

# PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN POST-TALIBAN AFGHANISTAN

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On November 14, 2001—the day after the fall of Kabul—the US Army Peacekeeping Institute at the US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, in collaboration with the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies at Brown University, hosted an informal meeting on Afghanistan. The meeting brought together a mixture of experts on Afghanistan, humanitarian and military operations, and transitional political arrangements. Most of those present were current or former US and UN officials. This combination of experts allowed the synthesis of multi-dimensional operational planning experience and Afghan-specific knowledge to produce comprehensive mission planning considerations. The purpose of the meeting was to explore a range of options and issues affecting the design of international intervention in Afghanistan. The following report is a reflection of the issues discussed, and incorporates many of the ideas contributed by meeting participants. The recommendations are the responsibility of the authors alone.

## I. Primary Objectives

The goals of international intervention in Afghanistan are two-fold. The first is to defeat the elements of the international terrorist network (generically referred to as al-Qaeda) that operate inside Afghanistan. As defined by the international coalition, these elements include both the foreign terror network and its Afghan hosts. The second goal is to aid Afghanistan in the creation of a stable, participatory government, and to support the Afghan people with humanitarian assistance in the interim.

This report focuses on factors to be considered and recommendations for achieving the second goal during and after the efforts to accomplish the first. The success of each of these goals is dependent on the success of the other. In order for the Afghan people to reclaim civil society and governance after 22 years of conflict and displacement, the country must be rid of the influences of al-Qaeda and the Taliban leadership which support them. At the same time, in order to prevent the reemergence of these influences that appeared and thrived in a time of chaotic factionalization, a stable political and social environment must be established in Afghanistan. **Therefore, the achievement of these interdependent goals requires the harmonization of military, political, and humanitarian operations.**

This report is presented in two sections. First, there is an identification of four possible types or degrees of intervention. Second, there is an analysis of the key factors that need to be considered for mission design in Afghanistan. These factors are discussed under the general categories of: creation of political space; balancing centralization and decentralization; and harmonization. Each factor is followed by recommendations for mission design that account for the factors discussed.

## II. Degrees of Intervention

In the universe of options for transitional arrangements, four degrees of intervention can be discerned from past practice. These categories are not discrete, and the ultimate working structure of a mission will likely comprise aspects of several. The kinds of missions that aim to reestablish political authority in the wake of conflict range from assistance to or partnership with weak domestic authorities; to selective control of functions in a factional environment; and ultimately to governorship, or the transitional administration of territory. If viewed on a spectrum, as the local authority weakens, fractures, factionalizes or disappears altogether, the nature of the international intervention required to reestablish political authority increases in intensity.

***Assistance:*** This category entails a limited degree of intrusion by international actors, either as part of a single mission or as separate efforts. Humanitarian and reconstruction assistance are provided by the international relief and development agencies, in cooperation with local NGOs and local and national governmental agencies, to the extent that they exist. An international political mission continues intensive negotiations to create or maintain a fragile ruling coalition and advises on strengthening weak governing structures. The presence of military forces, if any, would likely only be in an observer capacity. This has been the nature of the international engagement in Afghanistan since 1992.

***Partnership:*** This kind of mission requires a greater degree of involvement in holding together the political authority. International forces, if they are present, provide security in the capital, and perhaps several other major population centers. The international political mission is drawn deeper into negotiations to strengthen the fractured government, itself providing some of the coherence for that government, becoming more its partner than its advisor. International officers make some decisions regarding the development of governing institutions. Humanitarian agencies fulfill many of the country's social service functions in cooperation with local actors. The UN mission in Namibia was an example of partnership.

***Control:*** This form of intervention places an international mission in the position of fulfilling numerous government functions. Military and policing forces will provide security where needed and will attempt to create comparable domestic authorities. In this scenario, a government does not exist as such in the capital; rather there are a number of competing factions on the verge of open conflict, with occasional incidents of violence of varying intensity. The international political mission, while still trying to negotiate some kind of agreement and harmonize the international actors, is comparatively more coherent than any other actor in the environment. Expectations are being placed on the international mission to assume some responsibilities for basic services, or it will begin to foster resentment. The UN mission in Cambodia exercised the powers of control.

***Governorship:*** No semblance of a coalition government has proved possible in the capital city. Factions are dissolving and reconstituting themselves in new forms on a regular basis. The international community is faced with a stark dilemma: either abandon the country with only minimal involvement around the edges—though permitting also the kind of environment that has been termed a terrorist haven—or assume full executive and legislative responsibilities in the transitional administration of the country, and possibly

elicit a violent reaction to a new kind of occupier. The transitional administrations in Kosovo and East Timor are examples of governorship.

These operational categories provide a context for the considerations and recommendations that follow. There are different views on what is possible or desirable in Afghanistan. There may not be a clear alternative for international intervention in Afghanistan among the options presented above. Rather there may be a mixture of approaches required that the following analyses and recommendations reflect.

### **III. Factors and Recommendations**

#### **1. Creation of Political Space**

After 22 years of conflict, the Afghan people must have an opportunity to convene a process which will allow new leadership to emerge and for institutions to coalesce. In order for that process to begin, there is an urgent need for “political space” to be created within Afghanistan. Political space is a geographic area and social environment where people can meet, negotiate, and plan, free from the threat of force.

#### ***Political Space and The Warlord Problem***

Need for New Leadership: There is strong consensus on the need for new Afghan leadership. Many of the current factional leaders are irrevocably tainted for most of the population by years of factional fighting and grave human rights abuses. The current situation – a return to the status quo ante of the civil war period between 1992-1995 – must not be allowed to gel. This return to the “Lebanonization” of Afghanistan threatens to renew the conditions from which the Taliban and al-Qaeda wrested control of Afghanistan.

The Warlord Dilemma: At the moment, international intervention comprising military, political, and humanitarian elements faces a conundrum vis-à-vis the warlords. These factions have been a critical element in the war against al-Qaeda. Their control of the roads and countryside also means that humanitarian agencies must cut deals with these factions to gain access to the population in need. Both of these actions have the tendency to strengthen the warlords and their claim of political legitimacy. This process of legitimization is at odds with the long-term goals of creating a broad-based stable government. Thus there should be a systematic process by which warlords are delegitimized and impunity is checked through creation of alternative leaders, use of media detailing and indicting past abuses, vacating Afghanistan’s UN seat and providing the opportunity for legitimate leaders within the factions to be co-opted by a new political system.

Transitional Period: There must be a clear transitional period (two years) in which creation of structures and cooling off of hostilities can occur. Transitional leaders must be willing to step down at the end of that period. This is an ideal period in which to encourage the (temporary) return of Afghan technocrats residing abroad. Only once new leadership has emerged, the legitimizing instrument of the Loya Jirga (grand council) can be convened to select a new government.

The Capital and Regional Centers: The opening of political space needs to occur at both the national and regional/provincial levels. For the national process to work, Kabul must be demilitarized. Demilitarization entails removal of armed troops and heavy weaponry to a distance that minimizes the immediate threat of attack. If feasible, it would be best also to demilitarize the major population centers of Mazar-i-Sharif, Herat, Qandahar, and Jalalabad. This will ensure that local and provincial leadership also have the necessary time and space to confer.

Incorporating the Provinces: The process of incorporating the provinces into the political reconstruction is designed to accomplish three objectives: first, to integrate the regional perspective and leadership into an operational national structure, thereby creating a broad-based institution; second, to build the confidence of the people by including them in addressing less divisive issues; and third, to focus on administrative rather than ethnic/military divisions. As an example, each of the 31 provinces will appoint a representative to go to Kabul to sit on a health council, which will select leadership from within its own ranks. This body would form a transitional National Health Commission, which would be the primary planning interlocutor for the international community. It is important to note that while an international force will not likely be creating political space through demilitarization at the local level, many traditional local structures, such as the village *shura* (informal consultative body) are still in place and have been successfully utilized for such purposes by aid agencies in the last decade.

### **Recommendations:**

- Demilitarize Capital and Population Centers: Demilitarize Kabul (most critical) and the other major regional centers of Mazar-i-Sharif, Qandahar, Herat, Jalalabad (if feasible) with robust multi-national military forces (MNF) prepared to protect cities and perform confidence-building patrols into communities.
- Police and Military Forces: Establish Afghan police force within major cities and begin to structure a national army.
- National Commissions: Create National Commissions on key social service and economic issues (e.g. health, agriculture, demining, banking) comprised of provincial leadership.
- Employment: Create a humanitarian and development enterprise with a very large labor component to woo people and economy away from warlords.
- Local Institutions: Engage local institutions (village councils, functioning vestiges of municipal governments) in political and reconstruction process.
- Political Facilitators: Rapidly deploy small teams of international civilian political facilitators to the provinces to monitor events and facilitate participation of local leadership through provision of communication and travel assistance.
- Information Campaign: Use media to promote new leadership and discredit warlords.

## *Feasibility of Foreign Intervention in Afghanistan*

Suspicion, Not Xenophobia: Proposals for a robust intervention including foreign troops, political, and reconstruction assistance have been assailed on the basis that Afghans are culturally xenophobic and reject substantial presence of foreign influences. However, this myth is challenged by the significant role of hospitality in Afghan cultural practice and by the mixed history of outside forces in Afghanistan. It is more accurate to characterize Afghans not as xenophobic, but rather as deeply suspicious of anyone who appears to be misappropriating their resources or to be using the Afghan people as part of foreign political designs. This deep suspicion has been heightened by 22 years of armed conflict resulting from these factors. Therefore, intervention - including the use of foreign military forces - is feasible if done properly.

Pro-Afghan Solutions: If Afghans are only used to achieve the immediate goal of eradicating al-Qaeda, at the cost of a stable and participatory government, then the intervention will be rejected. However, the degree of cultural, social, and political disenfranchisement in Afghanistan is such that Afghans will be willing to accept a solution that is imaginative and creative even if it is not “home grown”. The recent “home grown” solutions have put warlords in power. The current presence of the international community can be used to determine an alternative solution.

Hospitality: “Hospitality” is a complex social and political device in Afghanistan that can be employed by an international intervention to ease its operations on the ground. Hospitality is used to create alliances, and to control outsiders in an insular society by drawing them into local structures (family and clan). The offer of hospitality involves implicit obligations and responsibilities in accepting and granting hospitality. If foreign forces (military or civil) are invited into Afghanistan, they will remain as guests and therefore they are welcome and protected until asked to leave by the host. This symbolic deference to a host will be important to maintain, and thus the project of legitimization of new political leadership is especially critical for the success of the mission.

### **Recommendations:**

- Harmonize Mission Goals: It is critical to ensure that the goal of a stable political future for Afghanistan is not subordinated to the goal of eradicating al-Qaeda. These goals are interdependent and their pursuit must be harmonized.
- Robust Mission: A robust mission should be employed which will have the capacity to advance broad Afghan interests in restoring the country to civil control. A weak mission that props up factional internal forces will be regarded with greater hostility than a robust mission that creates space for legitimate leadership.
- Local Liaison: While operating nationally, each component of the intervention must work with local liaisons. For the military this means local escorts as an entrée into new environments. For the political mission this requires getting to the local level to draw in local leadership. For the humanitarian and developmental elements this requires sharing resource allocation decisions with local interlocutors.

## **2. Centralization/Decentralization**

Tensions between centralization and local institutions in Afghanistan have existed for decades. Because much of Afghanistan's population is geographically remote and insular, local institutions of family, village, and clan define economic, political, and social relations for many. At the same time, the relative lack of formal civic institutions (government social services, universities, banks, police/military) in rural areas has caused a high degree of resource concentration in the urban areas, especially the capital. Since the Soviet invasion and subsequent collapse of the central government, regional fractures and ethnic-group politics have created a third layer of tension. Therefore, the development of new institutions in Afghanistan must strike a critical balance between these forces.

### ***The Significance of Kabul***

Political Center: Kabul has always functioned as the center of the Afghan political universe. It attracts the educated elite from all corners of the country and has a very diverse population. As a result, the intelligentsia and bureaucratic elites in control of the national institutions became "Kabulis," and were often detached from village life and norms.

Legitimacy: Kabul is the only legitimate center of the Afghan "nation" and possession of it is necessary for national legitimacy. However, simply possessing Kabul does not confer legitimacy, and if possessed by illegitimate forces, as it has been since 1978, the concept of an Afghan nation itself progressively loses legitimacy.

### **Recommendations:**

- Change Developing Status Quo (Ante): A small window exists to dislodge the forces currently occupying Kabul before they become entrenched and claim Kabul as their capital, which in reality would become the capital of northeastern Afghanistan, as it was in 1995.
- Establish National Institutions in Kabul: Imbue Kabul with national authority by (re)establishing institutions with input from all provinces.

### ***Local Control***

Local Institutions: For past central regimes, the process of building legitimacy and centralizing institutions has depended largely on the ability to attract/buy/force largely autonomous local institutions to cooperate. These local institutions, in turn, are legitimized by custom, force, and finance. A successful intervention will also have to integrate local institutions into its approach. However, lack of congruence and uniformity across regions and cultures suggests that different approaches may be necessary in different provinces, and at the district and village levels. Therefore the levels of intrusion may vary across the military, political and reconstruction spectrum.

Regional Autonomy: The turmoil of the last 22 years has created a strong degree of regional autonomy in Afghanistan. Ethnic groups that were relatively disenfranchised now have autonomous military, and to a lesser extent, political structures. These new political centers will have to be taken into account. The challenge of the existing decentralized power structure is to avoid regional autonomy that prohibits the development of national institutions. The challenge of centralization is to create national institutions that do not usurp all power and participation from the regions. The key to an approach in Afghanistan is a dual and simultaneous process of centralization and regionalization, in order to engage in a harmonized way in the regions and at the center.

### **Recommendations:**

- Engage local institutions: The security, political, and reconstruction components will only succeed through local engagement. This approach will reach the population most directly in the short-term, and will establish legitimacy for regional and national initiatives.
- Tie Local Leadership into National Efforts: There must be sustained efforts to ensure that provincial and local level authorities participate in central institutions. This will help to legitimize those institutions while drawing authority away from divisive regional powers and channeling it towards local administrative entities.

## **3. Harmonization**

### *General*

What overarching entity will be comprehensive and strong enough to combine all the international elements together that will be functioning in Afghanistan? Who has the capacity, the accountability, and the credibility with the Afghan leaders and people to accomplish this goal?

Polarization: Efforts of the international community concerning Afghanistan are currently polarized. For a decade, the UN political and humanitarian efforts have not worked together. In addition to the UN humanitarian effort, there are US, NGO, and ICRC humanitarian efforts, and possibly separate efforts by other members of the international coalition. The World Bank, with UNDP, is convening its own meeting to consider a reconstruction blue-print. The US and coalition military are prosecuting a war against al-Qaeda and the Taliban with one chain of command; but at the same time, multinational forces of the coalition are preparing to deploy as part of an international presence inside the country, and will likely have a separate chain of command and not be subordinated to a civilian political commander.

Prior International Practice in Afghanistan: Humanitarian agencies on the ground have grown accustomed to working with relative freedom and autonomy. They now need to adapt. They will have to work with or be operationally integrated with UN Secretariat offices, including the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, aid agencies and international military forces. The strategic framework and similar arrangements attempted previously have not managed to

harmonize the political and humanitarian avenues. This is not a one-way process, as humanitarian agencies have been operating inside Afghanistan for a decade and there is much the political side can learn from them.

Limits of the IMTF: The UN Integrated Mission Task Force (IMTF) for Afghanistan in New York is not a control mechanism; it is a clearinghouse. It filters information up to decision-makers and filters conformity of policy downward. It is a sounding board with relatively unrestricted participation. It is not an integrated planning entity with common operational direction. As such, it does not appear to be distinct from previous UN Task Forces. The IMTF would need to exert greater executive authority to harmonize the effort of UN agencies in Afghanistan. It will also need a joint working relationship with the World Bank.

Separate Rates of Operation: As is typical in a peace operation, each functional area is operating at a different pace. The civilian expertise is not in place as the military arrives. It remains unclear what kind of political process is needed for the Afghans and whether it will be treated with the necessary urgency. A concern is that the military will find itself the only ones deployed and pressures will mount for it to fulfill civil tasks that others could do better if present. International civilian actors will need to move more quickly to keep pace with the military.

Two Wars: The UN and other international civilian agencies need to realize that for as long as a war is being prosecuted against al-Qaeda and the Taliban, and perhaps even for some time afterwards, they will be associated with international coalition forces. This will be reinforced as the UN establishes its relations with an MNF that is deployed on the ground. Therefore international civilians may well become targets of attacks, which will require greater consideration of security measures. This danger may be mitigated somewhat by ensuring Afghan ownership of the political outcome of international military action. This may be achieved if it is the Afghans who defeat al-Qaeda. Short-term imperatives of achieving collapse of the Taliban by investing in unsavory warlords will negatively affect the long-term political process.

Regional Situation: Each of the neighboring countries are concerned about co-ethnic elements, refugees, terrorism and narcotics. All have some ethnic ties to groups in Afghanistan, but there is a relative lack of irredentist tendencies. There are three key neighbors: Pakistan, Iran and Uzbekistan. Pakistan has the deepest ethnic, political and security ties with Afghanistan. Iranian and US interests appear to be strongly correlated at the moment; both are focused primarily on improving security in Afghanistan and reducing the trans-border drug trade. The Uzbeks are most concerned about the effects of Afghanistan on their internal situation. There is also significant participation by non-state actors in drug, transportation and energy areas. An overall policy requires cooperation among these regional actors.

### **Recommendations:**

- Coalition Civilian Operation: To ensure rapid deployment of required civilian staff, consideration should now be given to a cadre of civilians formed as military multi-national forces are formed on a coalition basis. Greater direct involvement by Member States will give them a greater stake in the outcome of the mission.

- Leadership: It is critical to select the right international leader of the overall enterprise from the beginning. The civilian leader must be in charge of all civilians heading international organizations in Afghanistan. The leader must be prepared to commit for several years to this consuming task. This leadership should be aggressive, engaged, interested, and thick-skinned. This person must be strong and comfortable in the arena of politics. This individual should not merely use the position as a stepping-stone to a higher position.
- The Right Team: The right team is needed from the beginning. Selection should be based on competence rather than individual loyalty. The first team in-country will likely dictate the subsequent pattern of international action.
- Long-Term Mandate: A written mandate for long-term engagement from the international community is needed to stay the course in Afghanistan. International attention and interest will inevitably decrease over time. At the same time, such a mandate will require concrete milestones to keep the effort focused and serve as standards of measurement of success and failure.
- The IMTF: The IMTF should be given greater executive authority and organized to exercise that authority in order to harmonize UN agency participation.

### ***Military Forces***

Order and Confidence: Military forces will be one component in providing security and must be seen in the context of the larger process of allowing other functional areas to develop. Military operations should seek to build confidence with the local population in this larger process through their presence to guarantee the creation of political space. The military forces will provide order and their force design and size should be determined by the degree of local consent, risk to international workers and supplies, and the degree of the rule of law. Military forces need to report to a political authority to facilitate harmonization of the international intervention.

Unique Planning Factors: There are two unique aspects in planning the use of military forces for Afghanistan. One is the concurrent mission by other military forces prosecuting the war on terrorism while nation-building begins. The second is the cultural context in which the military forces will be operating. Culturally, outside actors must be invited and escorted into the local environment. This may require, when passing through one area to another, having an appropriate escort for each area.

### **Recommendations:**

- Clarity of Relations: The relationship between the forces prosecuting the war on terrorism, the forces providing political space, and the political authority must be clearly articulated and negotiated in the planning process.
- Operation by Invitation: When designing the security system for the intervention force, it should incorporate an understanding of the need to be invited and escorted into areas that standard military planning would assume accessible without consultation.

## ***Public Security***

Reestablishing the Rule of Law: Previous international interventions have always approached the redevelopment of a judicial system according to Western models—through police forces, courts, prisons and the law made by a parliament according to the rules of a constitution. Intervention in Afghanistan needs to be more flexible and open to alternative approaches, especially in light of previously existing institutions. The phasing of this process in Afghanistan must be according to immediate needs on the ground. The baseline for public security will be the local way that disputes are resolved. The most important threat to security will be human rights abuses or the exclusion of others from the political process. Afghan leaders should be held to a basic human rights standard. Current practices violating that standard in Afghanistan must be identified.

Applicable Law: Which law applies in Afghanistan? When the communists came to power, the existing legal code was largely adopted. That code was a mixture of common law and Islamic *sharia* law. For instance, the individuals responsible for the killing of UN aid workers in 1998 were turned in and prosecuted under *sharia* law. The Taliban had mullahs placed on top of the existing system, without interfering directly in it. Separate from the domestic legal code, in which legal framework will an MNF detain local Afghans? In the longer term, the legal framework is especially important in terms of property and contract law to attract outside private investment.

Status of Legal Structures: The status of existing judicial capacities needs to be properly assessed; determining the extent to which justice systems are functioning right now—or not—will affect the response of the international community in the first three months of its operations. There were a number of lawyers trained at the university in Kabul, who have been displaced and now work at such jobs as selling potato chips in Pakistan. These legal professionals could be brought back, and whatever is left of the local Afghan legal structure could be resuscitated. Extra-judicial executions have already been reported. Institutional development needs to start immediately and those providing security and stability need to be cognizant of that. Also, the distorting economic effects of an international mission can undermine the reestablishment of institutions by turning professionals, like doctors and judges, into drivers and guards.

Police forces: The organization of a Northern Alliance police force for Kabul has been reported, but it is unclear what its background or capability is. If an MNF is required to create space for a political process, local governance and revitalizing the economy, it will also need to create the space for the reestablishment of a rule of law, including the formation of police forces in the population centers where it is deployed. An important question to answer is how Afghan society views the police as an institution, whether it is seen to protect rights, or is abusive and a hindrance to survival and well-being. How widespread was the professionalism of the police in the past?

Command Relations: It is not clear what relationship will exist between the command lines of military forces fighting al-Qaeda, the MNF forces and general responsibilities for overall public security. In considering the size of a peace operations mission—UN or MNF—civil police may be as important as military units. If acceptable to Afghans, there may be a particular role for Multinational Specialized Units (MSU)—based on the Italian

*carabinieri* in Bosnia and Kosovo—to address problems of organized crime and political extremism. At the same time, maintaining security and stability will principally be in the hands of the Afghans themselves. The international community is unlikely to have executive authority and so their function will be to monitor local forces. Language will significantly affect this relationship. The political legitimacy of local public security forces will be key and that means the political arrangement that is reached will be paramount for the intervention to be successful.

Order v. Justice: The bulk of the Taliban came from the villages and will melt back into the villages. The international community has to decide whether it is looking for Al-Qaeda or the Taliban. Hunting them will be compared by local Afghans to the standards of treatment of earlier leaders and their human rights abuses. Credibility will require that justice is shown to be taking place by addressing human rights abuses.

### **Recommendations:**

- Transitional Law and Order: As always, provision needs to be made for the transitional exercise of law and order functions by MNF troops in the conduct of their immediate activities, including arrests and detention, to be credible on the ground. There is also need for communication of a clear basis on which to challenge executions and other abuses. International criminal law provides much guidance for treating abuses.
- Immediate Dispute-Resolution: A means of local dispute-resolution that resonates in the Afghan context needs to be fostered as quickly as possible. The Taliban's rise to power included their capacity to effectively resolve disputes. To be credible, this will need to be matched.
- Clarity of Authority: Afghans will need to know who has the authority to exercise law and order functions—the MNF by default of their power, the faction in control of the population center because of their presence, or other institutions being fostered by the international community.
- Local Laws: Let local people decide how they will deal with the Taliban returning to their villages on the basis of local laws, rather than having the international community perform this task.

### ***Humanitarian Assistance***

Security: The international humanitarian agencies have been substantially involved in Afghanistan since 1989. They have provided for their security by deal-brokering with factional leaders, always being the invited guest, and delivering on its promises. Its security in the future will depend on the extent to which al-Qaeda is contained. If it is not, there could be assassinations of aid workers to disrupt the aid, as several past incidents of murdered aid workers were attributed to al-Qaeda. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the political wing of the UN effort in Afghanistan has not been harmonized with the UN humanitarian effort.

New Actors: A number of local Afghan NGOs have emerged in the past years and established good reputations in the regions in which they operate, especially in the areas of demining (9 NGOs employ about 4500 people), health, and agriculture. There may be a rush of new international NGOs to Afghanistan where their inexperience could cause an incident in which people get killed. This would likely affect all international agencies by causing the withdrawal of personnel.

### **Recommendations:**

- UN Agencies: The UN political wing needs to demonstrate a willingness to learn from the UN humanitarian side AND the humanitarian agencies must accept that they are subject to accountability and will have to respond to the political authority to achieve harmonization.
- Donor Governments: Donor governments should give utmost importance to the experience of NGOs seeking to operate in Afghanistan in determining whom they sanction and support.

### ***Economic Reconstruction***

Greater Understanding: Any attempts to build the economy will be daunting. We need to know more before we can understand how to plan for economic development. We need to learn what has and what hasn't worked. There has been considerable thinking and planning over the last ten years for Afghanistan's reconstruction. However, future Afghan authorities will not have participated in the development of these ideas and therefore there is a danger in relying on previous plans. Based on past experience, if planning and implementation are not done properly, there is a distinct possibility that a significant amount of money will be spent on the economy in Afghanistan to little effect.

Impact on People's Livelihood: Building economic institutions and/or adopting policies that restrict peoples' ability to move goods, either across borders or through smuggling, will really impact on the livelihood of Afghans in the short term.

### **Recommendations:**

- Assessments: Research and conduct field assessments on what exists and what will work before planning in this sector. Do not think in terms of macroeconomic plans.
- Basic Services in Cities: The best hope for investment will be to focus on the recovery and reinstatement of basic services in the major cities, e.g. roads, banking.
- Short Term versus Long Term: Ensure that plans ameliorate negative short-term impacts of long-term programs. More specifically, ensure that programs to revitalize the economy do not cause immediate harm in other sectors and vice-versa.

## *Civil Administration*

Existing Administrative Structure: There is an existing administrative structure established decades ago that even the Taliban used by appointing the leaders at the district level and above. Many of the villages in a district have a *shura* (consultative council) that solves problems as they arise in the community. However, the *shura* is not a standing body with an administrative infrastructure. There is a psychological acceptance of the existing structure and so, in large part, what needs to happen is a rediscovering on the part of the people of these structures. They will be prepared to engage in this structure if it is clear that it will benefit them. The international community must demonstrate a commitment to a process that will do that.

### **Recommendations:**

- Representation: Create a basic form of representation by seeking an individual from each village to select district level leadership that will enable new leaders to emerge.
- Begin Now: Building and reinvigorating civil administrative institutions must begin immediately. There are municipalities, like Kabul, that are likely to be able to quickly reestablish their public services.
- Commission on City Planning: The U.S. and others need to be bold in their thinking as demonstrated in the 1940's by the Marshall Plan. Encouraging an Afghan commission on city planning could help guide what international support and aid undertakes in the major cities.
- International Civilians: Don't flood Afghanistan with international civilians. Smaller multifunctional teams may be deployed in local population centres to generate momentum in reestablishment of civil administration and perform some harmonization tasks at the village level.

## *Cross-Cultural Considerations*

Afghan History: There is a danger in interpreting Afghan history with the view that tropes of the past dictate the future. Don't be trapped by historical trends. Afghan leaders will use their interpretation of Afghan history to further their own interests, which may not be true. Afghans are stereotyped as warriors, but they are also known for their culture and poetry. Also remember that they remain Islamic despite the departure of the Taliban.

Symbols: Symbols will be very important in this mission and the international community must understand which symbols to use and how to present their actions to resonate in a culturally appropriate way. They will need to appreciate what creates the perception of legitimacy in the eyes of the people; legitimacy is built on actions taken. It is important to identify the remaining social institutions or informal mores, attitudes or practices that can be hooked into, generally and as levers to influence the exercise of authority. For example, the code of Pashtunwali (the Pashtun tribal code) clearly defines the limitations and duties of seeking refuge, providing asylum, protecting honor, and revenge.

## **Recommendations:**

- Anthropological Advisors: Use anthropological advisors in the development of plans and in their execution. They will help interpret history, but also identify the reality of the ground situation on which to base current actions. For instance, there are two trends at the local level, a modernist one and a patriarchal or traditional one. Land and water disputes have been resolved by using both, and therefore one must look at the situation holistically.
- Actions Create Symbols: Develop an information campaign that conveys a well-defined commitment with a defined end. The international presence should not be intrusive but it must act decisively if its mandate is violated. Come in with care and don't brandish force. The impression must be that the international presence is caring of the Afghan people. These themes need to be stressed and promulgated. In the past military force has always come to impose order. But it is also true that hospitality graces the host with the aura of the guest, as captured in this poem:

One day at bath a piece of perfumed clay was passed to me  
from the hand of a friend.  
I asked the clay - Are you musk or ambergris?  
because your delightful scent intoxicates me.  
It answered - I am but a worthless piece of clay that has  
sat for a period with a rose.  
The perfection of that companion left its traces on me  
who remains that same piece of earth that I was.

From the *Gulistan* of Shaikh Muslihuddin Sa'adi  
(translated by Thomas E. Gouttierre)

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