bridge the gap between insecurity and security in order to create a stable environment in which to conduct humanitarian aid and development activities.

This approach needs to be closely monitored for its effectiveness and the extent to which it could severely impact on the safety, security and independence of humanitarian agencies existing operations. The close coordination of development objectives and strategies with military and diplomatic ones should not mean that humanitarian funding is limited to those areas or populations which are foreign policy priorities for the MoD and FCO. There needs to be an understanding that the aims of the British Government are not necessarily in line with the humanitarian objectives of the NGOs and therefore NGOs will not necessarily follow the military after it has “taken and held” a location. It is imperative that the proponents of the Comprehensive Approach do not see NGOs as “force multipliers” of HMG’s strategy in conflict areas.

Theme 4. Has the MoD and/or the UK Government worked effectively with the international community to adopt a Comprehensive Approach

The FCO has welcomed feedback from the BOND Conflict Policy Group on their strategy regarding the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The MoD involved in Southern Afghanistan have welcomed input into their pre deployment training. However none of this has been communicated as direct involvement in the Comprehensive Approach nor has there been, to our knowledge, a formal launch of the approach. There is an increased drive across government to provide more civilian assistance to post conflict settings in order to strengthen governance and political process with local governments such as the Government of Afghanistan. This has been widely communicated in the media.

Theme 5. Has the MoD and/or the UK Government built the UK’s capacity to engage in a Comprehensive Approach to a crisis? What more could be done?

The UK Government and they specifically have included a lot more civilian personnel in their operations in Helmand in roles such as Political Advisor and Stabilisation Advisors. The Stabilisation Unit accesses its database of Deployable Civilian Experts to fill such positions under the Cabinet Office. However the aims of these posts seem to be very foreign policy and military-led as opposed to being led by the development needs of the populations affected. Tearfund believes it is imperative that DFID be included at every stage of development of the Comprehensive Approach in order to advise the FCO and MoD of the developmental agenda and how this will contribute to a country’s recovery following a conflict.

Theme 6. What are the challenges faced by NGOs engaging in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might the MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?

There is little engagement with NGOs in the planning stages of a Comprehensive Approach outside of the classrooms of Shrivenham. To invite NGOs into the planning of the Comprehensive Approach from the DFID or FCO side would yield positive insights. However it must be remembered that NGOs need to maintain their impartiality. Neutrality is absolutely critical in order to comply with the Red Cross Code of Conduct’s commitment not “to act as instruments of government foreign policy” and to effectively prioritise on the basis of need alone. This does not mean that NGOs cannot have a healthy relationship or dialogue with government / military actors but this is not seen as collaboration or a convergence of similar objectives and opinions on this engagement will vary across the NGO sector. As a result, the most appropriate route for NGOs to engage with the planning of the Comprehensive Approach would be through DFID. There has to date been little outreach from DFID to NGOs regarding this. When planning for a Comprehensive Approach, the differentiation between the foreign policies of HMG, the British and other international forces from the humanitarian agencies at work in similar locations must be understood on all sides. Again, this does not mean that NGOs cannot have a healthy relationship, dialogue, or coordination with government and military actors, but that NGOs must retain independence in selecting the areas and populations with which they work, and that their humanitarian priorities cannot be presumed to converge with the policy priorities of the government (eg political stabilisation).

In addition, the Comprehensive Approach plan should not over-estimate the ability of humanitarian agencies to move swiftly into areas which may be considered “stabilised” for purposes of military movement about the area, but in which violence (criminal or low-level insurgent) continues to affect civilians to a significant degree. As most NGOs do not arm themselves and rely largely on their acceptance in communities for protection, their perceptions of security in an area may be very different from HMG personnel who travel armed or under armed escort. Moreover, in cases where NGOs have witnessed the withdrawal of military forces from areas once considered “held,” and the return of those areas to insurgent control, they may rightly hesitate to engage in areas newly declared to be “taken and held.”

Theme 7. What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the delivery of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might MoD / UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?

Part of the problem in addressing the different stages of a Comprehensive Approach is that it has not been explained outside of Government what the agreed stages are of the Comprehensive Approach. This makes it difficult to advise on how to overcome the challenges. It is very hard to move from a very military led set of stabilisation activities; physical infrastructural activities, capacity building of political institutions for government, to activities that will be connected to longer term development gains. This is not because such activities are not also appropriate with peace time activities but that those carrying them out will be very different and their approaches with them. Stabilisation, in a layman's understanding of it, it about influence, governance, political process, and capacity building institutions of government. As these activities are being done during the Hot Stabilisation period there needs to be close analysis of how they can be tied to longer term development and be sustainably carried out by the people who will remain in the country for a longer time than HMG's staff. This could be done through the ties made across government departments and the direct capacity building of the human resources in the civil service of the conflict affected country. Providing good management skills to personnel is a key capacity building a country for recovery post conflict.

Humanitarian agencies delivering services in areas of intense conflict such as Afghanistan must take care not to be perceived as parties to the conflict, or to be collaborating with military forces. If NGO work is publicly "claimed" by a government party to the conflict as a sign of stabilisation and victory, the odds sharply increase that the NGO will come under attack and the benefits of its work will be reduced or lost—witness the increase in volume of attacks in 2008 by insurgent forces against NGOs implementing the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) in Afghanistan. Accordingly, humanitarian NGOs whose work coincides with the Comprehensive Approach of the UK Government (and may be funded as part of that Approach) face the primary challenge of differentiating themselves in the eyes of the population from an ongoing military/counter-insurgency campaign. Whether or not HMG considers increased political stabilisation to be a de facto result of humanitarian NGO work (for example through improved health, food security, or income in a given area), that work should never be made a component of an explicit "hearts and minds" campaign, in which infrastructure or other benefits are explicitly claimed as an achievement by one of the parties to the conflict. HMG can assist NGOs by recognizing this differentiation and adopting a low profile approach to monitoring and publicizing NGO projects in conflict areas.

General insecurity is another challenge, in areas where criminality and insurgent activity pose a risk of violence to anyone, regardless of perceived affiliation. HMG can continue to assist by accepting the necessary security measures in NGO project budgets (eg staff specifically tasked with security management and analysis; employee training in security management and personal security; increased travel costs due to flights rather than road travel; communications costs such as additional satellite phones and radios; compound security measures such as blast film and razor wire; ballistic blankets and in some cases armour for project vehicles).

Theme 8. What are the challenges faced in moving between different stages of a Comprehensive Approach, for example from stabilisation to reconstruction?

It is very difficult for an agency such as Tearfund to advise on these challenges when those outside of Government have not been made fully aware of the different stages specified as constituting the Comprehensive Approach. It is very hard to move from a very military-led set of stabilisation activities (eg physical infrastructure and the capacity building of political institutions for government) to activities that will be connected to longer term development gains. This is not because such activities are irrelevant in peace time, but because those carrying them out will be very different and vary in their approaches. As many activities are being carried out during the Hot Stabilisation period, there needs to be close analysis of how they can be tied to longer term development and be sustainably carried out by the people who will remain in the conflict affected country for a longer time than HMG's staff. This could be done through the ties made across the host government departments and the direct capacity building of the human resources in the civil service of the conflict affected country. Providing good management skills to personnel is a key capacity building a country for recovery post conflict.

Theme 9. How can local ownership for a Comprehensive Approach be established?

In order to garner local ownership for a comprehensive approach in crisis situations there needs to be a clear explanation of the merits of the approach. The primacy of a military operation must be acknowledged as having serious limitations when it comes to rebuilding a society immediately after conflict or even during the 'Hot Stabilisation' period. The benefits of addressing indigenous ways of organising communities (for example through Shuras in Afghanistan), addressing reconciliation and district level governance need to be acknowledged, engaged, strengthened and used by HMG Stabilisation actors in order for the Comprehensive Approach to be valued, understood and owned locally. Greater input into the domestic security forces of police and legal institutions is needed further to the development of local armed forces. The value of developing and capacity building civil servants to run the conflict affected countries can be addressed by the Comprehensive Approach but there must be permission of those nations to design systems and institutions that are suitable for them not simply a mirror image of the UK.

Better communication is needed regarding the purpose and benefits of HMG strategy to be targeted at both local governments, down to the lowest district/provincial level, and at other civil society actors including the humanitarian aid community. There will be inherent difficulties in promoting this approach as for example the civilian casualties caused by a military operation are carried out by the same government that is providing reconstruction and development through the comprehensive approach. The local population needs to believe that HMG's involvement is for their good, their protection and the improvement of their daily lives. If this is not actually the case, or is perceived not to be the case then local ownership of the approach as a whole will be unlikely.

Theme 10. *What lessons have been learnt from the application of the Comprehensive Approach in Iraq, Afghanistan or other countries?*

It is difficult for an NGO to comment on anything learnt by government but we would encourage some research into this. A sharing of those lessons would also be welcome as the approach continues to be used and developed in areas of conflict. As an NGO engaged in disaster response, Tearfund has learnt the importance of dialogue with the military forces operating in the same environment in order to explain our organisation's mandate, our manner of working and how the work of the military and stabilisation impacts this.

APPENDIX K

WAR CHILD

Paper prepared by Mark Waddington, Chief Executive Officer and Nivi Narang, Campaigns Director, WAR CHILD

SUMMARY

This paper seeks to provide written responses to each of the questions put forward by the National Audit Office's enquiry into the Comprehensive Approach on behalf of the Defence Select Committee.

Examples from War Child's experience in the field, complimented with references from key elements of the relevant body of literature are presented.

In summary, it is War Child's view that the Comprehensive Approach is not currently effective, and that its development is confined by the dominant military agenda that underlies it. Recommendations are suggested to address this.

OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

War Child is an international award winning charity that has worked for over 15 years to help protect children, realise their rights and rebuild their lives in conflict and post conflict situations.

War Child has previously delivered major humanitarian projects, primarily emergency feeding, in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan. Our focus is now on building a protective environment for marginalised children in some of the worst conflict affected countries, including Afghanistan, DRC, Uganda and Iraq, where we remain the only international child protection organisation in the south of that country. In addition, War Child has experience of operating in Palestine, East Timor, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Rwanda.

War Child is also part of the War Child International family, which collaborates on projects to maximise the benefit of our collective efforts for children living with the effects of war. War Child International currently operates in Sudan and Sri Lanka.

War Child UK has worked in Iraq since 2003 in Thi Qar and Basrah, and in Afghanistan since 2001 in Herat.

War Child works with some of the most marginalised people in these countries—children who are affected simultaneously by insecurity, extreme poverty and social exclusion. They are often overlooked and hard to reach. They include street children, children in prison, child soldiers and child mothers.

“The recruitment of children as suicide bombers is an increasing threat and often involves significant cajoling and trickery. UNICEF indicates that children as young as six have been recruited to carry out such attacks. Many of these children are from destitute families in volatile regions of the country and are more easily persuaded to join the insurgents for protection.”

It is children like this that War Child is working with in Iraq.

Our work, however, is not limited to working with children. We work with families, local government, national ministries, the judiciary, the police, the education system, local religious organisations and local community based organisations as well as with other NGOs. It is through the relationships we build with these groups as well as with the local staff we employ in these locations that we have a deep understanding of the context on the ground, the needs and views of communities, their local structures and cultures.

We also work closely with DFID and the FCO, both of which have funded work in Afghanistan and DRC respectively. We have liaised with the MoD directly and via the Humanitarian Office for Coordination in Kuwait.

Theme 1: *From a UK perspective, what does your organisation understand by the term “Comprehensive Approach”?*

War Child understands that the Comprehensive Approach refers to an integrated approach across relevant government, public and possibly private sector and/or non-governmental agencies for the purpose of assessing, planning and implementing crisis management and peace support operations.

War Child understands that its primary elements:

- Political;
- Economic;
- Military; and
- Humanitarian.

We understand that this is currently being driven by the MoD. This clearly implies a dominant military agenda, which reflects War Child’s experiences on the ground.

Theme 2: *Has the MoD and/or the UK Government effectively communicated what it understands by the Comprehensive Approach and the merits of such an approach?*

No.

War Child operates in both Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as in DRC and Uganda. We routinely work through civil-military liaison organs. Our staff have worked in numerous conflict and post conflict environments, including Kosovo, Bosnia, Gaza, East Timor, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Liberia, Rwanda and so on. Our advocacy team works closely with UK Government departments as well as with politicians. However, no staff member has heard of the Comprehensive Approach.

In seeking to understand what the Comprehensive Approach is, the primary source documents we found were:

- The Joint Discussion note 4/05, January 2006, promulgated as directed by the Chiefs of Staff. The definition of the Comprehensive Approach provided by this document is, at best, vague and open to a variety of interpretations. As a means of communicating the concept it is poorly written and has very little substance.
- The Stabilisation Unit’s “core script” on the Comprehensive Approach. This paper scopes out a clearer purpose, with a focus on joined up planning. However, it is not a paper that would be accessible unless a specific search was being made on the Comprehensive Approach. In other words, you would have to know about the Comprehensive Approach before being able to have found this paper.

Both documents are very limited in terms of communicating the merits of a Comprehensive Approach:

- There is no reference to evidence, success or failures, or even an example of how the Comprehensive Approach has or might be employed in practise.
- There are huge gaps, including:
 - how the Comprehensive Approach might be used to prevent conflict occurring in the first place, and
 - the duration of commitment of the Comprehensive Approach,
- There is no consideration of a cross-government capability to deliver it.
- There is only a limited assessment regarding the status of its development as a concept and the challenges to its practical implementation.

A brief online search yielded a wider, specialist narrative on the Comprehensive Approach, such as conference reports and official military documents, which provided a fragmented body of literature. This body of literature presents significant inconsistencies regarding the definition and purpose of the Comprehensive Approach, which raise serious concerns for its humanitarian intentions on the one hand, and the transparency of interests underlying its use in any given situation on the other.

So, there does not appear to have been any substantive effort by the MoD and/or UK Government to communicate the concept of the Comprehensive Approach, the status of its development, an acknowledgement of current limitations and/or gaps in its understanding to anyone other than some internal stakeholders.

Theme 3: *Does your organisation see the Comprehensive Approach as an effective way of addressing international crises?*

There are potentially several very significant positives that might be gained through the use of a Comprehensive Approach in addressing international crises:

- It recognises the links between humanitarian/development, political and economic issues to security.

-
- It creates improved conditions for a more inclusive consultation of key stakeholders in a way that could make an intervention more responsive to the needs of civilians on the ground.
 - It improves the potential for having clearer and more transparent objectives for an intervention, which would enable non-state actors such as NGOs to more effectively position themselves with regard to humanitarian, development and advocacy needs, while having been explicit about intent the MoD and/or UK Government could be more robustly held to account.
 - It creates the possibility of a civilian led intervention with military elements, rather than an intervention that is defined and led primarily on military terms.
 - It presents the opportunity to establish the conditions in which conflict can be prevented through the use of economic and political assets alongside the option of military force in supporting governments which legitimately and to the best of their capability represent the interests of civilians, but which are at risk of coups, insurgencies or rebellion (see the work of Paul Collier in *War, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*, 2009, Bodley Head).

However, according to Para 103 of the Joint Discussion note 4/05, “the CA is a conceptual framework which could be used to reinvigorate the existing, Cabinet Office-led approach to coordinating the objectives and activities of Government Departments in identifying, analysing, planning and executing national responses to complex situations.”

It is therefore by definition a whole government approach and so is inherently politically motivated. This is inevitable and necessary. However, International Humanitarian Law dictates that humanitarian assistance, which is currently seen as an element of the Comprehensive Approach, should be given regardless of the political affiliation of a person, their ethnicity, religion and so on. So while there may be alignment with humanitarian objectives from time to time, the delivery of humanitarian action cannot remain independent of government policy wherever it falls within the scope of the Comprehensive Approach.

If humanitarian action is sourced in a “whole government” owned strategy and subsequently delivered through a Comprehensive Approach then it is not impartial. Consequently, the humanitarian delivery agents will not be perceived to be neutral within a conflict or post-conflict situation.

Furthermore, the Comprehensive Approach is established within the Joint Discussion Document as the “more extensive employment of the Effects Based Approach”⁶⁴, that is, its military aspect. The Comprehensive Approach is, therefore, fundamentally seen through a military lens and driven by a military agenda.

Four examples of a military dominance within the comprehensive approach are given below:

1. Language use and misuse is at the heart of much of the confusion surrounding civil-military relations. During the Kosovo crisis, NATO’s Chief Press Officer made reference to “humanitarian bombing” and a “humanitarian war”. War Child believe that the term “humanitarian” should not be used to describe any military operations.
2. Military sources close to War Child have stated that senior military personnel are referring to the campaign in Iraq as the “British defeat in Iraq”, indicating two things:
 - 2.1 The comprehensive approach has failed.
 - 2.2 Couching the description in the language of defeat (and by default, victory) is not consistent with the Stabilisation Unit’s paper on the Comprehensive Approach.
3. ISAF have recently been distributing teddy bears to the local population (via kindergartens, children’s centres and orphanages) in Herat, Western Afghanistan, which feature the ISAF logo and words along the lines of “caring for the Afghan people”. This attempt to behave as an NGO and encourage goodwill amongst the community following military action is hugely detrimental to War Child and other NGOs. The lack of distinction between NGOs and the military is likely to occur amongst ordinary people, which will result in lack of goodwill, lack of trust and lack of security of NGOs.
4. Within the frame of a military agenda, the Comprehensive Approach has been neither able to deliver aid in the volumes required nor without shaping it according to military and political interests:
 - Since 2001, \$25 billion has been spent in Afghanistan building local security forces. An equal amount was pledged in aid but only \$15 billion has been delivered. Of that \$15 billion, 40% has flowed back to the donor countries through contractors and other foreign staff. In the mean time, the security situation continues to deteriorate.
 - Much of the money “follows the conflict”, It is disbursed in areas where the conflict is fiercest, suggesting it is being used to achieve military and political aims rather than the humanitarian or development needs of people.

⁶⁴ The Effects Based Approach is defined as the “the way of thinking and specific processes that, together, enable the integration and effectiveness of the military contribution within a Comprehensive Approach”.

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- Because much of the aid flow into Afghanistan is tied to a military two-thirds of assistance bypasses the Afghan government, which raises serious question marks over the timing of efforts to support the establishment of an elected government.
 - Consequently, there is poor donor coordination and communication, and so the Afghan government does not know how 1/3 of the aid disbursed since 2001—\$5 billion—has actually been spent. This brings into question accountability to Afghan civilians as well as to the western, tax-paying public.

ACBAR, Aid Effectiveness in Afghanistan, 2008

Because humanitarian assistance delivered within the Comprehensive Approach has an inherently political basis (not least as a result of the military drivers) its delivery will be subject to partiality, and there will be a lack of neutrality on the ground. Consequently, there are significant implications for:

- Access to those civilians who require humanitarian assistance.
- The space independent humanitarian actors have to operate within, as defined by the parameters of impartiality, neutrality and independence and, therefore, capability to deliver.
- The security of independent humanitarian agencies as a result of humanitarian actions being perceived as non-neutral.

This leads to a number of unanswered questions:

- Where does the military role start and end within a Comprehensive Approach?
- How does the military role relate to the humanitarian role?
- How are local actors/NGOs involved in a Comprehensive Approach, and how are prospective beneficiaries able to input?
- Are all agencies/actors “in-theatre” perceived as assets within the Comprehensive Approach and, if so, what does this mean for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the very people who need it?
- How can the integrity of “campaign authority”⁶⁵ within the Comprehensive Approach be maintained given the dominance of the Effects Based Approach?
- To what extent are military actors able and/or willing to work with other actors toward a common humanitarian language that does not utilise or spin alternative meanings in order to cloak the negative consequences of military actions, or service an agenda that is not always reconcilable with humanitarian work?

These are all questions which need answering in the planning phase of a Comprehensive Approach for a specific crisis and then reviewing throughout the delivery of it. Full transparency regarding the answers to these questions will be vital to ensure that the purpose of a Comprehensive Approach is fully understood and so that the key actors can be held to account for it. It is on this basis that more effective coordination with independent actors will be enabled and its legitimacy more deeply rooted among civilians. And so finding the answers to these questions must involve the consultation of civilians, their organisations and NGOs.

In the mean time, within the frame of a Comprehensive Approach people are perceived as objects, the vessels of attitude and motivation, the holders of hearts and minds, allies or enemies. They are not perceived, as they would be through an impartial humanitarian lens, as human beings with rights, the actual subjects of a humanitarian intervention. Consequently, within the four primary elements of the Comprehensive Approach—political, economic, military and humanitarian—the humanitarian needs of people play a muted fourth fiddle.

Thus, humanitarian action is likely to serve the political, economic and military objectives of foreign policy rather than the requirements of international law, especially international humanitarian law. This closes the loop in a way that creates a partial, non-neutral frame for humanitarian assistance that is not always in the interests of those who need help.

Humanitarian assistance is one of the St Petersburg Tasks that form the mandate of the EU’s Rapid Reaction Force. There are major concerns about the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance when delivered by the military within the frame of a Comprehensive Approach. For example:

- Aid delivered by the military is often short term and unsustainable. For example, during the Rwandan crisis British forces established an army field hospital which was open for only six weeks, which they demolished during a serious Shigella outbreak.
- Also during the Rwandan crisis, the RAF quoted cargo rates for the transport of humanitarian supplies six times higher than those of a civilian airline.

⁶⁵ Campaign Authority is “an amalgam of 4 interdependent factors: the perceived legitimacy of the international mandate; the perceived legitimacy of the authority of those conducting operations; the degree to which factions, local populations and other actors subjugate themselves to the authority of those conducting operations; and the degree to which the activities of those conducting operations meet the expectations of factions, local populations and others”. Joint Discussion Note 4/05.

- In Afghanistan, the US Army spent \$40m on food airdrops weighing 6,000 tonnes, equivalent to \$7.50 per Kg. This compared with the World Food Programme's average of \$0.20 per Kg.
- Also in Afghanistan, the food packets air dropped by the US military were the same colour as cluster bombs, which they also dropped in over 235 locations.
- Most armies are not equipped to provide health services for civilians. They are geared up to provide medical care to a predominantly male, adult, healthy population. However, 80% of all displaced people are women and children.

Jane Barry with Anna Jefferys, January 2002,
HPN Network Paper,
Overseas Development Institute

It is worth noting that humanitarian aid is not limited to food drops and field hospitals. It has crucial social elements that are linked to both food security and health, but which are also wider in scope such as child protection and transitional justice. Neither the army nor DFID have this type of expertise. For an NGO to do this work under the auspices of a Comprehensive Approach would create challenges of access, security and the actual humanitarian space required to ensure all the civilians in need were assisted regardless of their ethnicity, religion, age or gender.

Humanitarian assistance delivered through a Comprehensive Approach diverts funds away from the established humanitarian aid architecture. This prevents independent humanitarian actors from doing their job effectively and so establishes the conditions in which they will fail. Consequently, a pretext is provided for humanitarian assistance to be delivered through a Comprehensive Approach (rather than through independent humanitarian actors) and the shaping of it by political and military interests.

For example, in Kosovo only 3.5% of total funding from the top six EU contributors went to UNHCR. In overstepping UNHCR's mandate and bypassing UNHCR's role as coordinator, governments unilaterally (and through NATO) started to run the humanitarian operation.

Schenkenberg, E. Sept 2001, NGOs must seriously reflect on their roles following the Kosovo refugee crisis. Focus: Balkans. www.oneworld.org/voice/crisis.html

Finally, whenever military actors are involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, very little effort is made to learn and evaluate effectiveness.

For example, feedback from field staff on NATO's Response Force involvement in the response to the Pakistan earthquake raised concerns "about mission creep which occurred with NATO contingents getting involved . . . in rehabilitation and other longer term programmes, which could have been led by civilian agencies. The NATO deployment also became politically controversial in Pakistan; leading to the expedited withdrawal of NATO troops. To date, no surveys have been conducted to assess the implications of NATO involvement in the flood response for perceptions of International NGOs, longer term rehabilitation assistance and humanitarian space. Furthermore, despite the wider investment in "humanitarian reform", policy makers also appear deaf to proposals that donor nations might resource alternative civilian options for providing such air-lift capacity."

NGO Seminar on Civil-Military Relations, February 2008, VOICE

Theme 4: Has the MoD and/or UK Government worked effectively with the international community to adopt a Comprehensive Approach?

In the Joint Discussion Document and the Stabilisation Unit's paper on the Comprehensive Approach there is no consideration of how adopting the Comprehensive Approach will require the buy-in and commitment, as well as capability development among other nations, not least NATO and EU member states.

As a consequence, there appear to be significant inconsistencies across a variety of key international actors.

For example, the US military's Army Modernisation Strategy establishes the Comprehensive Approach as a means of ensuring full spectrum dominance. This can be reasonably interpreted as total victory (see p.12 of http://downloads.army.mil/docs/08modplan/Army_Mod_Strat_2008.pdf), which is not consistent with statements by the UK Government's Stabilisation Unit core script on the Comprehensive Approach:

"The term "success" is now supplanting the term "victory" in conflict-related operations, even those in which military force is deployed and encompasses the much wider requirement to ensure that the object of our engagement is left in a viable condition—politically, economically, socially and militarily."

This leads to a cloaking of vying interests and creates distrust, conflicting interpretations of key terms and inevitably, a lack of coordination with regard to humanitarian activity. Consequently, humanitarian activities become even more vulnerable to exploitation by political and military requirements, threatening the core parameters of humanitarian space, not least impartiality and neutrality.

This has been starkly illustrated during the course of 2008 in Afghanistan where the consequences of military activities on civilians do not appear to have been considered as a particular factor in working effectively across the international community's efforts.

High levels of civilian casualties undermine the achievement of the objectives and/or strategic aim of the Comprehensive Approach. With this in mind, neither the MoD nor any other element of the UK Government in Afghanistan has sought to monitor the excess mortality of Afghan civilians as a result of the occupation, nor has this been championed as a necessity to ensure informed policy and decision making within the delivery of the Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan. Therefore, there have only been limited efforts to mitigate the consequences of military activity on civilians across the international community, which challenges the local perception of legitimacy and so undermines the Campaign Authority element of the Comprehensive Approach:

- “. . . it is virtually impossible to get a clear and uncontested account of Afghan civilian deaths . . . No organisation has undertaken sustained and consistent data gathering and presentation, and so there is no agreed authoritative record, nor any widely respected body able to authenticate future claims to such authority.”⁶⁶
- “UNAMA Human Rights recorded a total of 2,118 civilian casualties between 1 January and 31 December 2008. This figure represents an increase of almost 40% on the 1523 civilian deaths recorded in the year of 2007. The 2008 civilian death toll is thus the highest of any year since the end of major hostilities which resulted in the demise of the Taliban regime at the end of 2001. Of the 2,118 casualties reported in 2008, 1,160 (55%) were attributed to antigovernment elements (AGEs) and 828 (39%) to pro-government forces. The remaining 130 (6%) could not be attributed to any of the conflicting parties since, for example, some civilians died as a result of cross-fire or were killed by unexploded ordnance.”⁶⁷
- “In 2007 Afghan security forces and IMF [International Military Forces] supporting the Government in Afghanistan were responsible for 629 (or 41%) of the total civilian casualties recorded. At around 39% of total civilian casualties, the relative proportion of deaths attributed to pro-government forces remained relatively stable for 2008. However, at 828, the actual number of recorded noncombatant deaths caused by pro-government forces amounts to a 31% increase over the deaths recorded in 2007. This increase occurred notwithstanding various measures introduced by the IMF to reduce the impact of the war on civilians.”⁶⁸

Theme 5: Has the MoD and/or the UK Government built the UK's capacity to engage in a Comprehensive Approach to a crisis? What more could be done?

No

Because:

- A truly comprehensive civilian agency is not in place nor capable of leading the planning or delivery of a Comprehensive Approach;
- The lack of DFID's institutional muscle to influence outcomes in a Comprehensive Approach. If DFID were to be made a part of the FCO this would have catastrophic consequences for the department's capability to champion the importance of humanitarian and development issues outside a military agenda, thereby significantly limiting the scope of a Comprehensive Approach; and
- of the limiting attitude of the military.

For example, Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely, Director of the UK Defence Academy and, therefore, ultimately responsible for the training of all military personnel, limited the purpose of a Comprehensive Approach to “driving a wedge between the insurgent and the people”.

US Government Counter-Insurgency Conference, Washington, 28–29 September 2006

- The focus on crisis management only and not prevention, or post-crisis follow up.
- Lack of capability to consult and genuinely enrol the support of local stakeholders.
- Inadequate commitment of humanitarian resources.

⁶⁶ John Sloboda, *The Need to Acquire Accurate Casualty Records in NATO Operations*, Oxford Research Group, May 2009.

⁶⁷ United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, Human Rights Unit Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, 2008.

⁶⁸ United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, Human Rights Unit Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, 2008.

Theme 6: *What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the planning of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might the MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?*

The current decision making architecture utilised throughout the Comprehensive Approach is very difficult to penetrate. Therefore, the potential of NGOs to influence the planning of the Comprehensive Approach is negligible.

For example, the federal and decentralised structure of NATO operations in places like Afghanistan means that trying to engage in planning is challenging and often fragmented. “Many of the fundamental questions regarding civil military interaction in Afghanistan, like the military’s involvement in development and reconstruction activities, are decided upon at a political level. Debates between NGOs and junior military staff and policy makers at the working-group level have little impact on these decisions.”⁶⁹ This massively constrains NGOs ability to engage in planning.

Even where NGOs are able to engage with planning processes, it is rarely a meaningful exercise and can be obscured by vested military interests.

For example, without exception every meeting held by War Child staff with ISAF on security trends in Afghanistan have been on a one to one basis, in order to promote confidence, candour and transparency. In all cases, including during 2008, War Child was specifically told that the security situation in Afghanistan was improving. This calls into question the point of actually seeking to use resources in engaging the planning process in a comprehensive approach if it is going to be predicated by the avoidance of vital facts for the purpose of portraying a more positive situation than actually exists. It also undermines confidence in the integrity of information shared.

Theme 7: *What are the challenges faced by NGOs in engaging in the delivery of a Comprehensive Approach to a particular crisis? How might the MoD/UK Government assist NGOs in addressing these challenges?*

Because NGOs are unable to influence the planning of a Comprehensive Approach, the effects on delivery are likely to be catastrophic.

Although NGOs are, for the most part, the primary champions of civilian consultation, inclusion and rights—the escalation in the number of deaths, kidnappings and intimidation of humanitarian workers,⁷⁰ has massively affected humanitarian access to large numbers of people in Afghanistan thereby compounding existing challenges to civilians. This is a huge problem to NGOs and is, in part, attributable to their perceived and sometimes actual engagement with the Comprehensive Approach.

In Afghanistan, the Comprehensive Approach is led by military interests and objectives. It is not, therefore, balanced, based on the needs of local civilian populations, and so lacks legitimacy in the eyes of Afghans. Consequently, security continues to deteriorate nationally.

Human Rights Watch raises “concerns as to whether the attacking forces acted in accordance with their obligation under the laws of war to exercise ‘constant care to spare the civilian population’ and take ‘all feasible precautions’” to minimize loss of civilian life.”

“There has been a massive and unprecedented surge in the use of airpower in Afghanistan in 2008. In response to increased insurgent activity, twice as many tons of bombs were dropped in 2007 than in 2006. In 2008, the pace has increased: in the months of June and July alone the US dropped approximately as much as it did in all of 2006. Without improvements in planning, intelligence, targeting, and identifying civilian populations, the massive use of airpower in Afghanistan will continue to lead to unacceptably high civilian casualties.”

“NATO lawyers involved in investigating? airstrikes told Human Rights Watch that in some TIC [Troops in Contact] situations in which airstrikes have been called in, US and NATO forces did not know who was in the area they were bombing. Civilian casualties increase when forces on the ground do not have a clear picture of the location and number of combatants and civilians in an area. Such gaps in knowledge, when combined with fear and the ‘fog of war’ at times mean that forces resort to airstrikes when options less likely to cause civilian loss are available.”

“Air-strikes remain responsible for the largest percentage of civilian deaths attributed to pro-government forces. UNAMA recorded 552 civilian casualties of this nature in 2008. This constitutes 64% of the 828 non-combatant deaths attributed to actions by pro-government forces in 2008, and 26% of all civilians killed, as a result of armed conflict in 2008. Nighttime raids, and ‘force protection incidents’ which sometimes result in death and injury to civilians, are of continuing concern. Also of concern is the transparency and independence of procedures of

⁶⁹ NGO Seminar On Civil-Military Relations. Feb, 2008. VOICE.

⁷⁰ “Aid agencies have long criticised Western troops in Afghanistan and Iraq for carrying out small development projects, “blurring the lines” between military and humanitarian actors. For instance, the Taliban issued a statement after killing four aid workers in Afghanistan on 13 August (2008), accusing them of working for “foreign invader forces”. An article by Humanitarian Relief on a report by the centre for international Cooperation and the Overseas Development Institute (see http://humanitarianrelief.change.org/blog/view/attacks_against_aid_workers)

inquiry into civilian casualties by the Afghan Government and the IMF [International Military Forces] ...and the placement of military bases in urban and other areas with high concentrations of civilians which have subsequently become targets of insurgent attacks.”

Troops in Contact: Airstrikes and Civilian Deaths in Afghanistan.

Human Rights Watch, 2008

The delivery of NGOs’ humanitarian and development efforts are greatly compromised in Iraq due to the lack of funding available. This has been acknowledged by several members of a coalition of NGOs who work together to advocate for Iraq. A recent War Child Iraq Appeal provides an example of how War Child believes the current weak Comprehensive Approach in Iraq has affected our funding. Our appeal was launched to raise money for children affected by the war in Iraq. Despite having a significant communication campaign⁷¹ we only raised tiny amount of money from the public. We believe that the dominance of MoD messages in the media could have contributed to this. In addition to government messaging about the urgency of military operation, if DFID had given equal priority to communicating the reality for civilians on the ground—their poverty, displacement, lack of access to basic services, etc, the public may have been persuaded that the need to donate to children in Iraq was important.

Aid provided to fragile states rarely lasts long enough to help stabilise a country/region after conflict. Development investment is not always forthcoming due to the fear that conflict will resume or that conflict is universal. This is known as the conflict trap—the less development, the more chance of conflict.⁷² Similarly, the higher the chance of conflict, the lower the chance of development. The huge resource gap for post-conflict situations affects many NGOs, including War Child.

When NGOs apply for funding, we are asked to provide evidence of the problems we describe. There is a dearth of data about communities in conflict locations, partly because of security issues but also due to a lack of commitment to invest in obtaining it. This gap in information affects not only War Child’s ability to raise much needed money, but also the understanding and acknowledgement of specific issues on the ground. These combined issues have a significant affect on the delivery of humanitarian and development programmes.

The stabilisation unit’s description of the Comprehensive Approach mentions the need for “state-building” A NATO article acknowledges this and the need for building institutions including the judiciary and police.

“Experience in Afghanistan and the Balkans has demonstrated the importance of contributing to the International Community’s Comprehensive Approach for the success of operations, which are increasingly of an integrated civilian-military character. NATO is therefore trying to build closer partnerships with other international organizations that have experience and skills in areas such as institution building, development, governance, judiciary and police”

(http://www.nato.int/cps/uk/natolive/topics_51633.htm)

The delivery of War Child’s work on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan is often hindered by the judiciary and police, who are more frequently a cause rather than a solution to the problem. For example War Child’s experience of the weak judiciary in Afghanistan includes witnessing the impunity for perpetrators of child abuse and children being kept in prison alongside adults, often for crimes they have not committed. Similarly War Child has evidence of a weak police. Rather than protecting children, the police in countries including Iraq and Afghanistan often display brutality to street children.

For the UK government to assist NGOs in addressing this problem, there needs to be a greater emphasis on building the capacity of institutions such as the judiciary and police, which would include training on human rights, child rights, juvenile justice, etc.

Theme 8: *What are the challenges faced in moving between different stages of a Comprehensive Approach, for example from stabilisation to reconstruction?*

The primary challenge is that military actors do not know how to do this.

Firstly, the humanitarian sector has learned from decades of experience that stabilisation—relief—reconstruction—rehabilitation—development is not a sequential continuum. These elements are inter-dependent and often occur concurrently.

Secondly, many civilians already have coping strategies with regard to each of these elements. To impose solutions without recognition of this can undermine these often life saving coping strategies. For the most part, military actors take charge, define problems and contrive solutions with little or no consultation. This further undermines the inter-dependence of these elements. Without investment in people and their ability to address their own humanitarian needs, even administer support given to them, dependency will be inevitable and sustainability will not have a chance.

⁷¹ through gigs hosted by high profile celebrities, national TV advertising and radio coverage across Europe.

⁷² For example see Collier, *The Bottom Billion*.

Thirdly, the military agenda which dominates during the conflict/stabilisation elements of a Comprehensive Approach have long term consequences for the way in which humanitarian actors are perceived by civilians, which can create huge challenges to legitimacy, participation and effective aid delivery.

For example, NGOs were identified as “force extenders” under Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, which hugely compromised perceptions of NGO neutrality and led to reduced access to civilian populations and a massive increase in security risks in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Fourthly, the way in which assistance is delivered is usually as important as the substance of the assistance itself.

Alice Thomson reporting from Afghanistan in *The Telegraph* noted that:

“These people don’t just need a few TV dinners that might land on their heads (ie air drops). They need water—impossible to drop from the air. They require medicine, but also someone to administer it; oral rehydration tablets for cholera; tents to keep out the snow; vaccination against measles; therapeutic feeding for malnourished babies; millions of blankets. In Herat last winter, 500 children died from hypothermia in temperatures of -25C and that was before the war started.”

Theme 9: *How can local ownership of a Comprehensive Approach be established?*

The Comprehensive Approach is defined in the Joint Discussion document as: Commonly understood principles and collaborative processes that enhance the likelihood of favourable and enduring outcomes within a particular situation.

If the Comprehensive Approach is to be an effective way of addressing international crises for civilian populations, then we have to understand its definition more clearly and ask the following questions.

Who decides:

- What the common principles are?
- Which collaborative processes will enhance the likelihood of favourable and enduring outcomes?
- What the favourable and enduring outcomes should be?
- Who they should benefit?
- When and where the Comprehensive Approach should be used?
- How long it should be employed?

For the most part, civilians are denied a voice in helping to shape these fundamental principles in any given situation where a Comprehensive Approach is used, thereby denying it the traction it needs to gain local legitimacy and support.

In order to enable local influence and ultimately support of a Comprehensive Approach participatory, field based surveys should be undertaken in advance of any military action with civilians, civil society and other key stake holders in order to assess the:

- costs and benefits;
- likely impact over the short and long term, with particular regard to civilians;
- cultural appropriateness;
- likely levels of support and participation;
- implications for local economic, political or social structures;
- favourable outcome options and who they are likely to benefit
- strategies that will enable independent, impartial and neutral delivery of humanitarian assistance;
- sustainability; and
- potential alternative solutions to military action.

Ultimately, the success of a Comprehensive Approach will be defined by the ability to enrol, engage and genuinely work with local stakeholders, and in War Child’s experience, this will be based on the capability and support of civil society. Without exception, in all the countries War Child has operated civil society has established that it is best placed to engage, franchise and enable the genuine participation of civilians in humanitarian and development programming. Unless there is investment in the conditions to strengthen civil society—locally and internationally—many of the structures through which information, representation and accountability are enabled will remain weak. This will have a knock-on effect on the effectiveness of attempts to promote representation, relevance and governance throughout the course of a crisis intervention and its follow up. Furthermore, civil society organisations are, to varying degrees,

independent. Many have the specialised skills required to deliver humanitarian assistance effectively. Limited investment in the conditions required to support civil society, therefore, limits the extent of delivery of impartial humanitarian assistance.

The role that DFID has to play in enabling this is vital. DFID should, therefore, be the primary actor in a UK Government Comprehensive Approach.

Theme 10: *What lessons have been learnt from the application of the Comprehensive Approach in Iraq, Afghanistan or other countries?*

Based on War Child's understanding and experiences of working in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as elsewhere, we are proposing a 16 point plan that might enable the Comprehensive Approach to become effective in addressing international crises:

1. The Comprehensive Approach narrative needs to be realigned with a focus on civilians and their humanitarian and economic needs.
2. It should not be limited to response, but should also be employed in crisis prevention efforts.
3. Wherever the Comprehensive Approach is employed, the overall aim and objectives must be clearly spelled out and comply with International Law and be mandated by the relevant authorities such as the UN.
4. All military actors must be ultimately responsible to a civilian command architecture within a Comprehensive Approach.
5. Military action should only be countenanced if:
 - all peaceful methods of resolution have been exhausted,
 - protection by the controlling authorities have demonstrably failed,
 - the overall aim and objectives of the Comprehensive Approach in any intervention must be clearly spelled out, comply with International Law and be mandated by the relevant international authorities such as the UN,
 - there is proportionality to the protection needs of civilians at risk, and
 - there is accountability to the UN.
6. The military should, if at all possible, not get involved in humanitarian aid efforts. If military actors must get involved, this should be in support of a lead civilian agency, where the military stays in the background. Only as a last resort should the military get directly involved in aid delivery, and only if the humanitarian assistance process fails (but not if this is as a result of funds and other resources being diverted from humanitarian agencies to military and other state delivery agents). In such circumstances the military should have a clear plan of what, why, how and the duration their involvement, and a clear strategy to hand over operations at the earliest possible time to the relevant agency.
7. Clear lines need to be drawn between independent humanitarian actors and those actors which are subject to the mandate of a Comprehensive Approach. On this basis, the criteria for dialogue to promote coordination and, where appropriate, information sharing can be developed and compliance monitored.
8. The probability of conflict relapse after a military intervention is high and so the Comprehensive Approach must ensure a long term commitment. A Comprehensive Approach would mean that even if the military leave, other relevant government departments would remain active until the location in question is economically, socially and politically stable.
9. A common language (with commonly shared meanings) must be developed between humanitarian and military actors.
10. A Comprehensive Approach and its core objectives must mean the same thing to all actors involved within it, especially within multi-lateral initiatives.
11. A genuinely independent monitoring and evaluation capability must be established to evaluate and bear witness to the effects of military actions on civilians and the delivery of humanitarian assistance (directly or indirectly) within a Comprehensive Approach.
12. Official monitoring and publication of the primary impact of the Comprehensive Approach must be undertaken. This must include surveying excess mortality, and must conform to internationally established epidemiological standards. Vitally, the data in such surveys must be disaggregated by age and gender.
13. One of the essential ingredients for a successful Comprehensive Approach must be equal power across key UK Government and/or international "departments". In the UK this would include DFID, MoD and the FCO. DFID does not currently have the mandate to fundamentally influence the planning and delivery of a Comprehensive Approach. A Comprehensive Approach must, therefore, ensure that DFID (and its UN agency equivalents on the international stage) has the institutional muscle to affect outcomes positively.
14. The Comprehensive Approach needs to be developed as an international norm. In order to be effective it must be adopted internationally, not least by the likes of NATO, the EU, UN and especially by the US.

15. Investment in the conditions to strengthen civil society, both locally and internationally. This is a vital part of crisis prevention as well as crisis preparedness. This must be undertaken in a way that secures the integrity of civil society's independence, impartiality and neutrality.

16. Finally, and crucially, children comprise more than 50% of all people living in failed and fragile states, the countries most vulnerable to the type of crisis that might require a Comprehensive Approach intervention. The status of children is profoundly linked to the status of women.

Research by the likes of the ODI and IDS indicates that children are the primary demographic structure through which poverty is transmitted across generations. Children stunted by malnutrition now, and children unable to go to school now equates to drastically reduced development prospects for a country in years to come. If a Comprehensive Approach is to be successful, therefore, it must be aligned with the long term conditions required to promote the development of children and women. Otherwise, the likelihood of a crisis relapse during a prolonged post-conflict period will dramatically increase.

This can best be achieved by utilising a rights based framework throughout the planning and delivery narrative of a Comprehensive Approach. Reference to key treaties and conventions, such as Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and so on, will need to be a central part of this narrative. This will provide a deeper human substance to a Comprehensive Approach in a way that makes it more meaningful to both civilian populations as well as to UK tax payers, and is more likely to result in its success thereby providing value for money.

16 October 2009

Memorandum from the British Red Cross

BACKGROUND ON THE BRITISH RED CROSS

The British Red Cross helps people in crisis, whoever and wherever they are. We are part of a global network of volunteer based organisations that respond to conflicts and natural disasters and assist people in crisis. We enable vulnerable people in the UK and abroad to prepare for and respond to emergencies in their own communities. And when the crisis is over, we help them to recover and move on with their lives.

The British Red Cross (BRC) is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement), which comprises:

- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC),
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the Federation), and
- 186 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide.

THE BRITISH RED CROSS RESPONSE TO THE INQUIRY

Key points

- It is vital that humanitarian organisations continue to be able to advocate for and dispense neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian aid to people in crisis on both sides of ideological and geographical divides, irrespective of longer-term goals such as peace, security and development.
- While the benefits of a comprehensive approach, with joint planning between different UK Departments, are clear, neutral humanitarian organisations must be allowed to maintain a clear separation from any political or military agenda the British Government may be pursuing.
- The British Government should reaffirm its recognition of the unique nature of neutral and independent humanitarian action, and a clear “division of labour” between humanitarian and military actors with understanding and clarification regarding mandates, roles and responsibilities.
- The British Government should also reaffirm the special status and role of components of the Movement, in particular, of National Societies, such as the British Red Cross, as auxiliaries to the public authorities of their respective countries in the humanitarian field. This has both benefits and challenges in the context of the Comprehensive Approach.

Introduction

The press notice sets out the Inquiry's focus on how far ‘UK military and non-military agencies work effectively through a comprehensive approach with “commonly understood principles and collaborative processes that enhance the likelihood of favourable and enduring outcomes within a particular situation.”’ (DSC press notice, 25 March 2009)

The Comprehensive Approach, including joint planning and working across government departments, has clear operational and strategic benefits. Likewise the continuing work of the Stabilisation Unit (SU), and the engagement of SU, MoD, DFID, and FCO personnel with the NGO-Military Contact Group, a

group chaired and hosted by BRC which meets quarterly, with the express purpose of promoting dialogue and understanding, and exchange of information between the UK armed forces, government and agencies including the ICRC.

However, it is crucial that this improved political and military coordination does not seek to co-opt neutral and impartial humanitarian agency activities, which must remain clearly distinct from broader political or military objectives. Experience from humanitarian operations has shown that blurring this distinction can have grave consequences for acceptance by and access to affected populations, and the security both of aid workers and, critically, the people they seek to help.

Neutral and independent humanitarian action

Humanitarian organisations including the Red Cross adhere to principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality to provide aid strictly on the basis of need, without regard to other objectives and interests; the Movement refers to this as Neutral and Independent Humanitarian Action (NIHA).

In practice, neutrality is a key tool, which can enable humanitarian agencies to operate effectively on humanitarian issues across all sides in a conflict, and to gain access to people in crisis regardless of geographic or ideological boundaries. This enables humanitarian agencies to work in areas others cannot access, such as Baluchistan in Pakistan, in rural areas of Darfur, and in the Vanni in Sri Lanka.

The MoD acknowledge the need for humanitarian agencies to establish and maintain “humanitarian space” in which to operate and the distinction between the role of humanitarian actors and that of the military; and require commanders to disseminate these concepts and manage relationships accordingly. (JDP 3-90, April 2006) The MoD Joint Discussion Note on the Comprehensive Approach describes the comprehensive approach as “a combination of diplomatic, military and economic instruments of power, together with an independent package of developmental and humanitarian activity and a customised, agile and sensitive influence and information effort.” [author’s emphasis] (JDN 4/05)

Stabilisation and the perception of neutrality

In the last 15 years, there has been an important shift in military doctrine, whereby military missions are conducted with a much broader political objective of stabilisation, nation building, or “winning hearts and minds”. As a result, there are often attempts to “instrumentalise” humanitarian aid and merge it with broader political objectives, including joint planning. While our principles of impartiality and neutrality will not prevent us from entering into dialogue with the military and governments, and indeed this is entirely appropriate as part of National Societies’ role as auxiliary to the State (including the medical services of the armed forces), this form of engagement takes place with the understanding that humanitarian action will remain distinct from any political agenda.

The loss of aid agency neutrality, real or perceived, can have serious consequences for humanitarian access and security. It is important to note that 2008 was the worst year on record for aid worker safety with a 61% increase in the relative attacks per numbers of aid workers in the field. The 2008 fatality rate for international aid workers exceeds that of UN peacekeeping troops (ODI HPG Policy Brief 34, April 2009). The perception of some agencies as working together with western stabilisation forces or even with the host government can impact on the security of both aid workers and beneficiary populations, and can prevent agencies working in certain areas (Caught in the Conflict, 2009). In Afghanistan, where many NGOs work on state-building and developmental issues such as reconstruction, development and advocacy in perceived alignment with ISAF, opposition forces have, at times, labelled certain humanitarian agencies and, importantly, recipients of their aid, as legitimate targets.

For this reason, it is vital to ensure that humanitarian agencies be allowed to continue to operate outside political and military objectives—only by preserving their neutrality can they continue to reach those most affected by conflict across the world. Nevertheless, the British Red Cross recognises and welcomes the important steps taken toward improved dialogue and joined-up working between government departments in recent years.

13 May 2009

Memorandum from CARE International UK

SUMMARY

From the perspective of CARE International, the Comprehensive Approach (CA) needs to be understood in the broader context of shifts in civil-military relations, peace operations, donor aid policy related to conflict-affected developing countries. The “War on Terror” has introduced new dimensions to longer-term changes in donor and military policy, which promote “integrated approaches” across political, military and aid strategies. Certain trends appear encouraging—at the level of rhetoric at least, if not implementation. Thus some variants of “Comprehensive Approach” policy discourse in the UK and internationally appear to recognise the need for civilian-led political and reconstruction strategies in post-conflict situations. “Lessons

identified”, if not “lessons learned”, emerging from Iraq and Afghanistan underline the ineffective and counter-productive nature of short-termist, military-dominated approaches to civil-military relations. For others, it is merely a new label for the old-style ways of working.

Different military and government officials maintain quite varied understanding of the term’s definition. For some officials, it implies a new way of operating, which respects and supports civilian leads on tasks associated with stabilisation and reconstruction. For others, it is merely a new label for old-style ways of working. Fundamentally, the CA appears to remain a military-dominated agenda; focusing on narrow and technocratic issues about departmental territoriality and organisational culture. While coherence of government policy is an obvious and important objective, NGOs maintain serious concerns about potential impacts of CA implementation for their operations, and the safety of their staff and beneficiaries. At field level, experience of military operations in Afghanistan suggests that international forces will continue to assert a military pre-eminence in hostile environments in which they are conducting combat operations. This partly reflects both the level of authority delegated to the force commander in-theatre, and the imbalanced spread of resources between military and civilian actors involved. Such an approach threatens the space for NGOs or other agencies to deliver independent, neutral and impartial humanitarian assistance.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The UK Government should respect the non-governmental and independent character of civil society and specifically NGOs involved in humanitarian assistance in conflict-affected contexts. For this reason, it should not seek to incorporate NGOs into a Comprehensive Approach framework, but rather identify means to enable appropriate and effective dialogue with NGOs on related policy and operational issues.
- The UK Government should invest in NGO capacities and mechanisms to enable effective and appropriate NGO engagement in policy dialogue on issues related to the Comprehensive Approach; trainings and exercises with the military to sensitise them to humanitarian principles; and programmatic learning on effective NGO approaches to civil-military interaction at field level.
- The UK Government should ensure that development of the Comprehensive Approach respects the distinct mandate and priorities of the Department for International Development (DFID); in particular in relation to humanitarian action. DFID should be maintained as a government department represented at cabinet-level by a Minister to ensure effective and appropriate coordination, as opposed to subordination, between aid policy and the other relevant line ministries.
- UK approaches to the Comprehensive Approach are highly influenced by wider international efforts. For this reason, DFID should invest in strengthening UN humanitarian leadership and coordination structures, in particular UN OCHA. At present, UN OCHA is frequently constrained by inadequate human resources and political backing to effectively engage in coordination with political and military actors on an equal and independent footing.

COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH: IMPLICATIONS FOR NGOs AT FIELD LEVEL

1. NGOs, such as CARE International, deliver life-saving and livelihoods assistance in some of the most insecure and conflict-affected regions of countries like Afghanistan, Somalia and Sri Lanka. That access, often fragile and dynamic, is dependent on the acceptance of local communities and parties to the conflict. Respect of humanitarian principles is central to negotiating such access. Our commitment to humanitarian principles is not inspired by abstract theory, but rather our need to ensure the safety and security of field staff, partners and beneficiaries. In southern Afghanistan, for example, one of CARE’s local partners was approached by Taliban representatives and told: “Your aid is good for the local community and may continue. However, if you or the programmes you implement become associated with the NATO forces, then you will make yourselves a target.”⁷³

2. For the above reasons, CARE maintains serious concerns about potential consequences of the Comprehensive Approach for its operations, and the safety of our staff and beneficiaries. An instrumentalist interpretation of the Comprehensive Approach in donor government policy would threaten the space for CARE and other aid agencies to deliver independent, neutral and impartial humanitarian assistance.

3. At field level, experience of military operations in Afghanistan suggest that international forces continue to assert a military pre-eminence in hostile environments in which they conduct combat operations. This partly reflects both the level of authority delegated to the force commander in-theatre, and the imbalanced spread of resources between military and civilian actors involved. CARE played a leading role in organising recent field research by the BAAG and ENNA networks on civil-military relations in Afghanistan; with a particular focus on experience in Uruzgan and Paktia.⁷⁴ That research found that inappropriate associations between the military and some NGOs created security risks for the wider NGO community and local beneficiary populations. It also led to recommendations that military forces should stop instrumentalising NGOs to deliver on their short-term “hearts and minds” activities; and take greater

⁷³ Interview, 13 June 2006.

⁷⁴ *Aid and civil-military relations in Afghanistan* BAAG and ENNA Policy Briefing Paper, 2008.

steps to minimise risks incurred through their interactions with civilian agencies. The research indicated that while there has been an expansion in the civilian capacity of NATO Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and investment in coordination with the government and other civilian actors, considerable challenges remain. While “civilianisation” of stabilisation efforts may feature high in the rhetoric of policy-makers, it was yet to translate into discernable changes for either Afghan populations or NGOs on the ground at the time of our research.

4. The BAAG/ENNA research also assessed the mechanisms for civil-military interactions at field level in Afghanistan. A number of NGOs participate in the Afghanistan “civil-military relations working-group”, which is chaired by ACBAR in Kabul. The group is attended by donors, UN, NATO ISAF and Coalition representatives. Its objectives are to facilitate dialogue in order to address concerns regarding “bad practice” (eg. military CIMIC activities that impact negatively on aid programmes), and share information of relevance to NGO safety and security. Critical to the on-going sustainability of this working-group is its careful demarcation as a forum for appropriate dialogue that respects the neutrality of aid agencies. No information can be discussed that could be perceived as alignment or intelligence-sharing with the military. However the group suffers from two major limitations: inconsistent participation from all sides; and failure on the military side to follow-up and implement commitments made. In terms of participation the group has lacked representatives from the national contingents leading the PRTs. Additionally, ISAF participation has normally been limited to the CIMIC unit (CJ9), while most of the issues discussed need participation of representatives from the other branches of ISAF (particularly planners and strategists—CJ5). On the NGO side, many NGOs simply lack the staff capacity to engage in such processes. In terms of concrete results, NGOs express concerns about the limited follow-up on issues raised in the working group. On the military side, this partly reflects the high turn over of personnel and a lack of follow-up within the military hierarchy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The UK Government should respect the non-governmental and independent character of civil society and specifically NGOs involved in humanitarian assistance in conflict-affected contexts. For this reason, it should not seek to incorporate NGOs into a Comprehensive Approach framework, but rather identify means to enable appropriate and effective dialogue with NGOs on related policy and operational issues.
- The UK Government should invest in NGO capacities and mechanisms to enable effective and appropriate NGO engagement in policy dialogue on issues related to the Comprehensive Approach; trainings and exercises with the military to sensitise them to humanitarian principles; and programmatic learning on effective NGO approaches to civil-military interaction at field level.

COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH: IMPLICATIONS FOR UK GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

5. Donor deliberations on aid effectiveness have become increasingly preoccupied with “whole-of-government approaches” to coordination between diplomatic, defence and development efforts. In the UK, these debates have focused on implementation of the “Comprehensive Approach” across relevant government departments; in particular the Department for International Development (DFID), Ministry of Defence (MoD), and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Coherence of government policy is an obvious and legitimate objective. For this reason, efforts to promote the Comprehensive Approach have partly focused on narrow and technocratic debates about departmental territoriality and organisational culture in Whitehall. However, the Comprehensive Approach must also be understood in the broader context of shifts in civil-military relations and wider donor policy related to the “War on Terror”. Certain trends appear encouraging—at the level of rhetoric at least, if not implementation. Thus some variants of policy discourse on the Comprehensive Approach appear to recognise the need for civilian-led political and reconstruction strategies in post-conflict situations. “Lessons identified”, if not “lessons learned”, emerging from Iraq and Afghanistan have underlined the ineffective nature of short-termist and military-dominated approaches to stabilisation and reconstruction efforts in such contexts. However, for others, the Comprehensive Approach is merely a new label for old ways of working.

6. In the UK, some commentators have suggested that a Comprehensive Approach could imply that development and humanitarian policy become explicitly subordinated to UK national security or foreign policy imperatives. This has led some commentators to suggest that DFID should end in its current form as an independent Government department represented at Ministerial level in the Cabinet; and that it becomes incorporated as a sub-department within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. This would represent a hugely controversial and counter-productive direction for UK policy and practice, reminiscent of changes in US foreign assistance policy under the Bush administration. Under the Bush administration, aid policy became explicitly framed within the US national security strategy. Between 2002 and 2005, total US

assistance managed by the Department of Defence (DOD) went from 5.6% to 21.7%, while that managed by USAID fell from 50.2% to 38.8%.⁷⁵ This militarisation of US foreign assistance policy is widely perceived as a significant factor in the increased targeting of US-based NGOs by armed groups involved in conflicts around the globe. More recently, policy discourse from the Obama administration indicates that the US may shift towards a more nuanced approach to coordination across development, defence and foreign policy.

7. CARE, along with other multi-mandate NGOs operating across humanitarian, recovery and development programmes, has widespread experience of the linkages between security and developmental efforts on the ground. Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes provide one example. DDR consists of short-term military components (disarmament and demobilisation) and a long-term development process (reintegration). Failure to adequately link, sequence or resource DDR has led to insecurity (El Salvador, Guatemala, Angola), and even jeopardised peace processes in some instances. However, CARE's experience in community-based reintegration and rehabilitation efforts, in contexts like the Democratic Republic of Congo and elsewhere, suggests that effective coordination not require integration.

RECOMMENDATION:

- CARE calls on the UK Government to ensure that development of the Comprehensive Approach respects the specific mandate and priorities of the Department for International Development (DFID); in particular in relation to humanitarian action. DFID should be maintained as a government department represented at cabinet-level by a Minister to ensure effective and appropriate coordination, as opposed to subordination, between aid policy and the other relevant line ministries.

COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH: IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

8. While the Comprehensive Approach has been primarily an intra-governmental agenda, its implications for multilateral institutions are also evident. From CARE's perspective, one of the most important challenges lies in strengthening the UN's role in humanitarian coordination. The ability of humanitarian agencies to engage in policy dialogue or coordination with military or political actors depends on functioning humanitarian coordination structures. For this to work, these humanitarian coordination structures, whether UN or non-UN, must be experienced as legitimate from the perspective of operational agencies, such as CARE. At present, it is generally acknowledged that humanitarian leadership and coordination remains one of the most significant challenges in reform of the UN humanitarian system.

9. Current debates in the UN secretariat on the role of humanitarian coordination in relation to "integration" between political, military and aid strategies are preoccupied by models of "structural integration" versus "coherence and strategic partnership". At present, UN Integrated Missions are headed by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), who will often also hold the double-hatted role as Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator. This arrangement integrates humanitarian leadership into the mission's political and military leadership. In some instances, a deputy Deputy-SRSG role has also been established with responsibility for humanitarian affairs, reporting to the SRSG. Advocates of the latter approach argue that it provides for adequate humanitarian coordination capacity, and enables humanitarian influence on the SRSG from inside the mission. At present, there is not one stand-alone UN Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) deployed anywhere worldwide. UN OCHA continues to struggle to deploy adequate capacity to the field-level to support humanitarian coordination efforts in a timely and effective fashion. As yet, there have been no independent evaluations to verify whether these arrangements have led to any positive outcomes in terms of facilitating humanitarian access. Humanitarian agencies have frequently criticised current arrangement for [a] politicising humanitarian coordination; and [b] resulting in inadequate capacity for humanitarian coordination as the individual in question is pulled in several directions.

10. More recently, the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan has led to the establishment of a new and semi-independent OCHA office in that country. This development is widely perceived as an acknowledgement that total integration of humanitarian affairs into a political and military mission in Afghanistan was not effective or sustainable. While this change is unlikely to make a fundamental difference in how humanitarianism is perceived in Afghanistan in the short-term, it should provide enhanced capacity for humanitarian coordination. With time, this may also result in a better coordinated humanitarian community able to deliver life-saving assistance in a principled and professional fashion.

11. For the above reasons, CARE believes that international reforms should recognise that effective coordination between aid agencies and political or military actors does not require integration. Particularly in violent contexts, the responsibility for humanitarian coordination should remain outside of political and military mission structures. Military and political missions should not be given mandates or capacities, which duplicate or undermine the remit and efficacy of an independent OCHA, which should serve as the voice and representative of the humanitarian community.

⁷⁵ *United States (2006), DAC Peer Review: Main Findings and Recommendations*. OECD/DAC. 2006. http://www.oecd.org/document/27/0,2340,en_2649_201185_37829787_1_1_1_1,00.html

RECOMMENDATION:

- CARE calls on DFID to invest in strengthening UN humanitarian leadership and coordination structures, in particular UN OCHA. At present, UN OCHA is frequently constrained by inadequate human resources and political backing to effectively engage in coordination with political and military actors on an equal and independent footing.

19 June 2009

**Memorandum from Daniel Korski,⁷⁶
The European Council on Foreign Relations**

INTRODUCTION

1. In the past decade, Britain has experienced repeated failures in integrating the political, military, economic, humanitarian and informational elements of its national power. The failures have been both at the strategic level in Whitehall and in the field. In Iraq, for example, the absence of an integrated strategy eventually led to the loss of British control over Basra.⁷⁷ Despite this hard-earned lesson, it took almost two years to effectively integrate the military and civilian contributions in Helmand—perhaps too long to make a real difference on the ground or in the eyes of the US. In many of the world's developing countries, British government departments still do not work together, and act as comprehensively as required, even when both the human and financial costs of failing to do so are high.

2. The lack of a comprehensive war strategy and the failures of in-theatre implementation have been accompanied by the Government's struggle to prepare its "back-office" systems ie the Human Resources policies, training, funding streams, IT support and duty of care arrangements, to operate in a comprehensive manner. This problem has been acute in post-conflict missions. In nearly every post-Cold War military operation, a lack of rapidly deployable civilian capabilities in all NATO allies has left military forces performing numerous tasks for which they do not have a comparative advantage. This has arguably extended the duration of their deployments.

3. These failures led to the development of the so-called "comprehensive approach." In its simplest definition, the "comprehensive approach" means blending civilian and military tools and enforcing cooperation between government departments, not only for operations but more broadly to deal with many of the 21st century security challenges, including terrorism, genocide and proliferation of weapons and dangerous materials.

4. In its first-ever cross-departmental submission on the issue to the Defence Committee, the Government argues "it has always worked cross-departmentally".⁷⁸ Though matters have improved in a stop-start reform process since Tony Blair originally mentioned the idea of "joined-up government" in 1997, there is still a long way to go. A habit of cross-departmental cooperation does indeed stretch back to the Haldane Committee that in 1918 created the modern departmental system. But interdepartmental working has not been an integral part of how Whitehall operates. The reasons are simple: political, financial and bureaucratic loyalties stream vertically upwards rather than across departments, thus inhibiting integrated collaboration. Changing this remains one of Britain's main national security challenges.

5. This paper looks at the history of the "comprehensive approach" in Britain, charting the tortuous journey to compel greater cross-departmental collaboration, especially in stabilisation operations. A journey that for a long time was trodden by mid-ranking MoD officials and military officers, allied with a small number of officials in the cross-departmental Stabilisation Unit, DfID and the Foreign Office. The paper then proposes a number of changes—at the strategic, operational and preparatory levels—required to operationalise a "comprehensive approach".

FROM JOINED-UP TO COMPREHENSIVE

6. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, governments began recognizing that most policy issues such as water use, security, terrorism, family breakdown and drug abuse could not be addressed by one governmental department or agency alone. Supported by academic research that showed issues as crime being influenced by family, social and economic factors, many governments began looking at new ways of organizing themselves to address such problems. Unlike New Public Management, the previous reform initiative, which encouraged governments to focus on performance against targets and to be more efficient at delivering services, the new wave of reform, promoted under the banner of "joined-up government", put an emphasis on horizontal and vertical integration of both policy and delivery. In the words of Geoff Mulgan, who is credited with inventing the phrase "joined-up government", the aim was to "align incentives, cultures and structures of authority to fit critical tasks that cut across organizational boundaries." In many

⁷⁶ Daniel Korski is a Senior Policy Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, London.

⁷⁷ Hew Strachan, "Making strategy: Civil–military relations after Iraq", *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, Volume 48, Issue 3, 2006.

⁷⁸ Memorandum submitted by the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development, 12 May 2009.

ways, improving cross-departmental work became the administrative focus of the early Labour governments. Though this was mainly a domestically-focused effort, from 1997 to 2002 a number of internationally-focused initiatives were developed, most prominently the Global Pools, a cross-departmental funding mechanisms that compelled different departments to agree on resource allocation. In the 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review,⁷⁹ Public Service Agreements were introduced that sought to compel inter-departmental cooperation. For the first time, different departments would have to work towards one, shared overseas target.

7. At the same time, however, the Labour government introduced the International Development Act and cleaved the Department for International Development out of the Foreign Office. Whatever its benefits for aid policy, creating DFID had the result of ring-fencing aid and complicating cooperation with the MoD, especially in post-conflict stabilisation missions.

8. By mid-2000, however, this focus on joining-up government began shaping the way in which key military officials thought the mistakes made during the initial US-led Iraq invasion could be avoided. In particular, senior military officials saw the absence of civilian departments—both from the military planning as well as on-the-ground implementation—as key reason for the worsening security situation.

9. Though the role of civilian organizations had been important in Kosovo, and other post-Cold War missions such as Sierra Leone, the record of civil-military integration had been a limited one. In the US, the separation between civilian and military agencies began after the Vietnam War as both the military and the civilian soured on each other. It accelerated during the Reagan years when the military began to capture such a large share of the federal budget and began to acquire both the resources and the expertise to do without civilians in most policy matters. Simultaneously the civilian aspects of stabilization were starved and atrophied. By the end of the Cold War, being aware of each other's work had been seen as sufficient. For example, the Dayton Peace Accords that ended the Bosnian War strictly separated the civilian and military tasks. The US NATO commander famously avoided anything he thought was not strictly a military task, which was seen as "mission creep". In KFOR, DFID were represented at both Divisional and Brigade level. But compared to the close relationship between civilians and military officers in and after World War II—where the British Army alone had some 15,000 troops dealing with civil matters—the Cold War years and the immediate period after the fall of the Berlin Wall, saw a greater division between civilian and military roles and mandates.

10. There were exceptions to this trend of separating civil and military activities, as in during the Malayan Campaign, Britain's largest Cold War counter-insurgency mission. There, British General Frank Kitson warned: "the first thing that must be apparent when contemplating the sort of action which a government facing insurgency should take, is that there can be no such thing as a purely military solution because insurgency is not primarily a military activity."⁸⁰ Though often thought of as a good example of civil-military cooperation, Northern Ireland was less of an exception; military aid to the civil power (MACP) saw the armed forces help the police in the province, but the roles of the different units remained distinct. There may be a stronger case for arguing that British assistance to the forces of the Sultanate of Oman in their fight against the Marxist insurgents of the People's Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf, showed how to effectively support an ally's counterinsurgency efforts with a range of tools, both military and civilian. In Vietnam, a number of improvements happened in civil-military cooperation including through the establishment in 1967 of CORDS—Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support—to coordinate the US civil and military pacification programs; but as described above, the political impact of the war caused a greater civil-military rift after the US withdrawal from South East Asia.

11. These missions were also the exception; during the Cold War, separation of civilians and military became the norm inside almost all NATO governments. Whatever governments such as the British, French or the US learned about the importance of cross-governmental cooperation during their counter-insurgency missions in Algeria, Malaya, Oman and Vietnam were forgotten. This division of roles may have been relatively cost-free during the Cold War and even in the peacekeeping missions in the early 1990s. The UN missions in those days were largely aimed at separating combatants, and monitoring ceasefires. They were "interpositional" and limited in scope. There was simply no impetus to dredge up previous experiences of institutionalizing civil-military cooperation. The exception may have been Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) officers attached to the British Army. But even their role became, in the words of Stuart Gordon, "progressively more narrowly defined".⁸¹

12. However, with the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq the costs of separation became clear. Lashing civilian and military plans together came to be seen not only as useful, but key for success. As the Defence Committee wrote: "Once the Government has made a commitment to post-conflict stabilisation, as it has in Iraq that commitment will only be effectively delivered through the planned and coordinated effort of all

⁷⁹ See "Public Service Agreements 30", which seeks to "Reduce the impact of conflict through enhanced UK and international efforts." The subordinate Delivery Agreement lays out four indicators, to measure progress in achieving the PSA. http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/pbr_csr07_psa30.pdf.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Eric Edelman, "Comprehensive Approach to Modern Insurgency: Afghanistan and Beyond", address at the George C. Marshall Center, 27 March 2007, http://www.defenselink.mil/policy/downloads/USDPMunichSpeech_AS_DELIVERED.doc.

⁸¹ Stuart Gordon, "Understanding the Priorities for Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC)", 2001 <http://www.jha.ac/articles/a068.htm>.

the relevant government departments.”⁸² Yet given the circumstances of the Iraq War, the resistance to greater civil-military cooperation was strong, particularly in DFID. Senior DFID officials, supported by the then-Development Secretary’s resistance to the Iraq War were loath to engage with the military. The result was limited developmental input into the post-war strategies.

13. Since civilians could not be counted on to cooperate voluntarily with the military on the post-9/11 battlefield, the MoD began the search for other ways to compel integration. In *Delivering Security in a Changing World*, the Ministry of Defence began laying out its argument that that only by adopting a comprehensive approach to security policy, of which defence was but a part, would British interests be best served.⁸³ While British military officers grappled with how to get other departments involved in war-fighting, they found support from their US colleagues. As American defence expert Jeremy Shapiro notes: “in the US, the demand came because [the military] lacked some capabilities and probably to a larger degree because they were failing and had been hung out to dry by the rest of government to accomplish task that at least theoretically did not belong only to them.”⁸⁴

14. New US military thinking, spurred by technological advances that had facilitated greater sharing of battlefield information, had by then also led to the birth of “network-centric warfare”—the intent of which was to achieve enhanced military effect through information systems. If tomorrow’s soldiers were electronically networked to each other, and back to their headquarters and potentially to their political masters in real-time, then, it made sense to think about their role more broadly.⁸⁵ This US push to exploit technological advances led directly to the adoption of the “effects-based operations” (EBO) concept, a quasi-scientific methodology for thinking through how to move beyond attrition and use non-military power.⁸⁶ The essence of EBO was neatly explained in *The Strategic Defence Review: A New Chapter* from 2002. The aim was to “Move away from always assessing defence capability in terms of platforms or unit numbers. It is now more useful to think in terms of the effects that can be delivered—we must consider what effect we want to have on an opponent and at what time.”⁸⁷ By 2000 this thinking had percolated from its original wellspring in the US Air Force into the other military services. It has also become part of then-US Defence Secretary’s mission to transform the US military into “deployable, fully integrated joint forces capable of reaching distant theatres quickly and working with our air and sea forces to strike adversaries swiftly, successfully, and with devastating effect.”⁸⁸

15. Though “effects-based operations” was about more than civil-military integration, aiming to transform military planning too, in the EBO concept many in the US military believed they had also found a cast-iron system to integrate civilian and military planning (under military leadership). Led by Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), US military authorities began experimenting with the EBO concept. Through military exercises, including with allies, JFCOM pushed its new idea. Unified Quest, a large US military exercise, sought to use the EBO methodology. The largest multilateral experiment, the Multinational Experiment (MNE) series, formally adopted an “effects-based approach”. The result was that in exercise-like scenarios UK, French, German military planners had to become familiar with its language and methods. As the EBO concept required the simultaneous processing of large data sets, it found an enthusiastic audience in the defence industry, which begins looking for ways to develop IT systems to better support civil-military planning, EBO-style.

16. With the US commander of JFCOM double-hatted as the head of NATO’s Allied Command Transformation, many of the ideas developed by the US staff were disseminated to allied officers. Given the close relationship between US and UK militaries, it was not a surprise that the “effects-based operations” were particularly important in shaping UK military thinking. In the discussion documents accompanying *The Strategic Defence Review: A New Chapter*, the MoD backed many of the ideas behind the EBO approach though it would be another two years before the concept of effects-based warfare was to be fully embraced. In the Joint Venture exercise, then the UK’s largest military exercise run by PJHQ, many of the ideas associated with “effects-based operations”—for example the way to conduct planning—were tested.

17. In the end, “effects-based operations” were unlikely ever to survive the trip across the US in its fullest form being too complex, and too formalized to sit easily with the UK military’s manouverist doctrine, and the notion of mission command, not to mention the administrative traditions in most government departments. Even in the US military it came in for criticism. For example, an analysis of the 2006 Israeli-

⁸² An Initial Assessment of Post Conflict Operations, HC 65-I, Sixth Report of Session 2004–05 House of Commons Defence Committee.

⁸³ Andrew M. Dorman, “Transforming To Effects-Based Operations: Lessons From The United Kingdom Experience”, *Strategic Studies*, January 2008.

⁸⁴ Correspondence with Jeremy Shapiro, 18th June, 2009.

⁸⁵ See Brooke Smith-Windsor, “Hasten Slowly: NATO’s Effects Based and Comprehensive Approach to Operations: Making Sense of the Past and Future Prospects”, Research Paper No 38, NATO Defence College, July 2008.

⁸⁶ There is no commonly agreed definition of what “effects-based operations” are. In one definition, such operations are described as “operations planned, executed, assessed, and adapted based on a holistic understanding of the operational environment in order to influence or change system behaviour or capabilities using the integrated application of selected instruments of power to achieve directed policy aims.” The Joint Warfighting Center, USJFCOM, Pamphlet 7: Operational Implications of Effects-based Operations (EBO), 17 November 2004.

⁸⁷ *The Strategic Defence Review: A New Chapter*, Cm.5,566, London: TSO, 2002.

⁸⁸ Donald Rumsfeld, “21st Century Transformation” (Lecture, National Defense University, Washington, DC, January 31, 2002), www.defenselink.mil/speeches (accessed September 28, 2007). See also Transformation: A Strategic Approach, Office of Force Transformation (hereafter, OFT), Office of the Secretary of Defense, Military (Washington, DC: 2003), and “Elements of Defense Transformation” OFT, Office of the Secretary of Defense, (Washington, DC: 2004).

Hezbollah conflict found that the EBO “terminology used was too complicated, vain, and could not be understood by the thousands of officers that needed to carry it out.”⁸⁹ Key US doctrinal publications—such as the Joint Publication (JP) 3–0, Joint Operations, and JP 5–0, Joint Operation Planning, contain little of the original EBO concept. In 2007, the U.S. Army distanced itself from EBO entirely; Field Manual 3–0, Operations published in February 2008, rejected what General James N Mattis, the Commander of US JFCOM, called “the more mechanistic aspects of EBO”.⁹⁰ But though the EBO concept never made it across to Britain in its original, deterministic form and was revised inside the US military, it acted as an important catalyst for doctrinal reforms and in Britain supported the MoD’s push for changes in Whitehall. In the words of Lieutenant General Ebbe Rosgaard: “The comprehensive approach [was] a conceptual evolution stemming from the Effects-Based Approach.”⁹¹

STOP-START REFORMS

18. Yet even though the push for a “comprehensive approach” was part of an intellectual push for greater cross-governmental cooperation that had clear support at the highest levels of the Labour government, particularly in No 10, it initially found little support among senior officials in the FCO, and DFID. The result was a process of stop-start reforms. In the early Blair governments a number of initiatives were developed; cross-departmental funding mechanisms such as the Global Pools, inter-departments units such as the jointly-run FCO/DFID Sudan Unit and the Stabilization Unit (then called the Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit), as well as the first UK-run Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in Mazar-i-Sharif in northern Afghanistan, which brought together civilian and military staff.

19. But from mid-2005 until mid-2007, the desire to push further seemed to be on the wane at the time when the MoD was gearing up to advocate additional reforms, and when operational experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan suggested the necessity for further initiatives. When the Cabinet Office’s produced a report about countries-at-risk of instability and sought to promote inter-departmental policy, it was blocked by senior FCO officials. As Andrew Dorman has written: There was “little support for this initiative outside the MoD, with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development markedly cool about the idea.”⁹²

20. This division between the FCO and DFID on the one hand and MoD on the other led, to a number of clashes between departments. When officials from the FCO, the Stabilization Unit and the MoD sought to develop principles for what the “comprehensive approach” would in reality entail, they were quickly slapped down by senior Cabinet Office officials, who were keen to preserve their institutional role; there could be talk of “a comprehensive approach”, but certainly not “the Comprehensive Approach”. Officials participating in the FCO-led Comprehensive Approach Working Group tried to develop a number of initiatives, but were often blocked. A proposals by the MoD’s doctrine-writers—the Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre—to draft a doctrine on the “comprehensive approach” for the military, was watered down from a full doctrine to the lesser category of a “Concept Note.” Many senior officials felt that anything else, would be allowing the MoD to abrogate the right to tell other departments how to operate.

21. Though the Stabilization Unit—in many ways the holder of the cross-departmental flame alongside the MoD—tried to change the way government assessed conflicts, planned missions trained and prepared staff and allocated resources, the 30-person unit was allowed to get on with its job, but little more. The unit’s planning methodology—the Joint Stabilization Assessment (JSA), which was designed to ensure inter-department in-put and thus create cross-departmental assessments—was rejected by DFID, which favoured its own analytical tools. Few senior officials attended the unit’s civilian-led exercise and the Stabilization Unit’s role in both Basra and Helmand was initially limited to providing contracted staff for the PRTs, rather than to assist in developing cross-governmental plans. It became, in the words of one employee, “a body shop”, but only one of many across government since the FCO and DFID for a long time kept control of deployments into missions and posts seen as “theirs” eg OSCE missions for the FCO.

22. Operationally, the “comprehensive approach” also experienced a number of set-backs. In late 2005 when the first UK Plan for Afghanistan was being developed, there had been some indications it would become a genuinely integrated, cross-departmental product. Some of the team members tasked with drafting the plan came from the MoD and had, in the old jobs, pushed for the “comprehensive approach”. But in the end, despite widespread consultations both across Whitehall and with the British Embassy in Kabul, the plan became an amalgamation of (in some cases already existing) departmental plans, stitched together at the seams; it was a new, integrated plan shaped by a joint assessment of the problems. (As such, it dovetailed the international community’s disaggregated efforts in Afghanistan until 2008).

⁸⁹ Matt M. Matthews, “We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War”, The Long War Series Occasional Paper 26 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008).

⁹⁰ James N. Mattis, “USJFCOM Commander’s Guidance for Effects-based Operations”, issue 51, 4th quarter 2008, Joint Forces Quarterly.

⁹¹ Ebbe Rosgaard, “The Danish Comprehensive Approach” in Selected Contributions From The Proceedings Of The Effects-Based Approach To Operations (Ebao) Seminar 13-14 March 2008.

⁹² Ibid Dorman.

23. At ministerial level, a so-called “Reid Committee” named after the then- Defence Secretary brought FCO, DFID and Treasury ministers together to explore Stage III in NATO’s plan to extend ISAF into Helmand and what role Britain should take on. Once Cabinet approved the UK role, planning for the deployment of British forces to Helmand was led by a PJHQ-run Preliminary Operations Team, working closely with a civilian team staffed by the Stabilisation Unit. But upon arrival in theatre, 16 Air Assault which led the Helmand Task Force, ignored the cross-departmental plans and drafted their own plan without input from the FCO and DFID. It would take months and several redrafting sessions before a genuine cross-departmental plan was agreed and the UK Civil-Military Mission Helmand (CMMH) in Lashkar Gah was set up. In 2006 in Iraq the US push to establish PRTs met with resistance from the FCO and DFID, who reluctantly agreed to sponsor a UK run PRT in Basra and in the end, endowed it with few of the resources and little of the political support necessary to work. DFID, for example, insisted on keeping the majority of its programmes and staff outside the PRT structure. Only in 2007 did DFID integrate most of its work into the PRT. By then, however, the team had been evacuated from the Basra Palace and re-established in the Contingency Operating Base at Basra Airport, with little room to visit Basra city or deliver programmes.

24. The period between 2005 and 2007 was in many ways a low period in the British government’s effort to act comprehensively. This did not preclude a range of initiatives to improve cross-departmental cooperation, especially in the field, where collaboration across departments and professions is often easier than in London. For every iteration of the “Better Basra Plan”, the guiding document of the UK’s post-war intervention in the province, new cross-department initiatives were developed. In 2006, for example, the divisional headquarters for British forces in Basra created a second Chief of Staff position, at lieutenant-colonel rank, to ensure integration between the General Officer Commanding, the Council-General and the PRT Leader. To coordinate departmental input further, the three senior British officials used to meet regularly in the Southern Iraq Steering Group, chaired by the Council-General. In a similar vein, at the British embassy in Kabul in late 2005 an office was established, led by the MoD and staffed by the Stabilization Unit, to track progress of the UK’s Plan for Afghanistan. Later in the autumn of 2006, a review of the Government’s plan (and lack of progress) in Helmand was run by an interdepartmental team. But all these initiatives seemed to work against the grain of what senior officials wanted and therefore had only modest results.

AN ANGLO-DANISH ALLIANCE

25. Feeling little support for a “comprehensive approach” at home, British military officials began reaching out to their foreign counterparts. Using the UK presidency of the European Union in the beginning of 2005, the MoD managed to put the idea of a “comprehensive approach” into EU documents and processes—before it had even become official British policy.

26. Work on a “comprehensive approach” inside the EU and on the “integrated approach” inside the UN had been underway since 2003 and 2000 respectively.⁹³ The Brahimi Report on UN peacekeeping has advocated integrated missions, bringing all the UN agencies in one theatre under one senior UN official. In November 2003, an EU policy framework had similarly emphasized the need for close civil-military cooperation not just as a culture of coordination, but as a prerequisite for effective crisis responses. With the experience of each new ESDP operations, the pressure for the “comprehensive approach” inside the EU grew, and a 2006 paper by the Council Secretariat of the EU emphasized the need for EU actors in theatre and cross-support and synchronization of activities in theatre. By then both the EU Special Representative to Bosnia, Lord Paddy Ashdown, and his counterpart in Macedonia, had taken steps to ensure that their remit extended (in some cases unofficially) over the work of the European Commission and the EU’s police missions. In Bosnia, Lord Ashdown had also constituted a Board of Principals to draw-in all the international organizations working in-theatre, including NATO, and the OSCE. But given Britain’s role as one of Europe’s main military powers and as a key player, alongside the French, at the St Malo Summit that kick-started ESDP, London’s advocacy of a “comprehensive approach” to the EU’s military approach turned an ad hoc field-based practice into dogma.

27. In pushing its ideas internationally, British officials found a ready partner in the Danish government, which under its 2003 EU presidency had originally pushed for greater civil-military cooperation (in part because of the Danish opt-outs from ESDP) and was keen to go further. From 2005 onwards, Danish officials began advocating for what they called “Concerted Planning and Action”, or CPA, in NATO. Though the “comprehensive approach” was described as being “the basis of the Alliance’s security policy” in NATO’s 1991 Strategic Concept, this had been more focused on having a political and a military approach to the former Warsaw Pact states, rather than integrating different instruments of power. CPA was explicitly about integrating departmental in-puts. In the summer of 2005, the Danish government organized a conference in Copenhagen to move the discussions on. By the spring of 2006, five states—Canada, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway and Slovakia—joined the growing chorus of allies pressing for a codified plan of action inside NATO on the “comprehensive approach.”

⁹³ By 2006 every international organisation had begun looking at joined-up government. See for example the OECD-DAC Reference Document Whole of Government Approaches to Fragile States, OECD Publication, 2006.

 THE US GETS SERIOUS

28. Meanwhile in the US, the failures of the Iraq War were leading to a clamour for inter-agency reform. A number of independent and bipartisan studies highlighted the problems in the current National Security Council system including the 1995 bipartisan *Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces*, the 1997 National Defense Panel, the 2001 *US Commission on National Security in the 21st Century*, CSIS's report *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols*, the Defense Science Board's *Transition to and from Hostilities* and the Princeton Project on National Security.⁹⁴ Congressional and executive studies also underlined the need for improved interagency collaboration.⁹⁵ In Congress, the calls for reform grew particularly loud. Ike Shelton, the powerful Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, began making clear he did not think the US had the necessary civilian capacity and Senators Richard Lugar and Joe Biden sponsored bills to create a dedicated organisation in the US administration to take responsibility for inter-agency missions.

29. Reluctant at first, the Bush administration eventually began a series of reforms to change the way the US government (both civilian and military) prepared for, conceptualized and implemented stability operations. As then Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral EP Giambastiani conceded: "at the federal level we can improve upon our structure, authorities, and tools to more effectively integrate executive branch actions."⁹⁶ The initial shuffling of bureaucratic chairs turned on efforts to implement National Security Presidential Directive 44, DoD's Directive 3000.05 (a new policy for stability operations), the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), and Condoleezza Rice's "Transformational Diplomacy" including USAID reforms, the establishment of the Office of the Director for Foreign Assistance and the "double-hatting" of its Director as USAID Administrator as well as the establishment of the State Department's Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization.

30. Many of the problems in the interagency process were seen as similar to those experienced by the Department of Defense (DoD) prior to Congress passing the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (GNA). And much like in the run-up to the passage of Goldwater-Nichol Act, there was an increasing sense of urgency. As Michelle Flournoy, who was to become Pentagon's third highest-ranking official, observed in 2004, "there has been a rising chorus of calls for a "Goldwater-Nichols II" for the national security agencies within the U.S. Government."⁹⁷ Former Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld made a similar link: "The 1986 Goldwater-Nichols legislation led to greater "jointness" and interdependence in the Department of Defence among the four services, but it has taken 20 years to begin to fully realize its potential. The broader [US government] structure is still in the industrial age and it is not serving us well." He went on to "recommend ways to reorganize both the executive and legislative branches, to put us on a more appropriate path for the 21st century."⁹⁸

31. This push eventually led to Congress funding a sweeping study of the interagency system and its problems; the Project on National Security Reform published a significant study, while many its board members—such as General James L Jones, Admiral Dennis C Blair, and James B Steinberg—brought their ideas into the new Obama administration. Combined with the support of Defence Secretary Robert Gates for increased State Department and USAID funding and General David Petraeus' practice of interagency cooperation in Iraq, under Barack Obama the US formally endorsed a "smart power" approach to foreign policy, with diplomacy in the vanguard as well as development and military power. What had begun in the second Bush administration as a set of low-profile initiatives to improve inter-agency cooperation would become the Obama administration's strategic intent.

32. But in 2006, with the US beginning to pushing for more civil-military cooperation, in November of that year NATO leaders formally acknowledged the need for the Alliance to adopt "effects-based operations" in their *Comprehensive Political Guidance*. Events culminated in the first articulation of the "comprehensive approach" at the Riga Summit in November 2006. Nearly two years later at the Bucharest Summit in April 2008, allied leaders endorsed an Action Plan for the development and implementation of NATO's contribution to a "Comprehensive Approach". Several areas of work were identified including: planning, lessons learning, training, cooperation with external actors and communications.

33. At the most recent Strasbourg/Kehl Summit almost every operation was described as requiring a "comprehensive approach", whether it be NATO's Afghan operation or the fight against piracy off the coast of Somalia. NATO leaders tasked the North Atlantic Council to prepare an interim report for Foreign Ministers in December 2009 and "to report at our next Summit on further progress with regard to the implementation of the Action Plan and NATO's ability to improve the delivery of stabilisation and

⁹⁴ Other reports and proposals include a CTNSP study, *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*, by Hans Binnendijk and Stuart E. Johnson, NDU Press, Washington (2004) and Thomas P. M. Barnett's proposals for "a department for all else", "Wanted: A department for all else", Thomas P. M. Barnett, Knox News, February 12, 2006.

⁹⁵ Statement of Christopher J. Lamb Before the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee on Implementing the Global War on Terror "Overcoming Interagency Problems" House Armed Services Committee, U.S. House of Representatives March 15, 2006.

⁹⁶ Statement Of Admiral E. P. Giambastiani, Vice Chairman Of The Joint Chiefs Of Staff Before The 109th Congress House Armed Services Committee 4 April 2006.

⁹⁷ *Transforming the National Security Bureaucracy*, Michèle A. Flournoy, Presentation before the National Defense University Joint Operations Symposium: Meeting Key U.S. Defense Planning Challenges, November 17, 2004. Bruce Berkowitz and Kori Schake made a direct link between the problems in the pre-1986 DoD and the current NSC system: "the situation closely resembled how departments and agencies in the national security community work today". Bruce Berkowitz and Kori Schake, "National Security: A Better Approach", Hoover Digest, 2005, No. 4 Winter Issue.

⁹⁸ Bob Woodward, "The World According to Rummy", Washington Post, October 8, 2006.

reconstruction effects. Perhaps just as important, at Strasbourg/Kehl NATO leaders also endorsed the establishment of a NATO Military Training Mission in Kabul, taking an important step in providing the kind of police reform assistance than many in the alliance had, until then, hoped would be delivered by other international organizations. As work begins on NATO's new Strategic Concept, the assumption is that the "comprehensive approach" will, in the words of German Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung, become "a core element".⁹⁹ Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the new Secretary General, is also said to see progress inside NATO on the "comprehensive approach" as an important priority for this tenure.

COMPREHENSIVENESS COMES HOME

34. Concurrently, as the "comprehensive approach" was adopted in the EU and NATO, and the issues became a growing US concern not to mention indispensable in the field, from 2007 support for the concept grew in Whitehall. Recently out of office, David Omand, the Prime Minister's former Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator, had elaborated on the requirements for reform, proposing the establishment of a Prime Minister's Department, improved Cabinet committees, and the creation of an NSC-like office¹⁰⁰ Quoting Field Marshal Alan Brooke, Winston Churchill's defence chief, Omand also called for process to support "grand strategy", that is an improved, interdepartmental planning process.

35. The call for reform was picked up by the Conservative Party, which in 2006 published a paper demanding the establishment of "a UK National Security Council".¹⁰¹ In the paper, Pauline Neville-Jones, an adviser to the Conservative leader, wrote: "the quality of some policy and of contradictions between component parts of it, leads one to question the adequacy of the security policy making process itself." This was echoed by Charlie Edwards, who argued in a report that while "departments have begun to develop a more joined-up approach to this interconnected world, there has been no obvious impact to Britain's archaic security architecture and systems."¹⁰²

36. Picking up on the outside pressure and not to be outdone by the Conservative Party, the newly installed Brown government issued a National Security Strategy¹⁰³ and convened a new Cabinet sub-committee, the Ministerial Committee on National Security, International Relations and Development (NSID), bringing together several departments. NSID, which replaced a sub-Committee that practically never sat, brought greater clarity to which of the 80 countries around the world that are at risk of instability or undergoing conflict the Government saw as priorities and therefore requiring a cross-departmental approach. Operationally, too, there was progress. The Helmand Road Map was agreed in spring 2008. Commissioned jointly between the Commander of Task Force Helmand and the Head of the Provincial Reconstruction Team, it set out their shared framework for the UK's engagement.

37. Efforts to change bureaucratic behaviour also began making a difference. The FCO, for example, has opened almost all of its positions to personnel from other departments while the Ministry of Defence hired a number of diplomats. The three most senior officials from the MoD, DFID and FCO made a habit of travelling together, including to the UK's civil-military missions in Basra and Helmand, to reinforce the need for the three departments to work together. More formally, two reviews commissioned by the Cabinet Office were tasked to look into ways of improving the government's ability to undertake post-conflict stabilisation mission. The latest, undertaken by a specially-formed Stabilisation Implementation Team, is expected to recommend changes to the way civilians are recruited for overseas missions. This adds to the earlier assessments undertaken by the Cabinet Office led Capability Reviews, which in 2006 were tasked to look at how government departments performed, including on cross-government collaboration. Simultaneously, the Stabilisation Unit has seen its role expand. It is now responsible for recruiting, preparing and deploying most of the civilian experts into the integrated Civilian/Military Mission in Helmand. The seriousness with which the "comprehensive approach" is being taken can also be seen in the increased levels of ministerial interest in the "comprehensive approach", not just in the field. For example, several ministers attended the military exercise Joint Venture 08, unthinkable for non-MoD ministers a couple of years ago.

BUT PROBLEMS REMAIN

The British Situation

38. The history of the "comprehensive approach" has been a tortuous one, characterised by lobbying by the military and recalcitrance in the other government departments. Yet despite significant initiatives to improve cross-governmental cooperation both in London and the field, the current system is still riddled with problems. Though there is now a National Security Strategy, how it relates to the FCO's Strategic

⁹⁹ Franz Josef Jung, "Ten points for a NATO Strategic Concept", Address to the Munich Security Conference, 8 February, 2009.

¹⁰⁰ David Omand, "In the National Interest: Organising Government for National Security", The Demos Annual Security Lecture 2006.

¹⁰¹ Pauline Neville-Jones. Security Issues: Interim Position Paper. Found at <http://www.conservatives.com/pdf/interimsecurityissues.pdf>.

¹⁰² Charlie Edwards, "The case for a national security strategy", Demos, February 2007

¹⁰³ Though a National Security Strategy was first issued under Gordon Brown's premiership, and an updated version is expected soon, Tony Blair commissioned work on the paper "Britain in the World", which acted as a prototype National Security Strategy.

Priorities and the MoD's Defence Reviews remains unclear. Whitehall uses at least five different computer/network systems (eg Fire crest, DII, DII Secret, IMN, GSI, DFID, etc) and can therefore only transfer classified documents and briefs interdepartmentally with the greatest difficulty.

39. Terminology is also as different between government departments as between countries. There are still insufficient incentives for staff to gain experience in other departments. Those that do undertake cross-departmental postings often feel they are "forgotten" by the home department or come to be seen as less departmentally loyal. On the ground, cooperation is also hindered the different departments' approaches to duty of care ie the rules that govern the safety of their staff. Though often deployed together, what a MoD civilian, a DFID official and an FCO diplomat—let alone an employee of the security services—are allowed to do still varies, though improvements have taken place in the specific case of Helmand.

40. There have been initiatives to compel departments to think about projects jointly (eg by pooling funds). However the majority of funds to be used in conflict environments are still allocated to DFID, which is circumscribed by the strictures of the International Development Act that mandates that funds have to focus on poverty-alleviation. Though this need not, in fact, constrain spending decisions, it has bred an organisational culture inside DFID that militates against spending resources in countries-at-risk of instability as well as alongside the military. As Ann M Fitz-Gerald writes: "Based on DFID's role as an international development agency, there is only limited overlap and convergence between DFID policies and foreign policy priorities."¹⁰⁴ It is hard to see how anything else than statutory change can help engender a new culture inside the department.

41. Policy is stove-piped both in the development and implementation phases; the few cases of successful cross-departmental cooperation have required a calamity or the direct interest of either No. 10 or a Secretary of State. Though both the FCO and DFID have undergone considerable changes, especially under David Miliband and Douglas Alexander, the two organisations are often, at odds. The Foreign Office continues to see its role as policy-making and struggles with implementation. It often prefers a reporting role does not have the project management skills to design and implement reform and capability-building programmes. Few ambassadors have worked in other government departments, let alone DFID. DFID, in turn, has begun to play a political role in many countries—especially in Anglophone sub-Saharan Africa but (as noted above) it remains constrained by the International Development Act and by a culture that is suspicious of the national interest. Yet its programmes are often not as coordinated with the rest of government as necessary or staff equipped to play a political and representational role. None of the Whitehall departments have yet fulfilled Prime Minister Brown's promise, made as part of the unveiling of the UK's National first Security Strategy in 2008, that a 1000-person register of civilians to be deployed in post-conflict missions would be created.

42. Furthermore, coordination is weak between those departments that focus on foreign issues (FCO, DFID, MoD) and those that focus on the UK (eg the Home Office). Perhaps most problematically, there is no oversight organization to ensure that the myriad of agencies, departments, and organizations have the capabilities to work together. For example, though Britain has backed EU-led police reforms throughout the Balkans, the connection to domestic law enforcement has been weak.

43. Only in Albania has Britain deployed a large Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) team and runs the EC-funded Police Assistance Mission of the European Community to Albania (PAMECA). Policy-wise, the Cabinet Office, which has taken on more responsibility since the first Blair Government, does not have the staff or authority to fulfil its expanding mandate. With Parliament's oversight divided along departmental lines—both in terms of resources allocation, agenda and committee mandates—the incentives towards inter-departmental cooperation are not as strong.

The International Situation

44. The "comprehensive approach" has also run into problems internationally, especially in NATO. Though the process of getting the Alliance to agree the concept though policy documents was not straightforward, it may prove to have easy compeered to implementing many of the commitments. There are several reasons. First, NATO allies still disagree on what the "comprehensive approach" really means in practice. To the US it has become another, more EU-friendly word for counterinsurgency operations. To many European governments, however, it has had little effect on the way they conduct military operations. Though many allies have established PRTs, only those in RC South have sought to genuinely integrate civilian and military work, rather than simply improve coordination. As a non-paper circulated by the Danish government notes: "Countries view CA [the comprehensive approach] from different perspectives and employ different definitions of these efforts, eg, counter-insurgency in Helmand Province is not directly comparable to civil-military efforts in Northern Afghanistan, for example."¹⁰⁵ Now that NATO has to move towards implementation, problems are likely to emerge.

45. Second, though many allied governments talk about the need to be comprehensive, many if not all lack the basic civilian capabilities to complement a military strategy. In 2008, all the EU government said they had 6050 police officers on the books and ready to be deployed. They deployed reported 1422. Similarly,

¹⁰⁴ Ann M. Fitz-Gerald, "UK National Security Strategy: Institutional and Cultural Challenges", Defence Studies, Volume 8, Issue 1 March 2008.

¹⁰⁵ NATO Comprehensive Approach Roundtable in Washington, D.C., 21 May 2009", Non-paper, 8 June 2009.

939 Rule of Law experts were reportedly on stand-by; only 132 were deployed. In total, 11,112 were reported as part of the EU's Civilian Headline Goal 2008, but only 1928 were in the end sent to the field. Europe's genuinely "civilian powers"—measured by money spent, civilians deployed and the extent to which "back-office" systems are being reformed to facilitate cross-government cooperation—are Britain, The Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Sweden and Norway. But if other allies and partners do not build civilian capacities, NATO will struggle to be comprehensive.

46. Third, NATO will struggle to be more comprehensive without a working relationship with the EU. Many key NATO allies like France and Germany will resist building civilian inside NATO, preferring to keep the Alliance focused on its military roles. This will remain the case even now that France has re-joined NATO's military structures. So a new NATO-EU link has to be forged. Forging such a link will, of course, be no easy feat. Turkey, Cyprus and Greece have blocked greater cooperation. Progress towards a resolution of the conflict is on-going and may be helped by behind-the-scenes international support but overt involvement is unlikely to help. No break-through though is likely in the immediate future. And though President Sarkozy is serious about France's integration into NATO's military structures, recalcitrant diplomats, for whom opposing NATO and championing ESDP has been a longstanding article of faith will need time to adjust. To this day, French and some other European diplomats prefer to discuss political issues elsewhere than NATO.

47. The fourth problem is operational. European governments are reluctant to commit additional troops, civilian personnel and resources to the Afghan mission. As a result it is not unlikely the US will increasingly see NATO not as a full-spectrum operator, and an alliance in need of a "comprehensive approach", but as a niche provider of peacekeeping missions in the already-stabilised Balkans and merely as a provider of security assistance in out-of-theatre missions such as NATO's ISAF.

REFORMS REQUIRED

48. In future, it will be necessary to match the most talented people to the threats Britain faces and make sure they bring a comprehensive approach to the problems of security. For lack of a better word, more "comprehensiveness" will need to be built into the way the British government recruits, trains, gives incentives and promotes civil servants—so a new generation of officials can be brought up to work differently. But rather than developing diplomats, soldiers, or development workers—or trying to teach each cadre of about the other—it may be necessary in the long-term to go further and develop officials who are equally at home in all government departments and who are encouraged to work together and in each other's offices in order to progress through the ranks.

49. The way to maintain departmental expertise and encourage cross-departmental working could be through a new National Security "Fast Stream" (like the old European track) of officials who would specialise in cross-departmental work. A subset of such a cadre could be more operational and be the in-house reserve for deployments; though the staff would not necessarily need to be uniformed, they may have to require military-level training and perhaps even carry weapons for self-protection such as CIMIC officers. This, however, is unlikely to create enough manpower for current deployments. So in future, Britain also needs to consider a civilian reserve, much like the US, with experts on stand-by contracts.

50. These are all long-term and costly initiatives. In the short-term, a cross departmental doctrine for stability and reconstruction missions should be developed for all departmental staff to follow in overseas missions. The US Institute for Peace has begun developing such doctrine for the US administration; there ought to be a British and perhaps even a NATO variant. A similarly short term measure would be to require Permanent Secretaries and their Deputy Permanent Secretaries in DFID, MoD, the Home Office and FCO to come from different departments.

51. Ultimately, this "bottom-up" approach needs to be accompanied by a "top down" transformation and integration of the entire national security apparatus. Any tangible success in facing the threat of the 21st Century requires that the inherently stove-piped Cold War institutions are torn-down and recreated. This means beefing up the centre of government, specially the Cabinet Office, which should be turned into a National Security Council staff as in the US administration. Such a staff could be led by an elected or appointed minister, who would also act as the National Security Adviser to the Prime Minister, supported by a National Security Director, from the ranks of the Civil Service. Unlike the Cabinet Office today, which has comparably few senior officials, a National Security Council staff ought to be staffed by several Senior Principal Action Officers at SCS1 grade, each covering a "mission areas" (eg a regional area like Afghanistan and Pakistan or thematic policy areas like non-proliferation) and have a Long-Term Planning Staff specifically dedicated to, and trained for, inter-departmental long-term mission planning.

52. Outside government, but reporting to the Prime Minister through the National Security Adviser ought to be a Comprehensive Security Board, led and staffed by respected senior ex-generals, former diplomats and past politicians who can give outside in-put into policy, and undertake occasional in-depth studies (including out of their own volition). The Government's National Security Forum, chaired by Lord West of Spithead, has taken a long time to be established, but may form a useful basis for a more independent Comprehensive Security Board. New structures also need to be established to ensure cross-departmental lessons are learnt and acted upon. One way could be to appoint, in National Security Council staff, a Chief Lessons Learning Officer, who would attend Cabinet discussions of military and civilian deployments. In

time, it may be worth considering turning the Defence Academy into National Security University for all departments, with the top position alternating at least between MoD, FCO, and DfID, but preferably among all Whitehall departments.

53. In Parliament, a cross-departmental, perhaps even a joint National Security Select Committee of both the Houses ought to be set-up, led by a former Secretary of State and with a substantial staff, including secondments from a range of departments and the military. There also ought to be debates specifically on cross-departmental issues, and the development of a comprehensive National Security Budget with the Permanent Secretaries of FCO, MoD and DFID as joint Accounting Officers. In due course, it may also be necessary to consider a National Security Act, but the first step should be a comprehensive National Security Review, which examines all the departments from a perspective of cross-department delivery. From this can flow a Defence Review and other departmental plans.

54. Finally, the way British stabilisation missions are run, especially in the field, needs to be changed. The idea of a “lead minister” with responsibility for one operation has shown not to work either in Britain (or in the US). An alternative is to have empowered Prime Ministerial Regional Envoys. Or in the cases where Britain has a large-scale, multi-departmental commitment, like Afghanistan, to have Resident Ministers, such as Harold Macmillan’s role in Austria, Duff Cooper’s in Singapore and Oliver Lyttelton’s in Cairo during World War II. These individuals would have the clout to manage all departmental interests, and have a direct link to Parliament.

55. For smaller missions, such as in Sierra Leone, Albania or Bosnia-Herzegovina, a number of short-term steps could also be taken to forge greater cross-departmental cooperation. In places where a cross-departmental is considered a priority, diplomats should have had cross-departmental experience to be eligible for the ambassador’s post. Furthermore, as a norm an embassy’s leadership—that is, the Ambassador, the DFID Head of Office, the Defence Attaché and the Head of Station should be appointed (though not necessarily deploy to Post) at the same time and attend pre-posting training together. By the same token, there should be a process of 360 performance reviews of all these posts, ensuring that judgments on performance are made from a cross-departmental perspective.

Changes inside EU and NATO

56. Internationally, reforms are needed in both NATO and EU and at various levels. Most importantly, however, will be the building of the necessary civilian capacity. As many countries do not prioritise the build-up of civilian capabilities, it may be necessary key to encourage a certain level national institution-building. To do so, EU and NATO governments could mandate the creation of National Action Plans, covering the structure, staffing and funding for dealing comprehensively with stabilisation missions. The plans could be modelled on the National Action Plans against poverty and social exclusion, which were submitted by ten countries in July 2004. The plans would have to be measured against common objectives, much like the anti-poverty aims agreed at the EU Nice European Council in 2000. If it proves too contentious to reach agreement on mandatory plans, it may be worthwhile beginning with voluntary submissions, perhaps with Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and Britain agreeing to submit plans to galvanise the effort.

57. Closely tied to the notion of National Action Plans is the idea of organising a “peer review” of each plan, much like OECD peer reviews, which monitor OECD members’ efforts and performance in the area of development co-operation. Each EU and NATO country would be critically examined approximately once every four years, allowing five or six plans to be examined annually. The reviews would be conducted by other EU countries—eg Germany would review Sweden’s plan with either the EU Council Secretariat or NATO HQ functioning as the secretariat to the process and reports presented and discussed either by country representatives.

58. Learning lesson from past and even on-going mission will also be crucial to improve both NATO’s and the EU’s ability to undertake missions comprehensively. In the EU, the lesson learning process has been ad hoc and dangerously politicised. In future, there will have to be a standardised lesson learning process, a dedicated staff inside the EU Council Secretariat and even deployed Lesson Learning Officers in each mission (like in UNMIK). But in the short-term, the EU-ISS should be expanded with a Brussels-based, unit headed by dedicated to the on-going analysis of missions, with results discussed by allied governments.

59. The system that British leaders use to manage the instruments of national power, and the manner in which Parliament oversees and funds the governmental system, do not permit the comprehensive working required to protect Britain and its interests in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world. By the same token, many of the international institutions are no longer up to the new tasks. While many improvements have taken place, especially in recent years, both systems still bear the hallmarks of being created to fight the Cold War. Many of the assumptions underpinning these systems are no longer valid. None more so than the departmental focus and the separation of civilian and military instruments. From 9/11 to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and emerging threats to the homeland, 21st-century national security challenges demand more effective communication across traditional organizational boundaries. Meeting these challenges requires a common vision and organizational culture and better integration of expertise and capabilities. That means making the “comprehensive approach” the standard approach both in Britain and internationally within NATO and the EU.

Memorandum from Josh Arnold-Foster

JOINED UP GOVERNMENT AND THE PLANNING OF THE HELMAND TASK FORCE DEPLOYMENT

This note is in response to the Defence Select Committee's call for written evidence for their inquiry into the Comprehensive Approach. It is based upon personal observation as a Special Advisor of the Whitehall planning and policy development process for the deployment of the Helmand Task Force between July 2005 and May 2006.

BACKGROUND

1. In the run up to the deployment of the Task Force a Ministerial group was set up chaired by the Defence Secretary to co-ordinate the different Government Departments planning for the Helmand deployment. The three Departments most closely involved were the MoD, the FCO and DfID. In addition the Home Office and the Treasury were also represented. Various questions were considered and some were decided upon at these meetings, including resource levels, assessments of local political, economic and security issues, and relations with other NATO allies. There was also communication between Government Departments at both Ministerial and official level outside of these formal meetings.

2. Initially there was a high degree of expertise and commitment from all Government Departments to this process. As the scale and complexity of the challenges faced in Helmand became more apparent that commitment was strengthened significantly. While there are a number of criticisms that can be made of the planning process there was no lack of will to try and ensure that a comprehensive approach was successfully adopted and implemented. However there are some bureaucratic and philosophical difficulties that need to be overcome before the Government can implement a truly comprehensive approach to national security.

PLANNING FOR THE HELMAND TASKFORCE

3. The Ministerial group meetings considered issues on the basis of written or oral submissions from officials and my recollection is that these were generally produced by individual Departments, rather than the result of a combined effort by officials from different Departments. The MoD provided advice on the size and scale of proposed British forces and other military issues. The FCO briefed on the composition and personalities of Afghan and other relevant political figures, and DfID produced papers on local agriculture and other development issues.

4. These submissions provided a very detailed analysis of individual challenges in the various fields of governance, security, economic development etc. They also proposed a variety of policy options to tackle these challenges. In addition there was a general recognition that the challenges were closely inter-related. What seemed to be lacking was a detailed, holistic and comprehensive analysis of how the different factors that effected stabilization were related to each other. In part this was due to the significant shortage of reliable and current economic and sociological data relating to Helmand. Nevertheless there could have been a more joined up approach to analysis and recommendation on various policy questions.

5. For instance the provision of new irrigation systems could be used either to divert farmers away from opium cultivation or by local warlords to grow even more opium through indentured labour or both. In Helmand ensuring that the first outcome is the most likely is not simply a development task but also requires close coordination of political and security operations. Another question is the degree to which development resources are devoted to providing work for young men. The MoD would tend to give this a high priority as it will help to divert them away from insurgency, but DfID may see this as less cost effective in terms of long term poverty relief. Addressing these questions cannot be done by one Department alone—it requires joint input and analysis from a range of views from different areas of Government. While the PCRU did provide some input on these types of questions the bulk of advice provided to Ministers was from individual Department.

A MORE INTEGRATED PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION FUNCTION IN WHITEHALL?

6. While the planning process for the Helmand deployment was efficient on reflection it may have been more effective to have co-located most of the officials involved full time in planning the Helmand deployment in one location and formed them into one office or unit, preferably by integrating such a function within the PCRU (now the Stabilisation Unit). It would have been tasked with providing the bulk of advice to Ministers and only those issues that had a major impact on the rest of the individual Department would be subject to separate advice from within that Department. Such issues could have included duty of care for deployed personnel, allocation of major strategic assets such as helicopters, strategic investment in staff development and so forth.

7. Evidently the Government is developing its policy on closer inter-Departmental working arrangements. Possible additional planning capabilities for the Stabilisation Unit are under consideration. However if the Unit also had the ability to provide Ministerial advice on the implementation of proposed plans this could significantly enhance the Government's ability to implement the Comprehensive Approach. This should not necessarily undermine the duty of Ministerial accountability to Parliament. The official in charge of this unit would have a slightly more challenging task of responding to the concerns of three different Ministers, but these difficulties would be outweighed by the advantage of having a common analysis of the problems and a common solution. None of this should dilute the ability of different subject

matter experts to provide clear and distinctive advice in their separate areas of expertise. Nor should it be seen as an attempt to suppress or discourage internal discussion and debate within Government about the Comprehensive Approach. What is urgently required is the ability to synthesise these different strands of thought and advice into a coherent and convergent set of policy recommendations. Ministers would still be collectively responsible for making decisions on the basis of relevant advice.

CURRENT AND FUTURE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The Senior Responsible Officer

9. In its Memorandum to this Inquiry the Government reported on the conclusions of a conference earlier this year about whether the appointment of a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) in theatre responsible for operational delivery would be appropriate. Understandably questions about their remit and authority would be difficult but what is less apparent is why the issue of which Department should provide the SRO is as difficult. In a speech last year the Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Richard Dannatt, said

10. "I am completely comfortable with putting my soldiers under command of the FCO or DFID in order to help them deliver their effects. Indeed, it is clear to me that we must start to develop in Defence niche capabilities against what is now being called Military Assistance, Stabilisation and Development tasks—MASD—and this is a new, emerging military task." (Speech to Progress meeting, 21 July 2008)

11. This willingness to closely integrate different parts of Government could work both ways. Why shouldn't DFID and FCO personnel be instructed by a senior military officer? Obviously as they are civilians such an arrangement would not be placing themselves "under command" as the military understand it. That is why in some circumstances SROs may use "influence" rather than executive authority.

12. The only consideration in selecting the right SRO for a stabilisation operation should be whether he or she is the best person for the task. Providing they have the right experience and expertise it is unclear why which Department they come from has any relevance to the selection criteria.

Funding

13. Traditionally the FCO and DFID have always had far smaller funds available to support stabilisation operations. The MoD has the significant advantage of calling on the Treasury Reserve and on the Urgent Operational Requirement procedure to access substantial additional financial resources from the Treasury. While the Government is altering this capability the military will still tend to have this advantage when deployed on stabilisation operations. This can lead to tensions over the tempo and scale of planned activities. One way to resolve this difficulty would be to give the FCO and DFID access to similar arrangements with the Treasury. If it is, in principle, right for the military to have access to substantial additional funds for stabilisation operations then the same principle should apply to their colleagues in the FCO and DFID.

Lessons learned

14. There has been considerable analysis of the theory and practice of the Comprehensive Approach, both in academic and political circles. Much reference has been made to the British experience of this type of operation. However what is currently lacking is a comprehensive official study of some of the key examples of the UK's historic involvement in stabilisation operations. That is why the Government should consider producing official histories of the Malayan, Kenyan and Cyprus campaigns. There may be political and legal questions that would need to be addressed before commissioning such works but nevertheless these could be a very useful guide to future policy makers.

CONCLUSION

15. The British Government is likely to be engaged in stabilisation operations in Afghanistan and probably elsewhere for many years to come. Ensuring that different Government Departments work together as effectively and efficiently as possible will be a vital part of such operations. Expanding the role and capabilities of the Stabilisation Unit is not the only answer to this challenge. Addressing the cultural and philosophical differences, sorting out the division of responsibilities for implementation and so forth will all be critically important. However concentrating all of the relevant Whitehall policy makers and advisors within one administrative unit should make advice to Ministers more comprehensive and therefore more likely to achieve the relevant strategic objective.

16. This memorandum is based upon relatively limited exposure to inter-Departmental working arrangements established over three years ago. Much has changed since then and therefore parts of this memorandum may no longer be relevant. In addition my perspective as a Special Advisor is inevitably limited. I should stress that both the civilian and military personnel involved worked very hard to plan an effective and successful operation which was fully in line with the Comprehensive Approach.

Josh Arnold-Forster

Former Special Advisor to the Defence Secretary, 2005–2006

7 July 2009

**Supplementary memorandum from Professor Theo Farrell,
Department of War Studies, King's College London**

1. This memorandum follows up on a key theme that emerged in my oral evidence before the Defence Select Committee on 9 June, namely, the degree of support amongst serving British officers for the Comprehensive Approach. In my testimony, I cited from memory two surveys that I had conducted which provided some data on this question. This memorandum provides that data.

2. Both surveys were designed by myself and Professor Terry Terriff (University of Calgary) to test officer attitudes to military transformation. This was for a project on European military transformation funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (Grant RES-228-25-0063).

3. The first survey was of British officers at the Joint Services Command and Staff College (JSCSC), Shrivenham, from March to May 2007. 138 officers responded to the survey; 60% of these were Army officers and 66% were middle ranking officers (major or equivalent). The second survey was a larger survey of European officers at the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany, from 2007–2008. 2464 officers responded to this survey (again, most were middle ranked), of which 146 were British¹⁰⁶.

4. Each survey asked 15 questions about military transformation. One question asked about the effects based approach to operations. Officers were asked for their views on the proposition that the future of operations would involve an “holistic approach”, involving a “mix of military and non-military instruments”, and directed towards “strategic effects”. In the NATO survey, 86% agreed with this proposition, including 86% of British officers¹⁰⁷. In the JSCSC survey, 88% of officers agreed with this proposition¹⁰⁸. This is an extraordinarily positive result.

5. Finally, I should like to emphasize what I said in my oral evidence, that British officer attitudes to the Comprehensive Approach need to be viewed in the context of the effects-based approach to operations (EBAO). Hence, our surveys asked officers for their view on EBAO but in so doing it also tests their view on the Comprehensive Approach.

6. EBAO concepts and doctrine developed in Britain between 2004-2008, driven by two factors: (1) lessons learned from operations in Bosnia (1992–1995), Kosovo (1999), Sierra Leone (2000–01), and Iraq (2003 on) which highlighted the need for a more integrated multidisciplinary and multi-agency approach to operations; and (2) new effects-based operations (EBO) ideas and doctrine emerging from the United States in the early 2000s.

7. US EBO doctrine sought to develop a scientific approach to operations, incorporating systems of systems analysis. This scientific and staff intensive approach conflicted with British military culture (and especially command culture). Hence from 2005 on, the British began to develop their own EBAO which de-emphasised the systems of systems approach, and emphasized the imperative to integrate kinetic and non-kinetic activities in a coherent approach to operations. Since many of these non-kinetic activities would be resourced and conducted by non-military partners, this provides the underpinning logic (from the military's perspective) of the Comprehensive Approach.

8. In August 2009, US Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) formally abandoned EBO doctrine. This is because the new commander of USJFCOM, General James Mattis, felt that the attempt to develop a scientific approach to operations was a dangerous illusion and damaging to joint command and operational effectiveness. The UK's Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC), also under a new commander, Major General Paul Newton, has likewise abandoned Britain's EBAO doctrine, in part because of the unhelpful association with the now discredited EBO doctrine. However, the underlying philosophy from EBAO, of the need to focus on generating and measuring non-kinetic as well as kinetic effects, and to integrate kinetic and non-kinetic activities in a coherent approach to operations, has been retained. Indeed, it lies at the heart of DCDC's new Joint Doctrine Publication 3-40, “Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution.”

¹⁰⁶ See Ev 153.

¹⁰⁷ See Ev 154.

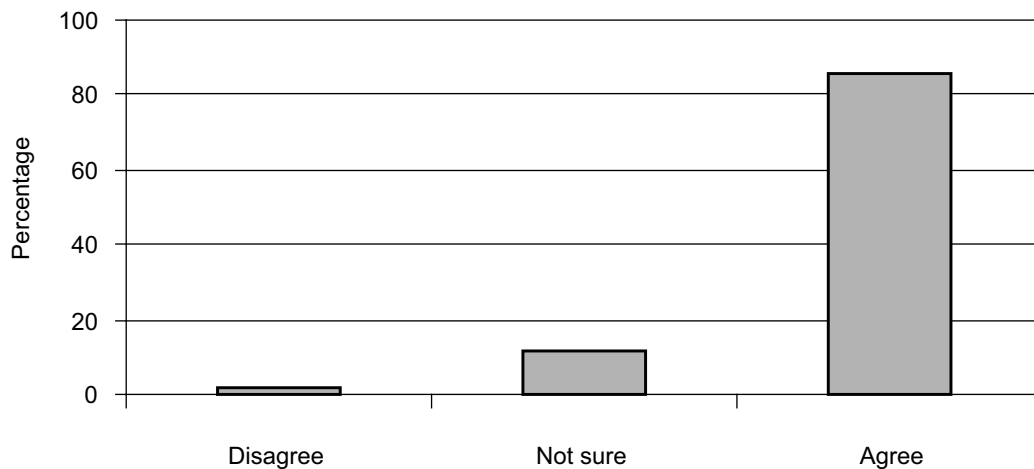
¹⁰⁸ See Ev 155.

Survey of NATO School, 2007–2008
RESPONSES BY COUNTRY

	<i>No. respondents</i>	<i>% total European</i>
Belgium	164	7
British	146	6
Bulgaria	14	1
Czech Republic	45	2
Denmark	187	8
Estonia	32	1
France	225	9
Germany	349	14
Greece	90	4
Hungary	58	2
Iceland	0	—
Italy	204	8
Latvia	28	1
Lithuania	29	1
Luxemburg	4	—
Netherlands	204	8
Norway	97	4
Poland	93	4
Portugal	71	3
Romania	61	3
Slovakia	34	1
Slovenia	43	2
Spain	220	9
Turkey	66	3
Total European	2464	

SURVEY OF NATO SCHOOL—QUESTION 13

Future operations will be characterised by an holistic approach
and directed towards achieving strategic effects



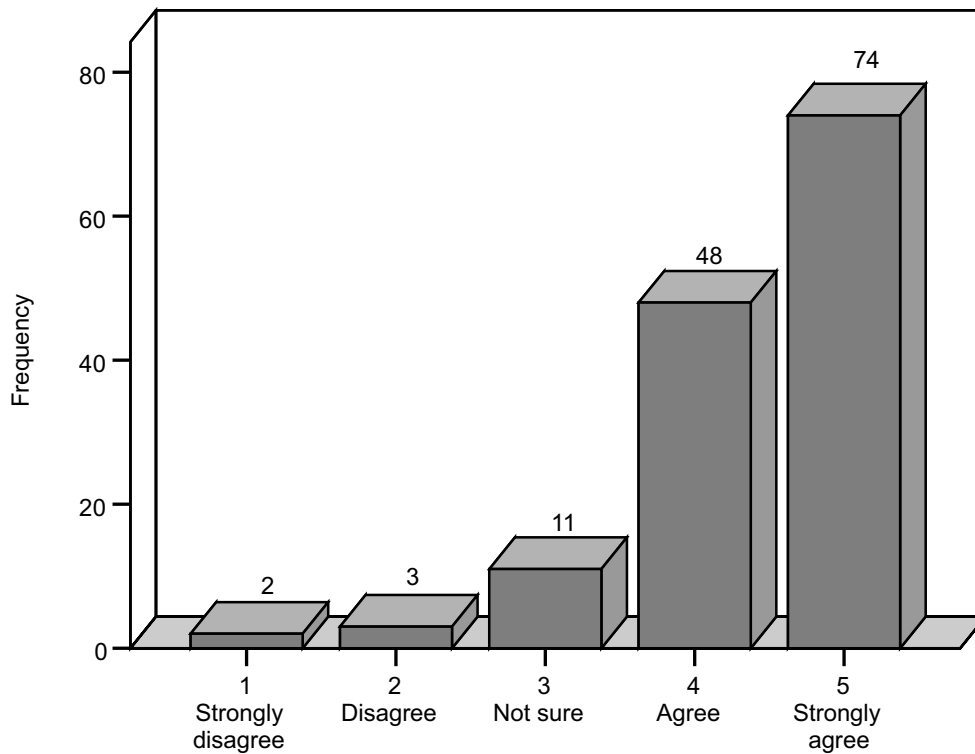
	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Not sure</i>	<i>Agree</i>
All European NATO	2	12	86
Britain	5	9	86
France	2	11	86
Germany	3	11	86
Netherlands	4	13	84
Poland	0	13	87
Romania	2	10	89
Spain	2	11	87

	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Not sure</i>	<i>Agree</i>
All European NATO	2	12	86
Army	2	11	87
Air Force	2	13	84
Navy	2	9	89

SURVEY OF JOINT SERVICES COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE (UK), MARCH-MAY 2007

Number of respondents = 138

Figure 12: Future operations will be characterised by a holistic approach, involving a mix of military and non-military instruments, and directed towards achieving strategic effects



	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Not sure</i>	<i>Agree</i>
Overall	4	8	88
Army	4	2	94
Air Force	7	25	68
Navy	—	11	89
Marines	—	—	100

11 June 2009

Memorandum from the UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC)

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC) is pleased to respond to the Defence Committee's inquiry on the "Comprehensive Approach" and in particular on how the approach should enable the UK's Armed Forces to carry out their responsibilities with respect to international cultural charters more fully and with greater impact. We would welcome the opportunity to elaborate on or clarify this written evidence when the Committee takes oral evidence in June.

1.2 The UKNC is an independent civil society organisation set up by HM Government in 2004 as the focal point in the UK for policies relating to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). UKNC brings together a network of over 200 experts in education, culture, natural & social sciences and communication & information across the UK. By working closely in partnership with HM Government, the UKNC enables it to engage a wide range of UK organisations and specialist institutions in the above fields.

1.3 UKNC's Culture Committee has 20 volunteer members, nominated by organisations across the spectrum of the culture sector, including the arts, museums and cultural heritage. The Committee's key aims include (i) to be the formal link between civil society, relevant departments in HM Government (primarily the Department for Culture, Media & Sport) including the Devolved Administrations and UNESCO on matters relating to all aspects of culture; (ii) to advise and work with HM Government on UNESCO's cultural activities which have specific relevance to the UK including UNESCO requests and initiatives, Conventions, World Heritage Sites matters, and cultural education; and (iii) to provide independent and expert analysis, comment and advice to HMG on cultural matters relating to UNESCO, including as input to UK policy-making on key UNESCO programmes and cultural issues.

1.4 The Culture Committee's priority areas for action include detailed consideration of UNESCO's culture-sector conventions. It looks at a range of issues including, inter alia, the impacts of UK ratification of conventions, whether the UK might ratify existing conventions, monitoring and enforcement of existing conventions.

1.5 At present one of the main areas of work for the Culture Committee is related to the identification and protection of the cultural heritage in times of armed conflict. The UKNC provided written and oral evidence to the DCMS Committee reviewing the Draft Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Bill in June 2008 and is actively working with Government to find a way for this legislation, which did not, at the very last minute, make it into the most recent Queen's Speech, to be passed in order that the UK may ratify the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols of 1954 and 1999 and by doing so join the rest of the major world powers that have already ratified. As part of this work the UKNC is hosting the UK & Ireland Committee for the Blue Shield. The Blue Shield, created in 1999 under the provision of the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention, is best described as the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross.

1.6 There is other good work going on: for example the collaboration on "Operation Heritage" between the UK's (3) Division and the British Museum.

2.0 WHY CULTURAL HERITAGE IS IMPORTANT

2.1 Cultural heritage defines a people, a nation, a community, or a group. It is what makes that collection of people different: in anthropological terminology it defines "the other". As such, by dint of these distinctions, cultural heritage can be seen as one potential cause of conflict: it is frequently used as a tool of war.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ For example, during the Second World War the German SS had its own Ahnenerbe (Ancestral Inheritance) unit that included archaeologists and other cultural heritage experts whose sole aim was to justify the expansion of Nazi Germany to the mythical size of the Greater Germany of prehistory. This Unit was also responsible for the so-called anthropological experiments carried out in concentration camps to prove the belief that Nordic/Germanic people were an "extraordinary biological phenomenon".

More recently, cultural heritage has been specifically targeted in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia and the destruction of one mosque in Ayodhya, came close to provoking war between India and Pakistan. As recently as March 2008 so-called "Afghan insurgents" were caching weapons in cemeteries, attempting to take advantage of US rules of engagement that forbid entry into cemeteries under normal circumstances.

2.2 Cultural heritage can be both intangible (for example, language, songs, stories) and tangible (for example, buildings, archaeological sites, landscapes, objects, pictures, books and archives).

2.3 By providing a sense of place, a feeling of pride, and a sense of dignity, cultural heritage makes us what we are. This is true of the collective as well as the individual: just as an individual without memory is only partially effective as a person so a society without a memory is only partially effective as a society. The vast majority of such common memory is provided by the cultural heritage. The lack of cultural heritage identity can create a dysfunctional society—and therefore a very difficult society to manage. It is no surprise that the creation of a national museum is one of the first five things newly independent nations tend to do. Part of the current problem in Iraq is caused by different groups, with different cultural heritage identities, vying for power. These different identities had been suppressed under Saddam Hussein who instead focussed on the ancient Mesopotamian cultural heritage that he claimed was common to all Iraqis.

3.0 WHY CULTURAL HERITAGE PROTECTION MUST BE A KEY COMPONENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

3.1 Given the above, it makes no sense to ignore the impact of conflict on the cultural heritage. Any comprehensive approach that aims for the creation of a sustainable peace in societies ravaged by war must take cultural heritage into account. However, there are three further reasons why the cultural heritage must be a critical element of any comprehensive approach.

3.2 First, the cultural heritage is fast becoming one of the key drivers for national economies through developments in, mainly, international tourism. In 2002 there were 715 million “international arrivals” in the world; the World Travel Organisation projects that this figure will rise to nearly 1.6 billion by 2020. In 2002 tourists spent US\$643 billion; we can only anticipate a huge increase in such spending by 2020. By extrapolation from statistics some 80% of “international arrivals” are travelling, at least in part, to see cultural heritage. If a conflict is allowed to destroy the cultural heritage (through direct targeting, collateral damage, or looting of museums and archaeological sites) combatants are effectively removing one potentially key driver for economic recovery post-conflict.¹¹⁰ This is obviously a situation that should be avoided if at all possible.

3.3 Second, through their experience in Iraq, many military officers now regard protection of cultural heritage as a “force multiplier” rather than as a burdensome addition to their responsibilities. Anecdotal evidence is now very clear that if occupying troops allow cultural heritage to be damaged that attacks on patrols increase and civilian cooperation significantly decreases.

3.4 Third, it is now established that some profits from the looting of archaeological sites in Iraq have been used to fund the so-called “insurgency” and allegedly the wider Al Qaeda network. By protecting the archaeological sites deployed troops would be cutting off this source of funding.

4.0 WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

By the military:

4.1 One of the conclusions of the Comprehensive Approach Workshop held in Brussels on 8 March 2007 was to stress “the importance of personal contacts and networks and the potential of joint training and exercising to facilitate better mutual awareness and bridge some of the gaps (eg different mindsets) between civilian and military actors”. It is key that military staff be appointed with the responsibility to liaise with the cultural heritage sector generally and at all stages of an operation (pre-deployment, deployment, and post-conflict). Such staff need to be trained regarding the importance of the cultural heritage to the comprehensive approach.

4.2 Such training should not be restricted to these liaison staff but should become a core part of general training for all troops, from senior officers to junior ranks. Specific pre-deployment training should also be developed for different potential theatres.

4.3 These staff should also liaise with those archaeologists already employed by Defence Estates who already carry out limited cultural heritage awareness training.

By the cultural heritage sector:

4.4 The cultural heritage sector needs to establish an effective UK & Ireland Committee for the Blue Shield that will be in a position to work with the Ministry of Defence to develop training programmes aimed at all levels of our Armed Forces. This is underway but further funding is required.

4.5 The cultural heritage sector needs to actively engage with the Ministry of Defence to assist in delivering training.

By Parliament:

4.5 Parliament needs to reactivate the Draft Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Bill that was lost from this session in order that the UK may ratify the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols of 1954 and 1999.

¹¹⁰ In terms of looting of archaeological sites, it has been estimated that at Sipan (Peru), after careful excavation, the subsequent display of both artefacts and site now generates something in the region of \$14 million a year in tourist revenue, a far cry from the \$250,000 the looters are thought to have earned for their initial finds.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Defence Committee's review of the "Comprehensive Approach" provides the UK with an opportunity to become one of the key international leaders in this field. The USA is considering a proposal to create a formal Cultural Heritage Planning and Training Office within its Department of Defence and the Netherlands Ministry of Defence is considering a report recommending the appointment of Cultural Heritage personnel to its central staff following a recent seminar in The Hague. The UK MoD is supportive of closer collaboration with the cultural heritage sector.

We should welcome the opportunity to work more closely with the UK MoD to deliver these recommendations and help create an effective comprehensive approach of which the UK could be proud.

12 May 2009

First supplementary memorandum from the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development

QUESTIONS 144–145: WHETHER THE STABILISATION FUND WAS FULLY SPENT LAST YEAR?

There was a slight overspend (less than 1.7%) of Stabilisation Funds in Helmand during the period 2008–09 as a % of total—the allocation was £22,412,000 and actual spend £22,795,000.

QUESTIONS 155–160: EVALUATION OF THE SUCCESS OF THE WHEAT SEED DISTRIBUTION IN AFGHANISTAN AND, IN PARTICULAR, WHETHER THIS HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE REDUCTION IN THE POPPY CROP.

This report has yet to be completed and should be finalised in July.

QUESTIONS 176–179: THE NUMBER OF PASHTU SPEAKERS IN MOD AND FCO.

In terms of the number of linguists, Dari is most commonly spoken in the northern and western parts of the country, as well as the capital Kabul, while Pashtu is primarily spoken in the east, south and southwest of Afghanistan:

DFID Afghanistan has at least six UK-based staff members working in Kabul who are currently learning Dari which is the official language of Afghanistan alongside Pashtu. In addition they employ 16 locally engaged staff who are native Dari/Pashtu speakers in Kabul and one in Lashkar Gah. They also have access to Afghan translators for both languages in both Kabul and Lashkar Gah. DFID Pakistan has four Pashtu speakers employed as local staff. None of the UK based staff speak Pashtu.

The Stabilisation Unit has 18 Pashto speakers on its database, of which two are deployed in Helmand, and 21 Dari speakers. The FCO has seven Pashtu speakers of varying levels of fluency: One is on training, three are in UK, two are in Afghanistan and one is in Pakistan.

For the MoD, the breadth of language training provided by the Defence Operational Languages Support Unit (DOLSU) gives a good indication of the current and future commitment:

PASHTO

<i>Training Year</i>	<i>Basic (1100-1110)</i>	<i>Intermediate (2210-2222)</i>	<i>Higher (3321-4444)</i>	<i>Total</i>
TY 05-06	0	16	18	34
TY 06-07	108	8	30	146
TY 07-08	124	0	81	205
TY 08-09	116	0	59	175
TY 09-10	128	2	66	194
TY 10-11	124	45	95	264

FARSI/DARI

<i>Training Year</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Higher</i>	<i>Total</i>
TY 05-06	0	16	23	39
TY 06-07	8	17	35	60
TY 07-08	3	0	27	30
TY 08-09	1	0	37	38
TY 09-10	5	0	28	33
TY 10-11	6	0	48	54

MoD language training is conducted to standards in accordance with STANAG 6001 Language Proficiency Levels; for example the 4 digit code 3321 (Higher) means level 3 in listening, level 3 in speaking, level 2 in reading and level 1 in writing (where 1 = survival, 2 = functional, 3 = professional and 4 = expert). The level of training provided is not necessarily dictated by rank or role, but rather by aptitude. However, the total numbers trained does not equal the total numbers current as some personnel may not have maintained their currency/proficiency post OPTOUR.

In addition to the above courses, since 2006–07 there has been a Basic Patrol Course requirement in Pashto for approx 250 personnel per Bde (or 500 annually) and all personnel conduct low level language training on OPTAG. It is not usually a requirement for MoD Civil Servants operating with the UK military in Afghanistan to receive language training; instead, they use local interpreters, but an IPOD based training package is available to MoD personnel.

QUESTIONS 197–199: THE FCO ACTION PLAN ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325

An update on progress against the UK’s National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 can be found on the FCO website at: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/unscr-1325-uk-action-plan>. The next update is due to take place over this summer.

Specific to Afghanistan, the FCO can report the following progress:

To encourage the Afghan Government to implement 1325, the FCO is funding various programmes—including a £500,000 women’s empowerment programme—to promote women’s equal participation in governance and to build awareness of women’s rights among civil society and policy makers. It is positive that because of a constitutional quota, over a quarter of the MPs in the Lower House of the Afghan Parliament are women.

Across Afghanistan, the UK supports the representation of women in our justice projects and programmes. For example, the proportion of female judges at the Criminal Justice Task Force, which investigates and prosecutes narcotics cases, is far above the national estimated figure of 3% women in the judiciary.

In Helmand, UK advisors are supporting the development of justice systems that can provide access for women. UK supported legal education initiatives are raising awareness of human rights, including rights and access to justice for women. Advisers with gender expertise are ensuring that gender issues are an important element of all our capacity-building work with the justice sector.

The UK programme in Helmand recognises the specific challenges faced by women working in the justice sector, including the Afghan National Police and the prison service. For example, Military Defence Police officers are mentoring female officers through firearms training and 10 week literacy training has been delivered to female officers.

The UK has also assisted in developing a provincial women’s group, focusing particularly on the rights of women and their children. One of the first elements to their work has been to provide literacy and vocational training to women in Lashkar Gah prison. Female prisoners there are also accessing legal representation for the first time, following the UK’s support to the Independent Legal Foundation-Afghanistan.

The UK will continue to lobby the current, and any future, Afghan Government on women’s rights issues—as we did with the Shia Family Law. That law has not come into force and we welcome President Karzai’s announcement that the law will be changed to bring it in line with the Afghan Constitution; which guarantees equal rights for women.

16 July 2009

Second supplementary memorandum from the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development

QUESTION 308: 2007 DFID PAPER (PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT).¹¹¹

QUESTION 358: THE NUMBER OF PASHTO, DARI AND FARSI SPEAKERS IN THE MoD, FCO, DFID AND STABILISATION UNIT:

Dari is the official language of Afghanistan alongside Pashto. Dari is most commonly spoken in the northern and western parts of the country and Kabul, while Pashto is primarily spoken in the east, south and southwest of Afghanistan. Dari is also called Persian Farsi although it is a different form to Iranian Persian. Those who speak Dari can also understand Farsi but not fluently.

Home Civil Service staff (HCS) has six Farsi speakers—two out of these read and write it fluently.

¹¹¹ <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/preventing-conflict.pdf>

DFID Afghanistan has seven UK staff members working in Kabul who are currently learning Dari. In addition they employ 16 locally engaged staff in Kabul who are fluent Dari speakers (the majority can also speak Pashto) and one in Lashkar Gah who is fluent in both Dari and Pashto. They also have access to Afghan translators for both languages in both Kabul and Lashkar Gah.

DFID Pakistan has four Pashto speakers employed as local staff. None of the UK based staff speak Pashto.

Stabilisation Unit has 18 Pashto speakers on its database, of which two are deployed in Helmand, and 21 Dari speakers. Currently details on fluency levels are not available though the database will provide these details once it is fully updated (aimed for by the end of the year)

The FCO has seven Pashto speakers of varying levels of fluency. Officers are required to sit requalifying exams every 5 years therefore their level of fluency cannot be guaranteed.

Dari	<i>Finished</i>	<i>Training</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Extensive	1	0	1
Operational	6	2	8
Functional	4	0	4
Confidence	12	0	12
TOTAL	23	2	25

Farsi	<i>Finished</i>	<i>Training</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Extensive	6	1	7
Operational	17	6	23
Functional	9	0	9
Confidence	4	0	4
TOTAL	36	7	43

Pashto	<i>Finished</i>	<i>Training</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Extensive	0	0	0
Operational	4	1	5
Functional	0	0	0
Confidence	1	1	2
TOTAL	5	2	7

MoD, the breadth of language training provided by the Defence Operational Languages Support Unit (DOLSU) gives a good indication of the current and future commitment:

PASHTO

<i>Training Year</i>	<i>Basic (1100-1110)</i>	<i>Intermediate (2210-2222)</i>	<i>Higher (3321-4444)</i>	<i>Total</i>
TY 05-06	0	16	18	34
TY 06-07	108	8	30	146
TY 07-08	124	0	81	205
TY 08-09	116	0	59	175
TY 09-10	128	2	66	194
TY 10-11	124	45	95	264

FARSI/DARI

<i>Training Year</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Higher</i>	<i>Total</i>
TY 05-06	0	16	23	39
TY 06-07	8	17	35	60
TY 07-08	3	0	27	30
TY 08-09	1	0	37	38
TY 09-10	5	0	28	33
TY 10-11	6	0	48	54

MoD language training is conducted to standards in accordance with STANAG 6001 Language Proficiency Levels; for example the 4 digit code 3321 (Higher) means level 3 in listening, level 3 in speaking, level 2 in reading and level 1 in writing (where 1 = survival, 2 = functional, 3 = professional and 4 = expert). The level of training provided is not necessarily dictated by rank or role, but rather by aptitude. However, the total numbers trained does not equal the total numbers current as some personnel may not have maintained their currency/proficiency post OPTOUR.

In addition to the above courses, since 2006-07 there has been a Basic Patrol Course requirement in Pashto for approx 250 personnel per Bde (or 500 annually) and all personnel conduct low level language training on OPTAG. It is not usually a requirement for MoD Civil Servants operating with the UK military in Afghanistan to receive language training; instead, they use local interpreters, but an IPOD based training package is available to MoD personnel.

QUESTION 377:

The DFID report on meeting workforce demands for hostile and difficult environments is still under consideration and recommendations have not yet been agreed. A copy of the report will be forwarded separately to the Committee.

QUESTION 395: THE NUMBER OF GIRLS IN AFGHANISTAN NOT IN SCHOOL.

DFID figures show enrolled pupil numbers have grown from 1m in 2001 to 6.6m today; 36% of who are girls. Females were not allowed to go to school under the Taliban.

QUESTION 399: DATA ON ACCESS TO HEALTH BY WOMEN AND GIRLS AND DETAIL ON INITIATIVES SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF WOMEN.

82% of the population now live in districts that have access to a basic healthcare package, compared to 9% in 2002. Full immunisation of children has risen from 15% in 2003 to 27% in 2006; saving the lives of 35,000 children a year. Details of programmes specifically targeting women in Afghanistan are attached (see annex 1)

Information requested following the hearing with the PUSs

QUESTION 194:

Guidelines for working with humanitarian NGO's in Afghanistan are attached.¹¹²

QUESTION 205-207:

Supporting research can be found in the Collier papers below:

“On the economic consequences of civil war, P. Collier, Oxford economic Papers 15 (1999 168-183)”

“Post conflict risks (CSAE WPS/2006-12), Oxford: Centre for the study of African Economies, Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler and Mans Soderbom, Department of economics, University of Oxford, 2006 (17 August) www.csaef.ox.ac.uk/workingpapers/pdfs/2006-12text.pdf.

QUESTION 208:

Terms of Reference for the review on the Future of the Stabilisation Unit are attached (see annex 2).

9 September 2009

Annex 1

Implementation of 1325 Action Plan, in relation to Afghanistan

An update on progress against the UK's National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 can be found on the FCO website at: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/unscr-1325-uk-action-plan>.

The next update is due to take place over the summer of this year.

Specific to Afghanistan, we can report the following progress:

To encourage the Afghan Government to implement 1325 we are funding various programmes—including a £500,000 women's empowerment programme—to promote women's equal participation in governance and to build awareness of women's rights among civil society and policy makers. It is positive that because of a constitutional quota, over a quarter of the MPs in the Lower House of the Afghan Parliament are women.

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In Helmand, UK advisors are supporting the development of justice systems that can provide access for women. UK supported legal education initiatives are raising awareness of human rights, including rights and access to justice for women. Advisers with gender expertise are ensuring that gender issues are an important element of all our capacity-building work with the justice sector.

¹¹² <http://ochaonline.un.org/AboutOCHA/Organigramme/EmergencyServicesBranchESB/CivilMilitaryCoordinationSection/PolicyGuidelinesRelatedDocuments/tabid/4938/language/fr-FR/Default.aspx>

The UK programme in Helmand recognises the specific challenges faced by women working in the justice sector, including the Afghan National Police and the prison service. For example, Military Defence Police officers are mentoring female officers through firearms training and 10 week literacy training has been delivered to female officers.

The UK has also assisted in developing a provincial women's group, focusing particularly on the rights of women and their children. One of the first elements to their work has been to provide literacy and vocational training to women in Lashkar Gah prison. Female prisoners there are also accessing legal representation for the first time, following the UK's support to the Independent Legal Foundation-Afghanistan.

We will continue to lobby the current, and any future, Afghan Government on women's rights issues—as we did with the Shia Family Law. That law has not come into force and we welcome President Karzai's announcement that the law will be changed to bring it in line with the Afghan Constitution; which guarantees equal rights for women.

Annex 2

Information note on terms of reference for stabilisation and civil effect implementation team

1. The Stabilisation and Civil Effect Implementation Team's (SIT) role is to design and agree mechanisms to implement recommendations from the Cabinet Office Review on Stabilisation that are not already being delivered by the Stabilisation Unit. To lead work to achieve initial operating capability by October 2009 in these additional areas.

2. The SIT's work is overseen by the Stabilisation Unit's two-star Board (DFID chaired with FCO and MoD, and Cabinet Office representation). The SIT works closely with the Stabilisation Unit.

3. The main priorities for the SIT are to develop a) the Civil Service Stabilisation Cadre, and b) SU planning capability so that the Unit can have clear responsibility for planning and delivering civil effect operations. The team's work includes:

- a. Developing proposals for the establishment of a Civil Service Stabilisation Cadre;
- b. Scoping the planning and delivery functions to be carried out by the expanded Stabilisation Unit;
- c. Formulating a proposed structure and job specifications for an enhanced Stabilisation Unit;
- d. Considering the potential requirement for a Rapid Response Team (RRT),
- e. Liaising with the Unit on a) the transfer from FCO of management of deployments of serving Police Officers and secondments to multilateral missions, b) development of the Stabilisation Volunteer Network, with public and private sector partners, and c) improvements to the quality of personnel on the DCE (Deployable Civilian Experts) database.

4. The team's work is expected to last six to nine months from February 2009.

Memorandum from Ministry of Defence and Department for International Development

1. *The Committee is aware that PJHQ has a thorough and detailed process of learning lessons from operations in which the Armed Forces are involved. The Committee would like to know how this work within PJHQ links in with the work in the Stabilisation Unit and its own responsibility for learning lessons from the use of the Comprehensive Approach. Are the military working together with civilians to identify relevant lessons?*

PJHQ Lessons are sourced from Post Operational Reports raised by returning Operational Commanders at 1 and 2 star level. The PJHQ Lessons staff identifies those lessons which require a civilian input and assigns them on the Defence Lessons Identified Management System; where these are within the mandate of the Stabilisation Unit (SU), they are assigned to the Unit for resolution. In addition to regular meetings between SU and PJHQ Lessons staffs to exchange views and discuss joint issues, the SU is represented on the Defence-wide Lessons Working Group (which meets quarterly), at branch head level, and the Head of the SU is a member of the 2 star level Defence wide Lessons Reference Group (DwLRG), which meets every six months. Both of these Groups discuss issues of wide relevance and identify areas requiring further collaborative working. An example of this is the tasking by the DwLRG of small teams, the Operational Lessons Team (Afghanistan), to deploy to Afghanistan to investigate issues to inform corrective inter-departmental action.

MoD as a whole, together with DFID, FCO and Stabilisation Unit are implementing a capability for learning cross-cutting lessons on conflict (within the scope of PSA 30) across the three Departments, which will be based in the Stabilisation Unit.

2. *The Committee would also be interested to know if there are any planned changes to the CIMIC capability in the Armed Forces. And, if there are, it would like an explanation of the proposed changes.*

Civil Military Co-Operation (CIMIC) is acknowledged as a critical activity in stabilisation operations. The military's ability to deliver better 'co-operation and co-ordination' has dramatically increased in the last 12 months with the development of the Military Stabilisation Support Group (MSSG), which has responsibility for:

'Preparation and delivery of civil effect/CIMIC planning teams and functional specialists, capable of providing stabilisation support to all deployed formation HQs and Battle Groups (BGs) in order to contribute to PJHQ and Joint Task Force operational capability.'

The MSSG has been tasked with increasing the capability, training and education in CIMIC, Military Assistance to Civil Effect and Stabilisation and, since the summer 2008, has provided a 400% increase in support of Op HERRICK. The Group has doubled in size over the last 12 months and is yet to reach its full establishment and therefore reduce the need for augmentation to meet the operational need.

CIMIC is the key enabling function that facilitates the stabilisation plan in Afghanistan to be delivered and is now recognised as a high priority to achieve success.

DETAIL

Civil military integration was initially embedded within the Civil Affairs Group, which later became the Joint CIMIC Group (JCG). The JCG was tasked to support all deployable formations with specialist CIMIC staff, including provision of internal and external training to Defence.

JCG staff have been deployed on all the major UK operations since the 1990s. The significant difference in the operating environment from the Balkans through Iraq to Afghanistan has seen the focus of CIMIC change from being primarily an enabler for security and military operations to a more pro-active and central position within the mission. CIMIC is now pivotal in the planning of stabilisation operations, is a major contributor to the Influence activities and a major source of information and intelligence. Staff often have to act on behalf of OGDs in non-permissive environments.

The increased scope and importance of civil military operations to deliver stabilisation has often been beyond the capabilities and training of those staff from the JCG and therefore ad hoc structures have been established in an attempt to bridge the capability gaps. The Stabilisation Unit (SU), PJHQ and HQ Land Forces have all recognised that the military needs to be able to plan, co-ordinate and deliver Military capability to assist in the delivery of Civil Effects on Operations. This was subsequently backed up by the Director Operational Capability (DOC) Audit and the Future Army Structures-Next Steps Military Assistance to Civil Effect Paper (FAS-NS MACE), both recognising that the JCG needs to have a broader remit than just CIMIC and should be responsible for the preparation and delivery of Civil Effect/CIMIC planning teams and specialists, capable of providing stabilisation support for operations.

The FAS NS-MACE paper directed that the Jt CIMIC Gp become a specialist MACE unit, delivering Civil Effects and CIMIC trained staff in order to support current operations. The unit was also to become the focal point for the development of Civil-Military Operations across Defence. The new specialist MACE unit is responsible for the delivery of military Civil Effects capability and training, in order to support PJHQ/JFHQ in the delivery of a medium scale enduring deployable capability.

The Jt CIMIC Gp was re-named the Military Stabilisation Support Group (MSSG) on 1 Apr 09, to better reflect the new role and responsibility. It achieved Initial Operating Capability in Nov 09 and provides MACE staff officers in all Land Formation HQs. Planning teams are formed and trained as required to enhance deployed 2* (Divisional), 1* (Brigade) and Unit (Battle Group) HQs. Delivery teams, consisting of Functional Specialists, are established, trained and made available to support operations as required.

THE MSSG

The MSSG fulfils five key functions:

1. The preparation and delivery of Force Elements at Readiness (Civil Effect Planning Teams and Functional Specialist) for contingent and enduring operations.
2. Recruit, train and retain sufficient manpower to maintain and develop the MSSG as a joint organisation at its required readiness state.
3. Supporting the delivery of Civil Effect, CIMIC and Stabilisation awareness training across Defence.
4. Manage change: delivery of the MACE Implementation Plan.
5. Support MoD Joint Capability and HQ Engineer in Chief in the development of Civil Effect, CIMIC and Stabilisation capability, including maintaining linkages with OGDs, International Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations.

MSSG roles are as follows:

- Gather and analyse civil information.
- Provide an interface and staff focus for civil environment.
- Integrate civil and military planning and effects.
- Provide co-ordination and co-operation in support of the mission between the different actors in Theatre.
- Contribute to the Influence Campaign.
- Provide information through interaction.
- Support the force through securing resources.
- Be prepared to act on behalf of OGDs.
- Support Humanitarian Assistance to Disaster Relief (HADR) operations as required.

The MSSG is tasked to provide the following capabilities:

- A specialist staff branch for PJHQ/Joint Force HQ (JFHQ).
- Support to a Medium Scale Enduring Operation (Op HERRICK).
- Support to a Small Scale Enduring Operation.
- Support to a Small Scale one off Operation.

OPERATIONS

The MSSG currently has 40 personnel deployed on Op HERRICK filling Stabilisation planning functions, which mainly involve CIMIC. The deployment is manned by a combination of Core MSSG staff and Individual Augmentees from all Three Services and the Reserve:

- 40 personnel (10 MSSG)
 - 6 Royal Navy.
 - 28 Army (six Reservists).
 - 6 Royal Air Force.

There are also about 40 personnel on Op HERRICK filling functional specialist appointments in such areas as Counter-Narcotics, Police Mentoring and Civil Engineering.

The MSSG has also conducted CIMIC and stabilisation training across the whole Task Force as part of the Pre-deployment training and as part of the Reception, Staging, Onward Movements and Integration (RSOI) package.

3. *The Committee would also like to understand whether the earlier difficulties with recruiting UK police officers to be deployed to Afghanistan and elsewhere to aid with police training have been resolved. It would be useful to know how many police officers have been deployed and how many have been recruited to the database.*

Conflict-related international policing assistance policy rests with the Stabilisation Unit (SU), which in turn now includes the International Secondments Team (IST) which manages conflict-related police and other civilian deployments overseas. There are four suppliers of policing assistance: the Home Department Police Forces, the Ministry of Defence Police (MDP), retired UK police officers, and consultancy firms. The latter two provide the bulk of policing advice: the MDP is the leading constabulary providing serving police officers. The spreadsheet attached details numbers of police, retired police and Deployed Civilian Experts (DCE) deployed to various operations throughout 2009. The SU approach is based on a client/supplier relationship. SU/IST have sufficient volunteers for the provision of policing assistance to Afghanistan: indeed with the significant reduction in numbers deployed elsewhere (notably to Kosovo) they would argue that supply now outstrips demand.

The Association of Chief Police Officers are examining the current policy and conditions under which HMG deploy serving Home Office Police officers. Concerns remain over the ability to deploy officers into non-permissive environments. Currently there is a small number of serving Home Office Police officers in Kabul as part of either NATO or EU deployments but none deployed alongside UK Military or other HMG departments.

The UK is one of the only nations to provide police trainers to ISAF: six Police Mentoring Teams in Helmand comprising a mix of MoD Police and Service Police supported by Infantry. The MDP deploy 13–16 police officers to Afghanistan at any given time; currently 13 officers are deployed. They would manage a deployment of 20 (and possibly more) if suitable posts were identified for MDP officers. There are sufficient MDP Officers prepared to go to Afghanistan to fulfil the current complement of posts. The MDP has deployed 56 officers to Afghanistan since 2008 and currently has 43 officers in the deployment pool. The IST does not hold a database of volunteers; they advertise for positions on an annual basis and maintain volunteers' details on file until a vacancy needs to be filled. The Inspector and above requirement has just been advertised for the next 12 months; the sergeants and below will be advertised in Spring 2010.

4. *The Committee would like to see any available papers setting out how the “Comprehensive Approach” was implemented in Sierra Leone.*¹¹³

¹¹³ Global Facilitation Network’s report: *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone 1997–2007*, February 2009: www.ssrnetwork.net/publications/security_s.php

	August			September			October			November		
	Police	Civilian Retired Police	DCE's	Police	Civilian Retired Police	DCE's	Police	Civilian Retired Police	DCE's	Police	Civilian Retired Police	DCE's
CivPol Iraq	9	-	-	7	-	-	7	-	-	7	-	-
CPCC Brussels	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	1
Combined Strategy Transition Command—Afghanistan (CSTC-A)	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-
EUBAM Moldova	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1
EUBAM Rafah	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1
EJUSTLEX Iraq	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	1	4
EULEX Kosovo	10	1	14	7	-	15	7	-	15	5	-	15
EUMM Georgia	4	-	5	7	-	6	7	-	6	7	-	6
EUPM Bosnia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EUPol Afghanistan	8	1	-	8	1	-	6	2	-	8	2	-
EUPol COPPS Palestine	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	-
EUSEC Congo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
EUSR Caucasus	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1
EUSR Kosovo	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1
ICO Kosovo	-	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	2
NATO Training Mission Afghanistan (NTMA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
OSCE Georgia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OSCE Kyrgyzstan	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
OSCE Nagorno Karabakh	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1
OSCE Vienna	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1
OSCE Moldova	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1
UNAMID Sudan	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
Total	37	5	36	35	4	38	33	6	37	33	6	36

Third supplementary memorandum from the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development

STRENGTHENING OF THE STABILISATION UNIT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CABINET OFFICE TASK FORCE REVIEW OF STABILISATION AND CIVIL EFFECT

SUMMARY

1. A 1,000-strong civilian capability (of whom 200 can be deployed at any one time) has been developed ahead of schedule; greater capacity for planning and rapid reaction in Stabilisation Unit will be in place by the December target date; and progress has also been made on deployment of military reservists in a civilian capacity and police deployments. The additional capabilities have been developed at significantly lower cost than originally envisaged.

INTRODUCTION

2. The 2008 National Security Strategy (NSS) identified the need to improve the effectiveness of the UK and the international community to support countries affected by violent conflict, including the ability to deploy civilian stabilisation experts. The Prime Minister said when announcing the NSS that:

We must have civilian experts and professionals ready to deploy quickly to assist failing states and help rebuild countries emerging from conflict,... Britain will... make available a 1,000-strong UK civilian standby capacity.

3. The Cabinet Office Task Force Review of Stabilisation and Civil Effect (COTF) was launched in June 2008 to determine how best to achieve this outcome. It reported to the Committee on National Security, International Relations and Development—Overseas and Defence (NSID OD) in January 2009 focusing on i) the creation of the 1,000-strong Civilian Stabilisation Capacity (CSC); and ii) the strengthening of the role of the Stabilisation Unit (SU). A Stabilisation Implementation Team worked alongside the Unit over the period March–November 2009 to develop and implement the agreed recommendations. This memorandum sets out progress in achieving these and in increasing the contribution being made by the SU to the UK’s stabilisation efforts.

ESTABLISHING THE 1,000 PERSON UK CIVILIAN STABILISATION CAPACITY

4. The COTF set a target of 800–1,000 individuals from outside government and 200 from across government to form the 1,000 plus Civilian Stabilisation Capacity (CSC), from which up to 200 individuals would be able to deploy at any one time. 1,150 civilians have now been approved for the CSC, exceeding the target of 1,000 by the end of 2009. These comprise of 950 individuals from outside government on the database of Deployable Civilian Experts (DCEs) and 200 from across the civil service—the Civil Service Stabilisation Cadre (CSSC).

5. The number of personnel required by type of skills was determined on the basis of a cross-government agreed analysis of the respective roles of civilians and the military in stabilisation environments, taking account of recent experiences and possible future scenarios.

6. In 2008–09 the SU reviewed all individuals that it previously had on its DCE database to assess their suitability for working in challenging environments. Significantly enhanced experience of stabilisation activities on the ground in Afghanistan and elsewhere meant that a much more specific requirement could be set. As a result the number of DCEs on the database was halved. Over the course of 2009 a targeted recruitment campaign generated over 1,200 applications. A detailed assessment process, including face to face interviews with more than 400 individuals, was followed by more targeted efforts to meet specific skill sets.

7. Recruitment for the CSSC began in July. Applications have been received from 35 HMG departments including from devolved administrations, as well as Local Government employees, representing administrative grades up to the Senior Civil Service.

8. DCE and CSSC members are available for assignments on a voluntary basis. The majority of DCEs are self employed. All CSSC members obtained the agreement of their line managers to join the CSSC, with the requirement for additional line management endorsement for specific deployments.

9. The SU is providing “core training” to 390 of the 1,150 CSC (34%) most likely to be deployed over the period to mid 2011. Training provides an understanding of how to work in hostile environments and of good practice in stabilisation planning. By giving this training in advance of an appointment to a particular post, the lead time between appointment and deployment is minimised. Once appointed to a post, an individual also receives training specific to that post (“pre-deployment training”). The 34% core training coverage represents a balance between maximising preparedness and minimising expenditure on personnel who are not ultimately deployed.

DEVELOPING POLICE OFFICER DEPLOYABLE CAPABILITY

10. Serving police officers are drawn from both UK based constabularies and the Ministry of Defence Police (the latter are deployed under the MOD's Support to Operations Programme) and are typically released with the agreement of their forces and police authorities. The COTF recommended that a new International Police Assistance Group (IPAG) should develop more robust arrangements for delivering police capabilities for civil effect. The IPAG was formed in September to provide operational support to the International Police Assistance Board (IPAB).

11. The COTF envisaged a pool of 500 police officers from which 150 could be deployed at any one time. The IPAB noted the recommendation that the development of a cadre of police officers should be matched to the scale of deployments and should prioritise the right skills and experience. Additional police personnel are currently being recruited, with a focus on replenishing the existing pool of 150 police on standby for deployment in support of stabilisation efforts and wider conflict related international policing. This will be sufficient to support current and forecast police deployments for the remainder of this spending period.

STABILISATION VOLUNTEER NETWORK

12. The COTF recommended that SU establish a Stabilisation Volunteer Network (SVN) to widen the range of potential volunteers available. Partnership arrangements have now been established with a wide range of organisations—including the Local Government Association, the National Health Service, private sector companies and a number of NGOs. Employees from the public sector will join the CSSC and employees from the private and third sector will join the DCE database. A partnership event on 27 October, co-hosted by the SU and British Telecom at the BT Tower, at which PUS Mike Foster MP spoke, was well-attended and well-received. Partnership arrangements will be developed with further organisations as a result. SU has agreed with partners that the benefits of the network will extend beyond secondments to training opportunities and exchange of good practice.

RAPID RESPONSE CAPABILITY

13. The COTF recommended that SU's rapid response capability be enhanced. The current intention is to provide 25 individuals at 48 hours notice to move, selected from a combination of core SU staff and members of the CSSC. Initial operational capability will be reached by March 2010, with full operational capability being attained by June 2010. Meanwhile, rapid response requests continue to be met by core SU staff.

DEPLOYMENTS

14. The COTF recommended that SU become the "single HMG delivery unit for civil effect", including the responsibility for managing the deployments of civilians and police officers for UK stabilisation missions in hostile environments and international peacebuilding missions. This does not mean that SU is responsible for all civilians in hostile environments. The bulk of these posts are standard posts in UK Embassies and DFID offices which can be filled using their standard recruitment processes.

15. SU took on responsibility for deployments of Home Office police officers and civilians deployed to multilateral missions in October, with the transfer of the International Secondments Team from the FCO. SU currently manages 121 personnel deployed overseas in any month, comprising 33 serving police officers and 88 civilians serving on both multilateral and bilateral missions. Personnel were deployed in November 2009 to 17 countries including 47 to Afghanistan, 23 to Kosovo, 15 to Iraq, 13 to Georgia and 5 to Sudan. Other deployments in November included to DRC and Pakistan.

16. The creation of the CSC means that the number of SU managed deployments can increase substantially over the coming months if required (and subject to funding). The primary source of funding for these is the Conflict Pool.

DELIVERING STABILITY

17. SU has made a substantial contribution to the UK's efforts to promote stability in conflict-affected countries through both the deployment of personnel and the management of programmes on behalf of DFID, FCO and MoD:

- In Helmand, Afghanistan, SU is the primary source of civilians working in the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), and the primary source of UK civilians working in the seven Forward Operating Bases.¹¹⁴ In addition, SU not only trains these civilians before deployment but leads on engagement by Whitehall Departments in the exercise preparations of the Helmand Task Force. This contribution has helped enable the Government of Afghanistan to extend its capacity to meet the needs of Helmandis. Details of the successful civilian-military collaboration were provided in May 2009 in the MoD's Memorandum, *The Comprehensive Approach: A Memorandum by MoD, FCO and DFID* and the evidence of Brigadier Gordon Messenger;

¹¹⁴ Alongside Ministry of Defence Police officers and MoD (civilian) Area Claims Officers

- Elsewhere in Afghanistan, SU has supported ISAF Regional Command (South) to improve coordination of cross-province stabilisation and reconstruction. In addition, at the request of the FCO and DFID, the SU undertook reviews of UK support to Rule of Law and the Helmand Provincial Counter-Narcotics plan.
- In Iraq, SU managed consultants to support capacity building in Basra International Airport, leading to the handover to Iraqi control in January 2009, improved the effectiveness of donor support in rule of law nationally and undertook a series of reviews to improve the effectiveness of the Basra PRT and identify future lessons;
- In Sudan, SU managed consultants to support civil society engagement in the Darfur Peace Process, and have posted a member of core staff to Khartoum to assist DFID and FCO on a variety of stabilisation issues;
- In DRC, SU provided a Stabilisation Adviser to support the UN mission in Goma;
- In Georgia, UK secondees are present in all areas of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM), including: taking a lead in the mission's media outreach work, logistics, providing political advice and leading monitoring patrols on the administrative boundary lines with South Ossetia and Abkhazia;
- In Kosovo, SU provides a number of civilians and police to the EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX), including the Deputy Head of the EU's largest mission. Other personnel hold key positions that help to support reform in Kosovo, including: senior advisors to the Kosovo Police Service, a judge mentoring his Kosovan counterparts and trying some significant cases, as well as anti-corruption and organised crime experts.

PLANNING

18. The COTF recognised the importance of ensuring that a common purpose and a coherent set of objectives are agreed for any stabilisation mission. It noted the contributions that SU had made in facilitating cross-government planning and recommended its planning capacity should be enhanced. Following a detailed review of demand, SU's Board agreed an increase in the number of SU's planning posts from four to 11. This core will be augmented by a team of civil service cadre members trained in cross Government planning who can be called on at short notice to assist in a crisis. This will enable the SU to provide support to: (a) operations where there is a UK military presence; (b) HMG planning for countries at risk of instability—or fragile states—where there is little or no UK military presence; (c) international partners (bilateral and multilateral) for country-specific operational planning; (d) activities which inform and influence the way in which planning is done in key partner institutions (Whitehall, bilateral and multilateral partners).

19. The value of SU's support for planning has been demonstrated since June 2008 in the following examples:

- Helmand: SU enabled further development of the Helmand Road Map that informs UK civilian and military activity in the province, and its modification into an operational plan agreed with the Provincial Governor and other members of the international community. The plan has helped improve the coherence of efforts to promote stability, focusing on areas of greatest impact;
- Somalia: SU was commissioned to facilitate a new cross Whitehall strategy. In addition to the strategy work, the Unit also engaged with the AU and AMISOM in late 2009 on stabilisation lessons;
- Yemen: SU facilitated two cross-departmental workshops to produce a delivery plan and engagement plan to support the new cross HMG Yemen strategy;
- Sudan: SU facilitated a workshop with FCO and DFID in Khartoum to agree HMG's medium term goals in Sudan, and the steps required to achieve them;
- Pakistan: In summer 2009, SU, as part of a Friends of Democratic Pakistan team, supported the Pakistan Presidency in formulating a stabilisation strategy for Malakand;
- Military Exercises: SU provided teams to participate in two major military exercises—the UK's Exercise Joint Venture 08 and NATO's Exercise Arrcade Fusion—both of which identified valuable lessons about inter-agency planning and co-ordination of government activities in complex crises;
- Collaboration with the MoD: SU provided input into the creation of the new UK military doctrine for stabilisation operations (JDP 3/40: Military Aid to Stabilisation and Development).

SU RESOURCES

20. The COTF envisaged that the increase in SU capability would require a more than doubling of the staff complement from 34 posts to over 80 and an increase in the budget from £7 million¹¹⁵ to £16 million. Following more detailed examination by the SIT, the SU Board has agreed an increase in SU staffing to 65 staff and an uplift in the budget to £12.7 million in 2010. DFID, FCO and MoD are sharing the cost of the increase equally (DFID met over 90% of the baseline budget). Eight of the 19 new posts have now been filled, three new posts have been appointed and eight posts will be advertised in January 2010.

¹¹⁵ Excluding six posts in the International Secondments Team, FCO at £0.8 million and 13 posts in SSDAT at £1.3 million.

 ARMED FORCES VOLUNTEER RESERVES

21. SU has worked closely with MoD in supporting its thinking on the role of the military in stabilisation. This has been based on a common understanding that the military have a crucial supporting role in the delivery of civil effect in hostile environments. SU has contributed to the establishment of a Military Task, development of the role of the Civil-Military Co-ordination (CIMIC) Group into the Military Support to Stabilisation Group (MSSG), and contributed to stabilisation doctrine and training courses.

22. The COTF recognised the potential role of Reservists with civilian skills to enhance the capability of the military in performing their supporting role. It therefore recommended that MoD should rapidly identify members of the Armed Forces Volunteer Reserves with relevant skills not just to serve with the military but also to deploy as part of the CSC. In consultation with the SU, FCO and DFID, MoD has written a paper setting out options for the recruitment and deployment of reservists in stabilisation roles, the recommendations of which have been endorsed by the 3* Defence Strategy and Plans Group. The MoD, in conjunction with SU, is now focussing on means of identifying current reservists' civilian skills, in line with SU's task matrix, and planning communications with reservists and employers (including civilian opportunities available with SU). A second phase of implementation will focus on recruitment and training, and ensuring coherent mechanisms for identification and employment of members of the CSC and of reservists.

15 December 2009

Supplementary memorandum from Department for International Development (DFID)

MEETING DFID'S WORKFORCE DEMANDS IN HOSTILE AND DIFFICULT ENVIRONMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1. This note summarises the DFID study of its ability to fill posts in hostile and difficult environments and how it is taking forward the agreed recommendations.

2. Rationale and Purpose of the Study

2.1 This study undertaken between January and May 2009, looked at how DFID could better meet the workforce demands of a set of particularly difficult locations—those where the challenges of living and working, combined with restrictive posting arrangements (“forced unaccompanied” or “child-free”) necessitated by those conditions, are thought to limit the number (and possibly quality) of candidates willing to serve in those programmes many of which are also corporate priorities.

2.2 Currently DFID applies restrictive posting arrangements (RPA) to nine locations, comprising:

- (i) countries either in, or emerging from conflict:
- (ii) situations posing a serious terrorist threat: and
- (iii) smaller posts where living conditions are unsuitable for dependent children.

2.3 The study's relevance however goes well beyond DFID's current approach to staffing those nine programmes. Rising insecurity in some other locations, and an increasing focus on fragile and conflict affected states (as outlined in the commitments made in the recent White Paper), mean DFID should *reasonably expect and plan* for a future where more of its people will work in places where RPAs are in force. Focusing on the current nine RPA locations provided a useful “control group” to understand what motivates people to volunteer for these situations and to review DFID's response.

3. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

3.1 Evidence gathered from HR records; surveys of those who have and have not served in these places; and a review of what others (both HMG parties and international bodies are doing) led the study to eight core conclusions about DFID's performance to date in meeting the workforce demands of difficult postings.

3.2 Conclusion one—an ever increasing number and proportion of DFID's staff are serving in difficult places.

On 31 March 2009, the nine RPA locations accounted for 85 Home Civil Service (HCS) posts—21.3% of DFID's HCS working overseas; up from 47 (11.2%) in December 2006, and 29 (less than 5%) in 2003. DFID has been particularly successful in mobilising people to work in some very difficult places. Between April 2004 and December 2008, 74 different (HCS) staff worked in Afghanistan and more than 57 in Iraq between March 2003 and December 2008. (Table 1). These numbers exclude staff deployed by the Stabilisation Unit.

Table 1
FORCED UNACCOMPANIED AND CHILD FREE POSTS

	<i>March 2003</i>	<i>December 2006</i>	<i>March 2009</i>
<i>Forced unaccompanied</i>			
Afghanistan	2	18	28
Iraq (Baghdad & Basra)	7	6	10
Pakistan ¹¹⁶	0	0	21
<i>No child posts</i>			
Burundi	3	3	3
Guyana	3	2	4
Juba, Southern Sudan	0	0	3 + 1 (seconded)
Montserrat	4	4	4
Sierra Leone	9	13	11
Tajikistan	1	1	1
Total	29	47	86
Total HCS overseas		416	402
% of HCS overseas		11.2%	21.3%

3.3 Conclusion two—thus far DFID has successfully met the demand for staff.

The “gap profile” for RPA locations has been broadly similar to that for other overseas offices, and the success rate in filling vacancies at least comparable to other overseas offices.

3.4 Conclusion three—some posts are harder to fill than others.

A2/A1 advisory posts—specifically for economics and governance—have proved most difficult to fill. These skills are in high demand across the organisation, giving advisers more choice in terms of postings. In contrast, Band B administrative posts have been comparatively easier to resource. The study’s analysis suggested this reflects the generally younger age profile of that group (family commitments are therefore less likely to be an impediment); the greater promotion opportunities for Band B staff for which service in an RPA location is considered an advantage; and the significant uplift to salaries made by allowances.

3.5 Conclusion four—difficult posts don’t necessarily attract a specific “set” or “type” of person.

Records show that the average age, gender and family status of those serving in RPA locations has been broadly the same as others working overseas. But, there is some evidence of an emerging core of people serving repeatedly in these places.

3.6 Conclusion five—the volunteer principle remains the best.

The legal case for DFID to direct people to work in specific locations exists. But the benefits of shifting away from the volunteer principle are doubtful particularly when it has yet to be shown that DFID has fully exploited the volunteer route. Downsides include:

- motivation and productivity—people required to work in any location against their will will be less motivated than volunteers;
- consistency of application—requiring some but not others to move against their will—particularly where personal security may be compromised—would be seen as unfair; and
- compromises the key duty of care principle, that if staff are volunteers, then they can reasonably be judged to have made an informed decision about working in a situation which may involve personal risk.

3.7 Conclusion six—career opportunities and job satisfaction are more important factors in encouraging volunteers than financial inducements.

The results of a survey of all DFID staff who had served in RPAs over the last five years showed 82% took the job for career enhancement and new challenges. Just 5% cited financial benefit. But most people (54%) would not have applied without some financial recognition. Additional money is thus a necessary, but not sufficient factor in generating volunteers. A similar picture emerged in terms of additional leave and “breather” breaks (the six on two off rotation) offered in some RPA locations. While never a primary reason for volunteering, the overwhelming majority of people (78%) where these extra benefits are offered indicated they would not be prepared to go without the regular periods away from post to reunite with family and friends.

¹¹⁶ Excluding six posts in the International Secondments Team, FCO at £0.8 million and 13 posts in SSDAT at £1.3 million.

3.8 Conclusion seven—there is a potentially large pool of untapped volunteers within DFID.

A survey of 120 advisory staff (focused on those with the skills in greatest demand) showed only 13% were unwilling to consider an RPA posting. 15% described themselves as very willing; 25% as willing and 47% had an open mind. In terms of the reasons for not having applied thus far, 82% cited compulsory unaccompanied status and 77% the additional stress it would cause to family members.

3.9 Conclusion eight—other organisations are facing similar staffing challenges.

FCO and MoD in the UK and US State Department and USAID partners face similar challenges and have come to the same core conclusions—to keep the volunteer principle and take steps to more proactively develop and manage that volunteer base focusing on key incentives.

4. THE STUDY'S CASE FOR FURTHER CHANGE

4.1 The study assessed that while DFID has been successful in meeting the current demands for staff to work in RPAs to date, the business case to consider a revised and strengthened approach is strong given:

- the likely increase in workforce demands from fragile and conflict affected states generated by DFID's focus on this agenda; and
- a concern that our current approach cannot guarantee to generate a secure, predictable supply of the best, well prepared talent to take on professionally challenging, high profile assignments which we know are hard to fill.

5. AGREED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

5.1 In looking at how DFID could improve its approach to meeting the demands of hard to fill posts the study identified three core principles:

- (i) there's no single magical "fix." The requirement is for more intensive proactive management and a comprehensive approach which identifies demand early and generates a steady flow of volunteers based on delivering the incentives needed to generate volunteers and which better manages succession;
- (ii) all parts of DFID (not simply those looking to fill specific vacancies) need to be involved. This is corporate and hence a shared responsibility;
- (iii) the proposed measures won't solve all DFID's problems in staffing "difficult to fill posts," nor will they address wider issues around refreshing the skills base.

5.2 The study set out eight areas for potential improvements. These have been considered by DFID and the recommendations below agreed.

5.3 Recommendation 1— DFID should retain the volunteer principle for all posts. Compulsion should be the very final step and only when it has been definitively shown that efforts to generate volunteers have failed.

5.4 Recommendation 2—increasing financial incentives was unlikely to generate significantly more volunteers.

5.5 Recommendation 3—DFID should adopt a strategy based on pro-actively developing and managing three sources of volunteers: those from within the existing workforce; new recruits into DFID and secondments; and making better and more structured use of consultants.

5.6 Recommendation 4—as a general premise, the key to such a strategy should be the adoption of a pool approach to fill a defined core of priority hard to fill posts based on MoD's experience in deploying civilians through its "Support to Operations" initiative.

5.7 Membership of the pool would not be automatic. Applicants would be first sifted for suitability—including personal awareness training—with the possibility that individuals deemed narrowly unsuitable could be given specific training to bring them up to standard over a period of time to enable them to deploy.

5.8 Recommendation 5—more specifically, DFID should establish its own "pool" as the primary source of candidates for difficult to fill posts and draw on the Stabilisation Unit's Civilian Stabilisation Support cadre (CSSC) where the DFID pool is not able to find a suitable individual.

5.9 The establishment of the CSSC was one of the key recommendations of the 2008 Cabinet Office review of the UK's stabilisation capability. The study considered the option of relying solely on this rather than establishing a DFID specific pool. DFID concluded that both approaches should be undertaken given the desire to strengthen DFID's own ability to fill such posts.

5.10 Recommendation 6—it was desirable to strengthen the 'career incentive'; eg to manage 'next posting' moves better; and to ensure that DFID tracks appointments and decisions on promotability to assess the extent to which people with relevant stretching experience in fragile states are being recognised.

5.11 The study considered the case for giving Divisions in DFID greater flexibility to vary guidance regarding the proportion of staff assessed as “exceptionally suited for promotion” for RPA locations. DFID concluded that it was possible to use career incentives whilst maintaining the integrity of the promotability system. It was also important not to ‘over-promise’ career enhancements for staff which could be difficult to fulfil.

5.12 Recommendation 7—future recruitment exercises (including secondments) for those core skills in greatest demand (particularly economics, governance and conflict) should invite applicants to join the pool described above as means of entry into DFID.

5.13 Recommendation 8—DFID’s Heads of Profession (responsible for the recruitment and professional development of DFID’s advisors) should work closely with the SU to make better use of its database of deployable civilian experts (DCEs) in order to meet specific predictable staffing needs as well as manage their professional cadres in ways that make sure they are providing sufficient numbers of people for the difficult posts DFID needs to fill.

6. TAKING THE STUDY FORWARD

6.1 DFID is making progress on a number of the recommendations with Human Resources Division (HRD) leading on a review of incentives and benefits as part of the Public Value Programme (PVP) Allowances Review. HRD is also facilitating consultation between Stabilisation Unit and the Heads of Profession to encourage professional Advisory staff to volunteer to be on the Stabilisation cadre. In support of recommendations 3, 4 and 5 HRD will contact Directors in December to identify which posts should be included as part of the ‘pool and cluster’ approach. It has discussed the timing issues with the Stabilisation Unit to ensure that, if DFID’s volunteer staff are either not available or suitable for a key vacancy, DFID can immediately call upon the Stabilisation cadre without losing significant time.

HELMAND CN PLAN (Qs 155/160)

Why Counter Narcotics in Helmand?

Helmand is the largest poppy producing province in Afghanistan, estimated to cultivate 65% of Afghanistan’s opium, and the home to significant processing and trading. Separating the drugs trade from the insurgency in Helmand is vital to the counter insurgency campaign, as is reducing opium-fuelled corruption, which distances the population from the government.

2008–09 CN plan:

In 2008–09 Governor Mangal developed (with UK and US support) the Helmand CN plan. The plan was a three-pronged CN strategy with wheat seed distribution, public information, and law enforcement efforts designed to reduce poppy cultivation and extend the reach of provincial governance in Helmand. In CN terms it was ground-breaking in the degrees of Afghan leadership, civil-military collaboration and UK/US joint working.

What was the impact?

There were two elements to judge the success of the plan: counter narcotics and governance impacts. Both can only be truly judged on a much longer timeframe. However, even in the first year, and in its basic form, the plan had positive impacts on both:

- Opium cultivation decreased in 2009. Although predominantly driven by price effects, analysis shows that the CN plan positively built on this price impact. This shows that even under the toughest security conditions, progress is possible.
- Governance impact was demonstrated in the relatively secure areas of Helmand, by the Governor showing the population an alternative to drugs and the Taleban, and delivering on his promises. However, in areas of greater insecurity the plan demonstrated the limitations of the provincial government. Sequencing with security, therefore, is key to the success of the programme.

What should happen in the future?

Sustained counter narcotics programmes are needed to impact on the trade and insurgency in Afghanistan. Future years should look to build on this programme to establish a long-term, downward trend in poppy cultivation. In particular, as prices shift in favour of poppy again, more comprehensive agricultural development, with a greater focus on value addition and crop diversification and CN mainstreamed, should deliver a longer-lasting impact.

Programmes should be concentrated in relatively secure areas of the province, with all three elements of the plan (public information, licit livelihoods and rule of law) integrated and sequenced to provide maximum impact.

This integrated model for delivery—through the provincial government, with international military and civilian support—should be applied in other provinces in the South. Programmes should be directed where there is strong Afghan provincial leadership—either the governor, or relevant line ministries—and concentrating activity in relatively secure areas.

Recommendations for poppy producing provinces in the South:

- Identify where there is potential Afghan leadership capacity to run a CN programme.
- Identify areas within the province where the security and economic environment is permissive, or can be improved to allow outreach by the provincial and district leadership, as well as access to markets for farmers.
- Work with the Afghan provincial leadership to develop public information, livelihood and rule of law plans. These should be as comprehensive as capacity permits, and should look to build up over a multi-year timeframe.

AFGHANISTAN: UK COMMITMENT 2001-13

FIGURES IN £M

	2001-02		2002-03		2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		
	National	Helmand	National	Helmand	National	Helmand	National	Helmand	National	Helmand	National	Helmand	
DFID	50		74.5		79.7		79.6		98.4		83.7		
SPF (GOF/CN/CT/Migration)							6.1		46.8		46.2		
GCPP to 2007/08—SAF from 2008/09			11		10.4		15.7		9.3		9.1		
FCO bilateral											0.494		
TOTAL	50	0	85.5	0	90.1	0	101.4	0	154.5	0	139.494	15.1	
	2007-08		2008-09		2009-10		2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		TOTAL
	National	Helmand	National	Helmand	National	Helmand	National	Helmand	National	Helmand	National	Helmand	
DFID	100.8	8.1	122.4	20.6	109.5	18	109.5	18	109.5	18	109.5	18	1,224.9
SPF (GOF/CN/CT/Migration)	44.4		35.1		25.2		25.2		40.5		229		229
GCPP to 2007/08—SAF from 2008/09	18.9		30.7		16.8		27.2		40.5		263.6		263.6
FCO bilateral	0.162		0.34		0.35						1.346		1.346
TOTAL	164.262	8.1	188.54	43.4	151.85	69.2	161.9	58.5	109.5	18	109.5	18	18,1718.846
<i>UK Funding Announcements</i>													
<i>Amount</i>													
Tokyo Conference, January 2002 = £200 million to be spent between 2002-07	200												
Berlin Conference, April 2004 = £300 million to be spent between 2004-07	300												
London Conference, January 2006 = £500 million to be spent between 2006-09	500												
Paris Conference, June 2008 = £613 million new money for 2009-13	613												
In addition, in his statement to the House on 12 December 2007, the PM said that Britain will make available £450 million in development and stabilisation assistance for Afghanistan between 2009 and 2012, covering both short and long term priorities.	450												
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	TOTAL			
DFID through multilaterals	7.9	25.9	34.7	31.3	30	42.7	33.1	TBC	TBC	205.6			

SPF = Strategic Programme Fund (ie renamed GOF—Global Opportunities Fund)

CN = Counter Narcotics

CT = Counter Terrorism

GCPP = Global Conflict Prevention Pool until 2007-08

SAF = Stabilisation Aid Fund from 2008-09

11 December 2009