

Nordic Approaches to Whole-of-Government

– in Afghanistan and beyond

Karsten Friis and Sanaa Rehman (eds)



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Preface

Peacekeeping and stability operations have, since the end of the Cold War, experienced significant difficulties with coherence and coordination, in turn resulting in poor sustainability. A recurrent problem has been the absence of a common planning process, in which the actors involved formulate the goals of the operation and subsequently follow a joint strategy for achieving them.¹

Comprehensive Approach (CA) and Whole-of-Government Approach (WGA) are rather new concepts within the field of security studies. They can be described as approaches based on the assumption that greater integration, coherence and coordination will result in more effective peacekeeping operations.² The concept of CA has been adopted by different international organizations and WGA by several countries which in different ways have related to the concept in propositions and steering documents. Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark have also realized the importance of CA/WGA, not least as regards the ongoing operation in Afghanistan where all the Nordic countries are involved and where the operation is characterized by a range of actors working on different missions within the same field. What do these Nordic national strategies towards CA/WGA look like? Might we speak of a common Nordic CA/WGA model?

On 11 January 2010, the Sociology Group at the Institution for Leadership and Management (ILM) held a seminar at the Swedish National Defence College (SNDC) on 'How to Improve Inter-agency Cooperation in Afghanistan– a Nordic Perspective'. The aim was to describe the national CA strategies developed in Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark and see if and how they had been implemented in the current operation in Afghanistan, as well as whether there were any possibilities for a joint Nordic strategy toward CA.

Presenters at the seminar were representatives from four institutions in the Nordic countries: Jari Mustonen from Crisis Management Centre Finland (CMC Finland), Finn Stepputat from the Danish Institute for

¹ Cedric de Coning, 'The United Nations and the Comprehensive Approach' *DIIS Report 14*, 2008.

² Sanaa Rehman, 'Comprehensive Approach: det pragmatiska förhållningssättet till samarbete och koordinering vid fredsfrämjande insatser i komplexa konflikter' in Elma P. Göransson, Sanaa Rehman, Aida Alvinus, Björn Tomtlund, Ingemar Robertson, Franz Kernic and Gerry Larsson, *Comprehensive Approach: litteraturgenomgångar av begreppet och dess relation till ledarskap samt en empirisk intervjustudie*, Försvarshögskolan, Stockholm: 2010.

International Studies (DIIS), Göran Grönberg from the Swedish National Defence College (SNDC) and Karsten Friis from the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI). The organizer of the seminar was Sanaa Rehman from SNDC.

This report is a result of the seminar held at SNDC, and the ensuing collaboration between SNDC and NUPI. It has one chapter on each Nordic country and a summarizing conclusion, all aimed at enhancing our understanding of the different Nordic approaches to coherence and coordination, and at further elaborating the discussions on joint Nordic security cooperation.

Lastly, we would like to thank Susan Høivik for proof-reading and Andreas Øien Stensland for his assistance with editing and formatting. Their efforts were indispensable for finalizing the volume.

Sanaa Rehman and Karsten Friis

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Finland's Comprehensive Crisis Management Strategy

Jari Mustonen
Crisis Management Centre Finland (CMC)

Recognizing the complexity and nature of modern crises and conflicts, the Government Report on Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2009 noted the need for a comprehensive and systematic approach for actors and states engaged in crisis management, and that Finland should strengthen its comprehensive approach to crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction.³ Furthermore, Finland's National Strategy for Civilian Crisis Management, approved in August 2008, emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive approach and of improving coordination among a range of actors, civil–military coordination, utilizing the synergies between development cooperation and civilian crisis management, and participation of civil society representatives to (civilian) crisis management.⁴ One recommendation of the National Strategy for Civilian Crisis Management was that the Comprehensive Crisis Management Strategy should take into consideration the above-mentioned priorities.

After preparatory work of slightly more than a year, Finland's Comprehensive Crisis Management Strategy was approved on 13 November 2009.⁵ The strategy was drafted by a working group composed of representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs's Political Department and Department for Development Policy, the Prime Minister's Office, and as well as from the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Defence and the Defence Command. The strategy aims at strengthening a comprehensive approach in Finnish participation in crisis management activities, particularly in situations in which Finland engages means of civilian and military crisis management in response to international conflicts or post-conflict reconstruction.

³ Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2009, Government report, Prime Minister's Office Publications no. 13, 2009.

⁴ Finland's National Strategy for Civilian Crisis Management, Ministry of the Interior, Approved by the Finnish Government on 28 August 2008.

⁵ Finland's Comprehensive Crisis Management Strategy, unofficial translation, 25 November 2009.

This article, based on a presentation given at the Swedish National Defence College seminar on 12 January 2010, briefly presents the key objectives and principles of Finland's Comprehensive Crisis Management Strategy, and comments on the scope and priorities set out in the strategy.⁶

Key objectives

At the outset, the strategy recognizes the different roles and responsibilities of actors engaged in military and civilian crisis management, development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The overall objective is to improve the coherence and effectiveness of international efforts to respond to crises and conflicts. To this end, the strategy outlines a set of key objectives, as further elaborated in the following.

Active participation in military crisis management

The strategy sees military crisis management as a 'key element' of Finland's crisis management participation, and aims at advancing international peace and security, supporting humanitarian assistance and protecting the civilian population. The defence establishment recognizes the heightened requirements for military capabilities, and to this end, seeks to maintain and develop 'high-quality and versatile' military crisis management capabilities.

In practical terms, active participation in military crisis management means maintaining Finnish participation at the level when the strategy was approved, of some 700 soldiers.⁷ After downsizing in the KFOR mission in Kosovo at the end of 2009 by some 200 soldiers, the current size of the Finnish contribution is slightly under 500 troops.

However, Finland will increase its present participation of 140 soldiers to the ISAF operation in Afghanistan by approximately 50 soldiers – to a maximum of 195. Finland has also begun preparing its participation in two separate European Union Battle Groups in 2011: the Swedish-led Nordic Battlegroup (NBG) and Dutch-led Netherlands Battle Group (NLBG11). The Finnish contribution to the Battle Groups amounts roughly to 300 troops that are currently being recruited. Thus the number of Finnish troops in international operations, including the Battle Groups, might temporarily reach 800 soldiers during 2010. Future participation in military crisis management beyond

⁶ The comments and remarks made in this article are solely those of the writer and do not necessarily represent the views of the Crisis Management Centre Finland.

⁷ Finnish legislation allows deploying a maximum of 2,000 soldiers in international missions; however, in practice the limit has been set to 1,000 troops. As peacekeeping operations have become more challenging and expensive also in terms of material and logistic requirements, the number of troops has become further reduced.

2010, however, will decrease significantly, with the further downsizing of KFOR in Kosovo and the withdrawal of MINURCAT from Chad in 2010.

For Finnish military crisis management, the strategy highlights the European Union and NATO as key actors. Finland also continues to participate in UN-led peacekeeping operations, even though at the moment that would appear to be less of a priority. Following the withdrawal from Chad, Finland has been participating in UN peacekeeping operations with only some 20 military observers and a few staff officers.

Strengthened participation in civilian crisis management

As outlined in the National Strategy for Civilian Crisis Management, Finland has strengthened its participation in civilian crisis management and peacebuilding, and the number of Finnish civilian experts has increased from around 100 in 2008 to some 160 as of the beginning of 2010. Most of these experts (approximately 100 of them) are deployed to EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Georgia, with a smaller number employed by the OSCE – mainly in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, and the UN field missions in Africa.

Despite the rapid development of civilian crisis management, there is still a need for further increasing Finland's contribution to civilian crisis management and peacebuilding operations. In April 2009, Finland approved a policy directive on Afghanistan. The directive presents the pertinent challenges in Afghanistan, together with means of responding to those, including development aid, NGOs, humanitarian aid, civilian crisis management and military crisis management. As outlined by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in January 2010, Afghanistan is a priority for Finland's participation in crisis management. Hence, the Finnish contribution to EUPOL Afghanistan should be increased to over 30 experts. Also the Finnish contribution to UN missions, especially in Africa, should be strengthened. It is envisioned that Finland will deploy up to 200 civilian experts in the future – a goal that poses additional challenges to Crisis Management Centre (CMC) Finland, which recruits, trains and deploys Finnish civilian experts.⁸

⁸ CMC Finland, founded in 2007, is a governmental organization under the Ministry of the Interior. The main tasks of CMC Finland include recruiting, training and deploying Finnish civilian experts to civilian crisis management and peacebuilding operations, logistical and material preparedness, research and development, and international humanitarian response and civil protection tasks, including Finn Rescue Finland (FRF).

Broad civil–military coordination and cooperation

The strategy recognizes that while the means and responsibilities of actors involved in development cooperation and crisis management are different, they can be mutually complementary. Particular attention should be paid to synergies between civilian crisis management and development cooperation – a link that often is critical in building sustainable peace in countries emerging from conflict. Furthermore, the coordination between military and civilian crisis management must be intensified, as the actors often share a common area of operations, and may even have tasks that are interlinked or overlapping. First and foremost, this cooperation and coordination should be intensified at the national level between administrative branches, to improve Finland's capacity to contribute to international efforts at conflict prevention and resolution.

Support to security sector reform and rule of law development

The importance of security sector reform as part of various peace-building processes is emphasized in the strategy, with a view to participation in such operations, as well as support to security sector reform by providing sufficient financial resources. In particular, Finland aims at improving its capacity to participate in training and mentoring tasks in the security sector.

Promoting dialogue with civil society and NGOs

The strategy highlights the role and expertise of national and international NGOs and civil society in promoting a comprehensive approach. Civil society actors are often on the ground throughout the conflict cycle and possess invaluable skills that can be better utilized, both in contributing to external conflict management efforts, and even more importantly, in directly supporting the countries emerging from conflict.

Greater emphasis on human rights and equality

In September 2009, the Finnish Government adopted a report on the country's human rights policy, outlining Finland's aim of advancing the rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, minorities and indigenous people.

Strengthening the EU contribution to international crisis management

Finland participates actively in European Union crisis management operations, both civilian and military, and considers it important that EU capacity to respond to growing challenges in crisis management is

strengthened. Improving the linkage between elements of CSDP and EU Development Policy is of utmost importance for greater EU comprehensiveness – to which it is hoped that the Lisbon Treaty may contribute.

Promoting cooperation among international crisis management actors

Perhaps the most ambitious of the objectives in the strategy, and something to which Finland has only limited means to contribute, is the promotion of mutual cooperation and coordination between international actors. It is essential to define clear common objectives in response to each crisis – which has been painfully difficult to achieve thus far. For this reason, practical cooperation on the ground between the actors must be promoted.

Key measures

In order to achieve the above objectives, the strategy formulates certain measures – mostly national and rather concrete. With a view to strengthening the EU as a major international crisis management actor, Finland seeks to **actively promote a comprehensive approach in the EU**, including not just the CSDP actors but the Commission and EU's Special Representatives as well. However, the strategy fails to specify what the concrete measures are, and how Finland actually aims to further EU comprehensiveness.

In order to improve the comprehensive approach at the national level, the strategy proposes the establishment of a Strategic Coordination Group under the lead of the MFA. The group would consist of representatives from the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Defence, the Defence Command, the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Finance, and would be tasked with monitoring and promoting the comprehensive development of crisis management.

On the practical or desk level, the strategy recommends assembling inter-ministerial task forces that can convene when needed and focus on specific crisis areas. Experiences from such inter-ministerial groups on Kosovo and Afghanistan have been promising. With respect to Afghanistan, the practical work involved, *inter alia*, providing advice to Finnish-funded projects that the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) implemented in their area. With respect to the PRTs and their comprehensive approach, however, it must be said that Finnish experiences of combining civilian expertise in the form of police, political and development advisers to – and under – a military structure seem rather contradictory. Even though the work of the civilian ex-

perts would provide added value to the work of the PRTs, working under military command appears to have been challenging. The participation of Finnish civilian experts to the PRTs was terminated by the end of 2009.

A more operational and practical measure involves strengthening the comprehensive approach in the development of national crisis management capacities. The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for developing national capacities for civilian crisis management, whereas the defence establishment is in charge of developing military crisis management capacities. While there have been some attempts at collaboration and information exchange in the field of material preparedness and development, training of personnel to be deployed to international missions remains a key area for furthering the idea of a comprehensive approach.

A practical solution to enhance interaction and coordination among the actors operating in crisis areas – not related to the strategy, however – was the establishment of the Finnish Centre of Expertise in Comprehensive Crisis Management by CMC Finland and the Finnish Defence Forces International Centre (FINCENT). The Centre of Expertise annually organizes a joint course ‘Integrated Crisis Management’ which gathers participants from the military, civilian police, civilian crisis management experts, development cooperation experts and humanitarian aid workers. The aim of the course is to further the idea of a comprehensive approach by familiarizing the participants with the structures and operating procedures of the other actors, and by offering participants the opportunity to jointly consider possibilities for acting more comprehensively in response to various conflicts and crises.

Human resources are another critical aspect relating to the development of national capacities – securing adequate number of competent civilian and military personnel to be deployed to international missions. The legislation and legal provisions relating to service abroad (such as securing the leave of absence without losing employment) are generally in place. Nevertheless, recruitment to demanding operations like Afghanistan, Sudan or Chad has been challenging. One measure that has been taken for civilian experts and military personnel in Afghanistan has been to improve the terms of employment as regards salary and per diem allowances.

Some comments

Finally, some comments on the strategy as a whole, and on the priorities and measures involved. First of all, the effort to formulate a strategy focused on improving comprehensiveness in crisis management and peacebuilding must be commended, and the strategy describes the present Finnish participation in crisis management well. It should also be noted that the strategy was prepared as a joint effort involving several ministries and administrative branches – indicating the quality of cooperation between the national authorities. However, there are few considerations that I feel undermine the comprehensive nature of the strategy paper.

In the preparation of the strategy, the working group was composed solely of governmental representatives, with no representatives from NGOs or civil society. The draft document was circulated among civil society and NGO representatives for comment – but still, the lack of direct participation in the process evidently undermined their input to the paper. The question remains: whose comprehensiveness are we actually talking about? The same criticism applies to the Strategic Coordination Group or the inter-ministerial task forces, as it seems that the focus on the strategy is very much on coordination among the various administrative branches (resembling the Whole-of-Government Approach, WGA) rather than reaching out to a comprehensive range of actors, even domestically. Implementation of the strategy has, as of spring 2010, already started with the conveying of the Strategic Coordination Group – and civil society representatives have expressed interest in participating in the Group, as well as in the inter-ministerial task forces.⁹

Another point concerns the scope of the strategy. The lengthy and somewhat fragmented document focuses on Finland's current participation in crisis management and development cooperation, describing the various challenges faced and some efforts to counter them. The paper indicates priority areas for Finnish participation in crisis management and peacebuilding activities, but on many points it fails to specify concrete ways of implementing these objectives. Again we must ask: What actually is the Finnish comprehensive strategy?

As to the priorities of the document, the strategy is rather military-oriented and biased towards military participation in crisis management, thus narrowing the concept comprehensiveness. The paper notes that 'military crisis management continues to be a key element of Finland's crisis management participation' – but how can the strategy be 'comprehensive' if military participation is the starting point for

⁹ This idea has been put forward especially by the Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network (KATU).

such comprehensiveness? It cannot be denied that in many operations the military are the key actor with a crucial role to play, especially in securing the cessation of hostilities and protection of civilians, but the military should be a part of a wider, truly comprehensive solution to a crisis or conflict. As the cases of, for example, Afghanistan or Iraq have shown, military engagement alone is not enough to build sustainable peace.

The strategy puts the UN slightly aside as an actor, whereas NATO and the EU are highlighted. However, it should not be forgotten the UN possesses great amount of relevant experience and practical knowledge from its Integrated Missions that have genuinely combined many actors under a single command and guidance. These experiences have not been one-sidedly positive, but they might provide valuable lessons for the EU and NATO in developing their strategies and capabilities. Following the Lisbon Treaty, and in the course of creating the new European External Action Service, the EU comprehensiveness has assumed rather odd forms – as in the new Crisis Management Planning Directorate, where key posts are manned by military personnel, even though 11 out of 13 ongoing CSDP operations are civilian.

The strategy does emphasize training and research in furthering comprehensiveness among the various actors, and indicates certain means to respond to the challenges. Still, it remains vague as to concrete steps, for instance regarding the development of a comprehensive capacity/capability.

Overall, Finland's Comprehensive Crisis Management Strategy attempts to outline principles and some measures for developing comprehensiveness in crisis management activities, and can be commended for summarizing the various aspects relating to Finnish participation in international crisis management and peacebuilding operations. Unfortunately, the strategy fails to rise to a new, innovative level in furthering truly comprehensive thinking in its approach to crisis management and peacebuilding. Rather, it echoes the traditional security-based thinking. More emphasis is needed on promoting the principles of human security as the ultimate objective of a comprehensive approach, as these principles should constitute the core of any strategy seeking to achieve comprehensiveness.

Inter-agency Cooperation: A Danish Perspective

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The Danish government has deployed troops to Afghanistan since the 2001 invasion, and opened a diplomatic representation as well as a series of development and humanitarian assistance programmes in 2002. As of 2010, some 700 Danish troops are deployed in Afghanistan, mainly in the unruly Helmand province in the south of the country, where they have been engaged in combat operations since 2006.

This chapter analyses inter-agency cooperation as it has developed during the Danish engagement in Afghanistan, first under the concept of concerted planning and action (CPA) from 2004 to 2009, and, since 2010, under a more comprehensive organizational set-up, developed mainly under the influence of the specific demands and experience of the operation in Afghanistan. The analysis is based to a considerable extent on the analysis of the concerted civil–military planning and action undertaken by the Danish Institute for International Studies in 2008–2009.¹⁰

Concerted Planning and Action, 2004–2009

In late 2003 the question of an integrated approach emerged on the national agenda. It did so, not as a response to the situation in Afghanistan but rather because of the complex situation that had developed in Iraq after the invasion in 2003, where the Danish government had deployed troops as part of the Coalition of the Willing. The ministries for Defence and Foreign Affairs (MoD, MFA) already had some experience from civil–military coordination in Kosovo, where NATO forces and humanitarian organizations became better acquainted with each other.

However, these experiences proved to be of little use in Iraq, where the intense resistance and Iraqi in-fighting made it impossible for ci-

¹⁰ See www.diis.dk/sw72612.asp

vilian agencies to work.¹¹ Therefore the two ministries involved developed the concept of Concerted (civil–military) Planning and Action (CPA), which was inscribed in the defence agreement 2004–2009. This agreement abolished Denmark’s territorial defence and focused on involvement in international ‘peace support operations’.

The Concerted Planning and Action concept involved: 1) a simple structure for coordination of military and reconstruction tasks at the strategic (inter-agency civil servant committee in Copenhagen) and tactical levels (steering unit); 2) a set of guidelines and a training course that prepared the armed forces to facilitate small-scale reconstruction activities in the absence of civilian agencies; 3) a small fund (2 mill. Euros from the humanitarian aid budget) for such activities; and 4) a Humanitarian Contact Group between the MoD, MFA, and key humanitarian organizations in Denmark.¹² The Danish government also pressed for the development of CPA in the context of NATO and other international organizations, where the concept of the Comprehensive Approach would take over from 2006 onwards.

Operational experience

Operationalization of the CPA was characterized by *ad hoc* and experimental arrangements as it was adapted to the evolving contexts in Iraq and Afghanistan. As the concept of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams developed in both countries, the Danish steering unit gradually became obsolete. In Afghanistan, the Danish contribution was integrated in first the German PRT in Faizabad, and later in the UK PRT in Helmand. In neither case have the Danish Armed forces had ‘their own’ Area of Operation, although the main focus of Danish personnel has been the town of Gereshk.

Since the involvement in the South, the demands for cooperation with UK civilian and military agencies at the strategic and tactical levels have been high, and relations to ‘big brother’ in London have to some degree overshadowed Danish inter-agency cooperation. For example, the finalization of strategies has had to await the outcome of complex negotiations among the UK ministries involved (DfID, MoD and MFA). The operational integration of Danish contributions in Helmand would appear to be functioning rather well, while the major dis-

¹¹ See Kasper Hoffmann, ‘Civil–Military Relations in Iraq 2003–7: the Danish Experience’ *DIIS Report 13*, 2009.
http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Reports2009/DIIS_Report_2009_13_Civil-Military_Relations_Iraq_web.pdf

¹² See Finn Stepputat, ‘Integrated National Approaches to International Operations’ *DIIS Report 14*, 2009
http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Reports2009/DIIS_Report_2009_14_Integrated_National_Approaches_International_Operations_web.pdf

tances in institutional terms are those between the field offices and the national capitals in the UK and Denmark.

According to a 2008 analysis by Søren Schmidt,¹³ relations between the Danish civilian and military entities were, as in most other countries involved in the operation, characterized by different time horizons, as well as expectations as to available civilian resources and reach-back capacity. Seen from the military perspective, the follow-up to operations of ‘clear and hold’ in terms of civilian capacities for the ‘build’ phase was too slow, too weak, and with too little operational back-up from – or influence on – the embassy and Copenhagen. The military personnel also lamented the limited presence of the Afghan administration at district level and the lack of resources forthcoming from the government in Kabul.

On their part, the military personnel showed little understanding of the reluctance of the Danish MFA towards channelling Danish development aid directly to Helmand rather than through national Afghan institutions and multi-donor trust funds, as stipulated in best practices for development cooperation. In addition, the Danish MFA had issues with the reluctant military support and protection of civilian advisors. While this was seriously affecting the operation of the advisors, the military were displeased with the strains that close protection put on their resources for kinetic operations. The obvious compromise – the use of private security companies – was considered a political no-go area in Copenhagen. But in practical terms the problem was solved by resorting to the services of a private company, Armour Group, working on contract with the UK government.

Strategic issues

Within the institutions involved in the counterinsurgency programmes in Iraq and Afghanistan, and not least in the wider Danish public, the Concerted Planning and Action has been perceived as related to the tactical-level issues of army-facilitated reconstruction activities, such as construction of schools and wells. The 2008–2012 strategy for Afghanistan has general and more specific objectives for the various civil and military elements of Denmark’s contribution. While still somewhat lofty, this strategy is more concrete and realistic than previous versions. In addition, the ministries developed annual strategies for Helmand in 2008 and 2009. Schmidt (2009) argues that these

¹³ Søren Schmidt, ‘Afghanistan: Organizing Danish Civil–Military Relations’ *DIIS Report 16*, 2009 http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Reports2009/DIIS_Report_2009_15_Afghanistan_web.pdf; and Finn Stepputat, ‘Synthesis Report: Civil–Military Relations in International Operations’ *DIIS Report 14*, 2009. http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Reports2009/DIIS_Report_2009_16_Synthesis_Report_web.pdf

strategies lack the perspective of political stabilization, for example in the development of the education sector in Helmand.

Since 2007/2008, it has become increasingly clear that inter-agency cooperation must take place at more strategic levels – not only in the form of Whole-of-Government approaches, but, more importantly, between NATO, UN, the EU, the US and other donor countries as well as the host government.

Whereas Denmark has only limited influence on these efforts, various issues of inter-agency cooperation have emerged at the national level. The inter-agency civil servant group served well for initial discussions and information between the involved institutions, but was not functional in terms of strategic planning and operation. This was taken over by the Afghan Task Force with a networking inter-agency team placed in the MFA. However, while the task force formulated integrated Danish plans for the Helmand operation, the development component looked more like ‘development as usual’, with little consideration of the specific problems in an area characterized by minimal and strongly contested state presence and the absence of legitimate institutions for mediating political conflicts.

Thus, given the specifics of a province like Helmand, the crucial void in inter-agency cooperation for strategic planning and operation has been the lack of political guidance and leadership within an overall strategy of political stabilization. State-building is not likely to take place until some kind of political stabilization has been achieved, which is a central point in the current British version of counterinsurgency.

Related to this issue, an Achilles’ heel of strategic development has been the lack of local expertise in monitoring and evaluation, including systematic analyses¹⁴ of how the security and development components interact and enhance or hinder the overall objectives. Thus, for example, education and school-building programmes cannot be carried out as if the situation were normal and without acknowledging that education is a deeply politicized and conflictual issue in a conservative region.

Towards a more comprehensive approach: 2010–2014

The new defence agreement 2010–14 became an occasion for the Danish government to re-conceptualize and develop its inter-agency cooperation. Thus, as of 2010, a new organizational set-up has been

¹⁴ Such as Peace and Conflict Impact Analysis (PCIA), path analysis, and political economy analysis.

established with the aim of strengthening the Whole-of-Government approach to stabilization, reconstruction and capacity-building in areas of conflict.

A centrepiece of the new structure is a global framework fund of 20 mill. Euros per year. These funds are taken from the budgets of defence, development cooperation, and foreign affairs. Although they remain under the responsibility of each of these ministers, the disbursements are not restricted by the OECD/DAC criteria for development aid which have tended to strain inter-agency cooperation. It may also be argued that reconstruction activities in conflict areas can often not be carried out in accordance with best practices valid for development cooperation activities.

Whereas the Afghanistan Task Force continues in function, the government has set up a new administrative structure for Danish engagement in/with areas in conflict and fragile situations. At the executive level, the ministers of development, defence, and foreign affairs (plus others on an *ad hoc* basis) meet annually to determine political, thematic and geographic priorities, including for the Afghanistan operation.

At the next level, an inter-agency steering group puts forth programmes and components for the global framework fund. Meeting at least four times a year, the group brings together high-level representatives from the ministries of state, defence, foreign affairs,¹⁵ and justice plus, on an *ad hoc* basis, the defence command, the police, the ministry of integration or/other relevant instances. Decisions are to be consensus-based, and the individual ministries will remain responsible for implementing the various components of the overall programme. The chairmanship rotates between the MoD and MFA.

An inter-agency secretariat with four to six employees supports the steering group and carries out the day-to-day administration. The secretariat is placed under the MFA, but the employees continue to have functions in their mother departments (MoD and MFA). They deal with relations to the various thematic and geographic sections in the ministries, the armed forces, diplomatic representations, civilian advisors, private companies, NGOs, etc. Furthermore, they manage fact-finding missions and facilitate the development of a new resource base for recruiting civilian advisors, as well as related processes of reporting, evaluation and learning. Previously, monitoring and reporting had been fragmented between many entities and stored in various incompatible archives.

¹⁵ In Denmark, the Minister of Development Cooperation is responsible for this budget, but the administration is integrated in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Finally a broad reference group with representatives from relevant state entities, the judiciary, NGOs, private companies, etc. meets occasionally to discuss and exchange experiences from involvement in areas of conflict and fragile situations.

Regarding the relations between Copenhagen and the tactical level where troops have been deployed in Afghanistan, separate lines of command are maintained between civilian and military entities. Unlike the situation in more stable areas of Afghanistan, civilian state entities have to work closely with the military in places like Helmand. Hence, in the current UK PRT structure, working under civilian 'direction' (without command and control over military units), operational planning is carried out in a joint leadership group before being implemented by the individual civilian and military entities.

In the complex, multinational set-up of the PRT, the presence of an experienced, high-level representative of the Danish MFA is crucial for coordination between the participating national and civil/military entities, as well as for relations back to Copenhagen. Whereas this kind of expertise is rare, it seems essential for inter-agency cooperation to be able to have available persons versed in civilian as well as military structures, and with experience from headquarters as well as field offices in conflict areas. Whether the new system will be capable of producing this kind of expertise is another question. Hitherto, the career system in the MFA has not encouraged specialized career paths, and field postings in hardship areas have not been sufficiently valued as an asset for promotion.

As the new governmental set-up has been in place only since spring 2010, it is still too early to say whether it will work and what kinds of problems may arise. But it seems that, to the extent that the government chooses to deploy Danish troops in high-intensity conflict, the direction taken with the new set-up is unavoidable.

On the other hand, the Afghanistan experience should not become the sole model for Danish civil–military engagement abroad. NATO's comprehensive approach¹⁶ (and the gigantic US engagement) defines a heavily nationalized model which pushes for WGA set-ups. The UN, with all its current deficiencies and lack of robustness, has developed a different model for an integrated approach that comprises civilian and military instruments within the same political organization.¹⁷

¹⁶ See Peter Viggo Jakobsen, 'NATO's Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Response Operations: A work in slow progress' *DIIS Report 15*, 2008 http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Reports%202008/Report_2008-15_NATO_Comprehensive_Approach_Crisis_Response_Operations.pdf

¹⁷ See Cedric de Coning, 'United Nations and the Comprehensive Approach' *DIIS report 14*, 2008 http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Reports%202008/Report-2008-14_The_United_Nations_and_the_Comprehensive_Approach.pdf

A Swedish Approach to Comprehensiveness

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Sweden has a long tradition of close and extensive civil–military cooperation, developed during the Cold War period. The Swedish Total Defence Concept had a very specific aim: to bring together all state-controlled institutions and even some private enterprises in order to prevent, and if necessary halt, a military invasion from the Soviet Union. With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent end of the Cold War, the Total Defence Concept gradually ceased to exist.

Today, in the twenty-first century, many in the international community are looking for better solutions to counter crises in conflict areas by combining, or better coordinating, civil and military instruments and capabilities. The term ‘Comprehensive Approach’ is often used, without being clearly defined.

From experienced peacekeepers to official administration bureaucrats it is often claimed that the culture of coordination now sought by the international community is really nothing new. With its long tradition in civil–military relations, Sweden could contribute considerable experience to the international community. Such views are especially common among Swedish officers who experienced the Cold War in the northernmost parts of Europe.

This chapter assesses such statements by examining the prerequisites for successful Swedish civil–military cooperation against current demands for solving complex crisis situations. It presents two government documents setting out policy and practice: the Swedish national strategy including civil–military engagement in international crisis management,¹⁸ and the Swedish Afghanistan Strategy¹⁹ outlining policy implementation in practice.

¹⁸ Government Communication 2007/08:51, *National strategy for Swedish participation in international peace-support and security-building operations*, Stockholm: 13 March 2008.

Non-defined ‘comprehensiveness’ vs. the Swedish Total Defence Concept

The first challenge comes with the non-defined term ‘comprehensive approach’. In this chapter it will be understood as referring to a culture of cooperation and desire to enhance the effectiveness of engagement in complex crisis resolution, to be achieved by combining the use of military and non-military capabilities to the greatest possible extent. Within a government administration this requires a top–down (Whole-of-Government) approach. However, in a crisis area there must also be a bottom–up approach, whereby also non-governmental actors contribute to the enhanced effectiveness on a voluntary basis – together with government and state actors.

In Sweden during the Cold War, all non-military actors contributed to the fulfilment of the Supreme Commander of the Swedish Armed Forces mission in order to keep out an aggressor. This was a military-centred approach with a single and clear end-state, on Swedish soil, governed by national legislation.

Comparing the Swedish Total Defence Concept with the understanding of a comprehensive approach as used here, we may note consistencies as well as inconsistencies. While the top–down approach is evident in both cases, there are differences. In the Swedish context, national legislation demanded cooperation and coordination between and among the actors. In the international context, this can occur only once an agreement has been reached – and the various non-governmental actors will normally not be covered by such an agreement. The top–down approach in the Swedish context was possible since the cooperation and activities took place where Swedish legislation had primacy.

Such military-centred approaches to defending Sweden apply only in interstate confrontations where national sovereignty and independence are at stake. In intrastate conflict, or in failing states, no military solution alone can turn crisis into peace. Military force can act only as part of the solution, in a support function to non-military actors.

Today’s Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB: in Swedish, *Myndigheten för Samhällsskydd och Beredskap*) is tasked with enhancing and supporting societal capacities in their preparedness for, and prevention of, emergencies and crisis. Structures for civil emergency planning are coordinated by the MSB, which holds the mandate for a holistic and all-hazard approach to emergency management. The

¹⁹ Utrikesdepartementet UF2009/46364/ASO, *Sveriges strategi för utvecklingssamarbetet med Afghanistan för perioden den 1 juli – den 31 december 2013*. Stockholm: 9 July 2009.

agency also employs personnel in international operations in support of other organizations, during and after natural disasters and conflict situations.²⁰

The actors working on the national level today have a totally different approach than was the case within the Total Defence Concept. The MSB, under the direction of the Ministry of Defence, coordinates non-military actors working in emergencies or crises in Sweden as well as abroad. As long as there are no military threats to the country, Swedish Armed Forces on Swedish soil are mostly limited to a supporting function.

In sum, Sweden's previous Swedish Total Defence Concept has very little – if any – similarity with today's comprehensive approach to civil–military cooperation in international crisis resolution. It is impossible to compare the application of the two concepts, as they are based on totally different conditions.

The Swedish national strategy

In March 2008, the Swedish government presented the Parliament with a national strategy for Swedish participation in international peace-support and security-building operations. The purpose of the strategy is to provide a complete picture of the level of Swedish aspiration. It links foreign policy, development, security and defence policy closely together and provides general guidance for Swedish action and use of resources. It emphasizes Swedish support for combined civil and military action.

Several guidelines in the strategy are of special importance to the development of a holistic and comprehensive approach. First, Swedish engagement is formulated as an integral and collective part of the policy towards the country or region concerned. This implies communication with the affected state to meet its needs and wishes, as well as communication with the engaged international community to coordinate and prevent conflict among the various contributors. Second, while the engagement is formulated as support to UN and EU peace efforts, it will also be covered by an overarching national objective.²¹ This implies a formulated objective covering all contributions under Swedish government control.

In essence, the national strategy recognizes that security and development must go hand in hand, and that effective contributions must include civil as well as military capabilities. These capabilities will be

²⁰ www.msb.se, 24 March 2010.

²¹ Government Communication 2007/08:51 (see fn. 18 above)

coordinated through a national objective, although the military contribution will normally be under international command.

A strategy under implementation

In July 2009, the Swedish Government decided on a strategy for development cooperation with Afghanistan covering 3.5 years of engagement. The strategy – which has been communicated to the Afghan government – sets a clear ambition for the contribution: the overall goal of Swedish development cooperation with Afghanistan is that people living in poverty, especially women and girls, should enjoy improved living conditions in a peaceful and democratic society.²² Furthermore it outlines a range of process goals: improved donor coordination, better monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, and enhanced Afghan ownership and capacity. It also defines objectives concerning democratic governance and human rights, education, private-sector development and humanitarian aid. Finally, allocated resources are presented in terms of activities: political dialogue through the new embassy in Kabul, 420 million SEK for development through NGOs,²³ contribution to security providers²⁴ and security sector reform.²⁵

It is too early to draw any conclusions with regard to the tangible outcome of this Afghanistan strategy. However, some initial considerations are worth noting. First, the Swedish government has declared its willingness to apply a Whole-of-Government approach when it engages in international crisis management. Functional structures have been arranged within and between ministries and together with government agencies to enhance coordination. Second, the overarching goal of interconnecting various different engagements in Afghanistan is a prerequisite for effective coordination, both on the national level and with the recipient government. Domestically, this also helps to provide legitimacy to the Swedish engagement. Third, there is an ongoing dialogue between generals and directors-general, and their respective staffs have now established working relations. Fourth, the Afghanistan strategy has so far had limited impact on the Swedish-led work of the Provisional Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Mazar-e Sharif in northern Afghanistan – mainly because the military contribution is barely mentioned in the strategy. Indeed, there might be good reasons for making it vague. Aims and ambitions are agreed within a NATO context, without non-NATO members (like Sweden) participating in the decision-making process; and agreements and plans are described

²² Utrikesdepartementet UF2009/46364/ASO (see fn 19 above), p. 2.

²³ Swedish Afghanistan Committee, Swedish Red Cross, Save the Children.

²⁴ International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), European Union Police Force (EUPOL).

²⁵ Utrikesdepartementet UF2009/46364/ASO (see fn 19 above).

in classified documents. By contrast, Sweden's military engagement in Afghanistan – including its tasks and responsibilities – is approved by the Swedish Parliament, on the basis of official documents.

Conclusions

This contribution has analysed the foundations for the often-voiced view that the Swedish Total Defence Concept established under the Cold War period had an approach to civil–military cooperation similar to today's 'comprehensive approach' in international crisis resolution. The conclusion is that a comprehensive approach has only limited similarities with the Sweden's Cold War Total Defence Concept.

A comprehensive approach in a crisis area requires a similar approach within the contributing countries. This 'Whole-of-Government' approach calls for a top–down model within organizations, governments and government agencies. With its national strategy for participation in international peace support, the Swedish government has laid the foundations for such an approach.

Sweden's overarching objective in Afghanistan – to help turn the difficult situation in the country into societal prosperity – is clearly set out in the Swedish development strategy agreed with the Afghan authorities. Although there is no obvious contradiction between the Swedish national objective and the objective agreed within international amalgamations, vagueness might obstruct the success of a comprehensive approach.

The limited role of the military contribution presented in Sweden's Afghanistan Strategy indicates a restrained ambition of combined civil and military action. One reason might be that the PRT is operating under NATO command, fulfilling tasks in accordance with an agreed operational plan, and not acting under a twin command that would involve receiving operational directives from Stockholm.

Norwegian Whole-of-Government – Politics in Denial

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The point of departure of this chapter is that Norway has a long tradition of aid coordination and a relatively well-coordinated Afghanistan policy at the highest political levels.²⁶ Despite this, the delivery in Afghanistan through the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) has been poorly coordinated. I argue that this is not merely a result of weak organization or structures. Rather, it is based on, firstly, a deeper conflict between key actors regarding the very purpose of Norway's presence in Afghanistan – primarily state-building combined with a struggle against the insurgents, or primarily poverty reduction. Secondly, it relates to the limited tradition in Norway, in the military and civilian agencies alike, of calculating the political effects of operations and programmes. The government appears to avoid making a firm decision on the priorities, and has attempted to continue denying the political role that it plays. The result is limited coherence and less efficient use of the taxpayers' money.

Norwegian aid and foreign policy traditions

The Norwegian government has a long tradition of utilizing civil society in providing aid and support to development overseas – both in crises and in regular development aid. UN agencies and Norwegian NGOs have often been the implementers of Norwegian aid and development programmes throughout the world. Norway may stand as an 'aid superpower': it has more than tripled its development budget since 1990. On the other hand, this aid has long been considered apolitical, founded on altruistic principles, universal values and local

²⁶ This article is based largely on Cedric de Coning, Helge Lurås, Niels Nagelhus Schia and Ståle Ulriksen, *Norway's Whole-of-Government Approach and its Engagement with Afghanistan*, Security in Practice 8, Oslo: NUPI, 2009, hereinafter called *Norway's Whole-of-Government*. The arguments regarding the deeper conflicts about the purpose of being in Afghanistan are my own, based on the article *The Politics of the Comprehensive Approach: The Military, Humanitarian and State-building Discourses in Afghanistan*, NUPI Working Paper 773, Oslo: NUPI, 2010. My thanks to Ståle Ulriksen and Helge Lurås for comments on the draft text.

needs only.²⁷ Norway has usually been reluctant to change these vast resources into conditionality and political demands of the recipients.²⁸

Similarly, Norway has nurtured a self-image as a ‘peace nation’, a small state without strategic global interests which can mediate and gain trust from both parties in conflicts, while also utilizing its good relations with the strong players if necessary. Presenting Norway in such a way has even been part of strategic considerations.²⁹ However, deployment in Afghanistan came as something new and challenging to this altruistic peace identity, adding the security dimension to the cluster. Military and civilian actors were now to work side by side in the PRTs,³⁰ and that complicated the previously harmonious relationship between the government and civil society actors. In Afghanistan, Norway suddenly became a far more political actor, with the military helping the Kabul government to expand its control over the entire territory and help fight the insurgents. This was to prove hard to combine with the identity as a non-political, altruistic peace-loving nation.

Norway in Afghanistan

The Norwegian engagement in Afghanistan is coordinated politically by the ‘Afghanistan Forum’, consisting of the state secretaries (deputy ministers) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice (equivalent to a ministry of the interior), as well as the Office of the Prime Minister. They prepare the government decisions related to all Afghanistan policy, and supply the government with coherent input and advice on priorities. They also travel jointly to Afghanistan. This political structure is mirrored at the higher level of the civil service, where the chief officials coordinate policy implementation. The Norwegian Embassy in Kabul is also partly linked in with this structure.³¹ The purpose is thus by and large to streamline Nor-

²⁷ In e.g. the 2004 Government Report/White Paper to the Parliament, ‘Stortingsmelding 35, 2003–4, *Felles kamp mot fattigdom. En helhetlig utviklingspolitikk*’ development assistance is based largely on universal values, human rights etc. The objectives are poverty reduction and achieving the Millennium Goals – but this also entails relatively politically laden principles like ‘good governance’ and democracy.

²⁸ See e.g. Terje Tvedt, ‘International development aid and its impact on a donor country: a case study of Norway’ *European Journal of Development Research*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 2007, pp. 614–635; Scandinavian readers may also consult Terje Tvedt, *Utviklingshjelp, utenrikspolitikk og makt. Den norske modellen*. Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk, 2003.

²⁹ See Henrik Thune and Ståle Ulriksen, ‘Prestige and penance through peace. Norway as an allied activist’ in Ann-Sofie Dahl and Norman Hilmer (eds), *Activism and (Non)Alignment: The Relationship Between Foreign Policy and Security Doctrine, Conference Papers 31*, Utrikespolitiska institutet, Stockholm and *NUPI Working Paper 637*, 2002; Mark Leonard and Andrew Small, *Norwegian Public Diplomacy*, Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003, available at <http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/UD/Vedlegg/public.pdf>.

For a discussion of Norway’s identity and foreign policy (in Norwegian), see Halvard Leira (ed.), *Norske selvbilder og norsk utenrikspolitikk*, Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), 2007.

³⁰ *NATO’s role in Afghanistan*, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_8189.htm

³¹ *Norway’s Whole-of-Government*, pp. 26–28.

way's policy and expand ownership of its Afghanistan engagement beyond the MoD and specialized MFA circles.

Importantly however, this is an *ad hoc* arrangement established for dealing with Afghanistan only – not other potential global crises. It does not include a permanent secretariat or a formalized organization of any kind. Furthermore, there exists no government-level political strategy paper for the Norwegian engagement in Afghanistan as a whole – only partisan statements by government representatives when addressing the Parliament or the media.³²

All the same, Norway is a significant contributor to Afghanistan in relation to its size. The Norwegian military engagement costs about 1 billion kroner (approx. 120 million Euros) per year,³³ while 750 million kroner (approx. 93 million Euros) is pledged annually in humanitarian and development aid for the next five years. About 15% of these funds are allocated to the Faryab region, where the PRT is located.³⁴ Thus we should note that the main portion of Norwegian resources spent on Afghanistan (disregarding the military expenses) is *not* dispersed through a Whole-of-Government approach (WGA) system in Afghanistan. The following will therefore examine only the above-mentioned 15% of the civilian funding, and the relationship between civilian and military actors operating in the same territory – the Faryab district. Moreover, Norwegian NGOs are not the sole implementers of these funds: international NGOs are also significantly involved, but they are rarely mentioned in the Norwegian debates.³⁵

Bearing this in mind, we may say that, in Afghanistan, Norway's WGA is 'operationalized' through the PRT in Faryab in ISAF Regional Command North (RC N). The mandate of the PRT is to promote security and good governance and to facilitate development and reconstruction, all in close collaboration with the government of Af-

³² Although the government recently launched an internet portal dedicated to the Norwegian engagement in Afghanistan:

http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/kampanjer/bistand_afghanistan.html?id=573474

³³ This estimate depends on how one chooses to calculate the expenses (investments, maintenance, running costs etc), and it could arguably be much higher. See also 'Norge bruker én milliard på Afghanistan-krigen' *Dagbladet*, 16 March 2010, <http://www.dagbladet.no/2009/10/14/nyheter/afghanistan/utenriks/forsvarspolitik/8567912/>

³⁴ Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, *Address to the Storting on the situation in Afghanistan and Norway's civilian and military engagement in the country*, 9 February 2010, accessed from http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/Whats-new/Speeches-and-articles/speeches_foreign/2010/afghanistan_address.html, 16 April 2010. Norwegian funds are otherwise distributed as follows: 51% for governance, 23% for rural development, education 11% and humanitarian aid 15%. See *Svar på spørsmål fra Høyre om sivil bistand til Afghanistan*, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre, 9 February 2010, accessed from http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/aktuelt/svar_stortinget/sporretime/2010/svar_sivilbistand.html?id=593063, 16 April 2010.

³⁵ For example, the French/Afghan NGO ACTED is a significant implementer of Norwegian donor funds. <http://www.acted.org/en/afghanistan>

ghanistan and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).³⁶ The PRT consists of about 400 soldiers (including 100 from Latvia) and some 10 to 20 civilians. The civilian group typically has a civilian co-ordinator, a political adviser, development advisers, police advisers and prison advisers, mainly from Norway, but also from Iceland and Latvia. The civilians and the military are co-located and are placed under certain common military security regulations, but operate otherwise relatively separately. The civilians are divided into at least two groups: the police and prison advisers (MoJ) and the political and development advisers (MFA). The role of the political and development advisers is to oversee the implementation of development programmes, liaise with the local authorities, the UN and others, and help to develop new projects and programmes. None of the civilians are under the command of the military contingent – they coordinate with the embassy in Kabul and with relevant ministries and directorates in Oslo. In other words, the PRT is not a very integrated unit.

Critical analysis

PRT stove-piping

The Norwegian-led PRT is a classic example of ‘stove-piping’. The military chain of command goes through RC North, ISAF HQ and the rest of the NATO structure, in addition to the national lines, through the National Contingent Commander (NCC) in RC N (Mazar-e-Sharif), the Norwegian Operational Command in Bodø and the MoD in Oslo. The civilians report mainly to the embassy in Kabul, sometimes also directly to Oslo. There is no tactical (Meymaneh/Faryab) or operational (Kabul) headquarters or equivalent of the Oslo Afghanistan Forum. The civilians and the military coordinate as best they can, but it is all based on good will, not on systems or regulations. There is no common higher level of command to refer to in case of conflict.³⁷ Neither is there a common plan. A ‘Faryab strategy’ was developed for the first time in 2009, but it represents more of a lowest common denominator than a strategy.³⁸ Good ambitions are plentiful, but they are not organized in a prioritized way in terms of time or resources. This all seems to represent a compromise between various ministries and not a political agenda – and as a planning tool it is of limited value for the PRT.

³⁶ *NATO's role in Afghanistan*, see fn 30 above

³⁷ For more details on the PRT model, see *Norway's Whole-of-Government*, pp. 29–33.

³⁸ See *A strategy for comprehensive Norwegian civilian and military efforts in Faryab province*, Afghanistan, Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Justice and the Police, May 2009. Available at http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/FD/Dokumenter/Strategy_Norway-in-Faryab-Afghanistan.pdf, accessed 16 April 2010.

Each military contingent appears to deploy with a somewhat different set of objectives for its deployment period, seeking to make a difference or set a mark during its tenure. While the military is integrated into the ISAF structure, including the regular RC N planning processes, the PRTs enjoy substantial leeway in their day-to-day operations. It is largely up to the Norwegian Armed Forces (and the PRT partner nations) to define the operational priorities. The ISAF command structure is therefore not an impediment to enhanced national coherence. Nonetheless, long-term planning – covering several years and PRT rotations – has not been conducted within the Armed Forces, or in conjunction with the civilian PRT representatives.

The political and development advisers may be considered the extended arm of the embassy, but they have weak direct links to Oslo. The civilian coordinator and political advisors are typically younger civil servants, not career diplomats with a good foothold and network in the embassy or MFA in Oslo. They are therefore not in a particularly strong position for strongly implementing Norwegian foreign policy or influencing the more senior (LtCol) PRT commander. The development advisors are also externally recruited personnel without much network in the MFA or the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, NORAD.

As a result of all this, there is no Norwegian common political strategy, no common planning, monitoring or evaluation of the efforts made in the various sectors where Norway is engaged in Faryab. The military engagement is carried out rather like a ‘stabilization operation’ based on patrolling either alone or embedded with the ANA units they train; the police advisers train the ANP; and both are engaging insurgents, criminal gangs or others that oppose the power of the ANSF and ISAF.³⁹ The civilians do traditional development programmes. None of them can refer to an overarching common plan. The political effects of all these activities are not being knitted together into a comprehensive strategy.

It appears odd that otherwise well-organized Norway has such an apparently inefficient and *ad hoc* system.

From humanitarian aid to political development

The relatively influential civil society in Norway has been particularly critical of the PRT, especially in its early years. The PRT was accused of blurring the lines between the humanitarian and military space, by e.g. using white vehicles, engaging in short-sighted (‘Quick Impact’)

³⁹ ANA: Afghan National Army; ANP: Afghan National Police; ANSF: Afghan National Security Forces, i.e. all police, border police and military units.

civilian projects, and generally entering the turf of the civilian NGOs. This, it was argued, resulted not only in unprofessionally implemented development projects, but could also jeopardize the NGOs, as the local population would consider them as a party to the conflict.⁴⁰ Here we may note the words of the Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, who recently stated that it was ‘easier during Taliban’, arguing that it was easier to build trust with the local population and hence implement their programmes before ISAF entered the theatre.⁴¹ From her point of view then, ISAF has been part of the problem and not the solution, as it has contributed to hamper the humanitarian and development work. As a result of such criticism, the need for protection of the ‘humanitarian space’⁴² has now been better recognized by the government. The plan for the future of the PRT is to further separate the civilian and military tasks, including a possible physical division of the two.

Hence, attempts to strengthen the coordination have met resistance from those NGOs tasked with implementing Norway’s development aid objectives. However, the scepticism towards the military – their potential undermining of the humanitarian space – appears to have spilled over also to the development sector. There is a tendency for the NGOs to keep defending their humanitarian space, while being more silent about the development programmes they are implementing. It may be argued that there have been instances, in Norway and elsewhere, of conflating the ‘humanitarian space’ with ‘NGO space’, i.e. defining everything NGOs do as untouchable.⁴³

The reason could be that development aid, while qualitatively distinct from humanitarian aid, is nonetheless largely regarded as non-political, in Norway and internationally. The aim of development is typically ‘poverty reduction’, which is seen as a universal good, based on the Millennium Development Goals. A guiding Norwegian document uses the same references, although it also includes more political concepts like ‘the principles of the rule of law, political pluralism and

⁴⁰ Stephen Cornish and Marit Glad, *Civil–military Relations: No Room for Humanitarianism in comprehensive approaches*, Oslo: Norwegian Atlantic Committee, Security Policy Library No. 5, 2008; Victoria Wheeler and Adele Harmer (eds), *Resetting the rules of engagement. Trends and issues in the military–humanitarian relations*, London: Humanitarian Policy Group HPG, 2006, p. 49.

⁴¹ See ‘Lettere under Taliban’ *ABCNyheter*, 28 December 2009, <http://www.abcnheter.no/node/102276>

⁴² The ‘humanitarian space’ refers to purely humanitarian projects, which are considered non-political and based on International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and not on e.g. a UN Security Council resolution. The guiding principle for humanitarian agencies is often referred to as the ‘humanitarian imperative’ and often summarized as ‘independence, impartiality and neutrality’. See *Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 1995.

⁴³ Sylvian Beauchamp, *Defining the Humanitarian Space Through Public International Law*, Canadian Red Cross, 2008, p. 16, available at http://www.redcross.ca/cmslib/general/obeoc_beauchamp.pdf.

democracy'.⁴⁴ The Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS), which is the main point of reference for the development agencies in Afghanistan, is built on the same principles. It covers all sectors Afghanistan needs to develop to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and is based on three pillars, 'security'; 'governance, rule of law and human rights' and 'economic and social development'. In practice, however, it is used primarily by actors involved in poverty reduction, and less by those concerned with security and political stability.⁴⁵ Furthermore, it is not connected to a political strategy of how to stabilize the country, and largely disconnected from any baseline study or conflict/political analysis.

Norwegian objectives, like those of the UN and the wider international community, are highly political and sensitive. It is a question of taking sides in an internal violent conflict, supporting one set of values (liberal) and one set of actors (the authorities).⁴⁶ The insurgents tend to object to several elements of the Millennium Development Goals, the ANDS and the Norwegian development aid criteria. Democratization, empowering women and rule of law are some of these contested elements. If one nonetheless chooses to implement such projects (there are strong arguments for doing so), awareness of the political connotations is a *sine qua non*. A risk analysis and a continuous, 'real-time', political effect and impact analysis would be natural parts of such an approach. However, the development community has at best a limited tradition in this field.⁴⁷

From impartial peacekeeping to political security and state-building

It is not only the development agencies that struggle with the realities in Afghanistan. Just as most development tasks are inherently political, so are the military. The tasks of ISAF are not limited to technical institution-building (like the ANA), also required is a systematic political agenda. ISAF is supposed to 'assist the Afghan Government in exercising and extending its authority and influence across the country, paving the way for reconstruction and effective governance.'⁴⁸ It

⁴⁴ See Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD): *Grant schemes for humanitarian assistance and development cooperation by Norwegian and international voluntary actors. Guidelines*, available at <http://www.norad.no/en/Tools+and+publications/Publications/Publication+Page?key=129252>; and 'Stortingsmelding 35'.

⁴⁵ Afghanistan has added 'enhance security' as a 9th topic of the Millennium Development Goals. See <http://www.undp.org.af/MDGs/goal9.htm>

⁴⁶ Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, 'Derfor er Norge i Afghanistan' (Why Norway is in Afghanistan), *Aftenposten*, 22 December 2007. Available at http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/smk/aktuelt/taler_og_artikler/statsministeren/statsminister_jens_stoltenberg/2007-4/derfor-er-norge-i-afghanistan.html?id=491689

⁴⁷ See Turid Læg Reid, *Joint Evaluations and Learning in Complex Emergencies. Lessons from the Humanitarian and Development Domain*, Security in Practice No. 7, Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2009.

⁴⁸ http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_8189.htm, accessed 17 July 2009.

is therefore a security and state-building mission, where strengthening the Afghan government takes precedence over poverty reduction. COM ISAF, General S.A. McChrystal, has additionally put strong emphasis on building local legitimacy:

*The Afghan people are the Objective. Protecting them is the mission. Focus 95% of your time building relationships with them and, together with the Afghan government, meeting their needs.*⁴⁹

To do this, the military must engage much more with the civilian population than in the traditional stabilization operations. Building relations and boosting the support of the Afghan authorities requires more dialogue and interaction with various leaders, groups and stakeholders, backed by a solid political and cultural understanding of the local society.

This is challenging firstly because it clashes with the traditional Norwegian ideas based on 'humanitarian space', i.e. that the military should avoid too much interaction with the civilian population, as that is the 'turf' of the civilian actors. It is also a challenge because the Norwegian troops have hardly have been trained and equipped for such tasks. They have been set up for more conventional 'stability' or 'robust peacekeeping' operations that are less focused on building the legitimacy of host-nation authorities.

Furthermore, it may be argued that the Norwegian military identity has become more offensive and combat-oriented in recent years as a result of the experiences from Afghanistan. While this, in many respects, is a healthy and realistic orientation, given the nature of the military profession (compared to e.g. the desk officers of the Cold War or the previously 'impotent' UN peacekeepers), it may also have made them overly enemy- and security- focused. If this is the case, COM ISAF's tasking above becomes difficult to implement. It requires less use of force, less offensive operations, but correspondingly more exposure, cultural awareness and thorough political analysis. Such 'smart' operations require a sophisticated political sensitivity traditionally rather unfamiliar to Norway's armed forces.

The Norwegian armed forces and the NGO sector seem to share a tradition of not considering the political implications and effects when designing their programmes and operations. Neither pillar of the PRT appears to include political analysis systematically in operational

⁴⁹ COMISAF Counterinsurgency Guidance (undated) http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/official_texts/counterinsurgency_guidance.pdf, p. 7; accessed 17 November 2009. GIRoA = the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

planning – they also lack the tradition and the necessary tools. Such a coordinated political approach to Faryab would require a shared set of political objectives and priorities, shared situational awareness and a shared conflict- and stakeholder analysis.

While there are strong arguments for keeping civilian and military operations separate in many cases, there is no reason why they not should plan and evaluate together, to ensure that resources are coherently spent and with maximal political efficiency. With the possible exception of purely humanitarian projects, all Norwegian aid to Afghanistan should in principle aim at the same political objectives – as defined by the government.⁵⁰ It would seem that traditional ideas about roles and ‘turfs’, combined with the lack of a tradition of systematic political analysis, prevents such collaboration.

Conclusions

To the extent that Norway and the wider international community can make a significant positive difference in Afghanistan – and that is a separate discussion⁵¹ – conflicting mandates, visions, priorities and perceptions are certainly not making it any easier to accomplish this task. Norway is not alone in being pulled in different directions simultaneously. But there is in Norway an apparent additional uneasiness about being an explicitly political actor, no longer hiding behind a veil of universal values and principles.

As a result, Norway’s WGA model in the PRT is struggling with higher hurdles than the organizational and structural ones. It is about acknowledging the immensely political role, and about having the political will to decide on the main priorities in Afghanistan – poverty reduction, or security and political state-building. Oslo has tended to avoid this debate altogether, continuing to try to do several things at the same time. The underlying assumption must be that these ends can be achieved independently of each other, or at least that they not are in conflict, so that a tighter WGA is not needed. This is a questionable assumption that reflects the wider problem facing the international community in Afghanistan. As long as key actors have significantly different perceptions, objectives and solutions, and are reluctant to acknowledge these differences, the prospects for peace and security, and for achieving the Millennium Goals as well as state-building will all remain grim.

⁵⁰ Based on Afghan needs, ANDS etc.

⁵¹ For critical analyses on the prospect of success in Afghanistan, see e.g. Helge Lurås, *Norge i Afghanistan – bakgrunn, retorikk, fortsettelse*, NUPI Notat 768, Oslo: NUPI, 2009; and *Vestens intervensjon i Afghanistan- bakgrunn, praksis, fortsettelse*, NUPI Notat 765, Oslo: NUPI, 2009.

Conclusion: Similar Challenges –But No Nordic Whole of Government Model

Karsten Friis

A certain Nordic identity and ‘brand’ has been discernible for centuries, even if it has never been a forceful political movement.⁵⁰ The Nordic countries have had rather different security and defence policies⁵¹ – but they arguably still share a common interest in the civilian aspects of crisis management,⁵² in humanitarian questions and in supporting multilateral institutions.⁵³ There is also a growing political will towards greater Nordic security cooperation.⁵⁴

From the brief explorations in this report, we may conclude that there is no such thing as a Nordic whole-of-government model. The four countries in question have differed in their approaches to national strategies, organization and field deployments. These differences probably stem from domestic organizational and political cultures, formal international affiliations and alliances (EU, NATO), as well as commitments to the partners in the on-going operations. There are, however, also similarities to be found.

Let us begin by summarizing some of the findings in this report, starting from the top political and strategic level. Only Sweden and

⁵⁰ See Lene Hansen and Ole Wæver (eds), *European Integration and National Identity. The Challenge of the Nordic States*, London: Routledge, 2002; Christopher S. Browning, ‘Branding Nordicity. Models, Identity and the Decline of Exceptionalism’ *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 42, No.1, 2007, pp. 27–51.

⁵¹ Arne Olav Brundtland, ‘The Nordic Balance’ *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1965, pp. 30–63; Pernille Rieker, *Europeanization of National Security Identity: The EU and the Changing Security Identities of the Nordic States*. London: Routledge, 2006.

⁵² Peter Viggo Jakobsen, ‘Small States, Big Influence: The Overlooked Nordic Influence on the Civilian ESDP’ *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 1, 2009, pp. 81–102.

⁵³ Alyson J. K. Bailes, Gunilla Herlof and Bengt Sundelius (eds), *The Nordic Countries and the European Security and Defence Policy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

⁵⁴ Thorvald Stoltenberg, *Nordic Cooperation on Foreign and Security Policy. Proposals Presented to the Extraordinary Meeting of Nordic Foreign Ministers in Oslo on 9 February 2009*. Available at http://eng.utanrikisraduneyti.is/media/Frettatilkynning/Nordic_report.pdf, accessed 27 April 2010; see also the subsequent *Memorandum of Understanding on Nordic Defence Cooperation*, signed 5 November 2009, available at http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/FD/Temadokumenter/NORDEFECO_MoU.pdf, accessed 27 April 2010.

Finland have developed national strategies for participation in peace-support, security-building and/or crisis-management operations. These seek to harmonize development, security and diplomacy and lay the foundations for concerted action. Norway and Denmark have no similar documents or strategies for international operations.

Despite this, on the institutional or implementation level of crisis management, Denmark is perhaps the country with the most sophisticated model; it includes ministerial coordination, a steering group, a secretariat and a reference group. Although this is a rather new structure which is yet to become fully operational, it is based on the experiences of the Afghanistan task force. Both Sweden and Finland have similar models in the pipeline as a result of their national strategies. Norway is the 'odd man out' here, with no inter-ministerial standing crisis management architecture similar to the other three countries.

Concerning Afghanistan in particular, Sweden, Finland and Denmark have all developed national policy directives or strategies for their activities. These documents seek to encompass the security, governance, economic and humanitarian aspects of the engagement, but show weaknesses when it comes to coordination with military (Sweden) or political aspects (Denmark). In the case of Norway, the political direction can be found in government documents and statements, but not as explicitly elaborated as in its three neighbours. However, Norway and others have developed strategies for the districts or regions their armies are operating in – also these with some weaknesses.

All four countries have some sort of inter-ministerial Afghanistan task force. The chief difference lies in the degree of permanence and political anchoring of this structure. Norway has chosen a non-institutionalized *ad hoc* approach, whereas the others seem to be using Afghanistan as a stepping stone to more permanent crisis management structures. Still, Denmark appears to be the only country which has seriously attempted to bridge the civilian–military gap – in Afghanistan and beyond.

All four have faced practical challenges related to civilian–military cooperation in their PRTs. Finland has stopped sending civilian experts to the PRTs; Norway is planning to move them out and further strengthen the operational divide between them and the military. Sweden also separates civilian and military efforts in the strategy and in its PRT, leaving the latter more as part of ISAF than of the Swedish strategy. Denmark is the sole Nordic country to conduct joint civilian–military operational planning (in conjunction with the UK). However, Denmark and others have been experiencing challenges in recruiting senior civilian (MFA) representatives at the tactical levels.

We may conclude that the main common Nordic feature is this: while efforts are being made to streamline various ministries at the policy level, little is done on the practical level – in the field in Afghanistan. As a result, the coherence developed in the national capitals appears to get lost in the implementation phase. The effectiveness of the efforts and the impact on the overall peace or stability thus seem limited. But is this necessarily the case?

The underlying rationale of this reasoning is that if all countries were some day to achieve national coherence among all the deployed state actors, theatre-level coherence would be enhanced as well. Robert Egnell argues along such lines in his *Complex Peace Operations and Civil–Military Relations*, where he claims that an *integrated* national civil–military structure would boost the effectiveness of operations.⁵⁵ He bases his argument on a comparative study of the USA and UK, and concludes that ‘integrated civil–military approaches are necessary for effectiveness in achieving the often far-reaching political aims of democratization and economic development.’⁵⁶ Egnell substantiates this claim mainly through organizational and institutional arguments – that integrated structures would build bridges between ministries and cultures, and provide strategic guidance to all relevant actors through a chain of command. While these are sound theoretical arguments in terms of organizational effectiveness, the brief explorations in this report indicate that there are several obstacles in real life which Egnell fails to take into account. One of them is competing, or even conflicting, mandates. The contribution on Sweden illustrates this in pointing to the tension between the Swedish national objective in Afghanistan (focused primarily on poverty reduction) and ISAF’s more security-focused objectives, within which the Swedish armed forces are operating. As a result, the Swedish military and the civilian agencies have different mandates and priorities. The Danish example shows something similar: Danish national coordination had to await the conclusion of UK coordination. If the Swedish military were to be fully integrated into the national Swedish strategy, it would likely be at odds with the ISAF strategy. Similarly, if Denmark had pressed ahead with its own national strategy irrespective of the priorities of its major partner in the field, the plan would probably not contributed to overall effectiveness and coherence.

Hence, effectiveness in terms of improved results must be measured in inter-agency coherence in the field. It is the coherence among and between the key actors – the UN (UNAMA, UNDP, etc.), WB, OCHA, USA etc., – that determines effectiveness, not national coherence.

⁵⁵ Robert Egnell, *Complex Peace Operations and Civil–Military Relations*, London: Routledge, 2009.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

Fully streamlined national contributions will not be positive for overall coherence if they are not in tune with the large actors. Furthermore, small states will generally be only *contributors* to the larger actors in international crisis management operations, rarely playing a dominant or defining role. Their impact will depend upon the relevance of the contributions, 'plug-in' capabilities and general agility to adapt to changing needs. Coherence of small states may actually undermine a theatre-level comprehensive approach – it may lead to inflexibility, complicated command structures (everything must go via the home capital), and *de facto* caveats that limit operational agility. Coherence at home may therefore be of less relevance in the field than Egnell's theory assumes.

The situation is somewhat different for larger states, like the USA, Canada and the UK. These are to a greater extent capable of defining the priorities and agendas of the international community in crisis management. Furthermore, their PRTs actually have substantial civilian components and resources which would benefit from a more coordinated approach. USAID, for example, explicitly states that it is part of US counter-insurgency efforts.⁵⁷ The Nordic states, however, disburse only a minor fraction of their efforts through their PRTs,⁵⁸ so there is less of a 'national area of operation'. Their civilian efforts are largely channelled through other actors, like the WB, trust funds for the Afghan government, or to NGOs operating all over the country. As a result, the arena in which to implement a national whole of government policy is limited.

The Nordic reluctance to apply significant civilian assets in conjunction with the military clearly weakens the impact of the PRTs and thus also the military contributions. Significant political diplomatic and economic engagement is a precondition for lasting security, but the limited tactical-level coherence leaves the military operations in a bubble where the political implications of the activities are not sufficiently accounted for. Denmark may be a partial exception here, but also its PRT struggles in this regard. Ensuring that military contributions are integrated and coherent with civilian efforts is a logically a responsibility for the troop-providing nation, but this way of thinking appears to be unfamiliar ground for the Nordic countries, where military and political/development tasks have traditionally remained separated.

⁵⁷ USAID/Afghanistan Strategy, <http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/Page.CountryOverview.aspx>, accessed 19 May 2010.

⁵⁸ However, the UK spends only 20% of its civilian aid budget in Helmand. See Finn Steputat 2009, *Synthesis report. Civil–Military Relations in International Operations*. DIIS Report 2009, p. 50. http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Reports2009/DIIS_Report_2009_16_Synthesis_Report_web.pdf

We may therefore conclude that what matters is not primarily national coordination but field coordination. However, whole-of-government solutions among the ministries in the Nordic capitals are still important, as it is necessary to make sure the various national contributions to the wider efforts are coordinated. All the Nordic states have made efforts in this regard. Nonetheless, for security to take hold, civilian efforts need to focus on political developments, not only poverty reduction. That requires coherence between civilian and military actors. Denmark appears to be taking lead among the Nordics in recognizing this feature of today's conflicts; the others are still largely reluctant. Such hesitance can prove costly – it is time for the Nordic countries to acknowledge the deeply political nature of stabilization and crisis management operations.