The Iron Fist in the Velvet Glove

The Application of Classic Counterinsurgency Theory in Afghanistan 2006-10

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Abstract

This thesis examines the soundness of the claim that counterinsurgency theory is no longer valid based on the experiences from Afghanistan. It does so by analysing to which degree three members of the coalition adhered to the theories of counterinsurgency in their operations between 2006-2010. Initially the thesis examines classic counterinsurgency theory. It argues that this theory is mainly characterised by a primacy of politics, that the population is the centre of gravity and a concerted government effort. I further analyses the efforts of Norway, Great Britain and the Netherlands within the framework of classic counterinsurgency theory. In sum, this thesis argues the Afghan case demonstrates that classic counterinsurgency theory is not outmoded. Of the three states studied in this thesis, only the Netherlands can be said to have adhered to counterinsurgency theory in the execution of the mission.

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Acknowledgements

My interest in counterinsurgency started when I was posted to Afghanistan as a lieutenant in 2005. I served on the battalion staff as an assistant planner. While we tried to get our heads around the problem at hand, it was clear to me that much of what I knew about conventional warfare was not useful in this conflict. I then started reading on counterinsurgency theory and doctrine and tried to implement this into our planning. After my masters program at the University of Glasgow, I was posted to the Norwegian Military Academy, and I was given the responsibility of teaching counterinsurgency. Many of the questions which I found myself, or my cadets raised, helped to shape this thesis. Being given a scholarship to write about one of my foremost professional interests is a bit of a daunting prospect, but even more a privilege. I have learned a lot through this process, and I hope that some of this migh be useful to academics and soldiers alike.

There are a lot of people I need to thank for their assistance in this project. I am grateful to the Norwegian Defence College for giving me a scholarship and the opportunity to do this. I would also like to express my sincerest gratitude to my supervisors Professors Phillips O'Brien and Peter Jackson. Professor O'Brien took me on board and asked the hard questions which needed to be asked to get the project on the right track. Professor Jackson is owed the greatest debt in this project. Thank you for your constructive criticism, patience and motivation throughout the process. His careful editing also made this thesis a lot better. I am grateful to the Norwegian liaison officers in the Netherlands and United Kingdom for all your help. All my fellow officers who kindly agreed to be interviewed for this thesis. Though you are not named in the thesis, this could not have been done without your cooperation. I would also like to thank Merethe Ruud and Dariane Raleza Hanssen for your help with proofreading. Last, but not least, I would like to thank my wife Nina and my three boys for their patience during this process.

Introduction

This is a study of the theory and practice of counterinsurgency. More specifically it is a study of the implementation of counterinsurgency theory on the ground by three members of the coalition in Afghanistan. It examines to what extent these states operated in accordance with the theories of population-centric counterinsurgency in their respective provinces, and why their behaviour differed.

The perceived failure of the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan has led to debate regarding military interventions in general and also severe criticism of counterinsurgency as a viable doctrine to solve the challenges of contemporary conflicts. These critics largely fall into two categories. The first group are opponents to almost any military intervention by Western forces. Their disagreement is more with overall policy than counterinsurgency as a doctrine specifically.[1] The last category does not argue that the West should refrain from military interventions. They primarily disagrees with the choice of counterinsurgency as a doctrine, or their interpretation of counterinsurgency, when Western forces intervene. Gian Gentile, a lecturer at West Point, has been among the more vocal critics. Gentile argues that 'in a sense, population-centric counterinsurgency has perverted a better way of American war which has primarily been one of improvisation and practicality.' In conclusion of his article Gentile states; 'The new American way of war [counterinsurgency] has eclipsed the execution of sound strategy, producing never-ending campaigns of nation-building and attempts to change entire societies in places like Afghanistan.'[2] Several other academics also echo this criticism of counterinsurgency as a viable doctrine. Based on the experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan Douglas Porch argues that 'we are on the downside of COIN.'[3] According to Porch the theories and doctrines of counterinsurgency rest on dubious historical evidence. He argues further that excessive adherence to the core tenets of COIN has served to relegate war to a

[1] For an example of this see: Barry Posen, *Restraint: A new Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy* (Cornell: Cornell University Press)
[2] Gian Gentile, "A Strategy of Tactics: Population-Centic Coin and the Army", *Parameters*, no. Autumn (2009): 5 and 15 and Gian Gentile, *Wrong Turn – America's deadly embrace of counter-insurgency* (New York: The New Press, 2013)
[3] Douglas Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of Coin", *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 22, no. 2 (2011): 253.

series of doctrinal truisms. M.L.R. Smith and David Martin Jones also argues not only that counterinsurgency theory is 'an insoluble paradox'.[4] They also argue that modern democracies struggle to develop effective strategies and to maintain the political will to conduct counterinsurgency campaign. In their conclusion, they argue that counterinsurgency can no longer be considered a viable doctrine.[5] While this is a natural conclusion based on their research, it represents a fundamental challenge for practitioners. Especially since they do not present any substantial alternative for governments faced with the challenge of an insurgency. David Ucko and Robert Egnell point to the difficulties Britain has had in fulfilling its ambitions in Iraq and Afghanistan through the use of counterinsurgency. While they are critical of decisions and implementations of counterinsurgency doctrine, they do not go as far as Porch in arguing the death of counterinsurgency.[6]

While much of the criticism raised in the works mentioned above is both timely and valid, it rests on a central and unspoken premise: that military forces in Afghanistan have worked in accordance with counterinsurgency theory. If this is not the case, criticism should perhaps be directed more towards the strategy which was employed by the coalition and its members, rather than the theories and the doctrine itself. Hence this thesis will attempt to explore to what extent three member states of the coalition conducted their operations in line with counterinsurgency theory, and why their behaviour differed. It will explore the dynamics and tensions between military theory, doctrine, strategy and tactics. Thereby attempting to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the campaign rather than focussing on only one level of warfare.

The US-led coalition's engagement in Afghanistan 2001 and the challenges following the invasion of Iraq in 2003 revived the general interest in counterinsurgency in the West. This specific type of conflict had in previous decades lost much of its relevance in military doctrines, followed by little interest

[4] M.L.R. Smith and David Martin Jones, *The Political Impossibility of Modern Counterinsurgency – Strategic Problems, Puzzles, and Paradoxes* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2015), 54
[5] *Ibid*, 179-185
[6] David H Ucko and Robert Egnell, *Conterinsurgency in Crisis - Britain and the Challenges of Modern Warfare* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2013).

in research after the US failure in Vietnam, and the withdrawal from empires by the major European powers. A notable exception was the United Kingdom (UK), which was forced to maintain a focus on this type of conflict due to the Troubles in Northern Ireland. However, the main focus of most NATO doctrines in early 2000 was concepts such as effects-based operations, intelligence driven operations, and network centric warfare. Norwegian Armed Forces doctrine published in the period may serve as an example of this.[7] It highlights manoeuvre warfare, network centric warfare, and effects-based operations as the main tools for the Norwegian armed forces. Low-intensity operations hardly warranted a mention, and counterinsurgency was not covered. When problems started to arise after the initial successes in both Afghanistan and Iraq, the focus for many military forces again shifted back to studies of counterinsurgency, its characteristics, and how to win such conflicts could.

Counterinsurgency is defined as 'those military, law enforcement, political, economic, psychological and civic actions taken to defeat insurgency, while addressing the root causes.'[8] Important recent military contributions to the development of counterinsurgency include the publication of the US Army and Marine Corps doctrine for counterinsurgency, *Field Manual (FM) 3-24*, in December 2006, and a revised British *Field Manual part 10* in 2007 and again in 2009. Both these doctrines stand firmly in one specific tradition within counterinsurgency, most often referred to as *population-centric* or simply *classic counterinsurgency*. Population-centric counterinsurgency prioritises separating the insurgents from the population and winning or coercing the population over to the side of the government, rather than trying to defeat the insurgents by conventional military means.

Many hailed the FM 3-24 as one of the finest doctrines published in years. However, it has also been the object of trenchant criticism. This criticism has in general largely fallen into two categories: *empirical* and *contextual*. The empirical

[7] Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, "Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine," (Oslo: The Defense Staff, 2007), 54-57.
[8] British Army, "British Army Field Manual Volume 1 Part 10 Countering Insurgency," ed. Ministry of Defence (London: 2009), Ch 1. p, 6.

criticism points at the doctrine's classic approach to counterinsurgency.[9] Classic in this sense means that it builds on experiences from the wars of decolonisation after the Second World War. Writers such as Hoffman and Porch argue that while there are lessons to learn from that period, contemporary armies need to 'revise them to reflect the realities of today's environment.'[10] The empirical criticism attacks the validity of the lessons used to underpin the doctrine.[11] In the preface of his latest book, *Counterinsurgency – exposing the myths of the new way of war,* Douglas Porch argues:

> Claims in doctrine for success in small wars, at least at a reasonable strategic, financial, and moral cost, have relied on mythologized versions of the past too often supported by shoddy research and flawed, selective analysis of cases.[12]

In other words, there are challenges involved with the application of theories of classic counterinsurgency as a foundation for contemporary doctrine. Not just because 'today's insurgent is not the Maoist of yesterday,'[13] but also because changes and developments in the strategic context of the conflicts have rendered many of the means used in the classic era unavailable today.[14] Any suggestion of resettling the Pashtun population away from disputed areas in Afghanistan in the studied period would not only be politically out of the question but also almost certainly unlawful. However, historians seem to agree that the forcible resettling of ca. 600,000 Chinese in Malaya was pivotal to the eventual successful outcome of that campaign.[15] One can argue the same about the role of the highly controversial internment camps in Kenya or South Africa.[16] Gil Merom also points to fundamental challenges faced by democracies when fighting insurgencies. His overall argument

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[9] See: Frank G Hoffman, "Neo-Classical Counterinsurgency?", *Parameters* Summer (2007) and Alex Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency", *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 21, no. 2 (2010).
[10] Hoffman, "Neo-Classical Counterinsurgency?," 84.
[11] For advocates of this school see: Douglas Porch, *Counterinsurgency - Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) and David French, "Nasty Not Nice: British Counter-Insurgency Doctrine and Practice, 1945-1967", *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23, no. 4-5 (2012).
[12] Porch, *Counterinsurgency - Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War*, xii.
[13] Hoffman, "Neo-Classical Counterinsurgency?," 71.
[14] Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency," 245-47.
[15] Hew Strachan, "British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq", *The RUSI Journal* 156, no. 6 (2007): 10 and Robert W Komer, "The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect - Organization of a Successful Counterinsurgency Effort," (Santa Monica: RAND, 1972), 53-58.
[16] Peter Mansoor, "Army," in *Understanding Counterinsurgency - Doctrine, Operations, and Challenges*, ed. Thomas Rid and Thomas Keaney (London: Routledge, 2010), 54-57.

is that democracies fail in small wars because they find it extremely difficult to escalate the level of violence and brutality which can secure victory.'[17] Public opinion in liberal democracies find it, according to Meron, difficult to accept the means necessary to win small wars. As conflicts drag on democratic governments find it increasingly difficult to maintain a popular support for the campaign. The 2007 version of the British doctrine argues that the lessons from history should not be blindly applied, but adapted to fit each specific case. It states that 'while military planning [for counterinsurgency] should draw upon the lessons of the past, doctrine has to evolve if it is to remain relevant.'[18] It is partly this challenge that forms the point of departure for the present study. Counterinsurgency doctrines of leading NATO nations are still firmly set in a classic counterinsurgency theory tradition, even if some critics argue that many of the experiences which shaped the doctrines are not relevant today. This thesis will in the theory chapter analyse the theories which form the theoretical foundation of contemporary counterinsurgency doctrines. It will then compare to what extent three nations involved in Afghanistan have adhered to these theories.

The aim of the thesis is not to establish whether or not the efforts of Norway, Great Britain, and the Netherlands have been a success in a strategic sense. It will instead focus on whether they put theories of classic counterinsurgency into practice in Afghanistan. This will provide the crucial basis for addressing the question of whether the theories of classic counterinsurgency theory remain valid as one of the foundations of contemporary military doctrine.

Research question

This thesis will explore this topic by addressing the following research questions;

First, how did Norwegian, British, and Dutch operations in Afghanistan between 2006-10 adhere to classic counterinsurgency theory?

Second, why did their approaches differ?

[17] Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15

[18] British Army, "Part 10 Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines) - Revised and Updated Version," ed. Ministry of Defence (London: 2007), Part B. Ch 2. p,1.

In the thesis the answer to the second research question will follow naturally from answering the first.

The theory and doctrine of counterinsurgency thus provide the common term of reference for the study. The question will be addressed through three case studies, all of which focus on medium to smaller states who were lead nations in their provinces: Norway, the Netherlands, and the UK. These states are the variables of the thesis.

The aim of the thesis is to help bridge the gap between practice and theory in the field of counterinsurgency. A central focus is therefore the tensions between theory and the practice and between strategy and tactics in the conduct of war.

Methodology

There are several reasons for choosing Britain, the Netherlands and Norway in Afghanistan as three as the objects for the case studies. Firstly, as a serving Norwegian officer, it was natural to include Norway. Secondly, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands are, from a Norwegian point of view, important allies. They are geographically close, have a long history of joint training with the Norwegian armed forces, and are thus both nations with strong bi-lateral as well as multi-lateral bonds with Norway.

Furthermore, they have all been lead nations in different provinces in Afghanistan: Britain in Helmand, the Netherlands in Uruzgan, and Norway in Faryab.[19] Thirdly, they have all been studied less intensively (especially Norway and the Netherlands) than the US, which has been the dominant troop contributor to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Fourthly, both Britain and the Netherlands were more easily accessible to me as a Norwegian officer. The Norwegian Army has liaison officers posted in both countries on a permanent basis. In tracking down serving officers for interviews and getting access to archives, these liaison officers proved invaluable. They were also accessible from a language point of view. The

[19] Lead nation is a NATO term for a member of the coalition which bears the main responsibility in a given part of the area of operations.

Dutch Army is very proficient in English and adheres to the principle of English as the command language of NATO. Because I have a good working knowledge of both English and German, it was also possible for me to read Dutch when the sources were not available in English. Lastly, this research focus dovetails with other work done at the Norwegian Military Academy on the development of strategy concerning the same three nations for the conflict in Afghanistan.[20]

Sources

This structure of the thesis moves from the general to the specific and from theory to practice. It will first analyse classic counterinsurgency theory in order to establish core characteristics of this particular approach. These characteristics will provide a framework of analysis for the case studies. The theories of Sir Robert Thompson and David Galula will receive special attention. Thompson and Galula was by no means the fathers of population-centric counterinsurgency. As pointed out by Beatrice Heuser, ideas along the same lines was advocated by Spanish officers back centuries back among others.[21] However, this thesis attempts to view the theory and practice of counterinsurgency as conducted in contemporary operations. In this regard, the works of Thompson and Galula, in particular, are central. Their recent resurgence into fashion was closely tied to the publication of the much hailed US counterinsurgency doctrine in 2006. Doctrines generally does not cite sources, but FM 3-24 cites Galula and Thompson as the only two mentioned sources in the introduction.[22] Because of the dominating position the US holds in NATO and also had in the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan the works of Galula and Thompson quickly gained popularity.[23] It can thus be argued that Galula and Thompson are central to understanding contemporary counterinsurgency doctrine.

[20] Tor-Erik Hanssen, "Coalition Strategy in Complex Conflicts: The Strategic Behaviour of Three Nato-States in Afghanistan 2003-2008" (King's College London, 2013).
[21] Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy – Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 428-431.
[22] US Army & Marine Corps, *Fm 3-24 Counterinsurgency* (Boulder: Paladin Press, 2006), viii.
[23] For an excellent review of modern COIN theory and contemporary doctrine see: Beatrice Heuser, "The Cultural Revolution in Counterinsurgency", *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30, no. 1 (2007)

The works of Galula and Thompson falls into the category of military theory. As this thesis deals with the relationship between theory and practice it is neccesary to brifefly clarify how I see the relationship between theory and doctrine. Military theory is the theoretical foundation for the application of military force. It can be defined as 'comprehensive analysis of all the aspects of warfare, its patterns and inner structure, and the mutual relationships of its various components/elements.'[24] It is the systematic knowledge on how wars can be understood, studied, and ultimately won. Military theory spans all forms of conflicts and aspects of military activity and represents the sum of military thought from antiquity until present time. Military doctrine is defined by NATO as 'fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions in support of objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application.'[25] While military theory occupies itself with war in all aspects doctrine is more practical. It serves as a bridge between theory and practice. The Dutch army pragmatically defines doctrine as 'the formal expression of military thought valid for a certain period of time.'[26] Thus military doctrine represents a conscious choice. Not all military theories remain valid or in fashion and doctrines formalises parts of military theory which the armed forces believe gives them the best chance of success. However, doctrines are not only a vital tool for the military forces to convey core ideas on how to fight. Doctrines are influenced by other factors than military theory alone. As pointed out by Barry Posen in his work on the source of military doctrine they also represent an opportunity for a government to influence how their military forces operate. Posen argues that 'military doctrine is a key component of grand strategy.'[27] Posen's work is mainly focus on overall national military doctrine for high intensity warfare. The logic of his argument, however, remains valid also for low-intensity conflict. National doctrines, or the software for the armed forces, tells the armed forces how to use their forces for different types of conflicts. This relates to the overall methodology of this thesis. An alternative to analysing the theory of counterinsurgency, such as this thesis will do, would

[24] Milan Vego, "On Military Theory", *Joint Forces Quarterly* 63, no. 3rd quarter (2011): 60.
[25] NATO, "AJP-01 Allied Joint Doctrine," ed. NATO Standadization Office (Bruxells: 2017), 1-1.
[26] Royal Netherlands Army, *Military Doctrine* (The Hague: Doctrine committee of the Royal Netherlands Army, 1996), 11.
[27] Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine – France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 33

have been to use the doctrines of leading NATO members, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, and apply the principles in the doctrines as a tool for analysis in the case studies. But doctrines are not purely military theory. National doctrines should be selections of military theory made to fit a specific security policy context. They should not only be informed by military theory alone, but also the specific strategies and policies of their government.[28] Hence, US doctrines should have a specific US flavour, UK doctrines a UK flavour, and so on. Because of this, I will utilise classic theory to build the theoretical framework for the thesis, and use the different national doctrines in the case studies to clarify each nation's specific stance on counterinsurgency.

The main challenge regarding sources for the case studies is the closeness in time to the events. Most relevant documents are not yet available because they have not yet been de-classified. However, I was able to obtain full access to both Dutch and Norwegian Army archives concerning operations in Afghanistan.[29] To my knowledge, this is the first research access granted by the Dutch and the Norwegians to the still classified archives concerning operations in Afghanistan. This was partly because I am a serving officer with a sufficient security clearance. Furthermore, I agreed to refrain from using any materiel that would be considered sensitive or still classified. This included: Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (IED) measures, raw intelligence data, specific capacities of weapons systems and details concerning injuries and fatalities. Lastly, I agreed that the respective Ministries of Defence could check that my thesis did not include classified materiel before I eventually published it. I was allowed to study anything classified up to and including ISAF secret. This included most operational orders (OPORDER), fragmentary orders (FRAGO), post-operation evaluations, reports, and communications logs.[30] As these documents are still classified, they are not filed in archives as such. Both in the Netherlands and in Norway they are still kept on the hard drives brought back by the different units from Afghanistan. On these drives,

[28] *Ibid*, 221
[29] In The Netherlands I worked with the Army Archives in Rikjswik and in Norway with the Permanent Joint Headquarters in Bodø.
[30] An OPORDER is a complete set of orders for a military mission. FRAGOs are issued to correct or amend orders given in an OPORDER as the situation develops.

each department of a staff typically has its folder with numerous sub-folders. As an example, each operation usually has a planning folder in the S or G5 (planning) department. A battle log at the S or G3 (operations) department, and after action review or evaluations in an own folder. It was challenging and time-consuming to get the bigger picture of the whole period of this study. In the Netherlands, the files were kept in 22 two-terabyte hard drives. Three of these proved to be corrupted, while the rest worked as they should. In Norway, the information was kept on six three-terabyte hard drives.

It proved impossible to get the same level of access in Britain as in the Netherlands and Norway. I was granted access on three occasions, but this was then revoked before my research trips. This is compensated for by doing more interviews in Britain than in The Netherlands and Norway. Also, the tradition of open parliament and committee hearings in Britain also proved a valuable source, in particular concerning the more strategic matters. I have also utilised the numerous autobiographies and first-hand accounts written by British officers based on their experiences in Helmand Province.

In addition to written sources, I have carried out numerous interviews with officers involved in the operations in the studied period. Due to the different organisation of forces between the studied nations, the personnel interviewed fall into diverse categories. For the Netherlands, the main focus has been task force commanders and their respective battalion commanders. As far as the British case was concerned, I focused on battle-group commanders and their respective company commanders. For Norway, I interviewed Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) commanders and Task Force commanders.[31] While all these have different titles and ranks, they performed similar tasks, though with sometimes different resources in their respective missions. In accordance with the ethical approval obtained for this thesis, all interviewees are anonymised when cited in the thesis. When referenced they are simply referred to as Norwegian, Dutch or British officer

[31] PRTs is a US concept used by NATO forces in Afghanistan in order to facilitate security, reconstruction and development within the same military organisation. Each province had one PRT. While the Dutch and British task force had a PRT embedded in their main task-force the Norwegians used the PRT as the main unit in Faryab province with other forces attached to the PRT.

followed by a random letter. Removal of even rank and position was done to maximise anonymity for the interviewees. If only the name of the interviewees was left out of the footnote, it would have been easy for a reader with intimate knowledge of the different armies to identify them.

All interviews were semi-structured with the same questions guide as a point of departure. They varied in duration between 40 and 120 minutes and were in most cases done in the office of the interviewees, or in a meeting room at their workplace. In most cases, I gained initial access to the different interviewees by email. Email addresses were in most cases provided by the Norwegian Army liaison officers in The Netherlands and Britain. On some occasions officers already interviewed provided contact information to other members of the unit.

The use of interviews posed several methodical challenges but also offered significant rewards. Interviews provided an opportunity to discuss events with the people who were on the ground and helped make the judgements and decisions, which in many ways make up this thesis. They provide valuable insight into the processes and ideas behind strategies and operations which otherwise would not be clear. On the other hand, the interviews were in most cases done several years after the officers re-deployed from their missions. It is therefore hard to distinguish what were their thoughts at the time and what might be a *post-hoc* rationalisation of actions or judgements. Furthermore, most of these officers are still serving members of their armed forces, and in many cases have reached a high rank since returning from Afghanistan. Even though they are anonymised in the thesis, they may have considered it to be in their best interest to "toe the party line" when discussing controversial issues connected to their deployment. I have dealt with this in the thesis by not using interviews as the only source of evidence when discussing the more controversial aspects covered. Wherever possible, I have cross-checked interview accounts either with other interviews or with written sources. Where this has not been possible the evidence was either not used, or used with the clearly-expressed caveat that it is based on a single source.

Scope

The scope of this work is limited by focusing on the years from 2006-2010. Reasons for this are simply that ISAF assumed responsibility for all of Afghanistan from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in 2006, and that the Netherlands terminated its contribution in July 2010.

I had no ambition of studying every aspect of the involved nations' participation in ISAF. For Great Britain, the study focuses on the efforts in Helmand by the PRT and the involved battle groups. For the Dutch, it focuses on the operations of Task Force Uruzgan. As far as Norway is concerned, it only deals with PRT Meymaneh and to some extent the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) in Faryab province. Due to formal rules concerning classification and the sensitive nature of the subject, the intelligence efforts of all nations will not be discussed directly or in any detail. The same applies to the use of Special Forces.

Outline

The thesis divides into four main chapters. Chapter one will explore, analyse and discuss population-centric counterinsurgency theory. It aims to provide an analytical framework to analyse the different nation's strategy and operations within. The theory chapter is followed by three chapters of one case study each focusing on Norway, Great Britain, and the Netherlands respectively. The case studies adhere to the framework developed in the theory chapter. The first part of each discusses the different nations' strategic and tactical approach to the conflict within the framework of counterinsurgency theory. The second part focuses on the manner in which each nation approached the conflict in a population-centric manner on both the strategic and tactical level. Finally, part three of each case study will analyse the different models of civil-military cooperation employed by the different nations and the extent to which these models were in line with population-centric counterinsurgency theory. While all three case studies follow the same overall structure, they still differ somewhat. In particular, the British case focuses more on one operation when analysing the tactical approach. Lastly, I summarise and discuss the main findings of the thesis in a conclusion.

Definitions

As many concepts such as *guerrilla warfare*, *small wars*, *operations other than war* (OOTW), *low intensity conflict*, *revolutionary war*, and *people's war* lack a common definition, it is necessary to outline how I relate to these in the context of this thesis. *Guerrilla warfare* is in this thesis viewed as a means to an end. It refers to a specific set of tactics that can be used by both state and non-state actors, but are most commonly deployed by insurgents. *Small wars* are 'all campaigns other than those where both the opposing sides consist of regular troops.'[32] Charles Callwell included campaigns to supress rebellions and guerrillas in his classic definition. Modern counterinsurgency theory stems from the early writings on small wars. In this thesis, the term counterinsurgency covers both these. *Revolutionary war* is a specific theory for how to conduct insurgencies for communist movements codified by Mao Tse-Tung, General Giap, Ho Chi-Mihn, and other communist leaders. Revolutionary war is further elaborated on in the first part of this chapter. I also distinguish between revolutionary war and contemporary insurgencies. While the latter was influenced by the theories of Mao and others, they are still not identical.

Other central concepts in this thesis are *military theory*, *doctrine* and *strategy*. I will just briefly clarify how these are understood here. Military theory is the theoretical foundation for the application of military force. It can be defined as 'comprehensive analysis of all the aspects of warfare, its patterns and inner structure, and the mutual relationships of its various components/elements.'[33] It is the systematic knowledge of how wars can be understood, studied, and ultimately won. Military theory spans all forms of conflicts and aspects of military activity and represents the sum of military thought from antiquity until the present. Military doctrine is defined by NATO as 'fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions in support of objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application.'[34] While military theory is occupied with war in all aspects doctrine is more practical. It serves as a bridge between theory and

[32] Charles Callwell, *Small Wars, a Tactical Texbook for Imperial Soldiers*, 3rd ed. (London: Greenhill Books, 1990), 21.
[33] Milan Vego, "On Military Theory", *Joint Forces Quarterly* 63, no. 3rd quarter (2011): 60.
[34] NATO, "Ajp-01 Allied Joint Doctrine," ed. NATO Standadization Office (Bruxells: 2017), 1-1.

practice. The Dutch army pragmatically defines doctrine as 'the formal expression of military thought valid for a certain period of time.'[35] Thus military doctrine represents a conscious choice. Not all military theories remain valid or in fashion and doctrines formalises parts of military theory which the armed forces believe gives them the best chance of success. In this manner, one could say that doctrines constitute the software for the armed forces. When I refer to the *strategic level* I do this in a hierarchical levels of command sense. The strategic level, encompassing both the political leadership and top military command, is defined as: 'the coordinated, systematic development and application of a nation's or alliance's economic, diplomatic, psychological, military and other political means to secure national or allied interests.'[36] When referring to strategy as a term an what this should entail in practical terms, I take a Clausewitizian approach. Strategy is viewed a process, aimed to match ends, means, and ways to gain an advantage over an opponent. Moreover, there is no clear line of demarcation between the different levels of warfare. While it is the responsibility of the strategic level to formulate strategy, this should not happen without inputs from the levels below.

Levels of analysis

Most books or studies of counterinsurgency tend to focus on the overall, or strategic, aspects of the conflict. There are notable exceptions to the rule, Emilie Simpson's brilliant *War From the Ground Up* is one.[37] Nevertheless, most work on counterinsurgency is focussed on the overall conduct of the conflict, or the strategic level of the conduct of war. Works which focus on the tactical level of the conflict tend to be first-hand accounts rather than academic works which try to analyse the actions of the involved in a theoretical framework. The focus on the strategic or operational levels is in many ways understandable. Military organisations are complex and do not lend themselves to easy comparative analysis. Orders and reports are filled with three letter abbreviations, military lingo and standardized terms which are hard to understand for outsiders.

[35] Royal Netherlands Army, *Military Doctrine* (The Hague: Doctrine committee of the Royal Netherlands Army, 1996), 11.
[36] *Ibid*., 12.
[37] Emile Simpson, *War From the Ground Up* (London: Hurst and company, 2012)

Furthermore, most military archives remain closed for 20 to 30 years due to formal acts of secrecy which military organisations are littered with.

The main weakness of works that focus mainly on either the strategic or tactical level is that these perspectives become too narrow. As argued by Clausewitz war is 'an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.'[38] Acts of force, or threats thereof, is executed on the tactical level. The will, or aim, of the war, is set by the strategic level. The key to success in warfare is the interaction between the two. In studies of counterinsurgency this is particularly important. Insurgency and counterinsurgency are highly politicised forms of warfare. The government and insurgents fight over the right to govern the whole or certain parts of a territory. Thus the actions on the tactical level are more directly connected to overall strategic goals than is the case in conventional wars. This effect is often referred to as a 'compression of levels'.[39] Actions on the tactical level can have direct consequences at the strategic. The abuse of prisoners of war in the Abu Graib prison by their American guards during the war in Iraq is one example of this. The numerous incidents where coalition forces inflict collateral damage on a tactical level is another. In conventional war, one can to some extent compensate for a lack of strategy by being tactically brilliant. However, the same dynamic does not exist in counterinsurgency. The US Army won the vast majority of skirmishes and battles during the Vietnam War, but still end up on the losing side. In order to thoroughly examine counterinsurgency campaigns, one should hence attempt to analyse strategy and tactics in relation, not just one of the parts.

Based on the evidence examined in this thesis the theories of classic counterinsurgency cannot be dismissed based on the experiences in Afghanistan. Only one of the three states studied can be said to have adhered substantively to counterinsurgency theory in their approach to the mission in Afghanistan during the period under study. Partly by conscious choice, Norway never attempted to employ counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. The strategic level in Norway failed to

[38] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War, Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret* (London: Everyman's Library, 1993), 83.
[39] Christopher Dandeker, "From Victory to Success - the Changing Mission of Western Armed Forces," in *Modern War and the Utility of Force*, ed. Isabelle
Angstrom Duyvesteyen, Jan, *Cass Military Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 29.

develop a coherent and fitting strategy for Faryab province which matched ends and means for their mission. Furthermore, they opted for a clear separation of civil and military efforts. This was mainly done to facilitate the work of NGOs in the area better. This choice also partly undermined any population-centric approach as it made coordinated security and development missions very difficult. Due to poor force-ratios, lack of clear strategic guidance and long term military planning the Norwegian operations in Faryab province was overall more characterised by an enemy-centric than a population-centric approach. While the UK officially conducted a counterinsurgency approach in Helmand, they diverged from counterinsurgency theory in the conduct of operations. The initial strategic guidance, including a clear counter-narcotics focus, was not well suited to the situation on the tactical level. Furthermore, because of the decision to expand operations out of the Helmand Triangle in 2006 British troops became overstretched. This again made any population-centric approach difficult as local force-ratios were poor.

The British in Helmand were also never able to coordinate civil and military actions effectively at the tactical level. This was partly caused by a lack of integrated planning. Different force-protection standards between the military and civilian personnel also aggravated the problem. After 2008 the British adapted their approach to one more in line with counterinsurgency theory. There are examples of more population-centric operations and efforts were made to reduce the problems with local force-ratios.
Only the Netherlands largely adhered to the theories and doctrines of population-centric counterinsurgency, albeit in an indirect fashion. Officially the Dutch pursued a 3D (defence, development and diplomacy) approach on the strategic level. Due to parliamentary procedures, they produced a coherent and fitting strategy for the mission. Furthermore, the first Dutch forces deployed to Uruzgan produced a comprehensive and long term campaign plan for the province. In summary, any claims that population-centric counterinsurgency is no longer a valid theory for low-intensity conflicts is not accurate.

In sum, two of the three states studied in this thesis did not adhere to counterinsurgency theory or failed to develop a strategy which made the conduct of counterinsurgency operations viable. The evidence examined suggest the problem is not with classic counterinsurgency theory. The Dutch case indicates on the contrary that it remains potentially very useful.

CHAPTER ONE: THE THEORY OF CLASSIC COUNTERINSURGENCY

This part of the thesis will examine the intellectual and historical foundations of contemporary counterinsurgency theory. It will have a relativily broad scope as it serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it will examine the theories and debates concerning population-centric counterinsurgency. It emphasises how classic, or population-centric, counterinsurgency in certain aspects differs from conventional war and other traditions of counterinsurgency. These characteristics will again form the framework of analysis in the following case studies. Secondly, it will also serve as the historiography and literature review of the thesis. The latter requires a wide perspective, but the main focus will remain on population-centric counterinsurgency theory. The principal sources for the first part of this thesis will be classic counterinsurgency theory. The works of David Galula and Sir Robert Thompson will receive particular attention.

Thompson served as a civil servant during the Malayan emergency and later as head of the British advisory mission in Vietnam. Based on his experiences he wrote *Defeating Communist Insurgency,* an influential book that has been in print ever since its publication in 1966. Thompson's work is not a history of how the insurgency in Malaya was defeated, but a generalisation of his experiences into a theory for how to defeating insurgencies. David Galula was a French officer that served in China, Indo-China and Algeria. After the Algerian campaign, Galula left the French Army and started working as a researcher at RAND. Partly for this reason, he has been much more influential in the US than in France. His most widely used work, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, first published in 1964, got renewed attention due to its influence on the new US counterinsurgency doctrine in 2006.[40]

Galula's work, just like Thompson's, is an attempt to generalise experience into theory, but Galula focuses somewhat more on the tactical level of the campaign.

[40] Conrad Crane, "United States," in *Understanding Counterinsurgency - Doctrine, Operations, and Challenges*, ed. Thomas Rid and Thomas Keaney (London: Routledge, 2010), 61.

More contemporary debates and theories will also be used in the first sections of the text to contrast or elaborate on parts of the theory.

Theories concerning how to fight low-intensity conflicts, or assymetric warfare, can be traced far back in military history. Beatrice Heuser points out that such ideas were present in the writings of Sun Zu and that Spanish officers wrote theories similar to the ideas of a population-centric approach to counterinsurgency as far back as in the 16th and 17th century.[41] Heuser furthermore points out that most larger states in this period practiced "small wars". Either during conquest of new territories, in the periphery of their empires, or to quell unrest within their own states.[42] Modern theory of counterinsurgency in many ways began with the conquests of colonies for western states. Regular warfare then became the domain of the domestic armies, while the colonial armies handled imperial policing, small wars, suppression of rebellions, and counterinsurgency. Practitioners reflecting on their experiences often published early theories of counterinsurgency. Gallieni, Lyautey, Bugeaud, and Callwell all came from this background. Some of their theories, for example Lyautey's oil spot theory and Callwell's definition of small wars, remain valid and influential today. Most of their approach to the conduct of operations, however, has been made obsolete by advances in technology or developments in human rights and international law. When reading of early French, and to some extent British, campaigns against rebellions in their colonies, one sometimes get associations to a sort of Carthaginian peace. As Porch argued: 'The "Lyautey method" boiled down in practice to a series of reprisal raids for damage inflicted.'[43]

The writings of this period nevertheless represent the starting point of modern counterinsurgency writing and thinking. Its emphasis on counterinsurgency as a distinct, albeit debated, form of warfare, it remains a central part of

[41] Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy – Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 390-391
[42] Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy – Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 391-394
[43] Douglas Porch, "Bugeaud, Galliéni, Lyautey: The Development of French Colonial Warfare," in *Makers of Modern Strategy - from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 393.

counterinsurgency theory today.[44] The focus on the political nature of these conflicts, the importance of avoiding having to counter irregular challenges with regular means, and accepting zones with different levels of government control – all these come out of these early theories of counterinsurgency.

After the Second World War several developments coincided. Many colonies found a national identity and insurgencies became the main means in their fight for independence.[45] The cold war further ensured that any insurgent movement with a communist outlook received outside support from China or the Soviet Union. These developments prompted a change and development in counterinsurgency practice and then theory. Firstly, the theories of revolutionary war published by Mao proved themselves to be an effective doctrine for insurgents. The Cold War and the East-West deadlock also ensured that most communist-inspired insurgents would get outside support from the Soviet Union. In the same manner, due to the domino theory, most states fighting a communist insurgency would get support from the West. Secondly, the growth of liberalism followed by a strengthening of international law, combined with the increased influence of the media, partly forced counterinsurgents to operate differently than before. Finally, and equally importantly, these were the busiest days of counterinsurgency in modern history. Unrest was common in most former colonies, and major nations were involved in the struggles. This again led to increased study and research into the phenomena of insurgency and counterinsurgency, and again to new doctrine.

Population-centric counterinsurgency is characterised by the presence of three traits:

1. The primacy of politics
2. The population as the centre of gravity
3. A concerted government effort

[44] See: Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of Coin."
[45] Martin Thomas, *Fight or Flight – Britain, France and their Roads from Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 56-66 and Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 249

There are obviously other characteristics of classic counterinsurgency, listed as classic principles in theory and doctrine.[46] While these others, such as intelligence driven operations, preparing for a long term commitment, and understanding the local environment, are obviously important, they are so in many forms of conflicts and not only when conducting population-centric counterinsurgency. Hence this thesis focuses mainly on the characteristics which set this specific theory of counterinsurgency apart from others.
The chapter will progress by expanding and discussing each of the factors listed above.

The primacy of politics

If we apply a Clausewitzian view of conflict, all wars are political, their purpose is to compel an enemy to do our will through the use of force. Our will is the political purpose or the aim of the war, the means are armed force, or violence as Clausewitz calls it.[47] This relationship between aims and means creates the specific character of each conflict. In theory, the laws of escalation would draw the belligerents towards an absolute war with no constraints and strategy would be simple; the enemy army must be destroyed, his country occupied, and his will to resist must be broken.[48] However, limitations both in war, in politics itself, and in human nature limit most wars well short of their absolute theoretical limits. Clausewitz underlined that all wars have different characters. The aims of the war influence the means and grant each specific war its unique character: 'The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose.'[49] While most associate the works of Clausewitz with conventional and total war, new research also show the utility of his theories for small wars. Sibylle Scheipers, in particular, has contributed to this. Scheipers does not only show that Paret and Howards translation partly shaped a rational and state-centric impression of Clausewitz' work, and at the same time

[46] US Army & Marine Corps, *Fm 3-24 Counterinsurgency* (Boulder: Paladin Press, 2006), Ch 1. p, 1-26 and Crane, "United States," 62 and British Army, "British Army Field Manual Volume 1 Part 10 Countering Insurgency," Part A. Ch 3. p, 1-22.
[47] Clausewitz, *On War, Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret*, 83.
[48] *Ibid*., 102.
[49] *Ibid*., 99.

downplaying the role passion and peoples war.[50] Scheipers also argues convincingly that Clausewitz' theoretical construct was inherently flexible and thus encompassed all types of war, and not distinguishing between specific forms of war.[51]

Small wars and counterinsurgencies are different from conventional wars because they have a different character and are, to some extent, driven by a different logic. In conventional or high-intensity wars, states settle political differences by means of battles and campaigns. The main contenders are most often seen as the armies in the field. Insurgents, on the other hand, attempt to change a state from within through the use of violence. As further explored below this again makes the primacy of politics even more prominent in these conflicts than in conventional war.

One of the paradoxes that arise from the above argument is that it in many ways is easier to conduct wars that tend more towards the Clausewitzian absolute, than small wars. In absolute wars, ends are total and hence the means are more total. In such wars the difficult part is to actually execute them, to gather enough resources in the right place at the right time, to bolster public will, and to point the armed force of the nation in the right direction. Even though Clausewitz did not make this argument outright, he came close when arguing 'that the political view should wholly cease to count on the outbreak of war is hardly conceivable unless pure hatred made all wars a struggle for life and death.'[52] If wars escalated to their absolute form and everyone fought to the end, then the political object of war could simply be replaced with a military one. However, most wars are not like that at all. Most wars are small, fought for limited ends with limited means. These wars are potentially more difficult to control and conduct strategically, based on the fact that they are small. The decisions that need to be made are smaller and seem somehow less important. It is harder for participating governments to

[50] Sibylle Scheipers, *On Small War: Carl von Clausewitz and People's War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 7-8
[51] *Ibid*, 1. See also: Sibylle Scheipers, ""The Most Beuatiful of Wars": Carl von Clausewitz and small wars", *European Journal of International Security* 2, no. 1 (2017)
[52] Clausewitz, *On War, Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret*, 733.

maintain focus over time since small wars do not force themselves to the top of the agenda of every state leader. While the major strategic decisions in the Second World War boiled down to Europe first, strategic bombing, and an eventual invasion of France, the major strategic decisions in small wars are less spectacular. It may seem that it sometimes is easier to wield a broadsword than a scalpel.

Furthermore, insurgency and counterinsurgency were, and remain, a highly politicised form of conflict in themselves. Conventional wars were often fought for reasons of *realpolitik*. Wars were fought to maintain or change a balance of power, or over control of border regions. In two cases in the 20th century war came close to a Clausewitzian absolute form and many of the participants fought for the survival of their state, but most conventional wars never reach that scale. A well-conducted communist insurgency, on the other hand, presented the state with a different challenge. It did not want a border province or increased influence in an area, it represented a fundamental threat towards the state from within. 'What is at stake is the country's political regime, to defend it is a political affair.'[53] Built on the experiences of the Chinese communist's struggle against both Chiang Kai-shek and Japan, Mao codified a formula for how to conduct and insurgency. David Galula, one of the most influential writers of the period, defined a communist insurgency as 'protracted struggle conducted methodically, step by step, in order to attain specific intermediate objectives leading finally to the overthrow of the existing order.'[54] Mao's concept of protracted war had three distinct phases:

1. The creation of a united party (strategic defensive)
2. Guerrilla warfare (preparation for a counter-offensive)
3. Movement warfare (strategic counter-offensive)

In order not to be wiped out when the intentions of the insurgents became clear the first step was to create a solid political foundation in the shape of a party. This would serve several purposes. First, it would educate the masses and unite them on the insurgent's side of the struggle. Once there, it would prepare them for the new state that was to emerge once the government was overthrown. Secondly, it

[53] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice* (Westport: Praeger, 1964; reprint, 2008), 62-63.
[54] *Ibid*., 2.

would provide the active fighters with recruits, shelter, and supplies once the guerrilla warfare began. Lastly, it provided the leadership of the insurgency with an organisation to control the masses once the insurgency gained momentum and eventually replaced the government.[55] Central to the whole concept was the cause of the insurgency. Ideally, the cause was of such a nature that it put the government in an unsolvable dilemma. At the same time, it should attract as many supporters as possible while rejecting as few as possible.[56] The ideas of Mao and his revolutionary war are of importance because the ideas of counterinsurgency at time came as a direct response to the threat caused by revolutionary wars.

To defeat a communist insurgency, the counterinsurgents not only had to defeat the military threat posed by the insurgents. They were also, more importantly, forced to defeat the political threat their government. Both Galula and Thompson underlined this point in their writings. One of Thompson's main principles of defeating a communist insurgency is that 'the government must give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas.'[57] Especially as long as the insurgency was still in the guerrilla warfare phase the military threat posed by the insurgency was manageable for the government. The political threat of subversion is more dangerous as it shifted the support of the population over to the insurgents.

Frank Kitson, another prominent British practitioner-become-theorist, argues the same view:

> The first thing that must be apparent when contemplating the sort of action which a government facing insurgency should take, is that there can be no such thing as a purely military solution because insurgency is not primarily a military activity.[58]

[55] Mao Tse-Tung, *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1968), 208-19.
[56] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 2 and 11-16 and Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency* (St. Petersburg, Florida: Hailer Publishing, 1966; reprint, 2005), 21-24.
[57] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 55.
[58] Frank Kitson, *Bunch of Five* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1977), 283.

This is further supported by General Slim, the chief of the Imperial General Staff at the outset of the Malayan uprising. In his report after a tour of the country he concluded that 'until it is recognised that the problem is by no means a military one, and that any military effort can only be subsidiary to and in support of a civil effort, we shall make no progress.'[59] This should not be interpreted as an attempt by Slim to shy away from army responsibilities in Malaya. He had come to realise that the core of the problem was that 'very considerable parts of Malaya have not since the war, and in some cases before it, been under effective administration.'[60] What was lacking in Malaya was not sufficient troops and ammunition to solve the military side of the problem, it lacked governance to solve the political side of it.

A primacy of politics does not only have consequences for the theory of counterinsurgency. It also has very practical implications if we accept the premise introduced above concerning the political nature of these conflicts. One consequence is that the politics of war are pushed further down the chain of command in counterinsurgency campaigns compared to conventional wars.[61] This is again reinforced because the army tends to be spread out in smaller units in counterinsurgency. If a company commander on the Western front in the Second World War did not have a clear grasp of the overall strategy, it was not very likely to affect the outcome of the war, neither on a tactical nor a strategic level. As long as he was competent to solve the mission ahead, he would most likely do well. Realities for a company commander in counterinsurgency, however, might be very different. His company would most likely be given the responsibility of a local district. This could involve meetings with village elders, coordination with police, initiation of basic needs improvements, arranging local elections, and manning and training local security forces. All these tasks should be managed in addition to the regular tasks of fighting insurgents and keeping the local population as safe as possible.[62] In this context the company commander needs not only a clear grasp of

[59] A J Stockwell, ed., *Malaya, the Communist Insurrection 1948-1953*, vol. 3, *British Documents on the End of Empire* (London: HMSO, 1995), 175.
[60] *Ibid*., 173.
[61] Chiara Ruffa, Christopher Dandeker and Pascal Vennesson, "Soldiers Drawn into Politics? The influence of tactics in Civil-Military Relations" *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 24, no. 2 (2013), 222-224
[62] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 62 and US Army & Marine Corps, *Fm 3-24 Counterinsurgency*, Ch 2, p 9.

the overall doctrine and strategy for the war, but he also needs a clear grasp of the politics of the war as he is the one that directly engages with the local population on a day-to-day basis in his area. In this type of warfare, levels are compressed compared to conventional wars. Counterinsurgency warfare is very much the 'captains' wars' as former US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates put it.[63]

Not everyone shares the view that classic counterinsurgency theory dictated a primacy of politics. Douglas Porch, in an article in *Small Wars & Insurgencies,* states that 'COIN offers a strategy, not to win wars abroad, but to pre-empt civilian control by cloaking an adventurous, not to say reckless, interventionist policy in the uplifting guise of the "civilizing mission."'[64] A strategy to pre-empt civilian control represents the exact opposite of the primacy of politics that this thesis has so far argued. Porch's article is both well-argued and full of historical evidence that supports his claim. On the one hand, Porch makes good use of the works of the theories of Luyatey and Gallieni, two of Galula's predecessors in the French Army.[65] They definitely did not favour political control over the operations they conducted, and in many cases, they applied so much indiscriminate force, including torture of captured insurgents, that it proved strategically counterproductive. On the other hand, Porch fails to make much use of the theories of Thompson and Galula, who argued quite the opposite and who are also far more influential in contemporary doctrine. Galula in particular underlined the importance of political control when fighting insurgents.

> "A revolutionary war is 20 per cent military action and 80 per cent political" is a formula that reflects the truth. Giving the soldier authority over the civilian would thus contradict one of the major characteristics of this type of war.[66]

Galula saw revolutionary war as a predominantly political activity. Hence it should be directed and controlled by civilians at every level. Thompson also stressed the need for political control over the army in his writings, and warned the reader of

[63] Robert M Gates, *Speech as Delivered by Secretary of Defence Robert M. Gates at West Point, Ny, Friday, February 25, 2011* (2011 [cited 07-05 2013]).
[64] Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of Coin," 241.
[65] *Ibid*., 243-44.
[66] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 63.

the dangers of a too big and influential army in counterinsurgency operations. He concluded that what is needed is an army that 'can fulfil its proper military role in support of the civil government.'[67] The critique voiced by Porch, however, provides a good balance to the counterinsurgency 'priesthood', as he calls them, and provides a good reminder that counterinsurgent theory and practice are often two very different things. However, when Porch argues that 'COIN offers a strategy, not to win wars abroad, but to pre-empt civilian control' he shoots well off the mark.[68] He does not only confuse strategy with theory and doctrine, he also fails to make use of the theories which has influenced contemporary counterinsurgency doctrine. While the likes of Gallieni and Luyatey might have skirted political control Galula and Thompson advocates in favour of this.

Small wars and insurgencies are highly politicised forms of conflicts. Their character requires a constant political involvement and also compresses the traditional levels of war in a way that places a higher demand on the strategic understanding of tactical commanders. It also demands a clear and coherent logic from the political-strategic level down to the tactical level. This presupposes a highly functioning civil-military relationship where both parts understand not only their roles, but also the possibilities and limitations of counterinsurgency as a doctrine.

The population as centre of gravity

As indicated by its name, the focus on securing and controlling the population is perhaps the most defining characteristic of population-centric counterinsurgency compared to theories of conventional war and other schools of counterinsurgency. This part of the chapter will initially analyse and discuss the theories that continue to influence doctrine on this aspect of counterinsurgency today. Furthermore, it will examine and weigh the implications of this focus in contemporary operations, utilising both current works in the field and valid doctrine. Lastly, it will address the idea of the minimum use of force and its role in population-centric counterinsurgency, as this is one of the more contentious parts of the theory.

[67] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 62.
[68] Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of Coin," 241.

Since the whole concept of a centre of gravity has been much debated in relation to operational theory in the last decades, I will briefly clarify what is meant by it in this thesis. Clausewitz defined the term by arguing that when a state made its war plans it 'must keep the dominant characteristics of both belligerents in mind. Out of these characteristics, a certain centre of gravity develops, the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends.'[69] In a traditional sense, especially on a tactical level, the centre of gravity was often interpreted as the enemy army in any conventional conflict. 'Consequently if you are to force the enemy, by making war on him, to do your bidding, you must either make him literally defenceless or at least put him in a position that makes this danger probable.'[70] This approach was normally codified in military doctrine either through a method of attrition, wearing down the enemy's capability to fight, or through a method of manoeuvre that aimed at rendering the enemy's position hopeless and hence broke his will to continue the fight. However, going back to the original concept as proposed by Clausewitz, the idea of a centre of gravity is not the mechanical view often taken by contemporary doctrine.[71] His original conception underlines that one must 'keep the dominant characteristics of both belligerents in mind.'[72] In this manner, the centre of gravity becomes relational and dynamic. It also becomes strongly dependant on what the enemy and you yourself want. By employing this view of what a centre of gravity is it becomes a useful concept to apply to low-intensity conflicts.

To understand why counterinsurgency places such emphasis on the population we must briefly revisit the theories of Mao and revolutionary war. Communist insurgencies drew their strength in terms of recruitment, logistics, protection, and other support from the population. 'The political aim [of the insurgency] is to gain control over the population.'[73] Since the insurgents in most cases were militarily too weak to defeat the government forces in an outright battle, they settled for a long war, depleting the government's will and ability through guerrilla warfare,

[69] Clausewitz, *On War, Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret*, 720.
[70] *Ibid*., 85.
[71] As an example see:Norwegian Defence Staff, *Norwegian Armed Forces Doctrine for Land Operations (Forsvarets Doktrine for Landoperasjoner)* (Oslo: The Defence Staff, 2004), 92-97.
[72] Clausewitz, *On War, Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret*, 720.
[73] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 29.

while at the same time undermining the government's control area by area and replacing it with their political system. Bernhard Fall provided a precise description of this process; 'When a country is being subverted it is not being outfought; it is being out-administrated.'[74] Since an insurgency ultimately is a fight for the governance of a state, the armed violence is merely a symptom, the political struggle is the cause of the disease, to use a medical analogy.

It is the aforementioned logic that created the premise of the population as the main objective for classic counterinsurgency theories. According to classic counterinsurgency theory, trying to fight an insurgency conventionally would fail.

> American generals are quick to claim, just because American forces can be lifted into any jungle valley and win a battle there if the Vietcong want to take them on, that they have the military initiative. This is certainly not the initiative required in counterinsurgency.[75]

Hence the counterinsurgent had to change his ways of operating and shift his attention from the insurgent armed forces to the population. According to these theories, the centre of gravity, the hub of all power and movement for an insurgent group, was and is the population.

> Logic forces him [the insurgent] instead to carry the fight to a different ground where he has a better chance to balance the force against him. The population represents this new ground. If the insurgent manages to dissociate the population from the counterinsurgent, to control it physically, to get its active support, he will win the war because, in the final analysis, the exercise of political power depends on the tacit or explicit agreement of the population or, at worst, on its submissiveness.[76]

The active support which Galula here refers to is also often referred to as "popular support" in counterinsrugency theory.The idea that the most effective way of fighting an insurgency goes through the poupulation represents the basic premise, and one of the most characteristic traits of population-centric counterinsurgency. The most important mission for the counterinsurgent is to engage in the fight for

[74] Bernhard Fall, "The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency", *Naval War College Review* April (1965): 34.
[75] Robert Thompson, "America Fights the Wrong War", *Spectator* 217, no. 7207 (1966): 195.
[76] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 4.

the support, or control of, the population. Jacqueline Hazelton has recently challenged the view that popular support is vital for the counterinsurgent. In an article published in *International Security* she argues:

> In contrast to the good governance approach [population-centric counterinsurgency], counterinsurgency success is the result of a violent state-building process in which elites engage in a contest for power, popular interests matter little to the outcome, and the government benefits from the use of force against civilians.[77]

Hazelton creates a dichotomy in her article between a governance approach, exemplified with the population-centric approach of the allied forces in Afghanistan, and coercion theory.[78] The latter approach relies more on the use of force instead of winning the support of the population. Hazelton further shows throughout her article that successful past counterinsurgency campaigns, among these Malaya and Dhofar, relied heavily on coercion, empowerment of some factions over others, and also liberal use of force at times. In her conclusion she argues that 'according to coercion theory [as opposed to population-centric], counterinsurgent governments must use force to control civilians, and thus cut the flow of resources to the insurgents.' Hazelton's article spurred a new debate on the topic. In a review article David Ucko and Jason Fritz gives credit to part of Hazelton's research, but also argues that 'the entire argumentation rests on an unconvincing dichotomy between Hazelton's "good governance" and "coercive" theories.'[79] While this dichotomy, as argued by Hew Bennett, is by no means an example of poor scholarship.[80] What it does highlight is a valid criticism of modern counterinsurgency doctrine. If we examine the quotes from Galula and Hazelton on the previous page their view regarding the role of the population in winning over an insurgency is almost identical. Galula's view on population-control, as examined more closely below, was by no means a popularity contest. The obvious paradox is

[77] Jacqueline Hazelton, "The "Hearts and Minds" Fallacy – Violence, Coercion, and Success in Counterinsurgency warfare", *International Security* 42, no. 1 (2017), 81
[78] *Ibid*, 80
[79] David H. Ucko and Jason E. Fritz, "Article Review 87", H-Diplo/ISSF (13 October 2017) https://issforum.org/articlereviews/87-hearts-and-minds
[80] Hew Bennett, "Bennett Response to Article Review 87", H-Diplo/ ISSF (4 January 2018) https://issforum.org/articlereviews/87-bennett

that the theories of David Galula was also one of the main influences of the counterinsurgency school Hazelton refers to as "the good governance approach".[81] While Hazelton's distinction between the different schools of counterinsurgency could be debated, her basic findings are sound. Neither Galula nor Thompson were particular squeamish about the use of coercion of force in order to gain control over the population for the government. Their main concern was to avoid an enemy-centric approach which they deemed ineffective when fighting an insurgency. Instead of criticizing Hazelton for creating artificial dichotomies, one could just as easily criticize contemporary counterinsurgency advocates for glossing over the more coercive parts in Galula and Thompsons works.[82] In the following part the rationale for a population-centric approach in counterinsurgency theory will be further analysed.

According to theory, the above premise that control or support from the population is the main aim of the operations should have direct implications for military operations in counterinsurgency. Since the population represented the new vital ground, it was important to prioritise operations to the areas that were most densely populated instead of areas with the most enemy presence. Thompson called this to secure the government's bases first. This did not refer to bases like Camp Bastion, but the most developed areas of the country which 'contain the greatest number of population.'[83] The basic idea was that if the counterinsurgent were able to separate the population from the insurgents, by controlling the population, the insurgents would be forced to attack the counterinsurgent on less favourable ground. Hence the job of tracking down the insurgents was made easier for the counterinsurgent. This does of course not mean that population-centric counterinsurgency theory argued that it is not necessary to fight and kill insurgents. The distinction lies in the difference between operational concepts focused mainly on chasing insurgents, or on taking the fight if the insurgents happened to cross your path while government forces were securing the

[81] Crane, "United States,"
[82] Michael A. Cohen, "The Myth of a Kinder, Gentler War", World Policy (22 June 2010) https://worldpolicy.org/2010/06/22/the-myth-of-a-kinder-gentler-war/
[83] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 57.

population. To become the active party, the counterinsurgent must first be reactive.

Even if one accepts that controlling the population is an important aspect when fighting an insurgency, the question remains how to achieve this. An insurgency must have a certain popular support from the start to get any traction, and how is a government going to turn this around? For now, we will dwell on the military component's contribution to this.

A central contribution to this question was Galula's theory of the active minority:

> In any situation, whatever the cause, there will be an active minority for the cause, a neutral majority, and an active minority against the cause. The technique of power consists in relying on the favourable minority in order to rally the neutral majority and to neutralize or eliminate the hostile minority.[84]

This idea was copied directly into the current US counterinsurgency manual and remains highly influential today.[85] Galula further described, in quite detailed form, how counterinsurgency forces should proceed to defeat an insurgency in area after area. Firstly, the government should deploy strong enough forces to expel overt insurgent presence and gain access to the population. When this was achieved, the security forces should leave static forces in the area to keep the population under control and avoid that the insurgents simply trickled back and regained control. Once in place, the hard part of uprooting the political organisation for the insurgents in the area started. This required both propaganda and tedious intelligence work, preferably done by the police. In the last phases, local elections should be held, and local security forces trained. Once the area was deemed safe from insurgent influence, government forces could continue to the next area.[86] Thompson's program of strategic hamlets was very similar in overall approach, but Thompson's work was of a more strategic nature and did not go into the same level of detail concerning the tactical execution of the operations.[87] Alex Marshall

[84] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 53.
[85] US Army & Marine Corps, *FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency*, Ch 1. p, 20.
[86] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 75-94.
[87] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 111-15.

argues that:

> Such a system [Galula's] is intellectually exemplary, and probably the single most organised and effective method for countering an insurgency ever designed; its significant short-term operational level success in Iraq is therefore less than surprising.[88]

As pointed out by Marshall the main limitations and challenges related to Galula's theories is its tactical approach. Without a sound strategy will produce only short-term results. As Douglas Porch points out:

> In fact, nothing in Galula's recommendations, [...] in keeping with COIN traditions, would have led the to a French victory [in Algeria] because Paris put forward no viable policy to convince Muslims to remain part of *la métropole*.[89]

Despite all other differences from conventional war one thing seems to remain true for both types of conflict: if the ends and means do not correlate, defeat is highly likely.

Another challenge is to actually control and influence the population once the overt insurgent presence is cleared. When discussing this, we need to keep in mind the premise that all revolutionary war, or insurgencies, is seen by classic theory as competitions for government. Since there is no certain way of telling who sympathises with the insurgents and not, theory emphasised the need to control the population after the initial clear operation. Classic theory described various techniques for achieving control, including a census of the population, curfews, restrictions on travel and movement, restrictions on carrying food out from villages, and detention of suspects.[90] In the more extreme cases the parts of the population most supportive of, or vulnerable to, insurgent influence could be resettled.

While Galula and Thompson are both clear on the need to coerce parts of the population, it should also be added that these measures were coupled with a

[88] Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency," 243.
[89] Douglas Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of Coin", (2011): 246.
[90] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 112.

physical protection of the population. 'The counterinsurgent cannot achieve much if the population is not, and does not feel, protected against the insurgent.'[91] In addition, both Galula and Thompson warned that the use of the harshest methods described in their theories, such as resettlement and detention without trial, should be employed with great care and only as a last resort.[92] These measures were also part of a carrot and stick policy. Once a cleared area was deemed strong enough to withstand insurgent influence the area was declared 'white' and restrictions removed.

The concept of population control is perhaps most challenging when it comes to the practice of population-centric counterinsurgency today on an operational and tactical level. There is no getting around that coercion, and the concept of population control is a keystone in operationalizing the theory on a tactical level. However, many of the means suggested by theory are either illegal under international law or for other reasons unacceptable today. Today, western forces are trying to implement strategies that are in large parts based on experiences from classic counterinsurgency campaigns, but they are doing so in the strategic context of liberal peace theory, not as colonial powers trying to maintain order and control in their empire.[93] How then can the theories of classic counterinsurgency be of relevance to current operations carried out in a different strategic context?

One contemporary and influential thinker and practitioner tries to bridge this gap at least partly. David Kilcullen is a former Australian officer who has also served as a special counterinsurgency advisor for US troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan. In *Counterinsurgency,* Kilcullen outlines a theory very similar to Fall, Galula, and Thompson, which he terms 'the theory of competitive control.' He defines the concept as follows:

> In irregular conflicts [...], the local armed actor that a given population perceives as most able to establish a normative system for resilient, full-

[91] *Ibid*., 53-54 and Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 83.
[92] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 78-79.
[93] Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency," 243-45.

> spectrum control over violence, economic activity, and human security is most likely to prevail within that population's residential area. [94]

By full spectrum, Kilcullen refers to insurgent, or government, organisations that are able to run complete shadow governments controlling all the above aspects of the population's life. One of the best examples of this is perhaps the Hezbollah in Lebanon. At the other end of the scale are insurgent movements like Al Qaeda in Iraq, who mostly relied on intimidation and brute force to maintain its control over the population. The full-spectrum insurgent movements represent the greatest challenge to the counterinsurgent.[95] Since this is obviously a two-way street the answer for the counterinsurgent is to engage in this competition for governance, and a premise for governance is control.

This part of Kilcullens's work is influenced by Stathis Kalyvas, a professor of political science at Yale, who in 2006 published a book called *The Logic of Violence In Civil War*. The book, as the title suggests, contains a comprehensive body of research on how violence affects civil populations during internal wars. One of his findings that has great relevance for the theory of population control in counterinsurgency is that people affected by civil wars seem to develop a high sense of pragmatism. To survive, the lion's share of the population tends to support the side they perceive most likely to win. This is shaped by whoever is in control of the population at any given time. 'The anecdotal empirical record provides substantial evidence that control spawns collaboration independently of prewar patterns of support.' Furthermore, 'there is substantial evidence that collaboration follows the *temporal variation* in control.'[96] According to this research, people's most fundamental need during a conflict is security and predictability. These factors seem to be more influential than emotional convictions of which side is 'right or wrong'. Kilcullen suggests that 'this finding has huge implications for traditional "hearts-and-minds" and "battle-of-ideas" approaches in which you try to make people like you in order to gain their support.'[97] In many ways, this simplifies the problem of how to get the support of

[94] David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 152.
[95] *Ibid*., 153-54.
[96] Stathis N Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 118-19.
[97] Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, 151.

the population. If the counterinsurgent can provide security and order, then support from the population will follow. Hew Strachan also supports this view. In an article on British counterinsurgency traditions, he argues; 'When we speak about "hearts and minds", we are not talking about being nice to the natives, but about giving them the firm smack of government. "Hearts and minds" denoted authority, not appeasement.'[98] If insurgencies represent a competition for governance in a state, the incumbent must show the population that he is able to govern and that he has the ability and resolve to win. According to these theories, this is best shown, at least locally and on a tactical level, by providing security and law and order.

Limited use of force in relation to the political objective

One of the more contentious points in contemporary counterinsurgency theory is whether there is such a thing as a minimum use of force tradition in classic counterinsurgency. Most often minimum use of force is understood as a practice where 'no more force must be used than is absolutely necessary and reasonable to achieve the immediate military aim.'[99] This is a somewhat ambiguous concept in itself and one that does not easily lend itself to academic analysis and scrutiny. It is also useful in this debate to distinguish between different types of force. Kinetic force, ranging from baton hits to gunfire and artillery fire, is probably the type of force most commonly associated with armed conflicts, but another form of force is also important in counterinsurgency. Coercion is in this thesis used to describe a use of force that is not necessarily deadly or demands physical interaction at all. Examples of this could be everything from routine checkpoints to resettlement operations. Nevertheless, coercion still constitutes to make someone do something they voluntarily would not do.

This part of the chapter will examine origins of the concept of minimum use of force in theory and then engage with the debate on its importance. I will argue that there is a practice of limited use of force that characterises population-centric counterinsurgency. This stems from the specific nature of the conflict that demands use of force to be instrumental to the main object of the conflict, which

[98] Strachan, "British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq," 8.
[99] British Army, "British Army Field Manual Volume 1 Part 10 Countering Insurgency," Ch 3. p,13.

is the population and is thus closely related to the idea of the population as the centre of gravity in such conflicts. However, many historians have overplayed the idea of a tradition of minimum use of force. It does not imply that force is not used in population-centric counterinsurgency or that this is a particular "nice" way of defeating insurgencies, quite the opposite: force must be used for the right reasons. As this is a debate mainly related to the British Army's conduct of counterinsurgency my main focus will be on this.

David Galula's formative experience was arguably his service as company commander in Algeria, a campaign more known for the heavy handed handling of the Battle of Algiers than for a minimum-use-of-force approach.[100] Perhaps not surprisingly, Galula did not emphasise the concept of minimum use of force extensively in his most widely cited book, *Counterinsurgency warfare – theory and practice*. It is for example not listed as one of his laws of counterinsurgency warfare. However, he did stress the importance that the government and its forces operated within the law. But at the same time he stressed the need for passing new laws such as banning the insurgent's political organisation.[101] An altered and more permissive legal framework not only made it easier for security forces to stay on the right side of civil legislation, but was also in many cases a necessity in order to defeat the political side of the insurgency. Furthermore, Galula's entire theory rests on the premise that the main objective for both insurgent and counterinsurgent is to obtain the active support of the population. In order to achieve this the government's forces should focus their operations on securing the population and separating them from the insurgents, not defeating the insurgents in a conventional manner.[102] When addressing the need for changes in the armed forces if these are to conduct effective counterinsurgency operations, Galula is specific on the need to adopt a minimum use of force approach. According to Galula an adaptation of the soldier's mind for counterinsurgency is just as important as its equipment and structure.

Reflections and decisions that would be considered appropriate for the

[100] Mounir Elkhamri et al., "Urban Population Control in a Counterinsurgency," (Foreign Military Studies Office, Center for Army Lessons Learned, Fort Leavenworth, 2005), 8-9.
[101] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 45.
[102] *Ibid.*, 52-56.

> soldier in conventional warfare [...] are not necessarily the right ones in counterinsurgency situations. A soldier fired upon in conventional war who does not fire back with every available weapon would be guilty of dereliction of his duty; the reverse would be the case in counterinsurgency warfare, where the rule is to apply the minimum of fire.[103]

Galula's main reason for underlining a minimum use of force approach seems to be rather pragmatic. It was as much about avoiding a shift towards a conventional approach, which he deemed inefficient in dealing with an insurgency, as it was about a general distaste for the use of force. Neither did he shy away from advocating the use force when needed, both kinetic force in order to defeat insurgents and coercion in order to control the population. Any use of force, however, should be instrumental to the political objective of the conflict.[104] Hence Galula was concerned less with the *amount* of force the counterinsurgent uses, than with the force being *instrumental* in order to secure and control the population.

Sir Robert Thompson, arguably the most influential British counterinsurgency theoretician of his generation, follows much the same line as Galula. Though he makes no specific mention of minimum use of force as a principle, he repeatedly warns about the use of excessive force when conducting counterinsurgency operations. Again his logic seems to stem from the same line of reasoning as Galula. The main objective for the counterinsurgent is to secure the population and separate them from the insurgents, and excessive use of force would simply alienate the population from the government and play into the hands of the insurgents who could utilise such incidents in their propaganda. When describing how government forces should clear contested populated areas of overt insurgent presence Thompson argued:

> The government forces do not want to have large firefights, employing heavy weapons and even aircraft, in the villages where they are attempting to regain control. [...] ,that type of action is liable to create more communists than it kills and makes the problem of pacification that much harder.[105]

Thompson's main concern, just like Galula, does not seem to come from a general

[103] *Ibid.*, 66.
[104] *Ibid.*, 61-64.
[105] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 106.

reluctance towards the use of force, or a concern with the level of force used. It appears to have more to do with the fact that massive use of force was the normal m*odus operandi* for armies in conventional war. Both Thompson and Galula tried to avoid this as they saw it as both counterproductive and not in accordance with their theories of how to conduct population-centric counterinsurgency. Thompson made this point very clear when commenting on early American operations in Vietnam: 'the gathering of processable data [body count] should no longer be the object of an operation. The Vietcong casualty graphs can be forgotten. Protect and regain the peasants, and the graphs will look after themselves.'[106] His criticism was not directed towards the general use of force, but the object the force was used for. Simply killing insurgents would not win the conflict in the long run. At the same time, Thompson also argued that counterinsurgent forces must rely on non-kinetic coercion in order to control the population once the insurgent presence had been cleared.[107]

Limitations on the use of force in classic counterinsurgency theory seem to have more to do with an acceptance of the specific character of the conflict than a general reluctance to use force. The major concern of classic theory is to avoid a situation where the army conducts operations with the aim of defeating the enemy on the battlefield just as in conventional operations. Clausewitz argued that the political objective of warfare influences its character so much that 'its [the war's] grammar, indeed, may be its own, but not its logic.'[108] If we accept the above logic of theory on counterinsurgency one might ask if these types of conflict even have their own grammar. The political object in these wars influences events on the tactical level, making the use of force counterproductive unless in direct relation to the political object of the war.

In the more contemporary debate on the subject a number of authors on counterinsurgency theory seem to argue that there was, especially in the British Army, a tradition for a minimum use of force in their conduct of counterinsurgency. Perhaps the most prominent proponent of this view is Rod

[106] Thompson, "America Fights the Wrong War," 195.
[107] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 112.
[108] Clausewitz, *On War, Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret*, 731.

Thornton who argues that a mix of Victorian values promoted by public schools, protestant ethics, judicial accountability, and public outcry after incidents such as Amritsar ensured that 'The British Army is still subject [...] to a minimum force philosophy.'[109] Furthermore, Thornton uses Callwell to back up his argument of a longstanding tradition of minimum use of force in the British Army. He claims that the Army did not like weapons that did not discriminate and made logistics more demanding. 'Thus the use of the machine-gun […] had been largely disavowed by the British as a weighty encumbrance as early as 1896'[110] The main problem with this argument is not the weighty encumbrance of the machine gun, but the overall context of using Callwell's doubt of machineguns in a minimum use of force debate. Callwell did warn about placing too much trust in machineguns; however, not because they did not discriminate, but because they tended to malfunction at critical moments.[111] Thomas Mockaitis, though somewhat more balanced than Thornton, argues much along the same lines when he says that '[...] force plays a vital but extremely limited role in internal conflict. Minimum force remains a cardinal principle in British counterinsurgency.'[112]

Several scholars have challenged the idea of a long-standing tradition of minimum use of force in counterinsurgency in recent years. Alex Marshall claims that:

> In practice, British methods remained above all reliant upon the threat of the maximum use of force, and included such techniques as crowd control via the use of indiscriminate volley fire, ethnic displacement, mass floggings and torture, the poisoning of wells and burning of villages, the napalm area bombing of Malayan forests, and the creation of 'free fire' zones – all conducted under extremely permissive legal constraints.[113]

This argument is also supported by Douglas Porch who argues that the British Army had:

> A mindset that contributed to the institutionalization of collective punishment, torture, 'resettlement', internment, 'special night squads' / ferret forces' / 'counter-gangs', and RAF terror bombing for imperial

[109] Rod Thornton, "The British Army and the Origins of Its Minimum Force Philosophy", *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 15, no. 1 (2004): 100.
[110] *Ibid.*, 97.
[111] Callwell, *Small Wars, a Tactical Texbook for Imperial Soldiers*, 440-41.
[112] Thomas Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency in the Post-Imperial Era* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 143.
[113] Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency," 241.

policing.[114]

Bruno Reis further argues that it was not only when studying the practice of counterinsurgency where one struggles to find evidence of a minimum use of force policy, but also in studies of doctrine. Reis claims that there is no evidence for a minimum use of force attitude in the guiding documents from the period.[115]

David French, who has utilized newly released archival material concerning British counterinsurgency after the Second World War, largely supports this view. He argued that British counterinsurgency practice between 1945 and 1967 relied heavily on coercion and that historians have overplayed ideas such as 'hearts and minds' and minimum use of force'.[116] He also concludes that while British security forces 'most of the time, did operate within the law', but that this was made easier by legislative changes allowing for coercion of the population.[117]

On the other hand, it is also possible to overcompensate when revising history in the manner French does. French argues in an article in *Small Wars and Insurgencies* that the British resettled a larger proportion of the population in Malaya and Kenya than the French in Algeria and the Portuguese in Angola.[118] However, when making the comparison, French neglects to account for the fact that neither the Chinese in Malaya nor the Kikuyu, Embu, and Meru make up the whole populations of their respective states – if he had, the calculations would look different. There is also a distinction between relying on the threat of maximum force and the actual use of it.

Huw Bennett further underpins this argument in a debate on the minimum use of force with Rod Thornton in *Small Wars and Insurgencies*. Bennett argues that the tradition of the minimum use of force in the British Armed Forces is largely a myth kept alive by what he refers to as 'regimental historians.' He further argues that too many historians rely on 'a methodology for analysing conflicts based on

[114] Douglas Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of Coin", 249.
[115] Bruno C Reis, "The Myth of British Minimum Force in Counterinsurgency Campaigns during Decolonialisation (1945-1970)", *Journal of Strategic Studies* 34, no. 2 (2011)
[116] David French, *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1945-1967* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 247-48.
[117] *Ibid.*, 248-49.
[118] French, "Nasty Not Nice: British Counter-Insurgency Doctrine and Practice, 1945-1967," 752.

doctrine alone, and lacking detailed empirical examination, [which] is worthless in understanding battlefield realities.'[119] Bennett does, however, balance his view by arguing that British forces on many occasions seem to learn from early mistakes and are generally able to operate with a minimum use of force approach.[120]

While there are definitely cases of British and other forces showing restraint while conducting counterinsurgency operations, as argued by Thornton, it is also easy to find cases of massive use force such as argued by Marshall. What does seem to be clear is that most new research agrees that there was not a tradition of a minimum use of force policy from classic days of counterinsurgency. If there is so little merit to the idea of a minimum use of force tradition in the British Army, then why has it been able to have such a hold on both doctrine and writing on counterinsurgency? Is it simply a constructed narrative, while in reality 'the key to success was to rebrand these kinetic methods as "hearts and minds" and prosecute it out of the public view.'?[121]

First of all, it is probably fair to argue that even if the British approach to counterinsurgency in the de-colonialization period definitely falls short of a contemporary idea of minimum use of force, it was still rather humane compared to the draconian measures other non-liberal states used at the time. This seems to hold true even later on as argued by Geraint Hughes:

> Furthermore, while conducted for less than enlightened reasons, the 'hearts and minds' dimension of British COIN doctrine differs starkly from purely coercive approaches to fighting insurgents, such as those practiced by the Soviets in Afghanistan (1979-89), the Iraqis against the Kurds (1987-91) and the Sudanese government currently in Darfur.[122]

Also, as pointed out by Max Boot, the British counterinsurgency campaigns fought in the aftermath of the Second World War never came close in intensity and scale to those fought by their French and American allies.[123] The problem in Malaya and Kenya was often to locate the guerrillas. A theory of limited use of force was

[119] Huw Bennett, "Minimum Force in British Counterinsurgency", 460.
[120] *Ibid.*, 466.
[121] Douglas Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of Coin", 249.
[122] Geraint Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975", *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 2 (2009): 276.
[123] Max Boot, *Invisible Armies - an Epic History of Guerilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2013), 392.

probably more likely to take hold there than in Algeria or Vietnam where government forces on many occasions were in danger of facing a serious problem if the insurgents found them.

Another factor to consider in the academic debate on the subject is that with some exceptions, it seems mainly concerned with the existence, or non-existence, of a minimum use of force tradition in the British Armed Forces. While this is obviously important and provides greater insight and understanding of the culture and history of the British Army, the debate seems more concerned with the perceived level of force employed by the armed forces in different conflicts than with whether the use of force was consistent with the theory of counterinsurgency. As shown above, theory of counterinsurgency seems not so concerned with the overall level of force, but more with the objective for which the force is used.

Whether or not classic counterinsurgency has a tradition of a minimum use of force approach to counterinsurgency remains debated. However, there is much that indicates that scholars have overplayed this side of the concept. Classic counterinsurgency theory emphasizes a limited use of force to avoid the lure of conventional war that seems ingrained in all armies. It seems more concerned with the objective of the force than the sheer level of force being used. It is in many ways unapologetically amoral in its view on the use of force. According to theory the objective of counterinsurgency, if one is to succeed, is to secure and control the population, not to defeat the insurgents by military force. However, if the opportunity arises to inflict losses on the insurgent's military component without fear of collateral damage, theory places no limits on the force applied. In addition, theory advocates widespread use of coercion in order to control a population and to keep it separated from the insurgents.

To sum up, an insurgency represents a competition for government. The insurgents rely on the support from the population for both political and military strength. Since the government in most cases cannot defeat the insurgents outright in battle, classic counterinsurgency theory advocates that the government must engage in a fight for the population. This should, according to theory, be achieved

through controlling the population and denying the insurgents access to it, by regaining a monopoly of violence. Once the government controls and secures the population, logic dictates that the insurgents need to attack the government forces in order to again gain access to the population. Government forces can then defeat the insurgents from their prepared positions. This focus on the population as the main objective of the struggle sets population-centric counterinsurgency apart from theories on conventional war and more enemy-centric theories of counterinsurgency.

A concerted government effort

The need for a coordinated and joint government effort follows logically from the political nature of small wars and insurgencies. The focus on the population stems from the theories on how to conduct revolutionary war as postulated by Mao. The highly political focus of these wars is again a result of the focus on the population and their role in the conflict. Since the problem presented by an insurgency was not solely a military one it could not be solved by military force alone, but only through a closely coordinated civil-military effort that again underlines the political nature of these conflicts. The classic works of Galula, Thompson, and their adherents normally just referred to this as an 'overall plan', or a 'full utilization of the counterinsurgent's assets.'[124] Today, issues concerning civil-military coordination and cooperation are most often debated under the umbrella term of "comprehensive approach". This final part of this chapter will initially analyse classic theory within the framework of civil-military cooperation and then account for and analyse the contemporary debate on comprehensive approach.

Sir Robert Thompson's principle that 'the government must have an overall plan' might at first glance seem superficial and almost superfluous.[125] However, Thompson's argument went beyond the simple fact that any government involved in a counterinsurgency must have a plan. The civilian effort in conventional war

[124] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 58 and Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 55.
[125] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 55.

normally focused on facilitating the army's fighting. Since an insurgency is not an outside attack on a state's sovereignty, but a competition for governance within a state, the military and civilian effort need to be closely coordinated in both planning and execution. Operations to clear areas of insurgents without government resources to hold and build governance in the area is strongly advised against in classic theory. The same goes for civilian efforts without sufficient security forces in areas with insurgents.[126] In order to achieve desired effects, the effort has to be balanced between the civilian and military resources. As also mentioned earlier in the chapter both Galula and Thompson underlines the importance of not allowing the campaign to become militarised. Counterinsurgency is a political struggle and hence manning, training, and deploying elements of government officials are just as important as the security forces. Thompson even argued that the creation of a large and conventional army, at the expense of effective administrative and judicial systems, was one of the primary mistakes made by the Americans in Vietnam. 'The inevitable effect if creating such a large army was that political power in the country rested entirely with control of the army.'[127] A large army also had the undesired side effects of forcing high public spending on the army and attracting the most talented members of public to the army. These talented individuals would be better used manning posts in the civil administration than fighting insurgents in the jungle.

In order to succeed, efforts have to be coordinated and jointly commanded. Thus the organisation of the effort is in many ways just as important as the military operations. Thompson, perhaps unsurprisingly given his background, argued for a committee system in order to coordinate the effort. The overall direction of the effort should be led by a national war council, led by the prime minister and also including the ministers from relevant departments and senior military, police and intelligence officers. This organisation should be duplicated on a smaller scale for the other administrative levels of government.

> "War by Committee" is frequently derided, but the system works if it is understood that the committees do not override the normal chains of

[126] *Ibid.*
[127] *Ibid.*, 58.

> command, but are there to ensure greater coordination in the execution of policy [...][128]

Coordination concerned the execution of policies and strategies decided by the national war council. Thompson argued strongly that each department had to remain responsible for their sector of government, and those areas that overlapped with other departments should be coordinated and resolved.[129]

Galula did not go into the same degree of detail as Thompson concerning the organisation of the effort. He nevertheless discussed the pros and cons of different forms of organisation in his theories. His two different alternatives for organising the effort are the same committee system as advocated by Thompson and an integrated civilian-military staff 'where the soldier is directly subordinated to the local civil authority.'[130] Galula summed up strengths and weaknesses of the two models by arguing:

> A committee is flexible, affords more freedom to its members, and can be kept small, but it is slow. Integrated staffs allowed a more direct line of command and were speedier, but it was also more rigid and prone to bureaucratism.[131]

On the question of overall organisation, Galula concludes that a mix of the two models was most likely the best option: a committee system for the top levels of command which deal with long-term strategic decisions, and an integrated staff approach at the lower levels where the requirement for speedy decisions was greater.

A last point to note on organisation, as far as classic theory is concerned, is that all theory seems to agree that any military organisation should be adapted to fit the administrative structure already in place in the state. Even Trinquier, a controversial figure in counterinsurgency history, who placed less emphasis on civil control in general, argues that it was important that 'the military organisation

[128] *Ibid.*, 83.
[129] *Ibid.*, 82-83.
[130] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 64.
[131] *Ibid.*

follows the lines of the civil administration to [...] permit the administration to function insofar as possible.'[132] Concidering Trinquiers background his emphasis on civilian control is worth to consider. Trinquier belonged to the generation of French officers who fought both in Indo-China and Algeria. He served as an intelligence officer during the Battle of Algers where French forces employed widespread torture of prisoners to break the FLN organisation. When the French forces in Algerie mutinied he had been transferred and was thus not directly implicated in the attempted coup. In his book, which also defends the torture of captured guerrillas, he nevertheless agues for at least a degree of civilian control. Given the political nature of counterinsurgency the functioning of civil administration is more important than perfectly aligned military sectors. Victory, in the long run, is be won by the civil administration and the police rather than the army as in other conflicts.

As shown earlier, the theories of Galula and Thompson, in particular, remain influential in current doctrines for counterinsurgency. Perhaps the key challenge of utilising their theories for current doctrine is the greater complexity of conflicts now compared to then. Galula and Thompson formulated theory from experiences of countering insurgency in states that had been colonized. Both France and Britain had colonial administrations, which included local security forces and judicial institutions. Being colonial powers, they had either direct control or considerable influence over domestic politics and strategy in the states faced by the insurgency. While this might often be a thin layer of governance, they had through their years of colonial control gained intimate knowledge of local culture, language, topography, power structures, and politics.[133] Most contemporary counterinsurgency campaigns for Western states are fought as expeditionary warfare. A challenge that arises from this is that at the outset of a conflict the only ready and deployable asset most states have is their armed forces. The problem is by no means new, Galula makes the same argument in his writings; 'However developed the civil administration may be in peacetime, it is never up to

[132] Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (Westport: Praeger, 1964; reprint, 2008), 61.
[133] French, *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1945-1967,* 11.

the personnel requirements of a counterinsurgency.'[134] Galula stated this from the context of a colonial power or a state facing an insurgency within its borders. The challenge is even bigger given the expeditionary nature of counterinsurgency today. The obvious solution of giving broader powers to the armed forces is not advisable, according to classic theory. Hence the problem remains of filling government posts in both central areas and districts in contemporary conflicts.[135]

Coordination of civilian and military efforts in contemporary counterinsurgency does not just limit itself to inter-departmental coordination. In the current context, numerous Non-Governmental-Organisations (NGO) are also usually operating in the theatre. These vary in size and expertise, but are often engaged in long term projects and have good local knowledge of the area. NGOs rely on their impartiality for protection in conflict zones. The concept of comprehensive approach seeks to coordinate both governmental and non-governmental efforts in conflict areas. The concept lacks a commonly accepted definition but is more an umbrella term for all efforts made 'to achieve greater harmonisation and synchronisation among the activities of the various international and local actors, across the analysis, planning, implementation, management and evaluation aspects.'[136] Others commonly used names for this concept are 'defense, diplomacy, and development' (3D approach) or a 'whole of government' approach.[137]

The main challenge in coordinating development efforts and military efforts in conflict areas is not just down to different organisational cultures and competition for resources.[138] These factors definitely play a role, larger or smaller, depending on which organisation one is dealing with. Another and perhaps more important factor that makes coordination difficult between development communities and

[134] Clausewitz, *On War, Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret*, 720.
[135] House of Commons Defence Committee, "UK Operations in Afghanistan Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-07," ed. House of Commons Defence Committee (London: The Stationery Office Limited, 2007), Evidence, p, 77.
[136] Karsten Friis and Cedric de Coning, "How to Conceptualise 'Comprehensive Approach'?," in *Comprehensive Approach - Challenges and Oppertunities in Complex Crisis Managment*, ed. Karsten Friis and Pia Jarmyr (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2008), 2.
[137] Robert Gabriëlse, "A 3d Approach to Security and Development", *The Quarterly Journal* Summer 2007 (2007): 67-68.
[138] Friis and Coning, "How to Conceptualise 'Comprehensive Approach'?," 8.

the armed forces in counterinsurgency is their different outlook on how conflicts should be resolved. Counterinsurgency theory, as this chapter has shown, sees insurgencies as a competition for governance and hence strives to regain governmental control in disputed areas. To do so, theory dictates that use of force is necessary to clear insurgent presence and to secure and control the local population. Development efforts must hence be prioritized to areas where the government perceives the chances of success to be the greatest and then expand from there. Development efforts, in accordance with this logic, 'must be designed to help the population to choose between the government and the insurgent, and enforce that choice once made.'[139] It is not a question of development effort dovetailing with the military effort, or the other way around. It is rather that 'counterinsurgents must synchronize all these activities [security, development, and governance] to support the overall political strategy.[140]

In practice, classic counterinsurgency logic collides with the logic of the development community. While the business of counterinsurgency is super-political, most NGOs concider themselves as non-political actors. Most NGOs conform to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence as decided by the Red Cross.[141] In order to gain access with humanitarian aid during armed conflict NGOs rely on all partners to view them as impartial and neutral. In highly politicized conflicts, as counterinsurgency, this is challenging in several aspects. For governments, such as Norway, which relies heavily on NGOs to do the development side of the mission this creates obvious difficulties. Norway, as an allied to the Afghan government, is in no way a neutral part in the conflict, while many NGOs attempt to do so. As Friis and Jarmyr points out 'the tension derives from the fact that the operating principles of humanitarian agencies require them to demonstrate their neutrality toward all parties perceived to be in dispute.'[142] The idea that it is at all possible to operate as a neutral, or non-political, party in complex conflicts has also been challenged.

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[139] David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla, Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 67.
[140] *Ibid.*, 113.
[141] Kate Mackintosh, "The Principles of Humanitarian Action in International Law" Humanitarian Policy Group in *The Politics of Principle Series*. London: 2000
[142] Karsten Friis and Pia Jarmyr, "Comprehensive Approach - Challeges and Oppertunities in Complex Crisis Managment," (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2008), 11.

In his book *Development, Security and Unending War* Mark Duffield points out that the UN strategic development plan for Afghanistan was politicised from the outset. 'The political use of aid is embodied in the founding principles of the SFA [UN's Strategic Framework for Afghanistan].'[143] Much of the wanted development, such as schools for girls, was founded on Western liberal values. When opposed by a cultural and religious conservative opponent such as the Taliban these actions would most likely be perceived as partial regardless of NGOs claims to the contrary. As this thesis will show this tension took different forms for the studied states. In Norway, where NGOs hold considerable influence over politics, it was one of the major factors leading to a clear separation of development and security actions. The Netherlands, on the other hand, was more successful in incorporating NGOs into their overall plan and to create a unity of effort between development and security. To summarise, there seems to be a potential tension between counterinsurgency theories and development theories, which could cause challenges when fighting an insurgency. While counterinsurgency theory demands that development recourses are used as a political tool to win the population over to their side, the development community fears that this might undermine their neutrality and further diminish the humanitarian space in modern conflicts.

From theory to practice

Thus far I have outlined the core elements of counterinsurgency theory. Since this thesis will analyse and discuss operations, within the framework of counterinsurgency theory, it is also necessary to identify how I will go about when utilising the theories in the different case studies.

I am not suggesting that this will be a clear-cut positivistic approach to the research. Warfare and its conduct are fluid and uncertain.[144] Thus it does not readily lend itself to a rigid approach. Nevertheless, I find it useful to establish a framework for analysis, not to function as a straitjacket, but to make the comparison of the different case studies more accountable.

[143] Mark Duffield, *Development Security and Unending War* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 146
[144] Clausewitz, *On War, Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret*, 161-62.

Implementing a primacy of politics

Military operations cannot be analysed in a vacuum. In an ideal world, politics would set aims and shape strategy, while strategy and doctrine should shape operations and campaigns.[145] Due to the political nature of counterinsurgency, this relationship between strategy and operations is arguably of even more importance in these operations. When addressing the factor of a primacy of politics this thesis will commence by analysing each nation's strategy for their participation in Afghanistan, how it adheres to overall counterinsurgency doctrine and whether it has an inherent strategic logic. Furthermore, it will examine whether the political aspect of the conflict is addressed and to what extent it includes the host nation of Afghanistan and the overall strategy of the coalition.

Implementing the population as the centre of gravity

Special emphasis will be put on the initial deployment of forces and any planned expansions of their sphere of influence. What do forces prioritise in these phases; force-protection, offensive operations against insurgents, or securing populated areas?

Secondly, it will analyse the operations conducted by the deployed forces. It will attempt an overall analysis, which focuses on the balance of operations, and whether these are enemy or population-centric in their design. Furthermore, it will do a more in-depth analysis of selected operations. In this process, I will utilize operational orders and post-operational reviews. These orders all follow NATO's standard five-paragraph format. Central aspects of these are the overall mission statement, called a restated mission. This is again underpinned by several key tasks seen as vital for the unit to accomplish if it is to solve its overall mission. Lastly, the thesis will explore the attitude shown by the forces concerning the use of force. This is closely related to the above factors, but will also be singled out for the sake of clarity.

Implementing a concerted government effort

The overall question when analysing this factor in the case study is to analyse how the different nations integrated their civilian and military efforts. It will to some

[145] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 52-56.

extent analyse which form of logic that seems to have driven the development of the strategy, an NGO logic or counterinsurgency logic. As discussed above, development and NGO logic on conflict resolution differs markedly from that of counterinsurgency theory. It is hence very difficult for a nation to encompass both these views when formulating a strategy. Furthermore, I will analyse the organisation of the effort and whether the more civilian sides of the efforts, such as governance and development, are well integrated into the setup. The same approach will be followed on a more tactical level. Each province in Afghanistan published a Provincial Development Plan (PDP) between 2004-2006. These will be used both to analyse whether the host nation is well integrated into the effort, and to see whether there is a link between development plans and operational plans on the military side. As far as it is possible, I will also discuss the funding of the operations and whether there was an overall balance between military and development spending by the nations studied. Classic counterinsurgency theory advocates a joint government effort that emphasizes the political logic of the conflict. Development efforts should be closely coordinated and executed in tandem with security efforts. This approach, however, creates a tension in relation to the development communities in contemporary conflicts. How this has been resolved will be elaborated on in the different case studies in this thesis.

Summary of counterinsurgency theory

The ideas from classic counterinsurgency continue to influence contemporary doctrine. Classic counterinsurgency views this type of conflict as a competition for governance within a state. It is state focused from the very outset and puts more emphasis on the need for governance than it does on the need for a military defeat of the insurgents. In order to win, theory advocates that the government must engage in a fight to win the support of the population. This should be achieved, area by area, by dispelling insurgent presence and the securing and controlling the population. In order to do so classic theory relies on the widespread use of coercion through while at the same time arguing against the massive use of kinetic force. This insistence on the limited use of force seems to rest on two different arguments. Firstly, the insurgents are merely the symptom of the problems, while the political cause of the insurgency is the real problem and hence demands

priority. Secondly, classic theory seems to focus on avoiding a shift towards conventional warfare that dictates closing with and engaging the armed part of your enemy. Many historians have chosen to see classic counterinsurgency as a "kind" theory of warfare focusing on "hearts and minds" and a minimum-use-of-force tradition. This view has probably rightly been corrected through recent research that points out that even British campaigns after the Second World War relied heavily on coercion and use of force. The latter view is also more in agreement with what classic theory actually argues. Both Galula and Thompson were more concerned with making sure that any use of force was instrumental to the political objective of the conflict rather than the amount of force being used. Lastly, given the complex environment of an insurgency, any government strategy and effort needs to encompass all measures needed to quell an insurgency. Counterinsurgency theory argues that these not only need to be coordinated in planning, but also jointly executed. In order to avoid a shift towards conventional war and to ensure the primacy of politics, the effort should be led by civil authorities at all levels. The effective organisation of this effort is just as crucial as a clever tactical execution. The more complex environment of contemporary conflicts makes this even more demanding today. Different government departments and NGOs compete for the same resources and often have different priorities on how to resolve conflicts. Classic counterinsurgency theory and principles for humanitarian development and aid are often at odds, which makes efforts to achieve a comprehensive approach challenging.

While the actual execution of classic counterinsurgency has definitely varied from case to case, its theory is actually quite consistent. If it were to be summarised in one sentence the idea of "an iron first in a velvet glove" is perhaps the most fitting description given to the concept.

This theory chapter has analysed counterinsurgency theory. The main factors of the theory chapter will now be utilized as a framework in the following case studies to establish to what extent Norway, Britain and the Netherlands have adhered to counterinsurgency theory.

CHAPTER TWO: THE CASE OF NORWAY

This part of the thesis will examine Norway's contribution to the international operation in Afghanistan. Norway failed to achieve a unity of effort with respect to the three main lines of operation in Afghanistan: security, development, and good governance. This was partly due to an under-developed and ill-fitting strategy, but also deliberate choices such as a clear separation between development and security efforts. This again led to military operations conducted by the Norwegian forces being characterised by enemy-centric rather than population-centric operations. In other areas, the Norwegian effort in Faryab was more aligned with counterinsurgency theory. Norway spent an equal amount of money on development as its military component. Further, it engaged in political dialogue with Afghan officials and the Taliban from an early stage, however, these efforts were isolated and failed to amount to a cohesive plan.

Background

Norway's involvement in Afghanistan was challenging. First, it represented a major shift to a more forceful type of operation than that to which Norwegian forces had historically been deployed. Norwegian forces had up until Afghanistan primarily contributed to UN peacekeeping operations involving low risks to its forces. Its longest involvement had been as part of the UNIFIL force in Lebanon where it was present for 20 years between 1978 and 1998. It further contributed forces to the various UN and NATO operations in the Balkans during the 1990s. In the UN mandated enforcement operations (Korea and Iraq 1991) Norway participated with non-combat troops such as field hospitals and a costal guard ship. Arguably, the profile of these missions were well suited for the Norwegian image of itself as a peace-enabling nation. Second, as in the case of the Netherlands, the Afghanistan mission spurred a debate of whether this was a combat or reconstruction mission. Whilst the Dutch took a more pragmatic view on this issue, this was more challenging in Norway. Norway found it difficult to adhere to the close cooperation between civil and military efforts prescribed by counterinsurgency theory and ISAF strategy. From 2008 and onwards this led to a disjointed effort in the Faryab province. Third, Afghanistan was the Norwegian Army's first encounter with counterinsurgency. With no previous experience and

no national doctrine for this form of conflict, it struggled both to provide professional advice to political decision makers, and adapt its operations on the ground.

Norway's first deployment of forces to Afghanistan commenced with the US led operation Enduring Freedom that toppled the Taliban government and targeted Al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership in Afghanistan. Initially, the Norwegian contribution was limited to Special Forces, an F-16 fighter detachment for a limited period, and engineers who conducted mine-clearing operations primarily at Bagram Airfield. When ISAF was established and assumed responsibility for Kabul, Norway deployed a company-sized battle group which served under ISAF command. This detachment was later increased to battalion strength supported by other NATO members.[146] In 2005 Norway assumed command of PRT Meymaneh in Faryab province and thus facilitated British forces to concentrate on Helmand.

Other research on Norway in Afghanistan

A limited amount of research has been published concerning the Norwegian involvement in Afghanistan even so that which has been published focuses on the issues of civil-military cooperation. The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) published its report in 2012. The purpose of this report, as an official government agency, was 'to assess the contribution of Norwegian development cooperation with Afghanistan from 2001 to 2011'[147]. In addition, the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs has also released other reports on the same topic.[148] The Norwegian Defence Research Establishment provided operational analysts to the PRT in Faryab and published one of the few reports focusing on goal-attainment on the tactical level in 2013.[149] The commander of the

[146] Partnering nations to the Norwegian battle group changed several times during the period. The other main troop-contributors included: Turkey, Italy, Hungary, and Latvia.
[147] NORAD Evaluation Department, "Evaluation of Norwegian Development Cooperation with Afghanistan 2001-2011," (Oslo: NORAD, 2012), xv.
[148] Karsten Friis, "The Norwegian Approach to Afghanistan: Civilian-Military Segregation," in *NUPI Working Papers* (Oslp: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2013) and Friis and Jarmyr, "Comprehensive Approach - Challeges and Oppertunities in Complex Crisis Managment." and Friis and Coning, "How to Conceptualise 'Comprehensive Approach'?."
[149] Svein E Martinussen, Andreas Barstad, and Jonas Myre Christiansen, "Attainment of Goals for the Norwegian Led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Faryab - an Assessment," in *FFI rapport* (Oslo: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, 2013).

last PRT in Faryab requested the report by asking the operational analysts 'what did we achieve in Faryab?'[150] Whilst the report in itself is well researched, it suffers from a major methodical drawback. In order to answer this question, the report utilizes *key tasks* as set by the PRT in their operational orders. Key tasks are a vital product from a military decision making process (MDMP). These are deduced after analyzing the mission, terrain, own forces, opposing forces and the civilian population within the area of operation. *Key tasks* are the most vital tasks a unit should accomplish in order to solve its mission. Furthermore, the report uses a series of surveys done by a local company in Faryab to assess the local population's response to the operations. This narrow dataset excludes several important factors for such a study, and the main weakness of the study lies in the overall methodical design. Whilst an analysis using the PRTs own key tasks will be well suited to answer whether the PRT achieved what it set about to do, it will not be well suited to answer the critical question of whether it set about to do the right tasks in the first place. This becomes especially misleading when the report argues that the military side of the mission has been a success.

Moreover, two edited books on Norwegian international operations have been published in recent years. Whilst several of the chapters in the two books on Norwegian operations abroad cover Afghanistan, none of these deal with operations in any detail.[151] When it comes to analysing Norwegian strategy in relation to international operations these books have created several useful explanations.

The independent Norwegian commission on Afghanistan published its official report in 2016 on the Norwegian effort in Afghanistan.[152] The commission's task was to evaluate and extract lessons from Norway's civilian and military involvement in Afghanistan during the period 2001–2014.'[153] The commission had access to all archival information relating to the mission in Afghanistan and carried out over 330 interviews during its work. The report covered all parts of the Norwegian

[150] *Ibid.*, 7.
[151] Tormod Heier, Anders Kjølberg, and Carsten Rønnfeldt, eds., *Norway in International Operations (Norge I Internasjonale Operasjoner)* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2014) and Ola Bøe-Hansen, Tormod Heier, and Janne Haaland Matlary, eds., *Strategic Success? (Strategisk Suksess?)* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2013).
[152] "A Good Ally: Norway in Afghanistan 2001-2014," in *Official Norwegian Reports NOU* (Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence,, 2016).
[153] *Ibid.*, 3.

engagement and is thorough and balanced in its conclusions. This report will serve as a valuable source for Norwegian operations in Afghanistan, in particular concerning the civilian efforts of the mission.

Counterinsurgency doctrine and education

Norway, unlike the Netherlands and Great Britain, did not have a national counterinsurgency doctrine when they deployed to Afghanistan. Research on counterinsurgency was with the exception of the Military Academy, extremely limited. Furthermore, there was no initiative during the Afghanistan conflict, to write a Norwegian counterinsurgency doctrine. Apart from the allied nations' doctrines, Norwegian and Senior Staff College officers relied solely on their formal training and education.

The Norwegian Military Academy has conducted a program on counterinsurgency since 1997. In the first years, this was done as part of the senior course with instructors hired from RMAS Sandhurst before Norwegian staff had been trained. Since the restructuring of officer education in 2005, the program has remained relatively unchanged. Counterinsurgency is taught as a part of a one semester long low-intensity conflicts module.[154] Ten weeks of this semester is spent studying peacekeeping whilst a further ten weeks is dedicated to insurgency and counterinsurgency. According to the course handout, the main focus of the course is to create an understanding that low-intensity conflicts fundamentally different from conventional war.[155] In addition, the students should acquire a familiarity with the theories of insurgency and counterinsurgency. At the end of the course, the cadets should be able to independently plan and execute company-level counterinsurgency operations.[156] The course on counterinsurgency has population-centric counterinsurgency as its main focus which is founded from a Maoist doctrine for insurgencies. It continues with studying classic texts such as Galula and Thompson before utilizing theory to shed light on different case studies. The case studies have varied but have previously included Malaya, Algeria, Dhofar, Kenya, Northern-Ireland, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Towards the end of the semester,

[154] Norwegian Military Academy, "Counterinsurgency Program," (Oslo: 2007).
[155] *Ibid.*
[156] *Ibid.*

the course arranges two map exercises whereby the cadets are expected to show an understanding of theory and doctrine in order to solve the missions. As compared to the courses run at the Dutch Military Academy and at Sandhurst, the course at the Norwegian Military Academy is more comprehensive and of a longer duration. Academically and practically speaking, it provides the students with a more than sufficient knowledge of counterinsurgency at the tactical level.

Staff College is the next level of formal education once officers graduate from the Military Academy. The average age of a course at the Military Academy is around 25 as compared to 35 at Staff College. Consequently, this would mean that only the more senior staff of the PRT would have attended Staff College before deploying to Afghanistan. Whilst cadets spend three years at the Military Academy, most students only spend one year at Staff College.[157] The main focus of this education is to make the officers proficient in joint operations and NATO planning procedures. Thus, time for other studies is rather limited. The first introduction to counterinsurgency as a topic at the Norwegian Staff College was done in 2008 and consisted of only one briefing.[158] This was increased to a two-day seminar in 2010.[159] Nevertheless, there was still a substantial gap between the education in counterinsurgency given at Military Academy and Staff College. As a result in part to this, a generation gap in the Norwegian Army existed during the Afghanistan campaign. Younger officers who filled the ranks as platoon commanders and younger staff officers had a relative solid education in counterinsurgency. On the other hand, commanders and senior staff officers had a more rudimentary knowledge of counterinsurgency.

The Primacy of Politics

A primacy of politics seems rather self-evident when Sir Robert Thompson in his seminal work *Defeating Communist Insurgency* argues that the first principle of counterinsurgency is that 'the government must have a clear political aim.'[160] Without a clear aim 'there will be a tendency to adopt short-term *ad-hoc* measures merely as reactions to insurgent activities or with the limited aim of attempting to

[157] About one-third of each course at Staff College goes on to do a two-year master's program.
[158] Norwegian Staff College, "Course Program 2008," (Oslo: 2008).
[159] Norwegian Staff College, "Course Program 2010," (Oslo: 2010).
[160] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 50.

defeat the insurgents militarily[...].'[161] Since counterinsurgency involves several sectors of the government, the aims or the strategy must provide a clear framework in order to ensure a unity of effort. The relevance of this truism has not been diminished since Thompson's time in Malaya. Contemporary operations are multi-faceted, coalition based, and expeditionary. If one adds NGOs, with at times diverging interests, the advice of having a clear aim for the operation remains valid.

The structure of this part of the thesis in the other two case studies has been to account for and analyse each nations strategy and their approach to the political side to the conflict followed by a two-step analysis. First, it has addressed whether the strategy has, in light of counterinsurgency theory, been fit for purpose. Second, it has analysed whether or not the Dutch or British armed forces has adhered to the strategy. In the case of Norway, this structure proved to be challenging. The main issue was that Norwegian strategy was so vague and unspecific that an analysis on whether Norwegian forces adhered to this was extremely challenging. Therefore, the structure of this part of the case study will deviate somewhat from the two other. It will account for and analyse Norwegian strategy in relation to its effort in Faryab province and thereafter attempt to present different explanations and arguments as to why this evolved in the manner it did, and how this related to the idea of a primacy of politics in counterinsurgency.

Strategic view

With respect to primacy of politics, the Norwegian effort in Afghanistan was almost schizophrenic. On the one hand, Norway failed to develop a coherent strategy designed to achieve political goals by the use of military force in conjuncture with other means for its mission in Faryab. Norwegian forces participated in Afghanistan from 2001, and assumed responsibility as lead nation in Faryab province from late

[161] *Ibid.*, 52.

2005. Nevertheless the first official strategy was published as late as 2009.[162] However, on the other hand, Norway clearly understood the need for a political solution to the conflict and promoted and engaged from early on in political talks with representatives of the insurgents. This effort was rather isolated from the rest of the activities pursued by Norway in Faryab, and could be more characterised as an attempt to broker a peace-agreement than an effort to defeat an insurgency.

During the period between 2001-2005, Norway contributed forces to ISAF and OEF, but was not lead nation in a province. OEF as an operation was dominated by SOF and mainly led from multinational headquarters with the US as the leading nation. ISAF was only responsible for Kabul province in this period and the contributing nations were responsible for either a sector of the effort, or one or several police districts in Kabul. Henceforth, the need for stringent and robust national strategies to underpin ISAFs effort as a whole can be argued as less pressing in this period compared to after the expansion of ISAF. Norwegian strategy in this period focused on creating a political purpose and a validation for their participation. This was normally presented through three main points; firstly, the mission had a clear UN mandate; secondly it served Norway's interest to support our NATO allies; and thirdly to participate in the fight against international terrorism. These three points were clearly present in the speech given in Parliament by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Petersen, as early as December 2001.[163] The first two purposes remained constant as strategic purposes throughout the period covered by this thesis even with the change of government in 2005 while the fight against terrorism became less visible in the labour coalition government from 2006 and onwards.

In order to fully understand why Norway struggled to come to terms with a counterinsurgency campaign at a strategic level, it is necessary to examine

[162] Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Justice and Police Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Civilian and Military Efforts in Faryab Province, Afghanistan," ed. Ministry of Foreign Affairs., Ministry of Defence., and Ministry of Justice and Police (Oslo: 2009).
[163] Jan Petersen, "Possible Norwegian Contributions to Afghanistan," ed. Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2001).

Norwegian security and defence politics. The overall strategic goals, or purposes, are not surprising because they represent the two traditional cornerstones of Norwegian security and defence policy and serve in many ways the same purpose. It also illustrates the sometimes-paradoxical duality of Norwegian politics in this field. First, it stems from a liberal argument that a UN led world order whereby states adhere to agreed principles and abide by the UN charter, is in Norway's interests. 'UN plays a key role in Norwegian security politics. Norwegian security is closely attached to the existence of well-functioning global security cooperation arrangements.'[164] Thus, a clear UN mandate for the operation in Afghanistan was not just a prerequisite for participation, but in some ways also a justification. Nevertheless, this does not fully explain different Norwegian governments' commitment to participate in Afghanistan. At that time, there were numerous other UN mandated operations with little or no Norwegian participation, many of these with a clearer UN profile than the mission in Afghanistan.

The second main strand of Norwegian security and defence politics can be examined through its relationship with NATO. As a small nation with a common border with Russia, Norway is dependent upon NATO as a guarantee for their security. In many ways, this functions as an insurance policy in the event that other states do not adhere to the rules set by the UN. This relationship is clearly stated in the 03/04 defence white paper: 'Within the overall UN frame, NATO remains the cornerstone of Norwegian security politics.'[165] Norway's traditionally two biggest parties, Labour and the Conservative party, despite all their other differences, have generally remained in agreement concerning defence and security. As a result of the dual priority, the UN and NATO have remained rather constant since the 1950s.

Thus, the strategic purpose of the deployment remained quite constant throughout the period. The change of government in late 2005 did not alter this, but it nevertheless provided a slight shift of emphasis towards the UN. The Labour led coalition outlined the main points of their defence and security politics in its

[164] Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Norwegian Government White Paper 42, 03/04," ed. Norwegian Ministry of Defence (Oslo: 2004), 25.
[165] *Ibid.*

accession declaration. Whilst stating that the main foundations of defence and security policy remain unchanged, it also explicitly stated that 'It is in Norwegian interests that we have a UN led world-order [...] The Government will work for a substantially strengthened UN.'[166]

The focus on NATO in the same declaration was somewhat toned down and it was made clear that all support to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) would be terminated.[167] This somewhat artificial division between the UN and NATO manner of conflict resolution, did not alter the strategic purpose in Afghanistan. However, it partly served as the back-curtain for why Norwegian forces were deployed to the northern parts of Afghanistan. It is also plays an important role in the development of the so-called 'Norwegian model for civil-military cooperation'.

Norwegian Faryab strategy

Norway relieved Britain as lead nation in Faryab province as a part of ISAF gradual expansion out of Kabul. This move coincided with a change of government in Norway following the parliament elections where Labour, the Socialist left party, and the Norwegian Centre party formed a coalition. Even though Norway assumed the role of lead nation in Faryab in 2005, it did not publish an official strategy until 2009. This does not necessarily imply that Norway did not have a strategy earlier; simply that it was not official. Thus, arguably it is challenging to analyse Norwegian strategy prior to 2009. Whilst official strategies are available to be examined, it is impossible to discern what is discussed in offices behind closed doors. Moreover, there are no indications that the 2009 strategy represented any major shift in strategic direction. The strategy did not create attention or debate when published. Thus, presumably it simply officially stated what was already known.

The strategy itself was published as a joint venture between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Justice and the Police. If one accepts that strategy

[166] Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, "Accession Declaration of the Stoltenberg II Government 19 October 2005," ed. Prime Minister's Office (Oslo: 2005).
[167] *Ibid.*

should state ends and apply means to reach these set ends, or as Hew Strachan argues: 'strategy is designed to make war useable by the state, so that it can, if need be, use force to fulfill its political objectives,' the Norwegian strategy for Faryab fell well short of this mark.[168] As a strategy it suffered from four main weaknesses. First, it did not present a plan for how aims should be achieved. Second, it did not prioritize resources in time and space. Third, it did not convey an understanding that Norwegian forces faced an armed opponent in Faryab with its own free will. Fourth, where it did provide clear guidance concerning civil-military cooperation, it broke with both counterinsurgency theory and ISAF strategy.

Hew Strachan's article 'The Lost meaning of strategy' was published three years prior to the Norwegian Faryab strategy, and addresses many of the points illustrated by the case of Norway. Strachan states that: 'the word "strategy" has acquired a universality which has robbed it of meaning, and left it only with banalities.'[169] A strategy should provide something more than overall goals for an effort; it should entail principle decisions and a framework for the commanders on the ground to operate within.[170] The Faryab strategy stated that 'the main aim of the Norwegian engagement in Afghanistan is to support the Afghan authorities in their responsibility to ensure stability, security, and development.'[171] As demonstrated in the cases of Great Britain and The Netherlands, these goals reflected the overall mission statement of ISAF. These overall goals were, however, in no manner operationalized in the Norwegian strategy. Moreover, there was no resemblance of a plan describing how these goals should be accomplished in the strategy. In this regard, the strategy was more akin to a policy document.

Prioritizing resources in a counterinsurgency campaign is, as demonstrated in the theory chapter, vital and a central component of any counterinsurgency strategy. Counterinsurgents typically never have enough resources to cover whole areas.

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[168] Hew Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy", *Survival* 47, no. 3 (2006): 49.
[169] *Ibid.*, 34.
[170] *Ibid.*, 49-52.
[171] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Civilian and Military Efforts in Faryab Province, Afghanistan."

Hence resources must be prioritized in time and space. That these priorities are reflected in the overall strategy is perhaps of even greater importance during counterinsurgency operations because these involve several sectors of the government and not just the armed forces. At the most Norway had about 500 personnel deployed in Faryab. Of these about 100 counted as 'boots on the ground' while the rest manned various staff, logistics, and other functions.[172] At the same time Faryab province is populated by about 950,000 people and is exactly the size of Wales.[173] In the introduction of the strategy it is stated that:
The main thrust of our efforts in Faryab will be based on UNAMAs integrated approach for implementation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the Provincial Development Plan (PDP), as well as the fact that Norwegian military contribution in the province is part of the UN mandated ISAF.[174]
This arguably could serve as prioritizing of Norwegian effort. One way of understanding this paragraph is that Norwegian strategy should take three main considerations into account. First, it should be conducted in accordance with the UN's integrated approach. Second, it should follow the direction set forth in the Provincial Development Plan, and third in accordance with ISAF strategy. The challenge was that any force commander would have to reconcile directions from three different actors; The UN, the local Afghan government, and ISAF.

But Norwegian strategy does not provide any guidance as to what should be done if these different partners disagree on where the efforts should be focussed. In addition, it presupposes that these different actors all have developed more detailed strategies that provide guidance for the force commander to adhere to. In this manner, the Provincial Development Plan is key. If it can be said that this was the foundation of the clear priorities of where Afghan authorities wanted forces to focus on, then it follows that it would be sensible for Norwegian strategy to

[172] The Norwegian Prime Minister's office, *Chronological Development of Norwegian Force Contributions in Afghanistan (Kronologisk Utvikling Av Det Norske Styrkebidraget Til Afghanistan)* (2016 [cited 4 April 2016]); available from https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/forsvar/internasjonale-operasjoner/innsikt-intops/kronologisk-utvikling-av-det-norske-bidr/id632365/.
[173] Petter Bauck et al., "Afghanistan: An Assessment of Conflict and Actors in Faryab Probinde to Establish a Basis for Increased Norwegian Civilian Involvement - How Can Norwegian Involvement Be Best Targeted and Organised," (Bergen: Christian Michelsen Institute, 2007), 11-13.
[174] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Civilian and Military Efforts in Faryab Province, Afghanistan," 2.

underpin this and hence strengthen Afghan rule instead of pursuing a strategy designed in Oslo. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

Unlike in Helmand and especially in Uruzgan, the concept of Afghan Development Zones was not endorsed and utilised in the same manner in Faryab province. The idea behind the development zones was to provide focal points for both civilian and military efforts in areas where it was deemed most necessary and hence ease coordination between different agencies. As shown in the case of The Netherlands this proved to be a useful tool and it was also utilised to coordinate the efforts of NGOs to some extent in Uruzgan province. The Faryab Provincial Development Plan did not compensate for the lack of development zones. The plan covered in all eight different areas of development: social safety, education, human rights and law enforcement, rural agriculture development, health and nutrition, security, infrastructure and natural resources, and economic and private sector.[175] Whilst all are important, the plan did not prioritise between different sectors. Instead each sector put forward key goals that resulted in ten specific projects.[176] Since the needs were different for the various sectors, this led to a rather disjointed whole, whereby projects was listed in very different parts of the province without an overall logic.

The goals listed concerning the different sectors are so ambitious, and sometimes so vague, that they are very difficult to operationalize. As an example, the main goal stated concerning security was to '[...] establish security in provincial level peace and stability in the region, professional police needs to be haired [*sic*] so security would be in placed [*sic*] in the province thus people can lead their secure lives in the regions.'[177] Undoubtedly, establishing security is one of the key tasks in a counterinsurgency campaigns, but this does provide any guidance when prioritizing resources. Furthermore, there were serious problems with the quality and feasibility of the entire Provincial Development Plan. This is clear when the specific projects it decides on for the security sector are scrutinized. The first

[175] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Faryab Provincial Development Plan," ed. ANDS secretariat (Kabul: 2007), 7.
[176] *Ibid.*, 11-12.
[177] *Ibid.*, 27.

major necessity concerning security listed in the plan was an awareness project aimed at creating unity between police forces and the people.[178] Whilst it is clear this was necessary, it is difficult to see that it was the most pressing need when faced with an insurgency. In addition, the plan lists construction of a police academy in Helmand for women as one of ten specific projects.[179] The overall purpose of this seemed to be national and aimed at increasing the number of women serving in the police forces. Notwithstanding that the police academy was to be constructed as far away from Faryab as one can get, it is also a very long-term goal and does not address the challenges at hand in 2006. The aim of Norwegian strategy to underpin local Afghan plans had in theory some merit. The main challenge was that it placed Norwegian strategy in many ways at the mercy of Afghan planning. Whilst this eventually is a necessary risk to take when conducting counterinsurgency, this was arguably in this case done prematurely. The Faryab Provincial Development Plan did not provide a framework for commanders to prioritize in accordance with, and it is also questionable whether the plan itself was feasible to such a degree that on must ask whether those who formulated Norwegian strategy had at all studied it in any detail.

Another challenge concerning Norwegian strategy was the understanding of the environment and the conflict Norwegian forces are deployed to, and how this is presented in the strategy. Specifically, there was an apparent lack of understanding that there were forces in Faryab with opposing strategies, willing to use force in order to resist Norwegian efforts in the area. Whilst it is not expected that a strategy presents an enemy course of action analysis, it needs to match the conflict at hand. As demonstrated in the British case, commanders on the ground that perceive the strategy as not fit for purpose, could become prone to operating outside constraints formulated in the strategy. Prior to the deployment of troops to Helmand it was debated whether the mission was peacekeeping or counterinsurgency. One difference between the two is the level of resistance one should expect, but both concepts acknowledge that there will be opposition to the mission on the ground. Norwegian strategy does not seem to admit that there was

[178] *Ibid.*, 66.
[179] *Ibid.*, 68.

any opposition at all. When addressing perceived challenges for the strategy it states that 'the Ghowrmach district [...] constitutes a particular challenge.'[180] Ghowrmach district, formally a part of the neighboring eastern province Bagdhis, was after Norwegian pressure administratively included into Faryab early in 2009. Whilst the strategy mentions Ghowrmach as a particular challenge, the PRT's evaluation was and had been for some time, more or less totally under Taliban control and played a key role in fueling the insurgency in Faryab province.[181]

Whether or not Ghowrmach district played a central role in destabilizing the rest of the province is debatable. What is clear, however, is that the province was well outside government control. Norwegian forces had prior to 2009 led three major operations into Ghowrmach district: Operations Harekate Yolo I and Harekate Yolo II in 2007, and Operation Karez in 2008. All these operations resulted in serious skirmishes with opposing forces and were widely covered and debated in Norwegian media. It was a well-known fact by 2009 (for anyone with any knowledge about Afghanistan) that there were forces opposing Norwegian and ISAF presence in the region. However, this nevertheless seemed to be completely overlooked in Norwegian strategy. Instead of presenting a strategy, which had a realistic outlook on the situation, it seemed to deal with the Faryab province as any other area that has fallen victim to an earthquake or another natural disaster.

The Faryab strategy did provide clear guidance in one regard. Much of the emphasis in the strategy was put on civil-military cooperation as indicated by its title. In a counterinsurgency all efforts of the government need to be well coordinated and the role of the military forces should be to create security so other agencies of the government can do their jobs.[182] The need for better civil-military coordination had also been a priority for ISAF between 2006-2009. This was further stressed in General McChrystal's initial assessment when he assumed command of ISAF in 2009.[183] The Norwegian strategy presented its directions on

[180] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Civilian and Military Efforts in Faryab Province, Afghanistan," 3.
[181] NO officer A, "Personal Interview," (2015).
[182] Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, 157-59 and Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 55-60.
[183] Stanley McChrystal, "COMISAF's Initial Assessment," (ISAF, 2009), C-1.

the topic under the headline ‘strengthened coordination between civilian and military actors’ it stated:

> The respective roles of the Norwegian civilian and military actors shall be clearly distinguished, and the coordination between all actors shall be strengthened and their efforts made coherent. The civilian component shall therefore be drawn out of the PRT and linked more closely to the local authorities and to the UN (UNAMA) as soon as the security situation permits.[184]

In this sense, the Norwegian solution for civil-military cooperation differed markedly from both counterinsurgency theory and ISAF strategy. Instead of a closer cooperation and coordination between civilian and military actors, the Norwegian civilian component was to be detached from the PRT and cooperate closer with the UN and Afghan partners. Exactly how this was meant to ‘strengthen coordination between all actors’ was somewhat unclear. UNAMA’s presence in the area was negligible, and the weaknesses in local Afghan planning have been discussed above.[185] What *clearly distinguished roles* between military and civilian actors entailed was also made more explicitly clear in guidance provided to PRT commanders. Several of the officers interviewed were told that there should be daylight between military and civilian presence in the same area and that this constraint was in effect even before the Faryab strategy was published in 2009.[186] This effectively ordered Norwegian forces to not directly cooperate with civilian actors and hence constituted a clear breach with not only counterinsurgency theory, but also with ISAF strategy. This clear separation between civilian and military actors became known as the ‘Norwegian model’. An explanation of this constraint will be further explored later in this chapter.

Norway, at least at first glance, adhered to counterinsurgency theory in one area. As discussed previously in the theory chapter, a counterinsurgency campaign is a highly politicized war. Military force should only be used in support of a political

[184] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Civilian and Military Efforts in Faryab Province, Afghanistan," 3.
[185] NORAD Evaluation Department, "Evaluation of Norwegian Development Cooperation with Afghanistan 2001-2011," 136.
[186] NO officer A, "Personal Interview." and NO officer C, "Personal Interview," (2016).

effort against the insurgents. A political dialogue with the insurgents needs to be instigated in order to find a political solution to the conflict at some point during the conflict. The Norwegian peace initiatives in Afghanistan were not publically known until the Norwegian Afghanistan Commission published its report in 2016.[187] According to the official report of the commission, the peace talks had two strategic purposes for Norway. First, Norway has a long-standing tradition as a peace broker and work towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Afghanistan could serve to reinforce this image. Second, and more influenced by *realpolitik* Norwegian diplomats and politicians had experienced that facilitating peace talks gave them more access to important allies, particularly the US.[188] Promoting peace could thus give Norway closer bi-lateral connections to our most important ally. During the period studied in this thesis, the peace talks focused on the 'Quetta track.'[189] The initiative stated late in 2007 and was kept alive until late 2010. The aim was to facilitate talks between the leadership of the Taliban movement, the *Quetta Shura*, and the Afghan government. Norway's role was solely to facilitate the meetings and not to act as a mediator due to the Norwegian involvement with combat troops in Afghanistan.[190] Even though the attempt eventually failed in its aim to facilitate meetings between the Taliban and Afghan authorities, it can be seen as an attempt to broker a political solution.

The relevant question for this thesis is, how the Norwegian effort looks from a counterinsurgency point of view? First, it was an effort isolated from the other efforts done by Norway in Afghanistan. It was not in any way connected to the combat operations or development work done by Norway in Faryab province. Norway's involvement in the ISAF operation was seen more as a hindrance to the peace initiative than as a natural part of the whole.[191] Second, the timing of the peace talks ran against what is advised by counterinsurgency theory. Though most counterinsurgency campaigns, such as the British in Northern-Ireland and in Malaya, ends with a political settlement, the timing of negotiations is important.

[187] "A Good Ally: Norway in Afghanistan 2001-2014," 152.
[188] *Ibid.*, 159.
[189] *Ibid.*, 162.
[190] *Ibid.*, 162-63.
[191] *Ibid.*, 162.

David Galula points out that: 'The counterinsurgent cannot safely enter into negotiations except from a position of strength, or his potential supporters will flock to the insurgent side.'[192] The need for secrecy was not lost on the Norwegian government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs worried how NATO allies and regional powers in the area would react if it became public knowledge that Norway tried to arrange negotiations with an organization deemed as a terrorist organization.[193]

In terms of timing, the Norwegian initiative was arguably somewhat premature. By 2007 ISAF and the Afghan government was at the best at a stalemate with the Taliban. Whilst ISAF controlled most of the largest cities, the Taliban grew stronger in many of the provinces and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) struggled with both recruitment and training standards. While the Norwegian initiative was isolated from the rest of Norwegian efforts, and was arguably somewhat premature it still represents an initiative where Norway sought a political solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. However, Norway's reasons for doings so seemed to rest more on domestic politics interests than a conscious effort to end the insurgency in Afghanistan.

A primacy of politics?

It has proven difficult to assess whether Norway adhered to a primacy of politics concerning their Afghanistan contribution. Norwegian participation in Afghanistan was primarily a result of both security and defense political considerations whereby a clear UN mandate underpinned the UN line, and a NATO led operation supported the NATO line in Norwegian politics. Whilst it was unproblematic to ride both these horses into Afghanistan, it proved more difficult to do the same when in Afghanistan. ISAF strategy, in particular from 2009 and onwards, demanded a tightly coordinated civil-military cooperation in line with counterinsurgency theory and doctrine. Norway, on the other hand, opted for a Norwegian model with a clear separation between military and civilian effort. This was more in line with the UN's integrated missions model and also a concession to a strong NGO lobby in Norwegian domestic politics.

[192] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 55.
[193] "A Good Ally: Norway in Afghanistan 2001-2014," 162-63.

To give organizations which are non-political by nature a central role in such a politicized conflict as counterinsurgency is itself a questionable approach. Counterinsurgency theory advocates that security operations, governance and development must be done in accordance with a clear political aim. It is hard to envision how organization which are impartial can do the main bulk of the development work in such a context. Norwegian strategy took more form of a policy and provided no clear direction or priorities on how political goals should be achieved through the use of military force. In this manner, as long as the Norwegian PRT in Faryab ensured daylight between their operations and their civilian counterparts, they were arguably more or less left free to decide for themselves what to do. Moreover, the Norwegian approach was to work closely with Afghan authorities and thereby ensure an Afghan solution to Afghan problems. However upon further scrutiny, Afghan plans in the area had many of the same weaknesses as Norwegian strategy and did not provide a framework for operations.

Norway's efforts to get peace talks commenced in Afghanistan was also more a result of domestic interests rather than part of the greater effort in Afghanistan. Within the framework of population-centric counterinsurgency there is little evidence to support that Norway at all pursued a counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan. Therefore, it is arguable in particular with regards to the separation of civil and military efforts that Norway consciously chose not to pursue a counterinsurgency strategy.

The population as the center of gravity

Overall, Norway did not pursue a population centric approach to their mission in Afghanistan. Due to a general mistrust of counterinsurgency as a viable solution to the conflict in Afghanistan, it pursued a more compartmentalized approach that deliberately distanced them from counterinsurgency on the strategic level. At the tactical level, the Norwegian troops had insufficient troop numbers to dominate much of Faryab province with a population-centric approach. Several operations on the tactical level were planned in a population-centric fashion. However, they tended to be over-reliant on the performance of the ANSF and the time allotted

for the hold and build phases were not sufficient. Consequently, the operations on a tactical level were more characterized by an enemy-centric rather than a population-centric approach.

Strategic view

Much of the reason why Norway never pursued a population centric approach in Afghanistan can be found in the Stoltenberg II governments view on conflict and development in general. Parts of the Norwegian Labour and the Socialist Left parties are in general more skeptical towards a US led world order than the more conservative parties in Norway. The Socialist Left party, as an example, broke away from the Labour because they wished for Norway to leave NATO. Many of the senior members of these parties were highly critical towards US politics after 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq in 2003 in particular. Counterinsurgency as a doctrine was associated with imperialism, dirty wars in the colonies, and the war on terror.

In 2017 Norwegian journalist Kristoffer Egeberg, one of Norway's most informed journalists on defense and security matters, published his book *Fredsnasjonen Norge* [The peace nation Norway] where he analyses Norway's engagement in international conflicts. He argues that work on a new approach to participation in international conflicts had begun even before the Stoltenberg II government won the elections in late 2005. Several researchers and high-level politicians from the Norwegian Labour and Socialist Left parties had regular informal meetings to discuss policy. One of these meetings specifically discussed 'the importance of separating military operations and development in conflict zones.'[194] Among the participants in this meeting were Jonas Gahr-Støre and Espen Barth Eide, minister of foreign affairs and defense respectively in the Stoltenberg II government. Many of the participants in these meetings had previously worked for NGOs in conflict areas. Jonas Gahr-Støre was the head of the International Red Cross in Norway at the time. When the negotiations between the parties forming the Stoltenberg II coalition government were completed it was decided that the basic guidelines of a

[194] Kristoffer Egebeg, *Fredsnasjonen Norge [the Peace Nation Norway]* (Oslo: Kagge forlag, 2017), 368-69.

clear separation between military operations and development work would become part of the government's official policy.[195]

Even though ISAF had worked from the basis of a counterinsurgency approach for several years, it was not until October 2009 and the NATO defense secretary meeting that counterinsurgency as a formal basis for the strategy in Afghanistan was discussed at this level in NATO. According to the official Norwegian report, this issue took the Norwegian delegation by surprise, and it was approved without a formal Norwegian objection.[196] This led to a paradox, as also pointed out in the official report. On the one hand, Norway approved counterinsurgency as the foundation for ISAF strategy in Afghanistan at the highest political level in NATO. On the other hand, the 'Norwegian Model' with a clear separation of military and civilian efforts, was given as a clear instruction to the PRT in Faryab.[197]

The choice of separating civilian and military efforts made it difficult for the Norwegians to conduct the population centric approach in Faryab. By effectively forcing a separation between security and development it is difficult to conduct comprehensive population-centric operations. In practical terms, it would entail that the security forces cleared an area and generated enough security for the development and governance side of the mission to work without the presence of security forces. This approach is the exact opposite to counterinsurgency theory. As David Galula argues: 'Military and political actions cannot be separated.'[198] What Galula refers to here as political action, is the development and governance which were the two other lines of operation in Afghanistan.

The separation of the civilian and military effort made a population centric approach difficult to achieve in practical terms. However, there is no evidence that the military forces were restrained from pursuing a population centric approach despite the limitations on cooperation with the civilian effort. Whilst, this limitation was explicit and clear from 2006 and onwards, there was no other

[195] *Ibid.*, 449.
[196] "A Good Ally: Norway in Afghanistan 2001-2014," 40-41.
[197] *Ibid.*
[198] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 58-59.

clear national guidance on how Norwegian forces should operate in Faryab. On the contrary, the PRT commanders enjoyed a great deal of freedom of action. In practical terms, the PRT commanders could decide on any course of action as long as the separation between civilian and military efforts were upheld. A senior staff officer in the 2006 PRT points this out during his interview. He explained that they were given no national guidance on how to operate whatsoever before their deployment. Upon direct request, they got a meeting with representatives from the MoD, which, according to him, provided nothing but overall ambitions for the mission.[199] The idea in the MoD and defense staff was that the Norwegian forces were detached to ISAF, hence operational guidelines for what the forces should do in Faryab should come from Regional Command North (RC-N). The report from the Afghanistan Commission describes the state of affairs of military operations in the 2006-2008 period in the following manner:

> Neither ISAF nor the Norwegian authorities provided any prepared strategy or detailed guidelines for what the PRT was to do in Faryab. Many from the military had expected ISAF Regional Command North to issue clear guidelines for the PRT's work. When Norwegian Joint Headquarters (FOH) did not issue clear guidelines either, Norwegian PRT commanders were left with considerable discretionary power within the framework of NATO operational plans. This freedom to act was meant to give the PRT commanders flexibility. The Norwegian Chief of Defence stressed that it was the individual unit head and PRT commanders who would be best placed for formulating missions for their units.[200]

It was in other words very much up to the different PRT commanders how the PRT operated. Apart from the restraint on daylight between military and civilian efforts, there were few other guidelines, both from the coalition and national. Norwegian commanders had more freedom of action than most lieutenant colonels could ever dream of having.

Tactical view

Norwegian operations in Faryab were characterized more by an enemy-centric approach rather than a population-centric approach. This was mainly caused by

[199] NO officer B, "Personal Interview," (2016).
[200] "A Good Ally: Norway in Afghanistan 2001-2014," 132.

poor force ratios, a lack of long term planning, and a tendency to treat the conflict in Faryab in conventional terms rather than as an insurgency.

When Norway assumed command over the PRT in Faryab from the British forces in 2005 it also assumed responsibility for all of Faryab province. Initially, the PRT was rather small with a PRT staff and three Military Observer Teams (MOT). Norwegian presence in northern Afghanistan was further strengthened in mid-2006 when a company sized quick reaction force (QRF) was deployed to Mazar-e Sharif.[201] This QRF was not under the command of the Norwegian PRT, but was meant to serve as a QRF for all of ISAF. Nevertheless, the Norwegian PRT used this force to support operations on several occasions in Faryab province. In mid-2008 Norway terminated the QRF. In order to provide the PRT with more boots on the ground and an organic manoeuvre force, it deployed a task-unit (TU) as a part of the PRT. While this task-unit underwent several changes it normally consisted of a small-mechanised rifle company[202] with support elements.[203] Military staff also dominated the Norwegian PRT in terms of numbers. Only three members of the staff were civilians. In theory, these three individuals should be responsible for political, development and civil-military coordination.[204]

Initially, the Norwegian forces had no realistic opportunity to conduct any operations where they controlled even small populated areas. The only forces available to the PRT were three to four MOTs. These were normally eight men strong reconnaissance teams. Their main task was to gather information and intelligence on the state of affairs in Faryab province.[205] These teams normally came from the Army Intelligence Battalion or similar units. Therefore, the tasks normally associated with securing the population in a counterinsurgency is not what they are equipped and trained to complete. Moreover, with only three to four of these teams available, it was extremely limited what they could actually

[201] The Norwegian Prime Minister's office, *Chronological Development of Norwegian Force Contributions in Afghanistan (Kronologisk Utvikling Av Det Norske Styrkebidraget Til Afghanistan)*

[202] While a mechanised rifle company at full strength has three organic rifle platoons the task-unit often operated with only one or two rifle platoons.

[203] The Norwegian Prime Minister's office, *Chronological Development of Norwegian Force Contributions in Afghanistan (Kronologisk Utvikling Av Det Norske Styrkebidraget Til Afghanistan)*

[204] NORAD Evaluation Department, "Evaluation of Norwegian Development Cooperation with Afghanistan 2001-2011," 116.

[205] "A Good Ally: Norway in Afghanistan 2001-2014," 132.

have secured. The lack of an own manoeuvre force for the PRT led to a pressure for the Norwegian QRF, which belonged to RC-N as a whole to be integrated into the Norwegian PRT.[206] Whilst this provided the PRT with a separate manoeuvre unit, it still did not boost the numbers to anywhere near what would have been required for long-term population-centric operations. Even with the inclusion of the QRF, the PRT could never field more than 120 boots on the ground for sustained operations.[207] The British counterinsurgency doctrine suggests a ratio of one counterinsurgent per 50 inhabitants as a planning guide for population-centric counterinsurgency operations.[208] Thus, in a province the size of Wales with 950,000 inhabitants, it was clear from the outset that Norway never had enough troops to control Faryab province as a whole.

As discussed previously in both of the other case studies as well as the theory chapter, it is very common for the counterinsurgent to never have enough resources. Hence counterinsurgency theory advice to prioritise forces to vital areas in the beginning, and then gradually expand the government control out from these.[209] Unlike the case of Britain and The Netherlands, Norway made no strategic priorities in regards to which areas in Faryab the effort should be concentrated. As demonstrated previously, the Norwegian PRT commanders enjoyed a great deal of freedom to choose where they wished to focus the effort. Unlike their Dutch colleagues, the Norwegian PRT did not produce a long-term plan for their operations when deployed into Faryab. Instead, each 6-month deployment made their overall framework orders within the wide parameters received through the ISAF chain of command. Especially early on in the mission, this led to operations being run in different areas for the different deployments and it is difficult to find a pattern. Later in the period both the Norwegian PRT and RC-N became somewhat more systematic in their approach, particularly from 2009 and onwards

[206] *Ibid.*, 60.
[207] The Norwegian Prime Minister's office, *Chronological Development of Norwegian Force Contributions in Afghanistan (Kronologisk Utvikling Av Det Norske Styrkebidraget Til Afghanistan)*
[208] British Army, "Countering Insurgency," ed. Ministry of Defence (London: 2009), Ch 4, p. 7.
[209] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 70-71 and Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 111-12.

because the main focus from this point and onwards was to support ANSF in their operations.[210]

Despite few national strategic guidelines, the Norwegian PRT still conducted several large operations in Faryab province. According to the official commissions report, the transfer of the QRF from RC-N to the PRT as a manoeuvre unit made these operations possible. Up until 2008, the PRT had to be given support on a case-by-case basis when they wanted to conduct deliberate operations. The reinforcement of the PRT meant that their capacity for both defensive and offensive operations increased. Upon the permanent arrival of the QRF, it was discussed how this could best be utilised. Three different concepts were discussed. It could still be used as a QRF and react to actions by the insurgents. It could be used in an offensive capacity and pre-empt actions by the insurgent, or a combination of the two. 'The PRT chose the preventative/pre-emptive option in order to influence a situation rather than reacting to situations that arose.'[211] Among the largest and more publicised operations were Harekate Yolo II in November 2007, Karez in May 2008, and Joint Vanguard Viper in April 2009. All these three operations took place in the contested Ghowrmach[212] area south-west of the Faryab province. All of these three operations had the aim of clearing the Ghowrmach valley, disrupting insurgents in the area, and leaving a permanent presence of security forces. However, due to different explanations, the ambition of pacifying the Ghowrmach Valley, and thereby securing the vital ring road which runs through it, failed on all three occasions for different reasons. One testament of this is that three operations were carried out with almost the same objectives over an 18-month period.

Operation Harekate Yolo II was carried out in conjunction with RC-N since the QRF was still under RC-N command at this time. It was mounted because it became clear that a growing Taliban presence in the Ghowrmach area threatened the ring road in the north of the district. The ring road is the main road in the country, as

[210] Provinvial Reconstruction Team Meymaneh (PRT MEY), "D+180 Rapport PRT XIII," (Meymaneh: 2009), 21.
[211] "A Good Ally: Norway in Afghanistan 2001-2014," 60.
[212] Sometimes spelled Ghowrmach in orders and reports.

the name depicts in runs around the central mountains and through all the major cities in Afghanistan. One of the main national projects was to improve the ring road. Insurgent activities in the Ghowrmach area were seen as a threat to this. The stated objective of Harekate Yolo was to 'facilitate a permanent deployment of ANSF in that area, coordinated with a solid reconstruction and governance effect.'[213] The initial purpose was very much in line with counterinsurgency theory. It aimed at a comprehensive approach, and the deployment of a static security force after the clear phase was concluded. However, already in the planning phase of the operation, it became clear that the development and reconstruction phases of the operation had received less attention than the clear phase in the RC planning staff. The commander of the Norwegian QRF voiced his concerns reading the matter in a letter to RC-N on November 7:

> I wish to see BGW's [Brigade commander] plan for who/ when/ how "humanitarian assistance" will take place in G [Ghowrmach] after we have established security. […] If it is not possible to cover the gap between milops and "long term projects" INS [insurgents] will take advantage of this when we pull our forces out. They will return and entrench their position.[214]

The QRF commander's reservations proved to be well founded. The Norwegian QRF and Afghan National Army (ANA) forces were able to fight its way into the Ghowrmach valley, but the development effort never materialised and the Afghan National Police (ANP) were not able to keep the insurgents away by themselves after the ISAF forces vacated the area.

Operation Karez was conducted in the same area a little over six months later. The task-unit from the Norwegian PRT was tasked to 'conduct area security operations by interdicting OF [opposing forces] in KOR-I KAREZ and BPT [be prepared to] interdict in JAR-I-SIAH.'[215] Again the purpose of the operation was to generate a permanent presence by ANSF in the area. This time a permanent Forward Operating Base (FOB) would be constructed. Additionally, German forces would contribute with development assets after the insurgents were cleared from the

[213] ISAF Regional Command-North, "RC-N Wngo No 3 024-07 HKYII, Main Body," (Mazar e Sharif: 2007), 1.
[214] Commander Norwegian QRF RC-N, "QRF Contribution to COM RC-N," (2007).
[215] ISAF Regional Command-North, "Frago 022 Op Viking Karez to Tmbn (nor)/ QRF5, OPO 001 Op Viking," (Mazar e Sharif: 2008).

area. Operation Karez, just like Operation Harekate Yolo, was planned in accordance with counterinsurgency theory. One can question whether the force was large enough to clear and subsequently hold that much terrain, but there was an idea of a permanent presence after the clear operation. However, just like in the previous operation, things did not go according to plan. About 48 hours before the operation was to commence, the Germans pulled all their forces out of the operation due to political constraints. It also became clear that the ANSF would not be able to independently hold the area after the ISAF forces had redeployed. The operation went ahead anyway, but despite the Taliban suffering heavy losses in the area on the 16th and 17th May, the operation failed to reach several of its objectives.

The last attempt to gain control in the Ghowrmach area in the period covered in this thesis was Operation Joint Vanguard Viper. The background for the operation was that previous operations in the area proved unsuccessful. Additionally, the Qeysar and Ghowrmach areas were still under insurgent control.[216] The purpose of the operation was:

> To put further pressure on ins [insurgents], and thus threaten their core areas, block their preferred avenues of approach and operate in force in key areas will expand the perceived dominance of ANSF and ISAF and marginalize INS ability to claim control over the population.[217]

This time the operation was coordinated with the Spanish forces west of Ghowrmach. They would advance out of Herat and block any attempts from the Taliban to retreat out of the area. When ISAF forces had linked up along the ring road, permanent posts manned by the ANP would ensure a lasting government foothold.[218] However, just like the two previous operations, it quickly became clear that the plan was overly optimistic and not well coordinated. When the Norwegian forces reached the province border along the ring road, the Spanish force west of them had not even left Herat. Furthermore, the Afghan police force which was to man the police posts in the area were not yet available as they had not finished their training.[219] Once again, the ISAF force had to leave the area

[216] PRT Meymaneh (NOR), "09-032 Joint OP Vanguard Viper," (Meymaneh: 2009).
[217] *Ibid.*, 1.
[218] *Ibid.*, 3 and NO officer C, "Personal Interview."
[219] NO officer C, "Personal Interview."

after the clear phase was conducted.

With respect to whether the Norwegian PRT conducted population centric operations in accordance with counterinsurgency theory, the above descriptions provide several insights into the challenges of contemporary conflicts. First, there seems to have been an overreliance on Afghan security forces' ability to secure areas after they were cleared. Arguably, all three operations in the planning stage were population centric. They all included plans for a static force to be left in the area after the clear phase had been conducted. In order to compensate for their lack of ISAF forces in the area, it was in all cases planned to leave ANSF as the main provider of security in the cleared areas. However, arguably the Norwegian PRT in all of the cases overestimated the ability of the ANSF to solve this mission. The assumption that the local forces would be able to hold the area once the PRT redeployed its own forces turned out to be wrong on each occasion.

When Sir Robert Thompson described the use of local forces as static security units, he seemed to work out from a concept where the government forces in the area train their own indigenous forces.[220] Modern counterinsurgencies are more complex. In the case of Faryab, the Norwegian forces who planned and conducted the operations were not in direct control of the Afghan security forces which were supposed to do the back-fill. In addition, it does not appear that RC-N assumed this responsibility. Moreover, it can be questioned whether it was at all prudent, from a counterinsurgency point of view, to pursue these operations in the Ghowrmach district. As demonstrated above, the Norwegian PRT never had enough forces to hold the areas, particularly when it became clear that the efficiency of the ANSF was lower than expected. In the case of Operation Karez, the PRT knew that the supposed development and governance parts of the mission would not take place before the operation was launched. The *clear-return to base* approach which these Norwegian operations eventually developed into risked the danger of quickly becoming counterproductive. Sir Robert Thompson argues when discussing basic operational concepts that: 'Clear operations will, however, be a waste of time unless the government is ready to follow the up immediately with hold

[220] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 112.

operations.'[221] The main objective for both insurgents and counterinsurgents is to control the population. If security forces do not remain in the area and take control of the population, the insurgents will normally trickle back and regain control despite losing the skirmish in a purely military sense. This dynamic was also visible during Operation Karez. One of the objectives was to arrest some of the suspected Taliban leaders in the village of Arzanak. The post-operational report described this part of the mission in the following manner: 'These operations did not lead to the desired results because the main parts of the population and INS [insurgents] of ARZANAK had escaped towards the mountains.'[222] The strength of the insurgents is that they are fluid. Without permanent presence, and control over the population which the insurgent depend upon, it is very difficult for the counterinsurgent to progress.

On the strategic level the Norwegians never directly engaged with the question of which approach the operations should have. However, the strategy of civil-military segregation did not promote a population-centric approach. On the contrary this led to a division of labour where the military seems to have taken the task of engaging the enemy forces in the area. Furthermore, the Norwegian task force had few troops in the province. This made long-term population-centric operations difficult. While operations were often planned with a *clear-hold-build* framework the *hold* phase was never sufficiently prioritised. Overall this led to an operational pattern which was more characterise by an enemy-centric than a population-centric approach.

A concerted government effort

With respect to a concerted government effort, the Norwegians eventually chose to pursue a very different model from what is advocated by counterinsurgency theory. Worried that a close cooperation between development and security efforts would undermine the impartiality of NGOs and other development workers, the Norwegian government pursued a policy of clear division between military and

[221] *Ibid.*
[222] ISAF Regional Command-North, "RC North Post Operational Report OP Karez, 25 July 2008," (Mazar e Sharif: 2008), 3.

civilian action. On the tactical level, the guidance given to the troops was that there should be daylight between military operations and development projects. This again made it very difficult to secure areas where development was meant to take place.

Strategic view, the "Norwegian model"

A core characteristic of population-centric counterinsurgency is the importance of a concerted government effort, or comprehensive approach. Many of these aspects have, from a strategy point of view, been discussed above. This part of the case study will explore how the 'Norwegian model' functioned in the operational theatre, and what the consequences of this approach meant from a counterinsurgency standpoint. Sir Robert Thompson argued that a comprehensive approach to operations were key in several regards.

> It is essential [...] that there should be a proper balance between the military and civilian effort, with complete coordination in all fields. Otherwise, a situation will arise in which military operations produce no lasting results because they are unsupported by civil follow-up action.[223]

In the same manner, Thompson warned that civil action in areas with insurgent presence without a simultaneous government military presence was a 'waste of time and money.'[224] Civilian efforts made to improve the standard of living or governance 'are inoperative when offered when the insurgent still controls the population.'[225] In order to win or persuade a population to support the government rather than the insurgent's, counterinsurgency theory and doctrine argues that these efforts must work in tandem. The dynamics implied in this was one of the reasons why Norwegian NGOs adamantly opposed this. The primary criteria for distribution are based on need and sustainability in humanitarian aid and development work. The work of these organisations is apolitical and their security is based on an impartial approach to the parties to the conflict. Counterinsurgency theory, on the other hand, is a highly political affair and does not shy away from using development aid as a tool to win the population on their side. David Kilcullen

[223] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 55.
[224] *Ibid.*
[225] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 55.

argues that development efforts 'must be designed to help the population to choose between the government and the insurgent, and enforce that choice once made.'[226] Such an approach to humanitarian aid and development could seriously undermine NGOs impartiality and hence their security.

The impartiality of NGOs and securing a humanitarian space in conflict zones were, however, not the only reason for Norway to adopt a clear separation between military and civilian efforts. It was also argued that this model worked better and was more efficient. Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre claimed that '[B]oth long-term experience and new research shows us that a good civil-military *work distribution* produces the best results in the long run.'[227] Much of this experience was based on the early days in Iraq and Afghanistan where the US Army in particular gave commanders large sums of cash to implement so-called quick-impact projects (QIP).[228] Evidence also exists in the Faryab province to support this view. In the first contingents, the PRT had its own Civil-military Co-operation (CIMIC) group who worked on the development side of the mission. This group was tasked with implementing development projects. One of the most prestigious undertakings of the PRT was to refurbish and improve the local hospital in the provincial capitol of Meymaneh. This was then fitted with state of the art equipment brought in from Norway. This equipment then proved too sensitive for local power fluctuations, local staff could not operate it, and it created a need for spare parts that the local hospital could not afford.[229] These type of projects provided support for those in favor of a clear separation between civilian and military efforts.

What were the underlying reasons for Norway's different approach to a concerted government effort compared to Great Britain and The Netherlands? In her analysis of the 'Norwegian model' Lene Ekehaugen points out three main influences. First,

[226] Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla, Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*, 67.
[227] Jonas Gahr Støre, "Norwegian Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan (Norsk Helhetlig Innsats I Afghanistan)," ed. The Royal Norwegian Department of Foreign Affairs (Oslo: 2010).
[228] Friis, "The Norwegian Approach to Afghanistan: Civilian-Military Segregation," 1.
[229] Geert Gompelman, "Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan's Faryab Province," (Boston: Feinstein International Center - Tufts University, 2011), 36 and NORAD Evaluation Department, "Evaluation of Norwegian Development Cooperation with Afghanistan 2001-2011," 111.

NGOs enjoy a considerable influence upon Norwegian politics. Especially the left side of Norwegian politics has had close connection with NGOs for years. Tor-Erik Hanssen points out in his thesis that 17 members of Stoltenberg's two cabinets either came directly from positions with an NGO, or went from cabinet and into a position in an NGO.[230] Second, Norway's primary experience in international operations has been alongside the UN. Third, Norway is a big player in humanitarian aid and development on a global stage. Ekehaugen argues that of these three, it was the influence that NGOs had on Norwegian politics that were the most influential.[231] Whilst Norway is by no means a military superpower, it does hold superpower ambitions concerning humanitarian aid and development. Norway was the ranked seventh in gross spending with 5,58 billion USD with respect to official development assistance for 2013. In addition, in terms of percentage of gross national income, Norway ranked first with 1,07% spent.[232] This does not only make aid and development big business in Norway, but it is an important part of a national self-image.[233] The close cooperation between civilian and military efforts advocated by counterinsurgency theory had prior to the publication of the Faryab strategy, been heavily criticized by NGOs. NGOs security in conflict zones is assured only as long as the parties to the conflict perceive them as impartial. Both a close affiliation with military forces and military forces venturing into what traditionally had been perceived as the NGOs domain could undermine this. Colin Archer, an Air Force general who after retirement became secretary general of Norwegian Refugee Council, argued that '[...] it is imperative to maintain a crystal clear distinction between humanitarian aid and military operations.'[234] Archer was by no means alone in voicing this sentiment. A research report ordered by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs prior to the Faryab strategy argued along the same lines.

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[230] Hanssen, "Coalition Strategy in Complex Conflicts: The Strategic Behaviour of Three Nato-States in Afghanistan 2003-2008" (King's College London, 2013), 77

[231] Lene Ekhaugen, "Coordination of Efforts "the Norwegian Model" (Samordning Av Virkemidler: "Den Norske Modellen")," in *Norway in International Operations (Norge I Internasjonale Operasjoner)*, ed. Tormod Heier, Anders Kjølberg, and Carsten Ronnfeldt (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2014), 101.

[232] OSCD, *Net Official Development Assistance from Dac Donors in 2013* (2014 [cited 8 April 2016]); available from http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/ODA%202013%20Tables%20and%20Charts%20En.pdf.

[233] Ekhaugen, "Coordination of Efforts "the Norwegian Model" (Samordning Av Virkemidler: "Den Norske Modellen")," 108.

[234] Colin Archer, "Right to Protection (Rett Til Beskyttelse)," *Klassekampen*, 27 November 2007.

> The PRT needs to ensure that in practice there is a clear separation between the security and humanitarian mandates. This separation should include provisions that diplomatic/development staff, the police and possibly the Norwegian Mission of Legal Advisers to Afghanistan 'Styrkebrønnen' operate independently of the military forces, are not co-located, use separate interpreters and do not depend on armed military escort when travelling in Maymane or in the province.[235]

In order for such opinions to find their way into Norwegian strategy they also needed to convince the right authorities to adhere to this view. Both Hanssen and Ekehaugen show that there were close links between the NGO environment and central figures in the Norwegian government.[236] Most prominent among these were Jonas Gahr Støre who went directly from the position as chairman of the Norwegian Red Cross before he became the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2005. Whilst one cannot argue that NGOs dictated parts of Norwegian strategy in Afghanistan it undoubtedly had a substantial influence on it. When asked by the Norwegian Liberal Party to present the rationale for a clear distinction between civilian and military effort the Minister of Foreign Affairs Støre argued;

We have seen that humanitarian actors are today more and more the victims of attacks in Afghanistan and other parts of the world. Military forces often view short-term civilian efforts as a part of their work to win the trust of the population. This is problematic because a mix-up of the roles of armed soldier in one second and humanitarian actor in the next creates insecurity. Such efforts can resemble humanitarian efforts, but is given with other motives and can *in extremis* endanger the humanitarian organizations. We are talking about an important, principal distinction.[237]

Støre also argued that a clear distinction where military forces could focus on their tasks and civilian actors on theirs was more fit for purpose and efficient than the mix-up done by most other nations in ISAF.[238] However, Støre's main argument for the 'Norwegian model' rested on the need to retain a humanitarian space in

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[235] Bauck et al., "Afghanistan: An Assessment of Conflict and Actors in Faryab Probinde to Establish a Basis for Increased Norwegian Civilian Involvement - How Can Norwegian Involvement Be Best Targeted and Organised," 3.

[236] Ekhaugen, "Coordination of Efforts "the Norwegian Model" (Samordning Av Virkemidler: "Den Norske Modellen")," 107 and Tor-Erik Hanssen, "Coalition Stragey in Complex Conflicts: The Strategic Behaviour of Three Nato-States in Afghanistan 2003-2008" (King's College London, 2013).

[237] Støre, "Norwegian Comprehensive Approach in Afghanistan (Norsk Helhetlig Innsats I Afghanistan)."(My translation)

[238] *Ibid.*

conflicts. He does not once in the letter refer to what was ISAF strategy and guidance considering civil-military cooperation. Thus, for Norway, as a major player in humanitarian aid and development, it was more important to be able to continue to play this role than what was expected from the alliance in Afghanistan. If there was a primacy of politics when it came to civil-military cooperation, it was more a case of a primary of domestic politics than what doctrine and theory describes as necessary to defeat an insurgency.

Another factor that can explain the 'Norwegian model' for civil-military cooperation is the lack of substantial military advice in the matter. As illustrated above, NGOs had a clear, and legitimate, interest in a clear distinction between military and civilian efforts. One might expect that the higher echelons of the Norwegian armed forces in the same manner proposed an approach in line with military theory and doctrine for Norwegian strategy. The Chief of the Norwegian Defense Forces tasked General Lilland with heading a committee who should answer 'how Norwegian coordination could be strengthened from an armed forces point of view' and 'what the armed forces could contribute with in this regard.'[239] In the mandate for the committee it was pointed out that the report should:

> Give special consideration to the difference in civilian and military role-interpretation, at the same time as the national effort shall appear coordinated and comprehensive. The political guidance for the "Norwegian model" is therefore to be given special emphasis.[240]

Considering this mandate, the committee was placed in somewhat of a dilemma. The role of the armed forces is to provide professional advice on strategy from their perspective. Thus, this should be based on military theory and coalition strategy. In this case it was asked to do so, but within political constraints that clearly went against both military theory and ISAF strategy. From a military point of view, it is very difficult to see how one could achieve a comprehensive approach in a counterinsurgency operation, and at the same time operate under the constraint of a clear separation between military and civilian effort. The principle of a coordinated government action, or comprehensive approach, was one of the

[239] Jon B Lilland, "Report on Comprehensive Approach (Rapport Helhetlig Innsats)," (Oslo: Norwegian Armed Forces, 2010), 2.(My translation)
[240] *Ibid*.(My translation)

core foundations of both counterinsurgency doctrine and ISAF strategy at this time. The report goes some way to describe this challenge. After a short description of ISAF strategy and their approach to counterinsurgency operations it states:

> The method [counterinsurgency] puts Norwegian forces in a dilemma. On the one hand a tight integration of civilian and military means is implied. On the other hand this integration could lead to a mix-up of roles that run contrary to the Norwegian PRT model.[241]

Instead of reaching the conclusion that from a military point of view Norway could not uphold the principle of civil-military separation and at the same time adhere to ISAF strategy it argued:

> A dynamic and interactive cooperation between civilian and military actors on the tactical level – with integrated planning at the same time as the execution happens closely coordinated, but separate – is the best way the armed forces can operate.[242]

Exactly how this should happen, and how this was meant to create a comprehensive approach was not specified. In this manner, the 'NGO view' on how civil-military cooperation in Faryab should be conducted was allowed to stand more or less unopposed in the development of Norwegian strategy.

One of the more problematic aspects of this clear separation of civilian and military efforts from a counterinsurgency point of view was that it also indirectly undermined the political aspect of the conflict. Military efforts could for periods of time create a relative secure environment where other effectors could work on the development and good governance side of the mission.[243] This presupposed a tight coordination of all efforts, and from a counterinsurgency point of view the civilian efforts should be leading this work. By relying mainly on the UN and different NGOs to perform this side of the mission, Norway effectively forfeited any degree of control over this.[244] Most NGOs are, and should be, impartial and rely on this as their protection in conflict areas. As such, the Norwegian government's influence on how development is done would most likely have been limited even if they had

[241] *Ibid.*, 4.(My translation)
[242] *Ibid.*(My translation)
[243] McChrystal, "COMISAF's Initial Assessment," C-1.
[244] Friis, "The Norwegian Approach to Afghanistan: Civilian-Military Segregation," 14.

attempted to exert it. This presents another question, that is, whether it was at all adapted for a conflict such as Afghanistan. As mentioned in the introduction, Norway's main experience prior to Afghanistan was in UN peacekeeping missions.

Whilst peacekeeping and counterinsurgency have much in common, their conceptual difference is nevertheless quite clear. All UN peacekeeping missions are conducted on the basis of the three basic principles of peacekeeping; consent of the parties, impartiality, and the minimum use of force.[245] Since all peacekeeping is undertaken to either implement or monitor a cease-fire agreement or peace agreement the impartiality of the force is absolutely vital in maintaining the consent of the parties. Conversely, in counterinsurgency one has already sided with the government. There was no idea or hint of impartiality in ISAF. Therefore, it is somewhat difficult to see how even NGOs who operated in this type of conflict, funded by the international community, would be perceived as impartial. This was also pointed out by the report on development work from the Feinstein Centre who points out that in Afghanistan most donors were also belligerents, and that the UN attempted to utilize methods based on impartiality where no peace agreement was in place.[246] It further points to that '[m]any [NGOs] work as implementing partners for government programs or, even if they do not, are seen as part of the international enterprise that supports the government.'[247] This should hardly come as a surprise in a counterinsurgency such as Afghanistan. If you built a school for girls you could claim to be as impartial as you like, but the odds were that the Taliban was going to see you as a part of the opposing forces. There is very little room for impartiality in such politicized conflicts as counterinsurgency. Norwegian strategy did not take this into account and as will be examined later in the thesis, it made any notion of a comprehensive effort very difficult by relying heavily on NGOs to perform development, and by separating civilian and military efforts.

[245] United Nations, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations - Principles and Guidelines," ed. Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support (New York: 2008), 31.
[246] Antonio Donini, "Afghanistan: Humanitarianism under Threat," (Boston: Feinstein International Center - Tufts Univeristy, 2009), 2.
[247] *Ibid.*

One area where Norway was more in adherence to counterinsurgency theory than the Netherlands and the United Kingdom was with respect to the overall spending. During the whole time span of the mission Norway has spent NOK 11,5 billion on the military side of the mission and NOK 8,4 billion for civilian purposes.[248] As such, the overall spending was more balanced and in line with the recommendations of counterinsurgency theory. The main challenge with this aspect of the Norwegian mission was not the overall spending, but rather how the money was utilized. Unlike the Dutch, which primarily funded approved projects inside the Afghan Development Zones (ADZ) in Uruzgan, the Norwegians channeled most of the funds to Afghan managed trust funds.[249] ADZs were an ISAF creation in order to prioritize areas where military action should create a secure environment in which reconstruction, governance, and development could take place. The Norwegian approach of mainly putting funds directly to the host nation is considered good practice in development terms. Kasten Friis argues that this way of funding could be defended from a development point of view as it has the potential to promote local ownership, longevity and accountability.[250] From a counterinsurgency perspective, however, the model is not very suitable as it undermines a unity of effort. As discussed earlier, a comprehensive approach in counterinsurgency demands that security and development are tightly coordinated. In the case of Norway, the Norwegian PRT through the ISAF chain of command mainly ran the security operations. The funds for development were mainly run though the Afghan government. If Norway had put measures in place to ensure that these were tightly coordinated it may have worked well, however, this was not the case. Arguably, this model fit Norway well as it promoted a separation of civil and military efforts. As Karsten Friis argues, anything but a clear separation also at this level 'would have forced the government to spell out priorities between security, development and humanitarian sectors.'[251] From the perspective of the Norwegian government, this seems to have been more important than an adherence to the overall doctrine and strategy of the coalition. Thus, whilst Norwegian spending

[248] "A Good Ally: Norway in Afghanistan 2001-2014," 213.
[249] NORAD Evaluation Department, "Evaluation of Norwegian Development Cooperation with Afghanistan 2001-2011," 44.
[250] Friis, "The Norwegian Approach to Afghanistan: Civilian-Military Segregation," 14.
[251] *Ibid.*

overall was rather balance, it did not promote a concerted government effort where all aspects of the mission were coordinated in the same direction.

The Norwegian decision to clearly separate civilian and military efforts in Faryab was completely legitimate from a domestic point of view. The tight coordination between military security efforts and civilian development efforts as advocated by counterinsurgency theory was highly controversial in NGO circles. Domestically, the Norwegian effort in Faryab was rather limited while it is a superpower in development terms.

Tactical view

Due to the limitations put on civil-military cooperation in the strategic guidance for Norwegian forces, the level of interaction at the tactical level was understandably limited. There were, nevertheless, attempts made to conduct development programs on a tactical level early on in the mission. Between 2006-2008 Faryab province was assessed to be rather benign and without a serious threat from the insurgency. This period saw both integrated and more independent development programs take place in Faryab. In particular, Norway funded the building of schools throughout the province.[252] This was by Norwegian funding in cooperation with central and provincial Afghan authorities. My research indicates no evidence that the locations of the new schools were tightly coordinated with security efforts to ensure that schools were built in areas that would be under government control in the foreseeable future. When the insurgency in Faryab grew in force, this became problematic as many of the schools were built in areas where Norwegian and Afghan forces had no opportunity to remain in control. When the official report made its evaluation of Norwegian development projects in Faryab, the assessment teams were unable to evaluate 40% of the 117 schools. These schools were all in areas outside government control and hence too dangerous to venture into.[253] The most publicised result of this policy was when Norwegian forces attacked the town of Khwaya Kinti in 2010. The insurgents' main stronghold in the city was the school, built with Norwegian funds a few years earlier.[254] The

[252] "A Good Ally: Norway in Afghanistan 2001-2014," 13.
[253] *Ibid.*, 143.
[254] Grosvold Øyvind

issue with the Norwegian approach in this instance was not only a lack of coordination between development and security; it was also a matter of the changing situation on the ground after 2007. Uncertainties are an integral part of the nature of war and it was difficult to foresee the increase of violence in 2007 in Faryab. In addition, the Norwegian and Afghan forces did not have nearly enough forces to secure all the locations where school were built. The core of the problem had more to do with the different perceptions of the conflict from a development standpoint. Success for the development program was measured by the 'number of schools built, the number of teachers educated and the number of pupils enrolled.'[255] Factors which should have been considered from a counterinsurgency point of view was not taken into account. Whether the school was in a government controlled area, that the teaching was in line with government educational programs and that the teachers were loyal to the government rather than other groupings were not part of the equation. If the conflict is understood as a counterinsurgency, a competition for government, these factors are of obvious importance. This was, however, not prioritised from the Norwegian side.

Also evaluations from the development sector in Norway have addressed the questions of a clear separation of efforts on the tactical level. The official report from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) is surprisingly negative in its evaluation of the Norwegian approach. Its criticism has two primary lines. The first is in relation to how Norwegian funds are used for development in Afghanistan. Unlike The Netherlands, who adopted a model where specific projects inside the Afghan development zones in Uruzgan were funded, Norway adopted a policy of more central funding. In the period between 2001-2010 Norway granted 5,3 billion NOK to development efforts in Afghanistan. Of these 22% were channeled through the UN, 24% through different NGOs, 25% were accounted as miscellaneous, and 29% were provided to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF).[256] Whilst a central model for funding could have long-term positive

Brekke Anders, *Norske Soldater I Kamp* (2010 [cited 23 May 2018]); available from https://www.nrk.no/urix/norske-soldater-i-kamp-1.7238166.
[255] "A Good Ally: Norway in Afghanistan 2001-2014," 102.
[256] NORAD Evaluation Department, "Evaluation of Norwegian Development Cooperation with Afghanistan 2001-2011," 48.

effects, it also proved challenging to make this money have an impact in Faryab province.

According to NORAD the local government complained about the lack of earmarked funds, as they did not feel 'that their ownership and capacity were being strengthened.'[257] It was also pointed out that the close alignment to Afghan plans advocated in the Norwegian strategy was not unproblematic, and in some ways an illusion. 'Afghan priorities are still to a large extent defined by the international community. Limited participation of Afghans undermine genuine local ownership.'[258] In other words, the impression of providing Afghan solutions to Afghan problems by aligning Norwegian strategy with the Provincial Development Plan did not work as intended. Furthermore, the NORAD evaluation questions the utility of the strict segregation between military and civilian efforts on the tactical level. The report argues, in a 'humanitarian policy perspective this has been positive and has enabled NGO partners to conduct their programs without association with the military.'[259] However, it also points out that in more practical terms on the ground this approach has proved to be problematic. 'The separation of the civilian and military components that was supposed to be accompanied by strong coordination, led to a division where the military operate in the insecure areas and NGOs in the safer areas.'[260] This view is also supported from key PRT personnel in both interviews and more public statements. Lt Col Rune Solberg, commander of PRT XV, wrote a controversial letter to the editor in one of Norway's biggest newspapers. Solberg argued that Norwegian aid and development policy gave the Pashtuns in Faryab a raw deal. Most Pashtuns live in the most insecure areas where aid agencies and NGOs did not operate due to security challenges. He claimed that 'the consequences of the Norwegian Model can prove to be a continuous growing insurgency, with increasing differences and mistrust between the population and the local government in Faryab.'[261] Several of the other PRT commanders also complained that due to the constraint on civil-military

[257] *Ibid.*, 133.
[258] *Ibid.*
[259] *Ibid.*, 111.
[260] *Ibid.*, 133.
[261] Rune Solberg, "Humanitarian Aid Gone Astray (Bistand På Ville Veier)," *Aftenposten*, 6 desember 2010.My translation

cooperation, they lacked the tools to improve development and governance following security operations.[262] In this regard, it is also worth noting that the last and highlighted conclusion of the NORAD report states that; 'Norway should rethink its strategy and aid programming for future engagement in Afghanistan.'[263] Coming from the Norwegian government's own development experts this counts as a rather clear criticism.

The second report focusing on Faryab province comes out of the Feinstein Center at Tufts University. This report is narrower in its approach and studies 'the assumed causal relationship between development aid and stabilization in Afghanistan.'[264] While the report in general paints a positive view of the Norwegian PRT and the efforts done in Faryab, it also highlights the weakness of pursuing a strategy so closely aligned with the Afghan authorities. The report shows that none of the national programs planned for Ghowrmach district had been implemented by 2010.[265] There is little reason to doubt that this was the case only here because Ghowrmach was selected as one of two top-priority districts in Faryab province.

Overall, Norway pursued a strategy of clear separation between civilian and military efforts. This was not only in clear contradiction to what is advocated by counterinsurgency theory, but also the strategy of ISAF. The main reasoning for this was to not undermine the impartiality of NGOs in conflict areas. Whilst Norway had a more balanced funding between civilian and military efforts it lacked coordination and unity of effort. On the tactical level there were little direct coordination. This was mostly due to the restraint put on Norwegian forces with regards to cooperation with civil actors in the province.

The Norwegian approach

In summary, hardly any aspect of the Norwegian efforts in Faryab province between 2006-2010 adhered to counterinsurgency theory. Norway did not develop

[262] NORAD Evaluation Department, "Evaluation of Norwegian Development Cooperation with Afghanistan 2001-2011," 112 and NO officer A, "Personal Interview." and NO officer C, "Personal Interview."
[263] NORAD Evaluation Department, "Evaluation of Norwegian Development Cooperation with Afghanistan 2001-2011," 138.
[264] Gompelman, "Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan's Faryab Province," 2.
[265] *Ibid.*, 22.

a coherent strategy for its effort. It did not prioritize resources, nor formulate an overall plan for how military force should be used to attain specific political objectives. The only clear strategic guidance provided was the 'Norwegian model' of civil-military cooperation. This prescribed a clear distinction between military and civilian efforts. This part of Norwegian strategy came about as a result of pressure from an influential COIN lobby, but it also had an ideological background. Overall it is a model that seems more adapted to UN peacekeeping missions than that of the highly political nature of a counterinsurgency. This model for civil-military cooperation also ran contrary to ISAF strategy and counterinsurgency theory. It made any comprehensive approach on the ground very difficult to achieve and it could even be argued that it made the insurgency worse since most aid was provided in the relative safe parts of the province.

Furthermore, Norway did not pursue a population-centric approach in their operations in Afghanistan. Given the underdeveloped strategy, there was little guidance on how to run the operations for the PRT commanders. On the other hand, the PRT commanders still enjoyed substantial freedom to define how operations were performed in other aspects of the operation. Poor force ratios and a lack of long term planning in particular made Norwegian operations on a tactical level more enemy-centric than anything else. Whilst operations several times were planned with a population-centric approach, the execution became enemy-centric. Most often this was due to an overreliance on host nation security forces and a too short hold phase in the operations.

The political level chose counterinsurgency away with regards to a concerted government effort on the strategic level. With a clear segregation between military and civilian efforts as the one guiding principle, this aspect of counterinsurgency was also not followed. Norway did balance the funding of the mission better than the Dutch and the British. However, most funds were channelled through their Afghan partners without a clear link to the operations in Faryab. Therefore, there was a lack of unity of effort where development was done in the safest areas of the province and security operations in the most volatile.

In his work on policy, strategy and doctrine prior to the Great War Jack Snyder noted: 'If new problems do not fit into the categories that the old beliefs establish, they will not be well understood.'[266] In Snyder's work this remark was made in the context of the changing geo-political, societal, and the technological situation for the great powers in the years leading up to World War I. It is also, however, rather fitting for Norway's challenges in Afghanistan. Faryab province was a new kind of problem, and from a counterinsurgency perspective it was not well understood.

[266] Jack Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive* (London: Cornell, 1984), 107.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CASE OF GREAT BRITAIN

Introduction

Great Britain was the only of the three nations studied who on officially treated the campaign in Afghanistan as a counterinsurgency. However, in the execution of the operation there were several aspects where the British deviated from population-centric counterinsurgency. Especially initially the British mission was characterised by a failure to develop a coherent strategy. A focus on counter-narcotics as a strategic goal in Helmand caused friction between the strategic and tactical level. Furthermore, the British armed forces, especially early in the deployment, failed to adhere either to its political guidance or the principles of classic counterinsurgency theory.

The decision to put British forces into villages in the north of Helmand was effectively a mission-creep. This left British forces to be spread thin and with little possibility for conducting effective population-centric operations. However, the British were able to adapt and improve their strategy and operations after 2008. There are examples of British forces on the tactical level preforming operations closely aligned with the theories of counterinsurgency such as Operation Panchai Palang in 2009. Lastly, the British mission struggled to create a functioning civil-military cooperation in Helmand. This was partly caused by different force-protection rules between civilian and military personnel in Helmand. These problems were further aggravated as the British forces, especially in the first two years, were spread so thin that they struggled to generate actual security in their areas.

The British mission to Helmand has been the cause of more controversy and debate, both in media and academics, than the Dutch and Norwegian missions. Several officers have left the British Army rather publicly after disagreements on how the mission was executed.[267] The mission has also been analysed and discussed in peer-reviewed journals by scholars such as Theo Farrell, Hew Strachan, and

[267] Stephen Adams, "Helmand Hero Quits over Troops' Treatment," *The Telegraph*, 17 Nov 2007 2007 and Justin Sutcliffe, "Hew and Will Pike: Fighting Talk," *Independent*, 9 Nov 2008 2008.

Robert Egnell.[268] The House of Commons Defence Committee has conducted three hearings regarding the mission. Also several books, both first-hand accounts and more research based, has been published on the British mission to Helmand. The definitive account of the campaign is the newly published *Unwinnable* by Theo Farrell. Farrell is to my knowledge the only researcher with access to the still classified sources regarding the mission in Helmand. Overall Farrell argues that the strategic aims for the conflict outreached the means deployed to reach them. While the British forces was able to adapt to circumstances on the tactical level he argues that 'the British and Americans were unable to convert these tactical gains into strategic success.'[269] This chapter will utilize these various sources as well as a significant number interviews conducted by the author.

Background and history of COIN

Of the different countries studied in this thesis Britain stands out in many regards. As one on the five veto powers in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), a G8 member, and a special ally of the United States (US), Britain is far more powerful and ambitious on the global stage than Norway and the Netherlands. As a former empire Britain also has a much richer counterinsurgency history than Norway and the Netherlands. Since the Second World War Britain has been involved in three conventional wars (Korea, the Falklands, and Desert Storm). In the same period British forces have fought insurgencies in Cyprus, Palestine, Malaya, Kenya, Aden, Dhofar, and Northern Ireland, to mention a few places.

The constant demand to rotate forces in and out of Northern Ireland gave British forces particular knowledge and experience in the conduct of counterinsurgency campaigns during a period where most other NATO armies paid no attention to this type of conflict. On the other hand, it was in some ways also a drawback. Robert Egnell has argued that 'British assessments of their own operations in the Iraqi south, tended to display a remarkable and, in hindsight, rather inflated self-

[268] Ucko and Egnell, *Conterinsurgency in Crisis - Britain and the Challenges of Modern Warfare* and Robert Egnell, "Lessons from Helmand, Afghanistan: What Now for British Counterinsurgency?", *International Affairs* 87, no. 2 (2011) and Theo Farrell, "Improving in War: Military Adaptation and the British in Hemand Province, Afghanistan, 2006-2009", *Journal of Strategic Studies* 33, no. 4 (2010).
[269] Theo Farrell, *Unwinnable – Britain's War in Afghanistan 2001-2014* (London: The Bodley Head, 2017), 2-4

confidence.'[270] Egnell partly blames this on a British belief that experience from the past will continue to serve them well in the future.

> It can be argued that British pride in this legacy [counterinsurgency] inhibited the serious soul-searching and reform processes that took place within the US military as a response to the challenges of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.[271]

Former British officer Patrick Little voices the same concern in an article published by the *RUSI Journal*. Little paints a picture of an Army that encouraged conformity and tradition over criticism and innovation, and as a result lacked the ability of quickly adapting to changing circumstances. 'Generations of US and European partners have grown up with the notion developed inside the British Army that it had more to teach than it had to learn.'[272] This attitude was also visible in British counterinsurgency doctrine at the time. 'The experience of numerous "small wars" has provided the British Army with a unique insight into this demanding form of conflict.'[273] The white paper on defence and security from 2003, *Delivering Security in a Changing World,* voices the same sentiments. 'The Balkans, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, and Iraq demonstrate the successful performance of British forces in conducting both combat operations and subsequent stabilisation operations.'[274]

It is undoubtedly true that the British Army has a vast experience from fighting numerous insurgencies. To claim a 'unique insight' into these conflicts in a doctrine, however, contributed to strengthening a notion in the Army that one does not have to take studies and training as seriously as one should for these specific types of war. An example of this can be found in the rather hotly debated article 'Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations' by Brigadier Nigel Aylwin-Foster from 2005. The article quite bluntly criticizes the performance of US forces in Iraq and was first published as part of *Seaford House Papers*, who

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[270] Egnell, "Lessons from Helmand, Afghanistan: What Now for British Counterinsurgency?," 299 and Robert Egnell and David H, Ucko, "True to Form? Questioning the British Counterinsurgency Tradition" in: Beatrice Heuser and Eitan Shamir, eds. *Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies – National Styles and Strategic Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 26-29
[271] *Ibid.*, 300.
[272] Patrick Little, "Lessons Unlearned", *The RUSI Journal* 154, no. 3 (2009): 12.
[273] British Army, "Part 10 Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines)," ed. Ministry of Defence (London: 2001), Part B, Ch 2, p. 1.
[274] "Delivering Security in a Changing World ", ed. Department of Defence (London: 2003), 2.

publishes the best dissertations from the British Defense Academy online. It was later re-published in *Military Review,* one of the most influential American professional military journals. The article in itself argues that the US Army was too conventional, too reliant on kinetic force, bureaucratic, and unable to learn and adapt to new circumstances.[275]

Aylwin-Foster stays clear of directly comparing the US culture and performance to the British. He does so only indirectly by referring to John Nagel's *Counterinsurgency lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, where Nagel compares the learning cultures of the two armies.[276] It was not so much the contents of the article that made it controversial; several influential US officers presented the same points of view at the time, and strategy changed accordingly during the surge in 2006-7.[277] The controversial aspect was rather that it was critique of a close ally, something that is normally not done as bluntly and publicly as in this article. Also, in retrospect, the timing of the article was not the best if one considers the massive improvement made in US performance in Iraq in comparison to British performance from 2005 and onwards.

On the other hand, the doctrine also warns that the extensive experience from the recent conflict in Northern Ireland 'tends to constrain military thinking on the subject because of its national context.'[278] Interestingly enough, several of the British officers interviewed for this thesis referred to their experience from Northern Ireland when talking about their preparations for deployment to Helmand.[279]

Doctrine, education and training

Britain had two different doctrines for counterinsurgency operations in place during the period studied in this thesis. The first one was published in 2001 and

[275] Nigel Aylwin-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations", *Military Review*, no. November-December (2005): 6-10.
[276] *Ibid.*, 9-10.
[277] Peter D. Feaver, "The Right to Be Right - Civil-Military Relations and the Iraq Surge Desicion", *International Security* 35, no. 4 (2011).
[278] British Army, "Part 10 Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines)," Part B, Ch 2, p. 1.
[279] UK D, "Personal Interview," (2013).

was actually the first British counterinsurgency doctrine ever published, despite their long tradition in these types of conflicts. An updated version with only minor changes was issued in 2007 before a completely revised doctrine, which incorporated recent experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, was issued in 2009.

2001 doctrine

The 2001 version of the counterinsurgency doctrine is made up of two different parts. Part A deals with theories of insurgency, while part B deals with counterinsurgency. The part that deals with insurgency is comprehensive and covers a great variety of insurgent theory. It first of all distinguishes between different forms of insurgencies, such as anarchist movements, egalitarian insurgencies, traditionalist, pluralist, separatist, reformist, and preservationist movements.[280] The doctrine further argues that while the categorisation of an insurgency in itself is not very important, it is important to understand the causes and aim of an insurgency.[281] This serves to enhance the political aspect of counterinsurgency in the British doctrine. In the annex to chapter 1, the 2001 doctrine provides short historical examples of the different forms of insurgencies. This includes the most common forms such as Mao's theory of protracted war, Che Guevara's *FOCO* theory, and Marighela's theories for an urban insurgency. It also included what at the time were more esoteric examples such as Abimael Guzman and the Shining Path guerrilla in Peru and a section on 'The dangers of Islam – Real and apparent.'[282]

Overall, and especially considering that it is an Army doctrine, the manual deals quite thoroughly with the phenomenon of insurgency. The doctrine is more descriptive than normative and seems to provide its audience with an understanding of the challenges rather than a set solution to the problems faced when countering insurgency.

[280] British Army, "Part 10 Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines)," Part A, Ch 1, pp. 2-6.
[281] *Ibid.*, Part A, Ch 1, pp. 6-8.
[282] *Ibid.*, Part A, Ch 1, Annex G, pp. 1-3.

This is also a continuing theme in Part B of the doctrine. The doctrine stands firmly in the overall tradition of classic counterinsurgency. The principles of counterinsurgency advocated in the doctrine serve as an example of this:

1. Political Primacy and Political Aim
2. Coordinated Government Machinery
3. Intelligence and Information
4. Separating the Insurgent from his Support
5. Neutralising the Insurgent
6. Longer Term Post-Insurgency Planning[283]

The British 2001 doctrine further underlines that 'they [the principles] should be applied pragmatically and with common sense to suit the circumstances peculiar to each campaign.'[284] Except for the principle of neutralising the insurgent all these principles in themselves fit into the overall framework of classic counterinsurgency. This is even clearer when elaborating on general theory of counterinsurgency in the introduction to part B, especially on the need for a political primacy and the difference between conventional war and counterinsurgency operations.

> In warfighting soldiers tend to expect that once broad political parameters have been established they will be left to decide the best way to achieve tactical goals: this is not necessarily the case in COIN and this has important implications.
> Since insurgency is principally a political struggle, it may be that the desired end of the government falls short of victory in a strictly military context and setting. [285]

Both these quotes are in line with the reasoning put forward by Thompson, Galula, and others writing theories of classic counterinsurgency. The violence is only a symptom of the problem in the insurgency. The root and the solution are both of a political nature, and military force can hence only support a wider effort to quell the insurgency. Even though the doctrine discusses different types of insurgencies and ways to counter them the theories of classic counterinsurgency very much forms the spine of the doctrine.

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[283] *Ibid.*, Part B, Ch 3, p. 2.
[284] *Ibid.*
[285] *Ibid.*, Part B, Ch 2, p. 3.

The strength of discussing several aspects of insurgency and counterinsurgency in a rather academic fashion might also be a weakness. As discussed in the previous chapter, the levels of command are compressed in this type of operations, and companies are often the principle unit. While doctrines tend to be descriptive in order not to be out-dated when published, they should also set down basic guidelines for how to conduct operations. The field manual does this in an overall sense, but when dealing with operational considerations in its chapter 6 it is very broad and general. Furthermore, it also deals mainly with intelligence operations and organisation of the effort and not with the tactical execution of counterinsurgency operations. The passage providing the most specific guidance for how to conduct operations is in chapter 8 in part B, under the heading 'Military operations.'[286] The foundation of operations clearly stems from a 'clear-hold-build' concept even though it does not use this exact phrase. 'The immediate aim of a framework,[287] or "oil-slick" operation as it is sometimes called, is to separate the insurgents from their supporters, food suppliers and sources of information in the designated area.'[288]

The next steps in this doctrinal prescription describe the consolidation of the controlled area and then a gradual expansion of it. This type of operations resembles the Brigg's plan employed in Malaya in the 1950s and also attempts made by the French early on in Morocco. While this provides some direction for operations on a tactical level it still falls short of manuals such as the US FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency manual and also the British 2009 counterinsurgency manual.

2009 doctrine

The next counterinsurgency doctrine published by the British Army came in 2009. The British team writing the doctrine was invited by their American allies to partake in a joint venture in writing the FM 3-24. However, as the British side were

[286] *Ibid.*, Part B, Ch 8, pp. 27.
[287] Framework operations in military vocabulary refers to the daily running of operations for a deployed force as opposed to deliberate operations.
[288] British Army, "Part 10 Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines)," Part B, Ch 8, p. 4.

unable to keep the same pace as their US counterparts, this was not to happen.[289] Alexander Alderson, a member of the new doctrine's working group, also argues that there were other reasons for the somewhat late arrival of the new doctrine.

> This apparent reticence to respond was due as much to a general difficulty in acknowledging that the campaign was dealing principally with an insurgent problem in southern Iraq as it was to an absence of evidence of a need for change.[290]

Early on in Iraq and Afghanistan there seems to have been a sentiment in the British Army that the old lessons, and doctrine, of counterinsurgency would continue to serve them well also in these new conflicts. According to Alderson, however, this changed around 2005-6 when 'an emerging requirement to adjust doctrine had started to coalesce.'[291] Hence work to update the existing manual started.

The 2009 doctrine defines counterinsurgency as 'those military, law enforcement, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken to defeat insurgency, while addressing the root causes.'[292] This definition in itself puts the doctrine close to the theory of classic counterinsurgency. It views an insurgency as primarily a political struggle that needs to be addressed in a comprehensive manner. Furthermore, it also acknowledges the need to address the root causes of the insurgency while simultaneously dealing with the symptoms. This is further underlined when the manual deals with the basic characteristics of these types of conflicts.

1. Direct military action may be required
2. Both sides have a political imperative
3. The population is central to the outcome
4. The solution is multifaceted.[293]

Like most doctrines the FM part 10 is not written for the war, but a war. Hence it was not overly focused on the operation in Afghanistan that was on-going when it was published. It nevertheless seems clear that many of the lessons identified in

[289] Crane, "United States," 61.
[290] Alexander Alderson, "Revising the British Army's Counter-Insurgency Doctrine", *The RUSI Journal* 152, no. 4 (2007): 6.
[291] *Ibid.*
[292] British Army, "British Army Field Manual Volume 1 Part 10 Countering Insurgency," Ch 1, p. 6.
[293] *Ibid.*, Ch 1, pp. 8-9.

Iraq, and early on in Afghanistan, have been incorporated into the doctrine. Firstly, it deals with the challenges posed by global insurgencies and the growth of religious extremism in the part that deals with insurgency.[294] The dangers of Islamism were also described in the 2001 version, but not in particular depth. Secondly, it emphasises more the complex nature of expeditionary counterinsurgency operations fought as part of a coalition. The parts that deal with unity of effort and primacy of political purpose underline the need to harmonise operations with the host nation and the rest of the coalition.

> Policy should be a guide for how a campaign develops which means that active political involvement is required throughout planning, preparation, execution, and assessment of counterinsurgency operations, and must involve the host nation's government.[295]

The 2009 doctrine is also more elaborate when it comes to describing how counterinsurgency operations should be conducted on a tactical level. It keeps with the overall British tradition of an ink-spot approach, but is more in line with the US FM 3-24 by adopting an explicit clear-hold-build approach as the tactical framework for operations[296]

The 2009 version of counter-insurgency doctrine emphasises that a clear-hold-build approach rests on several assumptions in order to be successful. Firstly, it assumes that the operations carried out underpin the host nation's efforts to address the underlying causes of the insurgency. Furthermore, it assumes that the objective of all operations is to secure the population and increase the influence of the government, and that all direct actions are based on solid intelligence.[297] It also underlines the need for a favourable force-ratio for the concept to work.

> The clearance stage of the operation requires a sufficient [number of] soldiers in order to generate the sort of presence which will reassure the population and, crucially, enable control of the situation to be secured. [...]

[294] *Ibid.*, Ch 2, annex A.
[295] *Ibid.*, Ch 3, p. 2.
[296] *Ibid.*, Ch 4, p. 14-21.
[297] *Ibid.*, Ch 4, p. 15.

> If the force is not strong enough in numbers, [...], it will be limited to protecting its forward operating bases, and will not be able to create an effective presence that can meet its principal responsibility of protecting the population.[298]

As we shall see, this highlights one of the lessons identified between 2006-2008 in Helmand. British forces were spread out thin, and due to the relentless pressure from the insurgents they were only capable of protecting their own bases and not the population.

Military training and education in counterinsurgency

All British officers do their basic education at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS). Though there are different ways to be commissioned, most officer candidates have an undergraduate degree, and is then given a 12-month course at the RMAS before graduating. During these months the cadets are to learn everything needed to become an officer. The RMAS Department of War Studies provides all education in history and military theory, including counterinsurgency. The program for the education is described in a folder called *Project Wellington*.[299]

The entire course is composed of 16 two-hour seminars ranging from general theories of conventional war to counterinsurgency. The part of the course that deals with insurgencies and counterinsurgency makes up five of the sixteen seminars. In addition to this, two of the exercises the cadets participate in during their training are based on counterinsurgency scenarios.

The course is comprehensive, despite its brief duration. It spans the most essential literature and doctrines, and if studied and discussed comprehensively it should help the cadets prepare for counterinsurgency warfare. The first two seminars of the course deal with insurgency. The first seminar is on the nature of insurgencies in general, while the second seminar mainly focuses on the challenges of contemporary conflicts.[300] The next two seminars are general seminars on the

[298] *Ibid.*
[299] Department of War Studies RMAS, "Project Wellington," (Sandhurst: Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, 2013).
[300] *Ibid.*, Seminar K and L.

theory of counterinsurgency, and the last one is concerned with case studies with 10-15-minute presentations on different counterinsurgency campaigns.[301]

Overall, the structure and reading for the course is not the main challenge with counterinsurgency teaching at the RMAS. It could be argued that the reading should include more critical texts, and perhaps be more prioritised to go in depth on fewer case studies, but the course still provides a solid knowledge base. The main issue with the course is the time available for cadets to study and digest the knowledge the course tries to impart. Instructors at the RMAS describe the cadets' everyday life as very busy. They normally have 8 hours of teaching every day, meaning that time for reading is very limited. Hence they have often not had sufficient time to read and prepare ahead of the seminars. Furthermore, considering that most cadets commissioned in the last decade faced a rotation to Iraq or Afghanistan soon after graduation, one might argue that 10 teaching hours out of one year is not very much. Especially compared to Norwegian cadets who spend 3 months studying counterinsurgency during their three years at the Military Academy.

Project Wellington provides a basic understanding of population-centric counterinsurgency. It could also spark an interest in further reading and studying that will deepen and widen the knowledge of counterinsurgency in their first years as serving officers. On the other hand, the relatively short amount of time spent on the subject will most likely prevent an intimate knowledge of counterinsurgency when the cadets are commissioned.

Summary training and doctrine

British doctrines and training seen together provide a foundation that should give officers a basic understanding of population-centric counterinsurgency theory. It also provides guidelines for how these types of operations should be conducted on an operational and tactical level. In discussions regarding British doctrine a quote attributed to Erwin Rommel often occurs: 'The British write some of the best

[301] *Ibid.*, Seminars M, N, and O.

doctrine in the world; it is fortunate their officers do not read it.'[302] During my interviews with British officers for this thesis, surprisingly few of them referred to UK doctrinal work during our talks. That is not to say that they had a poor understanding of counterinsurgency, quite often their knowledge and understanding was impressive, but that one should be careful and not overestimate the influence of doctrine when studying the lower echelons of an army.

The primacy of politics

The United Kingdom seems to have failed initially in producing a coherent strategy for their campaign in Iraq. The approach to the mission almost seems ad-hoc and to my knowledge there was not produced any clear strategic guidance before the deployment of troops. Several strategic aims for the operation were communicated to the forces. However, these proved difficult to operationalise and were not always fit for the circumstances on the ground. In particular, the central role of counter-narcotics was seen as counterproductive in a counterinsurgency environment by the tactical units on the ground. This again led to a lack of trust between the tactical and strategic level in the early period of the conflict.

Strategic view

In conventional war, armed force is used as a means for political ends. In counterinsurgency politics is a means in itself, in addition to armed force, due to the political nature of insurgencies as discussed in the theory chapter. This means that in a counterinsurgency campaign politics should prevail even if it runs counter to military needs and logic. Additionally, the aim of the counterinsurgent should be to defeat 'the political subversion, not the guerrillas.'[303] In the ideal world political process should lead to policy, policy should guide strategy, which again should guide the use of force on a tactical level.

> Policy should be a guide for how a campaign develops which means that active political involvement is required throughout the planning, preparation, execution, and assessment of counterinsurgency operations, and must involve the host nation's government.[304]

[302] British Army, "Army Doctrine Primer," (2011), i.
[303] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 55.
[304] British Army, "British Army Field Manual Volume 1 Part 10 Countering Insurgency," Ch 3, p. 2.

This puts great demands on the strategic level in these types of conflicts. In order to ensure unity of effort from all participating sectors of government the strategy must be clear on what the use of force is meant to achieve. Since resources are never sufficient it must make clear priorities and then follow up on these. Furthermore, the strategy needs to be understood at the tactical level. Strategies are in the end realised on the ground at the tactical level. Lastly, if a strategy of counterinsurgency is to be ultimately successful it needs to address the underlying causes of the insurgency. These can be challenging to identify at the outset of the conflict, especially when fighting expeditionary warfare. It is therefore not to be expected that these are clear from the outset, but that they remain a focus and that efforts are made to identify these as the conflict progress.

The primacy of politics in counterinsurgency was lost on the British prior to the deployment of forces to Helmand. A primacy of politics is one of the listed principles of counterinsurgency in both British doctrines published in the period studied. The 2001 doctrine asserts that counterinsurgency demands a political primacy and a clear political aim. It further elaborates that the armed forces can 'play an effective part by advising the government of the role, scope and potential of the military forces available in any counter-insurgency planning.'[305] The contribution of the armed forces also needs to be harmonised with other government efforts to achieve unity of effort and a true political primacy. The doctrine also underlines that in the case of coalition warfare, or if the conflict is fought on the territory of an ally, the government needs to ensure British political leadership in the theatre to guide the commander. Lastly the manual stresses the need to adapt all planning and organisation to the specific circumstances at hand.[306] All in all the doctrine has a classical view on the idea of primacy of politics, and also provides clear guidance on how this should be achieved.

With regards to the overall British strategy for Helmand it does not seem to be as well articulated as the Dutch was. In his thesis which studies British strategic process in depth Tor-Erik Hanssen identifies no less than eight or nine different

[305] British Army, "Part 10 Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines)," Part B, ch 3, p. 3.
[306] *Ibid.*

political aims for the operation. These included counter-terrorism, NATO/ US support, counter-narcotics, development, governance and security. [307] Other studies of the British campaign in Helmand has reached similar conclusions.[308]

While the goal relating to alliance politics were not the most prominent in the formal addresses made by Whitehall decision-makers it was unquestionably the main underlying reason for British involvement in Afghanistan. Britain had been the US' primary partner in the war on terror since the 9/11 attacks in the US.[309] The reason to increase the UK footprint in Afghanistan through the expansion of ISAF in 2005 was also seen in the light of improving UK-US relations which had become somewhat strained in Iraq.[310] While alliance politics may not have been a stated strategic goal for the UK government, but it would indeed be very hard to imagine substantial British forces in Afghanistan without an American presence there. Being a good ally to the US can thus be said to have been the main underlying goal for the British mission, much like it was for Norway.

The strategic aims which initially caused the most tension between the strategic and tactical level was that of counter-narcotics. Foreign minister Jack Straw stated his ambition was to 'put counter-narcotics at the heart of all our work in Afghanistan.'[311] The following part of this chapter will analyse this part of British strategy more in depth.

The policy of counter-narcotics

When Britain deployed forces to Helmand in the summer of 2006 counter-narcotics was one of two main strategic purposes for the operation.[312] In a speech at the IISS in October 2004 Foreign Minister Jack Straw argued that counter-narcotics was one

[307] Hanssen, "Coalition Strategy in Complex Conflicts: The Strategic Behaviour of Three Nato-States in Afghanistan 2003-2008", 171.
[308] Egnell, "Lessons from Helmand, Afghanistan: What Now for British Counterinsurgency?," 302 and James Ferguson, *A Million Bullets - the Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan* (Londin: Bantam Press, 2008), 22-24.
[309] Theo Farrell, *Unwinnable – Britain's War in Afghanistan 2001-2014* (London: The Bodley Head, 2017), 45-46
[310] *Ibid*, 137-138
[311] Jack Straw, UK Foreign Minister, "The Challenges Ahead for Afghanistan," *Speech at IISS* 2004.
[312] House of Commons Defence Committee, "The Uk Deployment to Afghanistan - Fifth Report of the Session 2005-06," (London: The Stationery Office Limited, 2006), Ev 24.

of the key aspects of future British efforts in Afghanistan. His argument had both a domestic and an Afghan aspect. Firstly '95% of the heroin on our streets originates in Afghanistan's poppy fields, bringing crime and human misery in its wake.'[313] As far as the Afghan perspective was concerned Straw argued:

> The parallel economy sustained by opium represents half the value again of Afghanistan's non-drugs GDP: it thrives on chaos and lawlessness, and those who profit from it have every interest in undermining the rule of law and the authority of government.[314]

These views were also supported in the Ministry of Defense's written evidence in the first hearings concerning Helmand in the House of Commons Defence Committee (HCDC) in 2005-6. When discussing the overall goals of the operation in Helmand it stated: 'but this military deployment alone will not guarantee success. An integrated approach covering security, governance, development and counter-narcotics is vital.'[315] Security, governance, and development were, and remained, the main objectives of the NATO led ISAF operation.[316] By including counter-narcotics alongside these three the Ministry of Defence effectively raised the issue of counter-narcotics up as one of Britain's main objectives in Afghanistan. It even put counter-narcotics to the very center of the deployment by arguing 'it is no longer terrorism, but the cultivation, processing and distribution of opium products that is the greatest threat to Afghan security.'[317] In 2006 there was very much a sense that the threat of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan had more or less been dealt with, and this made it possible to shift the focus to counter-narcotics. The Ministry of Defence further argued that counter-narcotics was the main reason for the deployment to Helmand province specifically in 2006.

> The UK has chosen to focus its efforts on Helmand Province because we believe we can make a difference in supporting the counter-narcotics effort and in countering the continuing threat to stability from the residual Taliban insurgency, illegally armed groups and criminal activity. The province is in the heartland of the narcotics trade, with more opium poppy cultivated

[313] Jack Straw, "The Challenges Ahead for Afghanistan."
[314] *Ibid.*
[315] House of Commons Defence Committee, "The UK Deployment to Afghanistan - Fifth Report of the Session 2005-06," Ev, 44.
[316] NATO, *ISAF Mission* (2014 [cited 4 Feb 2014]); available from http://www.isaf.nato.int/mission.html.
[317] House of Commons Defence Committee, "The UK Deployment to Afghanistan - Fifth Report of the Session 2005-06," Ev 47.

there annually than in any other region in Afghanistan.[318]

Such an emphasis on counter-narcotics as a strategic goal made sense for Britain in a domestic logic. In 2006 Britain was heading the G8 nations' efforts to counter the production and distribution of narcotics. A lead role in a province that was assessed by the UN to be 'on the verge of becoming the world's biggest drug supplier'provided an opportunity to tackle the problem at its point of origin.[319]

The main problem with the British counter-narcotics policy was not that it did not address a real issue, nor that it was not clearly understood at the operational or tactical level. The problem was simply that it really did not fit into the logic of counterinsurgency operations on the ground in Helmand. A senior officer in the first British battle group deployed to Helmand in 2006 commented the counter-narcotics strategy in an interview when addressing his main concerns before the deployment:

> Also, there was this major thing that we were part of the counter-narcotics, Opium Eradication Program, which to my mind was crazy, because that was just going to take the bread off people's tables. I mean, every single person would fight us. So the idea of having any influence, we'd have lost completely. [...] there was a debate of how much we should do, and I just said I'm not going to do any, because we're just going to get a whole lot of people killed, both on the Afghan side and our side.[320]

This view is echoed by Stuart Tootal, the commander of 3 Para, in his book *Danger Close*.

> I was also vexed that part of the UK's mission was the stated intent of eradicating the cultivation of opium poppies. [...] Eradication might have provided a compelling additional motive for intervention in Helmand, but in an agrarian society of dirt-poor farmers, most of the population have little alternative to growing opium. [...] [M]y concern was that the political imperative of eradication ignored the impact it would have on the people who grew it.[321]

Even though counter-narcotics was one of the key political and strategic purposes of the operation in Helmand in 2006, key personnel in the forces on the ground

[318] *Ibid.*, Ev 46.
[319] UN Office on Drugs and Crime, "World Drug Report," (New York: 2007), 1.
[320] UK F, "Personal Interview," (2013), 04:37-05.15.
[321] Stuart Tootal, *Danger Close - Commanding 3 Para in Afghanistan* (London: John Murray, 2009), 24-25.

clearly had reservations against pursuing this. It also seems clear that the British force in Helmand not only had reservations, but also chose to not get involved in the counter-narcotics operation. Accounts from early contingents in Helmand show that British forces put great emphasis on not disturbing the growth of the poppy, but also reassuring the locals that they were 'not here for the poppy.'[322]

The basic challenge with the counter-narcotics aim on the tactical level was that a counterinsurgency campaign is all about getting the population to side with the government in the struggle against the insurgents. If British forces took on the job of eradicating poppy crops, and thereby directly undermining the most important source of income, it would be hard to get any support. On the other hand, narcotics economy, being illegal, could not be taxed by the government and attracted local warlords and powerbrokers that further undermined the negligible government influence in the area. Seen in this light it is hard to imagine that a functioning Afghan government and a prospering drug production in Helmand could ever co-exist.

In the case of counter-narcotics, British operations early on in Helmand did not adhere to the principle of primacy of politics. Strategy dictated from Whitehall clearly emphasized counter-narcotics as a key task, while the tactical level both in statements and actions showed clear reservations about carrying this out. While there might have been good reasons for doing so, theory and doctrine clearly state the importance of a primacy of politics. Following this line of reasoning it is the political level that supposedly has the full understanding of the conflict and what is needed to win in the long term. Hence the goal of counter-narcotics should have been carried out on a tactical level despite the problems it might have caused in the short term. Nevertheless, it might be useful for this thesis to pursue the problem further and try to find different explanations for the challenges that British forces had with this issue early on in the operations in Helmand

First of all, there seems to be a difference in the understanding of what type, or nature, of conflict the British forces are deployed into in 2006. Significant parts of the upper echelons in Britain, both in politics and the Armed Forces, seemed to

[322] Patrick Bishop, *Ground Truth* (London: Harper Press, 2009), 48. and UK F, "Personal Interview," 05:10.

focus on the nation-building and stabilization aspects of the operation. On the other hand, members of the battle group, drawn mainly from the 16th Air Assault Brigade, seemed convinced that the operations at hand were a classic counterinsurgency operation. 'Both he [Gen David Richards] and I were convinced we're going into a counterinsurgency environment. PJHQ were not, and they kept talking as it's a Peace Support Operation.'[323] While The Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) seemed to believe that Helmand would be a sort of Peace Support Operation (PSO), the Ministry of Defense seems to have been somewhat more ambiguous about the nature of the deployment. In the hearing preceding the deployment the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Adam Ingram, made the following comment to a question regarding the expected opposition towards the British forces.

> However, to use the Iraq analogy, there is not that measurable level of insurgency, there is not a campaign at present but, who knows, there are, again, no certainties and no-one has got the wisdom to say with 100% certainty how things will develop, but there is no evidence of subdivision or disaggregation of the communities such as in the form of important forces in large numbers.[324]

The comment itself admitted that there were uncertainties about the situation on the ground, but the answers from both Ingram as well as the PJHQ during the hearing paint a picture of a situation that is expected to be more benign than Iraq, but less so than the north of Afghanistan where British forces had run a PRT so far. The PJHQ also added that they assessed that 'consent is high' among the population regarding ISAF presence in the region.[325] In the written evidence for the same hearing the MoD also describes the mission to be 'concerned with the existing ISAF tasks—reconstruction and counter-insurgency.'[326] While it is fully understandable that a degree of insecurity regarding the nature of the conflict should exist prior to the first deployment into a new province, this can also partly explain some of the tension between the tactical and higher levels. In a PSO environment, such as seems envisioned by the PJHQ and partly the MoD, one

[323] UK F, "Personal Interview," 00:41 see also: Tootal, *Danger Close - Commanding 3 Para in Afghanistan*, 34.
[324] House of Commons Defence Committee, "The UK Deployment to Afghanistan - Fifth Report of the Session 2005-06," Ev 23.
[325] *Ibid.*, 30.
[326] *Ibid.*, Ev 46.

should expect a more benign environment than a fully-fledged counterinsurgency operation. In such an environment, without a very active and resolute enemy, a strategy of counter-narcotics could arguably make more sense, especially in a long-term perspective. However, in a counterinsurgency, such an approach initially might play significant parts of the population into the hands of the insurgents, and hence prove counterproductive, especially in a short-term perspective.

A second aspect to consider is whether classic counterinsurgency theory and contemporary British doctrine does enough to problematize and provide a substantial analysis when it comes to the issue of primacy of politics. Both classic theory and doctrine state the primacy of politics more or less as a matter of fact. Both also presuppose that government strategy always is sound and provides the necessary guidance to win the conflict. Galula, in particular, is rather superficial on this subject. He reflects the view of Mao by stating that '"a revolutionary war is 20 per cent military action and 80 per cent political" is a formula that reflects the truth.'[327] This quote is also repeated in both US and UK current counterinsurgency doctrines.[328] However, Galula's works on counterinsurgency theory do not reflect this view in practice. Most of his book is concerned with the military aspects of defeating an insurgency, and does not problematize to any extent the difficulties of creating a viable overall strategy. This is somewhat surprising even considering his background as an army officer, the problematic relations between French politics and the actions of the French army in Algiers should have provided plenty of insight on the subject. Both strategic theory and counterinsurgency theory clearly argue for a primacy of politics, but counterinsurgency theory is weaker on explaining the need for a reciprocal process in the making of strategy. One of the more influential writers on strategic theory and civil-military relations of our generation, Eliot Cohen, argues in his book *Supreme Command* that the use of military force is most likely to succeed if strategy is developed in close cooperation between the political and military leadership.[329] Aims and means in strategy cannot be considered in complete isolation. In practical terms the aims

[327] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 63.
[328] British Army, "British Army Field Manual Volume 1 Part 10 Countering Insurgency," Ch 3, p. 2. and US Army & Marine Corps, *Fm 3-24 Counterinsurgency*, ch 1, p. 22.
[329] Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command - Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: The Free Press, 2002), 10-12.

must adapt to what the means realistically can achieve in the given circumstances. If the goal of counter-narcotics is seen in this perspective it is really a question of whether British strategy had been properly designed for the specific circumstances in Helmand province, and whether the goals put forward were achievable by the use of military force.

In the case of British deployment to Helmand in 2006 there was a clear discrepancy between the stated goal of counter-narcotics and the actual operations in Helmand in 2006-08. Senior members of the first British battle group had clear reservations against the goal; in their opinion, it would undermine the overall counterinsurgency effort. Even though counter-narcotics made sense in a domestic setting it is hard to see how it would not make the efforts of British forces in Helmand very difficult if it was pursued rigorously. Counter-narcotics was later dropped as one of the key strategic goals and given less emphasis than in 2006. During Prime Minister Gordon Brown's speech at the Royal College for Defence Studies in 2009, counter-terrorism is again put forward as the main strategic purpose of the mission. He stated that Britain's forces in Helmand were 'protecting our nation and the rest of the world from threat of global terrorism. Fighting there, so that we are safer at home.'[330] The theme of counter-narcotics was only addressed once, and then as one of the challenges to changing Afghanistan's economy.

The example of counter-narcotics highlights one of the key challenges of the concept of a primacy of politics as prescribed by classic counterinsurgency theory. Counterinsurgency theory does not problematize the challenges of creating a viable strategy that both addresses the key political issues of the conflict, and that is achievable through the use of military force. It very much presupposes that governments make sound strategic choices from the outset and the task of the armed forces is to simply carry these out. As seen in the example of counter-narcotics this is not always the case. Strategy needs to adapt to the situation on the ground while still maintaining the upper hand. As Eliot Cohen argues, this requires a constant involvement in the conflict from the bodies that create

[330] Gordon Brown, UK Prime Minister, "Prime Minister's Speech on Afghanistan," *Speech at the Royal College of Defence Studies* 2009.

strategy.

> It is up to the statesman to find the right point of view from which to judge military action. Usually, though not always, this entails deciding when political considerations must override legitimate, even pressing military ones, and this trade-off applies in the greatest wars and in far less substantial conflicts as well.[331]

It is too early to conclude whether the decisions made concerning counter-narcotics in the case of Britain were prudent or not. What seems clear is that there were pressing military objections towards the objective, and later developments show that the political level partly gave in to these by relegating the goal of counter-narcotics to a less significant objective. What it does also show is a willingness on the British side to engage in the conflict, and to adjust its strategy as the conflict progressed.

Tactical view

The northern platoon houses

A state facing an insurgency will never have enough forces to cover all troubled areas. One of the tasks of strategy is to prioritise areas of importance where the effort should initially be massed. This needs to be done at the political-strategic level in order to coordinate and harmonise the efforts of all government agencies involved. This part of the case study will examine if British strategy prioritised areas, and how British forces adhered to this. It will also discuss if contemporary operations pose new challenges to the idea of a primacy of politics compared to the classic era.

When British forces deployed to Helmand in the summer of 2006 it was with a relatively light footprint. Helmand province covers about 58, 500 square kilometres, more than twice the size of Wales, and has a population of about 1,4 million. Since covering the whole province with only one battle group deployed would be impossible, resources were prioritized to the most densely populated areas. British forces already had a presence with a PRT inherited from the

[331] Cohen, *Supreme Command - Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*, 214.

Americans in Laskhar Gah, and decided to focus on the town of Gereshk, the next major town along the Helmand River, in addition to Laskhar Gah.[332] Along with Camp Bastion these two towns form a triangle on a map, known as the Helmand triangle, or just the triangle. This area also overlapped with one of the ADZs. Even though the initial grouping of the battle group seemed clear, the specifics of what they were to do once in place seemed to be less clear.

> In terms of our actual concept of operations [it was] very loose. [...] We're going to try and find the places to secure for civil development, and we're then going to try and provide security in small, discrete areas within the triangle.[333]

Nevertheless, this initial deployment took the consequences of the limited resources that British forces had in Helmand and thus laid the foundations for a prioritized effort in the area.

[332] House of Commons Defence Committee, "The UK Deployment to Afghanistan - Fifth Report of the Session 2005-06," Ev 29.
[333] UK F, "Personal Interview," 06:49.

Map 3.1 Helmand Province

However, problems with the initial plan occurred early on when the newly appointed governor in Helmand, Mohammed Daud, started pressing for British troops to reinforce ANA positions further north in Helmand. 'Even though we [3 Para] had only arrived in limited numbers, there was increasing pressure for us to take command of the base [Sangin].'[334] In addition to Sangin the ANSF forces in Musa Qaleh, the district centre of Now Zad, and at the Kajaki dam were also seemingly under pressure from the insurgents. Stuart Tootal, the commander of the 3 Para, was apprehensive about deploying forces into northern parts of Helmand. On the one hand, not supporting the Afghan troops in the north and

[334] Tootal, *Danger Close - Commanding 3 Para in Afghanistan*, 35.

risking that the insurgents gained full control there could have a very negative influence on morale in both the ANSF and the local population. As a senior member of the battle group remarked;

> First of all, the one thing we have in our mission statement, we were there to support the Afghan government. Okay, so if their governor says, "I want you to put some forces up into these district centres, 'cause if you don't, they'll fall to the Taliban and this'll be catastrophic," you can't really turn around and say, "Well, actually no. We don't really want to do that."[335]

Tootal, on the other hand, was worried that scattering his troops into several district centres would tie them down in static positions and leave him with very little freedom of action. Another worry was their ability to sustain operations over time due to the limited number of helicopters available. Tootal and General Richards, who would assume command of ISAF shortly after, discussed their concerns during a visit by Richards in Helmand.

> We talked about his concern that we were in danger of getting overly fixed in the district centres. I said I agreed with him and recognized that we were deviating from the simple plan of the inkspot development concept that we had discussed over a pint in a pub in Wiltshire six months previously. I explained my dilemma of meeting increasing commitments with ever-scarcer recourses and the paradox of having to establish some permanent presence while still retaining sufficient forces with the freedom to manoeuvre.[336]

According to Tootal General Richards replied: 'Stuart, your Battle Group is doing brilliantly in difficult circumstances. And you, my friend, keep taking the tablets and keep doing what you are doing.'[337] While this might be good leadership, it did not seem to give Tootal much in the way of clear strategic guidance in a complex situation.

The fact that missions change as they proceed and adapt to changing circumstances is not new or controversial in any shape or form. The more interesting aspect relating to the northern platoon houses strategy is <u>how</u> the decision to deploy forces north seems to have been made. The British plan from

[335] UK F, "Personal Interview," 12:10.
[336] Tootal, *Danger Close - Commanding 3 Para in Afghanistan*, 78.
[337] *Ibid.*, 78-79.

the outset was, as mentioned above, to focus its efforts inside the Helmand triangle. While the rest of the strategy was ambiguous this seemed to be rather clear. Commenting on the basis for the deployment to Helmand, Lord Reid argues: 'The clear implication was that demands would be placed on us by people such as Engineer Daoud, an honest Governor, that ought to be resisted, because they were requiring us to do things that were unsustainable.'[338] Nevertheless, during the hearings in the HCDC Lord Reid also explained that he 'was briefed about this [decision to deploy troops north] retrospectively and informed by those in command that, in military terms, this was an operational decision.'[339] The detailed deployment of troops during an operation is normally considered a tactical or operational decision. However, in this case the re-deployment put British troops well outside the Helmand Triangle. It also effectively changed the nature of the British involvement in Helmand by spreading an already thin presence even thinner.

It seems that the challenge in this particular case is the coordination between the PJHQ and the MoD. Brigadier Butler, the highest-ranking British officer in Afghanistan, has afterwards been criticized for the decision of moving troops north.[340] To put the responsibility on Butler and Tootal would, however, be very unfair. Command structures in 2006 were at best unclear, and both were under pressure from Afghan authorities in the area.[341] Furthermore, Butler explains during the HCDC hearings that the PJHQ were fully briefed about the developments.

> I did not have the authority to make it [decision to deploy north] in isolation. We had weekly conference calls—video teleconferences, or VTCs—with PJHQ. We would discuss, write daily reports, write our weekly assessment and we would sit down on the VTC every week to discuss the issues.[342]

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[338] House of Commons Defence Committee, "Operations in Afghanistan - Fourth Report of the Session 2010-12," (London: The Stationery Office Limited, 2011), Ev, 92.
[339] *Ibid.*, 28.
[340] See for example:Ferguson, *A Million Bullets - the Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan*, 162-63. and Anthony King, "Understanding the Helmand Campaign: British Military Operations in Afghanistan", *International Affairs* 86, no. 2 (2010): 315.
[341] House of Commons Defence Committee, "Operations in Afghanistan - Fourth Report of the Session 2010-12," 23.
[342] *Ibid.*, Ev, 110.

What happened further up the chain of command was not really for Butler to question. One might say that a decision such as this should be put under real scrutiny from all levels involved, but formally all Butler needed was for the PJHQ to give the go-ahead.

However, PJHQ was not the only part of British government which was involved in the Helmand campaign. To only blame the PJHQ for the decisions to move forces into the northern parts of Helmand would be to have a too narrow a perspective. As argued earlier these types of conflicts demand a tight political involvement to ensure that operations on the ground are done in accordance to the objectives. It is hard to conceive that a decision of moving troops to the northern villages of Helmand went unnoticed if this was the case. What seems to be clear is that there was a dire lack of procedures in place to regulate the civil-military relations on the top level at this time. General Nick Parker, former Deputy Commander ISAF, also made a point of this during the 2011 hearings. 'The linkages between Kabul and the grand strategic or military strategic decision making in London need to be clearer and better understood.'[343]

One of the challenges concerning a primacy of politics in contemporary operations discussed in this chapter is related to the increased complexity of these operations. The most pressing question perhaps being; whose politics should have primacy? Classic theory was written in an era of colonial warfare where one government controlled all aspects of the efforts made to quell the insurgency. In Afghanistan there are multiple actors who influence operations and strategy. The lead nation in the province, Afghan governments as host nation, the US as the major troop contributor, ISAF, and other allies all had agendas that rarely correlated. General Richards highlighted this challenge for the House of Commons Defence Committee after returning from his posting as Commander International Stabilisation Force Afghanistan (COMISAF).

> When asked to compare others in my position people often mention Templar in Malaya. Well, he was in charge of a single nation's campaign there, and

[343] *Ibid.*, Ev, 55.

> basically he ran it; he did not really have to go and ask anybody. I either had to ask or to co-ordinate and influence a whole host of actors.[344]

In this case it seems that the choice was not between a military or political logic. The choice was more which policy of the different ones in play in Afghanistan to pursue. UK policy dictated that the troops should be prioritised inside the Helmand triangle, while the local Governor, representing Afghan policy, demanded UK troops to deploy further north in Helmand. If the British had adhered strictly to counterinsurgency theory they should have operated in accordance with UK strategy. However, modern conflicts are complex and this area is probably one where counterinsurgency theory needs to be revised. Overall the British forces cannot be said to have adhered to a primacy of politics in the initial years of the Helmand campaign. The decision to deploy forces outside the Helmand triangle was contrary to guidelines from the UK strategic level. As we will see further on this decision also had wide ramification for the rest of the mission.

The population as centre of gravity

Especially between 2006-08 the United Kingdom were not able to pursue a population-centric approach in their operations in Helmand, despite a clear population-centric design in the initial deployment. The main cause of this was the decision to deploy forces into villages north in Helmand. This decision left British force thinly spread over the province with poor local force ratios. Faced with aggressive insurgents the British forces were then unable to generate security and dominate their different areas of responsibility. Instead of controlling the population and forcing the insurgents to react to this the British forces became reactive and enemy-centric in their operations. After 2008 this improved somewhat. The surge of more British and American troops into Helmand improved the force ratios. As shown later in this chapter British forces also became better at planning and executing operations with a population-centric focus.

[344] House of Commons Defence Committee, "UK Operations in Afghanistan Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-07," Ev 46.

Strategic view

Counterinsurgency is a fight for the right to govern a state. This makes the fight for control over the population the perhaps most central aspect in this type of warfare. Whoever controls, and exerts influence over, the majority of the population over time will often have the best chance of victory. This part of the case study will analyse whether British operations in Helmand were mostly characterised by an 'enemy-centric' or 'population-centric' approach. It will start by discussing the initial deployment and grouping of forces. This phase sets the parameters for the following rotations of forces, as pulling out from areas previously occupied is not very common in counterinsurgency operations. Furthermore it will, within the same framework, attempt to analyse the purpose and conduct of some of the major operations conducted by British forces between 2006-2010.

The initial deployment of forces

As discussed above the initial plan for the British deployment was to focus forces inside the Helmand triangle.[345] The Helmand triangle encompassed the districts of Lashkar Gah, Nawa-iBarakzayi, western parts of Nad Ali, and the south-western part of Nahri Sarraj. It also included the largest towns in the area; Lashkar Gah and Gereshk. These parts of Helmand were by far the most densely populated area, about 900,000 of the 1,400,000 inhabitants of Helmand province lived within the triangle.[346] The basic idea was for the forces to seize control of these areas, and then gradually expand their zones of control as the mission proceeded.

While this suggests a population-centric approach from the start of the deployment, it also presented some serious challenges for British forces in 2006. One of the perhaps biggest challenges was the matter of force-to-population ratio. British counterinsurgency doctrine suggests a force to population ratio of 20 counterinsurgents per 1000 inhabitants.[347] This number, although a rough estimate, is what is considered necessary in order to sufficiently control a population during

[345] Theo Farrell, *Unwinnable – Britain's War in Afghanistan 2001-2014* (London: The Bodley Head, 2017), 170
[346] All population numbers taken from: UNDP/ Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "National Area Based Development Plan," ed. Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (Kabul: 2006).
[347] British Army, "British Army Field Manual Volume 1 Part 10 Countering Insurgency," Ch 4, p. 7.

an insurgency. If the size of the initial deployment of British forces should have been in accordance with this they would have had to deploy 18,000 troops into the Helmand triangle in 2006. Hence the 3,700 troops, with only 1,200 personnel in the actual battlegroup, were from the outset already very thin on the ground.[348]

In terms of counterinsurgency theory, the initial British concept of using all of its limited resources inside the triangle, which also contained most of Helmand's population, was basically sound.[349] 'priority in respect of security measures should be given to the more highly developed areas of the country. These contain the greatest number of the population and are more vital to the government [...].'[350] Following such a line of reasoning it would be prudent for British forces to follow the original concept and deal with the more rural areas of Helmand when the situation and resources allowed for it. In a modern context there are also several other considerations to make.

Tactical view

Particularly between 2006 and 2008 the British forces struggled to maintain a population-centric approach to their operations. Instead of the gradual and systematic clearing and holding of areas, British forces were partly forced to fight for survival in scattered platoon and company bases throughout Helmand province. Operations in this period were often enemy-centric in nature. The main cause of this was the platoon-house strategy discussed above in this thesis. The seizure of several locations north in Helmand, Musa Quela, Sangin, Kajaki, Now Zad, etc left British forces spread dangerously thin. One consequence of this was that force ratios were generally too low to maintain any semblance of control in these areas. In some of the locations, like Sangin and Musa Quela, the British forces were forced to fight for their survival.[351] Theo Farrell argues in his article on British military adaptation in Helmand that the enemy-centric focus in the early period in

[348] Tootal, *Danger Close - Commanding 3 Para in Afghanistan*, 22.
[349] UK F, "Personal Interview," 11:03.
[350] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 57.
[351] Ferguson, *A Million Bullets - the Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan*, 266.

Helmand was a result of the forces being 'under-resourced and under intense operational and political pressure.'[352]

However, it was not only lack of resources which led the initial parts of the Helmand campaign in an enemy-centric direction. A lacking ability to adapt operations to the circumstances on the ground also played a part. Robert Egnell, while discussing the issue of adaptation, mainly blames the military´s lack of adaptation to circumstances on the ground.[353] Anthony King points to the problem of dispersal as the major reason the challenges faced by the British in the early years in Helmand.[354] Even if these scholars to some extent disagree on the cause for British operations to fail initially in Helmand, they all seem to agree that the operations in the first part of the mission were characterised by a more enemy-centric than population-centric approach. The description of many of the operations from the numerous accounts of the early deployments also supports this. 3 Commando Brigade during Herrick 5 developed a concept called Mobile Operations Groups (MOGs). These were an attempt to regain mobility and initiative in the campaign in Helmand. A senior Royal Marine officer interviewed by Anthony King described the concept in the following manner:

> We evolved our tactics quite a lot; it was a case of fixed vs manoeuvre. Herrick 4 was fixed; it was platoon houses. We manned them but we sought to manoeuvre from them. We developed Mobile Operations Groups (MOGs): in Company groups, 200 strong with 13 Vikings, WMiKs, Pinzgauers and 105 guns. It was a heavy company group package. The logistics were independent. It was like a Long Range Desert Patrol. We would probe and then strike.[355]

It seems like the Commandos were trying to reestablish a war of movement in Helmand. To get away from a concept with too many fixed positions. When conducting counterinsurgency operations fixed positions plays a key role on the tactical level. Units in fixed positions are a precondition in order to secure and control the population. While there needs to be a balance between static and

[352] Farrell, "Improving in War: Military Adaptation and the British in Hemand Province, Afghanistan, 2006-2009," 573.
[353] Egnell, "Lessons from Helmand, Afghanistan: What Now for British Counterinsurgency?," 302.
[354] Anthony King, "Understanding the Helmand Campaign: British Military Operations in Afghanistan", (2010): 318-19.
[355] *Ibid.*, 317.

mobile operations, the emphasis needs to be put on the static units.[356] The problem at this point in Helmand were not the fixed positions in itself, but that the force ratios in the different positions were unfavorable for counterinsurgency operations.

Instead of actively reducing the number of fixed positions and hence improve local force rations the Royal Marines seems to have viewed the conflict in more conventional terms. A key part of this were the creation of the mentioned MOGs. Operations carried out by these MOGs further reinforce this view. Ewen Southby-Tailyour wrote the account of Herrick 5 after their return. One of the operations given most attention was operation Glacier two, an attack on a Taliban stronghold in the vicinity of Garmsir, well south of Lashkar Gah and the Helmand ADZ. The stated goal of the operation was to 'disrupt and harass the Taliban on his own ground, to raid and not to occupy, to get in fast and get out fast.'[357] The attack included a five-hour bombardment of the Taliban fort and a company size assault in lightly armored Viking tracked vehicles over the Helmand River frontally to the insurgents' position. The insurgents had, during the bombardment, redeployed to other compounds and effectively flanked the attacking commandos, forcing them to withdraw with several wounded and one marine killed in the action.[358] Several other operations carried out in the same offensive spirit is accounted for in the book, though none as spectacular as the attack on Jugroom Fort. It is worth considering that books like Soutby-Tailyours are not academic accounts or even serious work of military history, neither does it pretend to be. Their main object is to tell the stories of the soldiers and officers who fought in Helmand. In that regard stories like the assault on Jugroom Fort is bound to get more attention than more slow-moving and doctrinally sound operations. There is nevertheless no reason to doubt the authenticity of the operations described in the book. The manuscript was read by several of the participating officers and soldiers, and while it is not very critical in style it can be assumed that the contents of the operations is correctly described.

[356] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 77-79.
[357] Ewen Southby-Tailyour, *Helmand, Afghanistan 3 Commando Brigade* (St Ives: Ebury Press, 2008), 3.
[358] *Ibid.*, 3-13.

Operation Glacier Two did not aim to clear a new area for the Royal Marines to hold, the British did not have the manpower to hold new areas.[359] Instead the aim was to disrupt the insurgents and avoid that the Taliban grew too strong in areas outside government control. Compared to the Dutch, the British approach to *disrupt* operations seems more disjointed from the hold-build phases of counterinsurgency. It is also worth asking what the possible effects of an operation such as Glacier Two could have. If successful, the operation would have killed some Taliban fighters, destroyed the fort, and some of the insurgents' materiel. In conventional war, this would all be well and good, but such metrics are not very useful when fighting an insurgency.[360] The core aim for both insurgents and counterinsurgents is the control and support of the population. Even if this operation was a disrupt operation, and thus not meant to create a permanent presence in the area, it is hard to see how it connects to the main part of the operation.

In addition it is worth taking into account how the local population would perceive such an operation. Even if the operation was successful they would have witnessed security forces use an overwhelming force, including twenty 2,000-pound bombs, in order to destroy a local Taliban fort and to kill some of their fighters.[361] Afterwards, the remnants of the Taliban would still be in control of the population, and it is even conceivable that they would increase their hold over the area. The local insurgents could point to the fact that even though faced with a technologically superior enemy they were still the force to be reckoned with in the area. Assessments done by the forces also indicate the same. Whenever fighting with the Taliban occurred close to populated areas without being followed by a permanent security force presence the resentment towards the government grew and support for the Taliban grew accordingly.[362] In this manner operations meant to disrupt the insurgents can in a worst-case end up producing more support among to population in favor of the insurgency.

On the other hand, there are examples of British operations which were conducted

[359] *Ibid.*, 4.
[360] Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, 56-59.
[361] Southby-Tailyour, *Helmand, Afghanistan 3 Commando Brigade* 6.
[362] Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla, Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*, 96-97.

much more in line with counterinsurgency theory and doctrine. Especially after 2008 the emphasis seems to partly shift in favor of a more methodical and population-centric approach. This shift was made possible partly by the increase of troop numbers in Helmand. The British deployed a second battalion size battle group in 2009 and the Americans took over large parts of the southern and western parts of the province at the same time.[363] Secondly, there was a shift in the focus of the operations from kinetic and enemy-centric to a decisively more population-centric approach. Theo Farrell, to my knowledge the only scholar to be given more or less full access by the British Army, argues that this coincided with the deployment of 52 Infantry Brigade in the autumn of 2007.[364] The 52 Infantry Brigade decided that not only a shift in the focus of the operations was necessary, but they also identified a need for better long term planning. In-theatre planning, done by 52 Infantry Brigade, led to the development of the Helmand Road Map, a new and comprehensive plan for the stabilization of the province.[365] While this was welcome at the time it is worth noting the paradox that one of the changes done in the Helmand Road Map was to focus on the central areas of Helmand around Lashkar Gah and Gereshk.[366] In other words, to focus on the Helmand Triangle as the initial strategic guidance ordered.

Operation Panchai Palang

Within this new and more permissive environment one operation in particular stands out. As an example of the more population-centric approach pursued in 2009-2010, Operation Panchai Palang will be analysed more in depth in the following part of this chapter.

The Welsh Guards, along with Afghan and other ISAF forces, carried out Operation Panchai Palang in the summer of 2009. One part of the operation was the Prince of Wales's Company who cleared and subsequently held the two villages of Zargun Kalay and Cha-e Anjir in the Nad-e Ali district to the northwest of Lashkar Gahr. This operation is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, it is the most doctrinal

[363] King, "Understanding the Helmand Campaign: British Military Operations in Afghanistan," 331.
[364] Theo Farrell, "Back from the Brink: British Military Adaptation and the Struggle for Helmand, 2006-2011," in *Military Adaptation in Afghanistan*, ed. Theo Farrell, Frans Osinga, and James A Russel (St Redwood: Stanford University Press, 2013), 112-13.
[365] *Ibid.*, 119.
[366] *Ibid.*, 118.

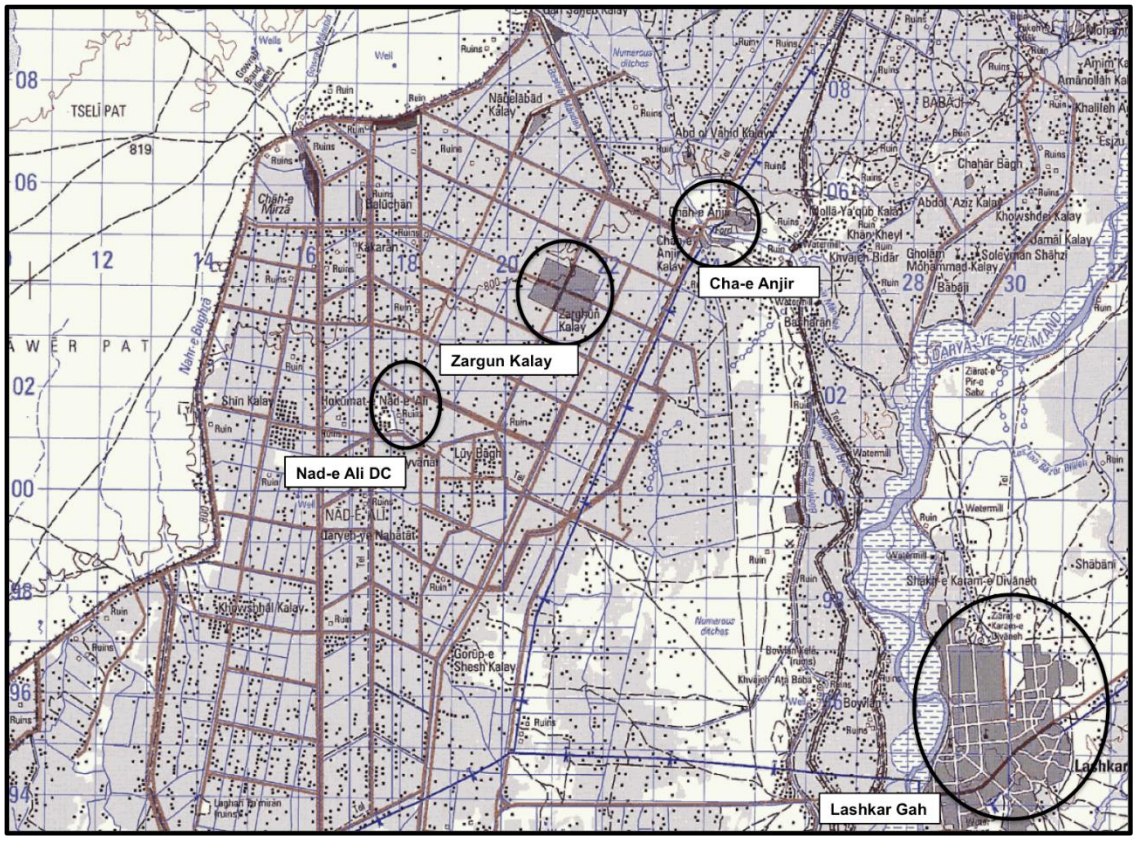
approach to a company-level operation that I have come across during my research. While it is not at all representative for all operations carried out by British forces in Helmand, it serves as a good example at one end of the spectrum. Furthermore, it entails several aspects, which is useful in discussing the utility of population-centric counterinsurgency in contemporary operations.

The Nad-e Ali district had proved a challenge for the British forces for quite some time. The district centre had been under ISAF control for a length of time while the outlying districts, in particular to the north, had proven more difficult to control. Its proximity to the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah, and the fact that the main supply route (MSR) from Camp Bastion to the battle group HQ in Lashkar Gah ran through the district also made it important from an operational point of view. At the start of the Welsh Guards' deployment a Forward Line of Own Troops (FLOT) of sorts ran more or less east-west through the village of Zargun Kalay. North of this were only some ANP presence with no support from ISAF. The northern area, commonly referred to as the Cha-e Anjir triangle or simply CAT, was particularly problematic. The villages of Shoval, Cha-e Anjir and Nagalabad Kalay all had a permanent Taliban presence and also a substantial drug trade, which again provided an economic base for the local and regional Taliban. Whenever ISAF forces ventured north of this line they were inevitably engaged by the local Taliban forces.

Operation Panchai Palang, or Panthers Claw as it was called in English, was an ISAF Regional Command South (RCS) operation launched in June 2009. It aimed 'to set the security conditions for successful presidential elections in Helmand and to support an inflow of US troops.'[367] The role envisaged for the Welsh Guards early on was to clear and hold the entire Cha-e Anjir Triangle. Simultaneously they were to block several crossings on the Shamalan Canal in order to cut off any insurgent forces who attempted to flee the clear operation further north. However, the commander of The Welsh Guards, Colonel Rupert Thornloe, resisted the idea of clearing all of the Cha-e Anjir Triangle. He felt that his units were already spread

[367] House of Commons Defence Committee, "Operations in Afghanistan - Fourth Report of the Session 2010-12," Ev 173.

thin and adding that much more ground to his AOO would only make matters worse.[368] Instead he worked for a less ambitious approach where one company would clear and hold only the village of Cha-e Anjir and leave the rest of the Cha-e Anjir Triangle for later. Thornloe had his way in this matter and it was decided that the Prince of Wales's Company would be given the mission to clear and hold Cha-e Anjir in conjunction with their other tasks for operation Panthers Claw.



Map 3.2: Key areas Operation Panchai Palang

The company was also given an early warning about this operation and was henceforth able to shape the battlefield in a favorable way.[369] The commander of the Prince of Wales's Company firstly moved a larger part of his company into the village of Zargun Kalay while moving a checkpoint in this area. This provided a good tactical point of departure for a future move into Cha-e Anjir. Further, he directed all operations by his company in the following period towards the villages

[368] UK B, "Personal Interview," (2014).
[369] Toby Harnden, *Dead Men Risen - the Welsh Guards and the Defining Story of Britain's War in Afghanistan* (London: Quercus, 2011), 235 and 322.

of Shoval and Nagalabad Kalay.[370] This was done as a deliberate deception with two purposes. Firstly it was to make the Taliban believe that the next operation would be directed towards these villages. Secondly they wanted to avoid the roads leading to Cha-e Anjir being seeded with IEDs. 'So we used these roads hardly ever, and we allowed the Taliban to move up and down them, no problem, so they were not IEDed.'[371] This also meant that the population living between Zargun Kalay and Nagalabad Kalay were not prioritized. As the map shows this area consisted mainly of scattered compounds and would have demanded a lot of resources in order to control. 'It was crap for the locals, but there were not enough of us to care about them that much in the grand scheme of things.'[372] In order to fulfil the task of securing Cha-e Anjir the Welsh Guards could not prioritize everything. By making such priorities they also made the task of clearing and holding Char-e Anjir easier for themselves.

One of the hardest things to do for an infantry company is fighting in built up areas. Especially if the enemy is intermingled with civilians, and you are operating under strict RoEs, wanting to avoid collateral damage. These types of fights tend to carry heavy casualty figures as close quarters fighting negates much of the technological advantage held by western troops. Furthermore, if the defender is able to seed the roads with IEDs they can seriously hamper the tactical mobility of the attacker, thus making him even more vulnerable. Hence one of the main goals for the Prince of Wales's Company was to avoid a fight for Cha-e Anjir in the clear phase of the operation.[373]

The Welsh Guards achieved this objective. On June 24-25 2009 the Prince of Wales's Company managed to clear and establish initial control over Cha-e Anjir 'without firing one shot.'[374] The company approached the town on the western of the two avenues of approach available for vehicles, went straight into the police

[370] UK A, "Personal Interview," (2013), 16:00-18:06.
[371] *Ibid.*, 18:06.
[372] *Ibid.*, 16:35.
[373] *Ibid.*, 15:28.
[374] *Ibid.*, 18:06 and Harnden, *Dead Men Risen - the Welsh Guards and the Defining Story of Britain's War in Afghanistan*, 323-24.

station in the western area of the town, and then peeled out to establish a perimeter of checkpoints mainly on the north side of the town.

The relative ease with which the British company was able to conduct its clear phase rested chiefly on two main preconditions. Firstly, a neighbouring company who conducted a feint west of Cha-e Anjir helped the effort. This tied up local Taliban reserves and prevented them from reinforcing Cha-e Anjir. Secondly, the Prince of Wales's Company managed to achieve a tactical surprise in the operation. The attack was carried out at dawn, which gave the ISAF forces a dominant advantage due to better night vision equipment. It also came from a different direction than what the Taliban expected. As the company approached the town they picked up ICOM chatter from the local Taliban fighters saying: 'They're already here, they're on the inside, they're on the inside of the town.'[375] In this case both deception and surprise, two elements often used by insurgents against conventional forces, were used with good effect against the insurgents.

Why is operation Panchai Palang especially interesting from a counterinsurgency point of view? I will now analyse the operation from a tactical point of view utilising the framework set forth in the theory chapter. I will argue that the operation closely adhered to population-centric counterinsurgency theories concerning a population centric approach and also showed a focus on the primacy of politics. The concerted government effort, on the other hand, proved more problematic in this operation and still left a lot to be desired.

As described in the theory chapter a primacy of politics on a tactical level mainly relates to two issues: was the operation carried out within the framework of the overall strategy, and did it involve the host nation in the execution of the operation.

The operation fit well into the overall strategy and plan on both an operational and strategic level. British forces had, after the initial overstretch, focussed more on the central parts of Helmand from 2008 and onwards. This was much helped by

[375] UK B, "Personal Interview."

the influx of US troops into Helmand, which allowed a more concentrated effort from the British side.[376] The villages of Zargun Kalay and Cha-e Anjir were also both well situated within the Helmand Triangle and the Afghan Development Zone for the province. Furthermore, the operation also tied into overall operational plans for Helmand. Panchai Palang was to be followed by an even larger operation, Moshtarak, which aimed mainly at clearing and holding the major Taliban stronghold in Marjha further south in the Province. In order to succeed with this it was important to stabilise the more central parts of Helmand first.[377] If ISAF and ANSF could secure Zargun Kalay and Cha-e Anjir it would thereby relieve some of the pressure on Nad-e Ali district centre and more indirectly Lashkar Gah.

While the Prince of Wales's Company's part of the operation was mainly carried out by ISAF forces it did not mean that ANSF was not involved. Before the operation was started a low-key recce of Cha-e Anjir was carried out.[378] The main objective was to locate a suitable spot for a base for the company and to meet with the local police commander. As soon as the company had secured the town they initiated a training regime for the local police in order to build trust and to enhance their effectiveness. During the hold phase of the operation British forces secured the outside perimeter around Cha-e Anjir, and the ANSF was the main effort inside the city. While they also did joint work at times, this general division of labour proved valuable. Major Giles Harris, commander of the Prince of Wales's Company, wrote in an article on the operation in *The Infantryman*, an internal army journal, after returning from Helmand.

> Perhaps the most effective initiative we instigated in order to maximise effect in the AO [Area of Operations] was to create mentoring teams which would operate alongside ANSF within the town itself whilst we concentrated our main manpower in depth.[379]

[376] House of Commons Defence Committee, "Operations in Afghanistan - Fourth Report of the Session 2010-12," 34-35.
[377] House of Commons Defence Committee, *Afghanistan and the Green Paper - Defence Committee Contents* (2010 [cited 6 February 2013]); available from http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmdfence/223/10020902.htm.
[378] UK A, "Personal Interview," 17:06 and Harnden, *Dead Men Risen - the Welsh Guards and the Defining Story of Britain's War in Afghanistan*, 322.
[379] Giles Harris, "Fighting the Counterinsurgency Battle at Company Level", *The Infantryman* (2010): 2.

According to Harris this not only freed up resources and enhanced ANSF resources, but also it also 'raised ANSF profile in the town giving them and the town a sense of ownership in any successes.'[380] In other words it was an attempt to create the first foundations for local ownership and sustainability.

Furthermore, British forces in the town also attempted to strengthen the regional powers in the area. One of the first actions was to arrange a *shura* where the governor of Helmand province was present.[381] While such meetings generally produce few tangible results it does show that British forces at the very least made deliberate efforts to increase regional power in the region.

Perhaps most significantly the leadership of the Welsh Guards at both company and battalion level seemed in this period to have a clearer idea of what higher echelons wanted them to achieve.[382] Much of the frustrations with vague strategic or poorly chosen strategic goals as described earlier in the case study seemed to have been resolved. This can partly be due to experience, but also the changed organisation with higher ranking and experienced UK leadership in the region. One can argue, based on this case, that one effect of clearer strategic guidance is more cohesive operations. In 2006, tactical commanders attempted to sub-optimise their operations partly due to lack of clear strategic guidance. This resulted in a mission creep which British forces spent the next two years correcting. In 2009, tactical commanders operate within the constraints of strategic guidance, and also more in line with counterinsurgency theory. While this observation is hardly surprising it nevertheless shows how important it is to get the basics right in a counterinsurgency operation.

The approach by the Welsh Guards in Cha-e Anjir was an example of a population-centric approach to counterinsurgency in several aspects. The purpose and planning of the operation clearly points towards a focus on securing the population

[380] *Ibid.*
[381] *Ibid.*, 1.
[382] UK B, "Personal Interview." and Harnden, *Dead Men Risen - the Welsh Guards and the Defining Story of Britain's War in Afghanistan*, 235 and House of Commons Defence Committee, "Operations in Afghanistan - Fourth Report of the Session 2010-12," 7.

rather than engaging and defeating the insurgents. British forces were also able to use force in a manner that supported the overall objective.

As argued in the theory chapter, one of the core ideas of a population-centric approach to counterinsurgency is that operations should be directed towards securing and controlling the population instead of chasing insurgents. While this does not exclude offensive operations, especially during the clear phase, it will in most cases entail a more defensive stance. In earlier cases we have seen several examples of operations that were enemy-focussed from the outset, and this was not the case here.[383] There were two main arguments for choosing Cha-e Anjir as the town to clear and hold. Firstly it was a densely populated area outside government control.

> That's the key why I picked that [Zargun Kalay and Cha-e Anjir]. They were geographically important, because they were on crossroads and junctions. But they had large, large population areas, with capacity for schools and shops. They were areas that, if secure, would grow into strong points for the government.[384]

While terrain cannot be excluded because of the influence it has on military operations, the main argument rested on what opportunities would be created through control of the population. The company commander in the area further reinforced this view. After explaining how his part of the operation tied into the RC South plan for Panchai Palang, he argued: 'Lastly, the population, unlike many populations we had operated amongst previously, were ripe for "tipping".´[385] Tipping in this context refers to the non-committal behaviour often seen among local populations during an insurgency or civil wars. As long as it remains unsure which part will win, the population tends to keep as many options as possible open in order to not end up on the wrong side when the war ends. This is commonly referred to as hedging, and getting the population to commit is called tipping. In

[383] See for example operations Harekate Yolo and Karez in the case of Norway.
[384] UK B, "Personal Interview," 19:30.
[385] Harris, "Fighting the Counterinsurgency Battle at Company Level," 1.

this case the intelligence believed that the population in this area could be turned to the government side if they were able to secure them from the Taliban.

Another key aspect of this operation was the deployment of Welsh Guards forces after the initial clear phase. Instead of massing the entire unit into one base, the Prince of Wales's Company chose to disperse its forces in order to create a perimeter around the town. The basic plan was very straightforward and classic:

> Create a hard perimeter, push out isolated enemy from the inside, deter them from coming back, protect lines of communication and respond violently to the enemy when presented, whilst creating a governable safe haven inside the perimeter which locals value and others want to be part of.[386]

The operation was thus shaped with its main focus on securing the population, not chasing the enemy in further offensive operations. This attitude also influenced the force deployment in Cha-e Anjir. In order to keep the population secure the Prince of Wales's Company manned six permanent checkpoints along with the ANSF around the town. These were mutually supportive with line-of-sight from one to the next in order to prevent insurgents from infiltrating the town. Since the Guards expected, and partly wanted, these positions to be the focus of enemy fire they were pushed far enough outside of the town so that ricochets would not endanger civilians in the city.[387]

Another factor to take into consideration is the force ratio between counterinsurgents and population. Aside from deploying their resources well in order to secure the town, the Prince of Wales's Company also enjoyed a better force ratio than early on in the Helmand campaign. Cha-e Anjir was at the start of the operation a town of about 1,600 inhabitants. This grew to about 4,000 at the end of the tour.[388] A company of about 100 soldiers and roughly the same amount

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[386] *Ibid.*
[387] UK A, "Personal Interview," 3:18, 8:26.
[388] *Ibid.*, 4:23 and Harnden, *Dead Men Risen - the Welsh Guards and the Defining Story of Britain's War in Afghanistan*, 501.

of ANSF was still short of the 1:20 force recommendation in the British doctrine, and officers in the company argue that they 'were hugely under-manned.'[389] Nevertheless, since this was part of a gradual expansion out of Nad-e Ali most of the areas south of the town were already controlled by ISAF and ANSF, leaving the company to mass their resources to the north of the town. This was further alleviated by terrain, as Cha-e Anjir has few avenues of approach and the surrounding terrain is predominantly flat.

But it was not only favourable circumstances that made the force ratio in Cha-e Anjir more manageable, it was also due to deliberate decisions made by the commanders on various levels within the Welsh Guards. Due to the experiences from other units earlier in the campaign they were conscious of the dangers of over-expanding. 'I was very clear very early that we were going to keep it tight, keep it simple, don't bite off more than we can chew.'[390] While such an approach is very much in line with counterinsurgency theory, it is worth mentioning that it demands tough decisions on the tactical level to make it work. After the initial weeks in Cha-e Anjir elders from the outlying districts approached the British forces and asked for them to push out their checkpoints and also include their areas so they also could benefit from an enhanced security. While this is a very good tactical indicator of success in counterinsurgency it would also have been dangerous to comply with, as it would have spread the troops out more. After consulting with the battalion staff the request was denied.[391]

The Welsh were, however, not able to counter all threats posed by the Taliban. Aware of the limits in their capabilities and resources, the measure of success set by the company was that there should be no IEDs or firefights inside the town.[392] The insurgents were only able to set off one IED inside the perimeter after their arrival, all other attempts were tipped off by the locals. While dealing with the overt threat posed by insurgent is obviously important, counterinsurgency theory argues that the less visible, but more dangerous threat posed by subversion and

[389] UK A, "Personal Interview," 05:31.
[390] *Ibid.*, 14:28.
[391] *Ibid.*, 20:02.
[392] *Ibid.*, 08:26.

the political organisation of the insurgents should take priority. 'Unless the communist subversive political organization in the towns and villages is broken and eliminated, the insurgent guerrilla units will not be defeated.'[393] While the Taliban were a less organised political movement than the communist insurgents of the 1950s, their continued presence in the town was clear to the Welsh.[394] However, they deemed that they had neither the resources nor the competence to address the problem. Putting more manpower into the town would necessarily mean drawing forces away from the perimeter around the town, thereby potentially making it easier for insurgents to rush a checkpoint or infiltrate back. In addition, the work of uprooting hidden insurgent presence in a town is normally not considered a task a regular infantry company should be able to do, but rather a task for intelligence services and Special Forces.

The Prince of Wales's Company were also able to use force in a manner that largely adhered to population-centric counterinsurgency theory. This might seem somewhat paradoxical if one examines some of the statistics for the deployment. During four months in Cha-e Anjir they registered 140 contacts with the enemy, most at short ranges. They also called in about 80 kinetic fire missions, more than 60 of these were danger close, meaning the ordnance was dropped closer to friendly troops than recommended by wartime safety regulations.[395] Counterinsurgency theory, however, is less concerned with the amount of force used than the purpose it is used for. In this case force was mainly used as a response to Taliban attacks, to secure and protect the population in the town, and to prevent the insurgents from gaining access. As far as counterinsurgency theory is concerned the distinction lies in the purpose for which force is used. If the main effort is to protect the population, and the enemy interferes with this, then use of force is instrumental to the overall objective of winning the population to the government side. On the other hand, in accordance with population-centric counterinsurgency theory a main effort to hunt down the insurgents, without securing the population adequately, is seen as counterproductive.

[393] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 56.
[394] UK A, "Personal Interview," 12:11.
[395] Harris, "Fighting the Counterinsurgency Battle at Company Level," 1 and UK A, "Personal Interview."

One of the dangers of a defensive deployment such as the Welsh Guards chose in Cha-e Anjir is that one risks leaving the initiative totally in the hands of the insurgents. Since the bulk of the counterinsurgent force is in static positions, the insurgents are free to choose the time for their attacks. From a doctrinal point of view this is in many ways a desired scenario, where the insurgents are kept away from population centres, and at the same time expend resources on attacking well-prepared and fortified positions. However, on a tactical level it poses among other things challenges to the morale of the troops in particular. It can also influence local opinions if the counterinsurgents are seen as inactive and unable to carry the fight to the insurgents. The Prince of Wales's Company came up with several creative ways of using force and rudimentary psychological operations to work around this. Firstly they made good use of well-prepared ambushes with precision-guided munitions, commonly referred to as 'come-ons.'[396] Insurgent attacks on Welsh checkpoints from prepared firing-points in outlying compounds were almost a daily routine. In order to counter this the company would prepare firing orders with precision-guided munitions, often using the GMLRS[397], targeting known firing points in the area. They would subsequently drive a well-armoured vehicle down the road, and as the insurgents opened fire they would obliterate the firing points with indirect fire.[398] Afterwards they made use of a Taliban tactic and patrolled out to nearby firing points leaving night letters. These letters basically stated that if these positions were used again they would share the fate of their comrades.[399]

The British were also able to use more inventive and less kinetic psychological operations in Cha-e Anjir. The Guards worried how the high number of firefights on the outskirts of the city affected the local population. Being unable to prevent the skirmishes from happening they decided to at least reassure the population as best they could. For this purpose, they utilised their interpreters and loudspeakers

[396] UK A, "Personal Interview."
[397] Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System. An American artillery system, which can fire GPS guided munitions.
[398] UK A, "Personal Interview," 07:42 and Harris, "Fighting the Counterinsurgency Battle at Company Level," 2.
[399] Harnden, *Dead Men Risen - the Welsh Guards and the Defining Story of Britain's War in Afghanistan*, 495-98.

mounted at the town *bazaar*. 'We would broadcast on a speaker into the *bazaar* as the rounds were in the air. [...] He [the interpreter] would then say, "In a couple of seconds, you're going to hear a big bang. That's the sound of the Taliban being killed.'[400] While this might seem a bit macabre from the outside, the effect on the local populace was good. During the intense fighting on the Election Day members of the Prince of Wales's Company describe how locals listened to the live comment of the skirmishes, like it was a game of football, cheering loudly when munitions exploded.[401] While both unorthodox and low tech this approach, according tothe Welsh Guards, helped to alienate the population from the Taliban, and to show that the government took steps in securing them.

To summarise, operation Panchai Palang shows that in this case British forces in Helmand were, on a tactical level, able to conduct population-centric counterinsurgency operations. The operation was well linked into the overall strategic and operational framework at the time. It also made good use of and cooperated closely with ANSF, especially in the hold phase. The operation managed to clear and hold a contested area and generate improved security over time. However, one should be careful not to generalise too much from one single operation. While the Prince of Wales's company was able to secure the area over time they were never able to fully penetrate local society and deal with issues such as political subversion. It would probably be a very tall order for an infantry company and would require dedicated special resources present over time. Furthermore, the development work in the area suffered due to a continued mismatch between civilian and military resources. One of the core tenets of counterinsurgency theory is that all efforts need to work in the same direction, and it remains doubtful if creating security alone is enough to sway a population to the government side. Nevertheless, this operation provides a good example of how an infantry company can approach a clear-hold operation in a doctrinal manner.

A concerted government effort

The concept of a comprehensive approach was perhaps the single most challenging

[400] UK A, "Personal Interview," 38:11 and Harris, "Fighting the Counterinsurgency Battle at Company Level," 3.
[401] Harnden, *Dead Men Risen - the Welsh Guards and the Defining Story of Britain's War in Afghanistan*, 488-89.

area for the British with regards to their mission in Helmand. Despite long experience and solid doctrinal guidance, they were never able to achieve a unity of effort and to effectively coordinate the civil-military efforts in Helmand. This was mainly due to a lack of centralised control, both in the shape of a clear overall strategy, but also in the mid- and short-term direction of the operations.

Strategic view

There is little doubt that the British both understood the importance of and aimed for an integrated and comprehensive approach to their mission in Helmand. The memorandum from the UK MoD in the 2005-2006 hearings stated that 'development and reconstruction are key to our success—crucial because without them, military intervention would not necessarily increase stability and security.'[402] This is echoed in the oral evidence given by Air Marshal Sir Glen Thorpy from the PJHQ during the same hearings.[403] Given the history of participation in numerous counterinsurgency and peacekeeping operations this was hardly surprising. The importance of a joint civil-military approach was, at least in theory, well understood among both uniformed and non-uniformed personnel. Hence, before the deployment to Helmand the British made an effort to conduct integrated planning. A joint UK plan for Helmand was made in cooperation between the Department for International Development (DfiD), the Foreign Office, and the PJHQ.[404] A unit from the Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU) was put in charge of coordinating the different actors involved in the planning. However, the planners were worried that the overall aims set for the campaign were too ambitious and would be very hard to accomplish. The plan, which focussed on developing ink-spots in the Helmand Triangle, was nevertheless agreed on and set in motion. As we know, events on the ground quickly overtook and partly derailed the original joint UK plan for Helmand. The effects on this in regard to a comprehensive approach will be dealt with in the next part of this chapter. Before doing so it is worth asking whether the work done to ensure a concerted government effort before deployment was sufficient and in line with

[402] House of Commons Defence Committee, "The UK Deployment to Afghanistan - Fifth Report of the Session 2005-06," 44.
[403] *Ibid.*, 29.
[404] Ferguson, *A Million Bullets - the Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan*, 147-48.

counterinsurgency theory.

The British did indeed adhere to Sir Robert Thompson´s somewhat obvious principle that 'the government must have an overall plan' which covers both the military and civilian aspects of the mission.[405] However, British planning was nowhere near as comprehensive as the Dutch planning ahead of their mission to Uruzgan. On the other hand, this could not be expected. The Dutch had more time to prepare before the deployment of force, and was not conducting extensive operations in Iraq at the same time. It was nevertheless a lot more thorough and comprehensive than Norway, who basically trusted ISAF to do the in-theatre planning. However, in all forms of warfare it is the execution and not the planning which is the most challenging. Circumstances change quickly, and as discussed in the theory chapter events on the ground will, and sometimes must, influence the overall strategic goals of a campaign. In order for such changes to be made one needs to have clear command structures and a clear understanding of who is responsible for what. Inter-departmental coordination is difficult in most states on a day-to-day basis. These difficulties are multiplied in expeditionary coalition warfare. Not only are the interests of different ministers and ministries at play, but also those of all the other troop-contributing nations, numerous NGOs, the host nation, the local governor, and the local population.

In this context it is surprising that Britain chose the PCRU to coordinate the efforts of the MoD, the Foreign Office, and the PJHQ. While the PCRU surely had competent staff it holds no formal authority over any of the bodies it was set to coordinate. This issue was also raised during the 2007 hearings on Helmand in the HCDC. The head of operations in the PJHQ was asked if the current arrangement was satisfactory or if 'there need to be a sort of elevation of PCRU or a Cabinet office minister at Cabinet level coordinating the various government departments across Whitehall?'[406] Lieutenant General Hougton argued that from his point of view the cross-Whitehall coordination worked quite well, and was also improving with more experience. While it is not uncommon that serving generals defend

[405] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 55.
[406] House of Commons Defence Committee, "UK Operations in Afghanistan Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-07," Ev, 75.

government policies in public hearings there is no reason to believe that coordination did not function well in Whitehall. The problem, as many of the scholars who has studied the Helmand campaign argued, was that it did not work well in Helmand.[407] Some of the reasons for this originated at the tactical level and will be discussed below, but others again could only have been corrected at the strategic level. One could argue that more direct involvement from the Cabinet level might have created a stronger sense of ownership, causing the issues concerning a comprehensive approach to be put higher on the agenda.

Another challenge with regards to a concerted government effort was the imbalance of the mission as a whole. David Galula argued that counterinsurgency should be an 80% civilian and 20% military effort.[408] Military forces involved in counterinsurgency should operate in support of civilian authorities. Operations should be conducted where the population can be swayed to support the government, or as a minimum, not support the insurgents. Galula feared that if the military component was given too many resources compared to the civilian component, one could risk that the military would become the lead agency and again steer the campaign in a more military direction. If we use British government spending as a tool of measurement the numbers are about 10-90 in favour of the security forces. Between May 2006 and March 2007 the British government spent £102 million on development while the annual military spending in Helmand was assessed to be £1 billion.[409] Moreover, in terms of staffing, the military component in Helmand literally dwarfed the civilian. Of the 3,500 personnel deployed to Helmand in 2006 only about 100 were allotted to the PRT, which held the responsibility for the development side of the mission.[410] Compared to the Dutch figures, the total balance is not all that different. The major difference is that the Dutch had an integrated campaign plan from the outset of the operation. In addition, the civilian component of the Dutch PRT had direct access, and from 2008 shared the leadership of the Dutch mission with the military commander. It is

[407] Warren Chin, "Colonial Warfare in a Post-Colonial State: British Military Operations in Helmand Province, Afghanistan", *Defence Studies* 10, no. 1-2 (2010): 237-39.
[408] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 63.
[409] House of Commons Defence Committee, "UK Operations in Afghanistan Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-07," Ev, 6-7.
[410] House of Commons Defence Committee, "The UK Deployment to Afghanistan - Fifth Report of the Session 2005-06," Ev 29.

thus fully possible that cross-coordination worked well in Whitehall, but the odds of the civilian component gaining actual influence in Helmand was limited, at least in regards to resources.

In sum, the British laid foundations for a concerted government effort in Helmand. It initiated and completed a UK joint plan for Helmand, which emphasised the importance of a comprehensive approach for the operation. On the other side the civilian side of the operation was vastly under-resourced and -staffed compared to the military side. Furthermore, based on the evidence examined for this thesis, the top echelons of British government did not take sufficient lead on the comprehensive approach in Helmand. Instead, the task of coordinating the different actors was delegated to the PCRU which held no formal authority over the bodies it was set to coordinate.

Tactical view

While foundations for a functioning and integrated approach were laid on the strategic level it seems to have been a somewhat different story on the tactical level. Several studies of the Helmand campaign are highly critical to the lack of development and reconstruction effort in 2006-2007.[411] A company commander who was deployed to Helmand in 2009 summarized the development effort, in his opinion, as: 'unsatisfactory, under-resourced, unimaginative, lack of commitment an no real big, big vision.'[412] The criticism raised by the military in particular was the lack of support for Quick-Impact Projects (QIPs) or merely the lack of civilian development staff in their respective areas. The main cause of the latter seems to rest on a combination of different force-protection rules among civilian employees and the military personnel and the high intensity of the combat operations in Helmand.

British civilian government officials operate under different force protection rules than soldiers. As an example of this, they require shelters with hardened roofs to stay relatively safe against rocket and mortar attacks.[413] As these are not soldiers,

[411] Ferguson, *A Million Bullets - the Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan*, 174-76 and Egnell, "Lessons from Helmand, Afghanistan: What Now for British Counterinsurgency?," 311-12.
[412] UK A, "Personal Interview."
[413] Ferguson, *A Million Bullets - the Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan*, 175 and Chin, "Colonial Warfare in a Post-Colonial State: British Military Operations in Helmand Province, Afghanistan," 239.

and thus not expected to take risks on behalf of their government in the same manner, this is not an unreasonable arrangement. It does, however, pose a challenge when fighting in conflicts with no clear front lines and a generally high threat level. In the beginning of the Helmand mission it was only the base in Lashkar-Gah which had sufficient shelters. This again seriously hampered the freedom of movement of the civilian development and reconstruction experts attached to the PRT. Will Pike, a company commander in 3 Para, noted in his diary on 22 May: 'Not enough on the development side. Have yet to see anyone from an NGO, and DfiD don't go out. Yet this is the development arm that is the route to success.'[414]

The different standards in force protection not only caused practical problems with integrating the security and development efforts, it also served to fuel the cultural differences between the components. Soldiers often have a low opinion of "the soft civilian culture" to begin with. This is often enhanced in conflict area where everyone not carrying a rifle is assessed to be a liability by the combat troops. This opinion is often also extended to elements of the military organisation that mainly spend their time inside the safety of the fortified bases. While the troops out in the FOBs lived with the bare minimum of comfort, the civilian personnel had more comfortable facilities.[415] While none of these arrangements in themselves are unreasonable, civil servants do after all not have years of military training, they could easily serve to widen the cultural gap between the different components of the mission and thereby undermine a sense of a common purpose.

Also during operation Panchai Palang there were challenges with regards to a concerted government effort. While security is normally highest up on the needs list for towns in areas ravaged by conflict there are also other key issues to address if one is to convince the population to side with the government. For Cha-e Anjir the list was very much like the rest of Afghanistan: education, better roads, electric power, and better medical care.[416] As a small infantry company the Prince

[414] Hew Pike, *From the Front Line* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2008), 182.
[415] Bishop, *Ground Truth*, 167.
[416] Harnden, *Dead Men Risen - the Welsh Guards and the Defining Story of Britain's War in Afghanistan*, 499 and UK B, "Personal Interview."

of Wales's Company was stretched thin in order to provide security. Aware not to raise false expectations they promoted modest goals for development in the area. Their key focus was to get the school reopened.[417] For any other development work they were dependent on help from the PRT or other civic action teams higher up in the echelons. According to the people involved on the ground from the military side, this did not happen. The description given by a key officer in the Prince of Wales's Company when commenting on development was representative of their feelings. 'I think basically that it was unsatisfactory, under-resourced, unimaginative, lack of commitment, and no real, big, big vision.'[418] It is understandable that someone who invests a lot of effort and takes risks to secure an area gets frustrated if they feel that the rest of the organisation is not carrying its weight. In a counterinsurgency perspective it is also problematic as armed force and security alone are really not able to deliver any viable long-term solutions. The criticism raised by parts of the Welsh Guards also mirrors what was noted at the formal hearings in the House of Commons Defence Committee in 2007. [419] One of the key issues raised in the hearing was that the efforts were hampered because 'the threat of violence had meant that civilian workers were reluctant to work outside secure areas.'[420] This, however, seemed to remain an issue. Arguments presented to the Welsh Guards in Cha-e Anjir were that force-protection measures were not adequate for civilian staff to work there.[421]

However, the different force-protection measures cannot alone explain the challenges concerning civil-military cooperation on a tactical level. One underlying cause are the initial actions and decisions by the British task force in Helmand. As Warren Chin points out, the expansion beyond the Helmand Triangle and the ADZ into the northern platoon houses expanded and escalated the conflict in a manner which was not planned for before the deployment. For the development side of the mission to get going, one first had to establish security, but the dispersal of the combat troops into fixed positions with poor force ratios lead to constant

[417] UK A, "Personal Interview," 21:55.
[418] *Ibid.*, 32:02.
[419] House of Commons Defence Committee, "UK Operations in Afghanistan Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-07," 36-36.
[420] *Ibid.*, 36.
[421] UK A, "Personal Interview," 32:51.

fighting. During visit of the Secretary of State for Defence, Des Browne, this issue became a topic. According to Stuart Tootal he 'pursued an aggressive line of questioning about why we were planning to do strike ops instead of development. He also wanted to know why the military were leading operations rather than the British civilian government ministries.'[422] It seems that Browne was touching on one of the very core ideas of counterinsurgency. If one is to succeed, military effort needs to be in support, and second to, the overall political effort. According to counterinsurgency theory, securing areas for development and increased governance is more important than strike operations against insurgents. Tootal clearly seems to have been somewhat provoked by the question and replied that 'this is Afghanistan and we are in the middle of a vicious counter-insurgency. The Taliban are trying to kill my soldiers, which is why we are conducting strike operations when resources permit.'[423] The overall problem was, as Chin pointed out, that most of the positions where the Taliban was trying to kill Tootal´s soldiers were in places such as Musa Quala and Sangin, deployed there based on decisions made by the British commanders in the theatre. On the other hand, I have no evidence of Des Browne, or other senior ministerial level figures, arguing for a clear civilian leadership of the mission before deployment. Creating a stronger civilian leadership from the outset could have ensured that the military operated in support of the development side.

Another frustration among the military forces in Helmand was the apparent lack of support for QIPs. Other nations, such as the US, had bestowed the military forces with money to conduct their own QIPs in areas deemed unsafe for the civilian workers. QIPs were originally an American concept where security forces were given money and other resources to enable small and quick-fix projects upon arrival in a new area. These would typically include pay for work projects filling in Taliban positions and firing points, clearing irrigation ditches, and similar things. The main idea was to buy goodwill among the locals and to some extent kick start the local economy. Stuart Tootal points out in his book that 3 Para identified over 30 possible QIPs during their deployment, and that none of these were started

[422] Ferguson, *A Million Bullets - the Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan*, 174-76.
[423] Tootal, *Danger Close - Commanding 3 Para in Afghanistan*, 79.

when they redeployed.[424] Interviews with other officers from support the argument made by Tootal in his book. One company commander was so frustrated at the lack of development support in his area that he suggested to stop all fighting for one day if he was given the money he then saved on ammunition for development projects. With the cost of a javelin missile at $150,000 he figured he could do a lot in his small area.[425] On the other hand, the whole concept of QIPs is debated in development circles. One reason rests on the projects often having a short-term focus and being without any local ownership. A senior member of the PCRU points this out in relation to an example used by Stuart Tootal. In his book he describes that a US NGO had provided washing machines to the local hospital in Gereshk. If the necessary plumbing was done these could, in his mind, be made operational and thus both improve the hygienic standard in the hospital and help the British forces win the hearts and minds of the locals.[426] For a practical and action oriented officer it is hard to understand why DfiD representatives refused to install a small amount of plumbing to make this happen. However, as the PCRU representative pointed out, the problem was more complex from a development point of view. Firstly the hospital lacked a reliable source of electricity. Installing a washing machine would also make several women, who made their living washing for the hospital, unemployed. Lastly, the hygienic standards of the hospital in Gereshk were assessed as quite good, by Afghan standards.[427] Such long-term and wider consequences of projects are what development experts assess. Most military officers do not have that type of training and are also shaped to a different mindset. This was also why the job of assessing which projects should be carried out was done by the PRT in Helmand and not by the different army formations.

The one area where the British effort in Helmand has really seemed to struggle throughout the period covered is civil-military cooperation on a tactical level. The intensity of the fighting and the following insecure situation made it difficult to deploy the civilian component of the task force into cleared areas. As a result, the efforts on the ground were perceived as lacking and inefficient by the British

[424] *Ibid.*, 255.
[425] UK A, "Personal Interview."
[426] Tootal, *Danger Close - Commanding 3 Para in Afghanistan*, 255.
[427] Ferguson, *A Million Bullets - the Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan*, 180-81.

troops. However, the intensity and fighting was partly caused by the decisions to deploy the British forces outside the Helmand triangle and the ADZ. A concentration of the task force inside the triangle would have led to better local force ratios and while there are no certainties it could have made the overall situation more favourable.

The British approach

Particularly in the initial two years of the operation, the British effort in Helmand did not adhere to classic counterinsurgency theory. The United Kingdom failed to develop a coherent strategy. The initial focus on counter-narcotics was seen as not only counter-productive by the military forces on the ground, but also as an example of a lack of proper insight at the strategic level by the British commanders. Also the relation to the host-nation caused challenges for the British. When the governor of Helmand requested that British forces deployed to villages north in Helmand the British forces chose to comply with this and thus expand the area of operations defined by the British government. This decision did not only leave British security forces dangerously over-stretched in the province. It also had negative consequences for other aspects of the mission. Poor force ratios meant that they were unable to dominate areas and struggled to generate actual security. This again almost forced operations in a reactive and enemy-centric direction. The poor security situation also made any development and governance work in the disputed areas a tall order.

Fundamental problems in military operations are rarely caused by one single mistake or bad decision. Neither is it possible to place the blame on one single person or component. As often the case in military operations it was the sum of smaller mistakes, or poor judgement, which put the British in the situation they found themselves in between 2006-08. The dispersion of forces, as discussed in the previous part, was a decision made on the tactical level in violation of the political guidance given to the mission. It was also a clear deviation from counterinsurgency theory and doctrine in general, particular in the early period. Both the strategic and tactical level must take their share of the responsibility for this. However, with regards to the overall research question of this thesis: The challenges for the

British campaign in Helmand was more a due to failures of strategy and tactics than counterinsurgency theory.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CASE OF THE NETHERLANDS

Of the three states studied in this thesis, the armed forces of the Netherlands adhered most closely to counterinsurgency theories in the conduct of their operations. They employed a realistic and pragmatic approach to the conflict. Dutch strategy matched the challenges at hand and provided clear guidance for the effort. At the same time the strategic level allowed the necessary room for adaptation by the forces on the ground. Furthermore, the Dutch managed to employ a well-balanced civil-military effort, especially compared to that of Britain and Norway, and also managed to maintain good civil-military cooperation throughout the operation. Dutch forces at the tactical level utilised an effects-based approach (EBO) to their operations. This proved an effective tool for creating both a long-term focus as well as a unity of effort between the civilian and military components of the Dutch intervention in Afghanistan. On the other hand, whether Dutch force ratios were sufficient to penetrate society to actually win the population to the government side is more debatable. It is also possible that the effects achieved by the Dutch forces will prove short-lived. One factor which to some extent undermined the Dutch efforts in the region was their unwillingness to deal with the central power brokers in Uruzgan on an official level.

Background and history of counterinsurgency

As part of the stage III expansion of ISAF, the Netherlands assumed responsibility as the lead nation in the province of Uruzgan in southern Afghanistan. The decision made by the Dutch government to deploy forces into Uruzgan in 2006 came after much scrutiny and debate, a process very different from those in both Britain and Norway. In 2010 the Dutch parliament refused to sanction further deployment of forces to Uruzgan, thereby ending the Dutch involvement in the province and also bringing down the Blakenende IV coalition.[428]

Uruzgan was by no means the easiest province in 2006. Regarding security, the standard of living, and government presence it was ranked among the lowest in

[428] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," (The Hague: 2011), 19.

Afghanistan. At the same time, it had a significant presence of Taliban who held considerable sway over the population.[429] Nevertheless, the Dutch effort in Uruzgan has been described as one of the few success stories for ISAF.[430]

Dutch counterinsurgency history

As a former colonial power, the Netherlands has a history of counterinsurgency. The Netherlands fought against insurgents both in the Dutch East Indies right after the Second World War, and during the rebellion in the Aceh province at the turn of the last century. Less literature and theory has emerged from these conflicts compared to those fought by the British. Nevertheless, there is an ongoing debate in the Netherlands whether Dutch counterinsurgency today resembles the campaigns fought in the past, and whether there is such a thing as a *Dutch approach* to counterinsurgency.

Sociologist Joseph Soeters seems to be one of the most ardent proponents of a Dutch approach. Soeters is a professor at the Netherlands Defence Academy and claims that the Dutch approach to counterinsurgency operations is characterised by less use of force, a high degree of cultural awareness, and more reliance on cunning and guile than brute force to achieve its goals.[431]

> The Dutch are proud of their typical "Dutch approach" or "Dutch touch". This approach amounts to bottom-up, harmoniously, preferably not so violently and via cooptation of local power holders and tribal balance, seeking for solutions to conflicts.[432]

This approach is often contrasted to an Anglo-Saxon way of war that is more confrontational, reliant on kinetic force and more enemy-centric than the Dutch.

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[429] The Liasion Office (TLO), "The Dutch Engagement in Uruzgan: 2006 to 2010 - a TLO Socio-Political Assessment," (Kabul: 2010).

[430] Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, "The Use and Abuse of the 'Dutch Approach' to Counter-Insurgency", *Journal of Strategic Studies* 36, no. 6 (2013): 867-68.

[431] Joseph Soeters, "Odysseus Prevails over Achilles: A Warrior Model Suited to Post 9/11 Conflicts," in *How 9/11 Changed Our Ways of War*, ed. James Burk (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).see also: George Dimitriu & Beatrice de Graaf, "The Dutch Coin Approach: Three Years in Uruzgan, 2006-2009", *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 21, no. 3 (2010).

[432] Jan van der Meulen Joseph Soeters, Robert Beers and Ad Vogelaar,, "Epilogue," in *Mission Uruzgan - Collaborating in Multiple Coalitions for Afghanistan*, ed. Jan van der Meulen Robert Beeres, Joseph Soeters & Ad Vogelaar, (Amsterdam: Pallas Publications - Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 329.

Dutch historian Thijs Brocades Zaalberg is the most outspoken critique of the idea of a Dutch approach to counterinsurgency. In an article published in the *Journal of Strategic Studies,* he argues that contemporary Dutch operations are not based on the legacy of former colonial campaigns.

> During these violent nineteenth and early twentieth-century military campaigns on Java, Lombok and Bali, in Aceh, and elsewhere in the Indonesian archipelago, large scale punitive campaigns, exemplary force and coercion were the rule, not the exception. Those claiming that something resembling a 'hearts-and-minds-approach' eventually pre- vailed during modern imperial expansion in the archipelago ignore decades of historical research.[433]

Zaalberg along the same lines. He stresses that in Iraq the Dutch forces in the Al-Mutanna province did not employ specificly Dutch solutions, but instead 'operated in line with the British divisional guidelines'[434], while in Uruzgan a more permissive environment allowed the Dutch to employ less force than their British and Canadian neighbours in Helmand and Kandahar.[435] Arthur ten Cate, in a lecture at a counterinsurgency conference in Amsterdam is more moderated than Zaalberg. He points out that it would 'be presumptuous to therefore claim this concept as typically "Dutch,"' but he nevertheless points out that Dutch way of soliving the mission differed from other nations.[436]

The debate on the Dutch approach resembles the parallel debate on the minimum use of force tradition in British counterinsurgency. As with the British case, it is not a question of 'either/or'. Dutch operations have been shaped by the circumstances from which it was conceived, and by the context in which it was fought. While tradition and history to some extent influence units, the surroundings they operate in and their specific characteristics tend to exert a greater influence. Operations in Uruzgan must necessarily differ from those in

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[433] Zaalberg, "The Use and Abuse of the 'Dutch Approach' to Counter-Insurgency," 872-73.
[434] *Ibid.*, 879.
[435] *Ibid.*, 891-92. Thijs Brocades Zaalberg & Arthur ten Cate, "A Gentle Occupation: Unravelling the Dutch Approach in Iaq, 2003-2005", *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23, no. 1 (2012): 119-20.
[436] Arthur ten Cate, "Conterinsurgency Light – The So-Called "Dutch Approach" to Stabilisation Operations in Iraq, 2003-2005" in: Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, Jan Hoffenaar and Alan Lemmers, eds. *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: Irregular Warfare from 1800 to the Present* (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of Military History, 2011), 616-617

Helmand and Kandahar because the challenges they pose are unique in their own manner.

Doctrinal framework

The Dutch Armed Forces concluded a thorough update of its doctrinal framework right after the turn of the century. As part of this a doctrine for counterinsurgency operations was published. Dutch counterinsurgency doctrine, just like the British, stands firmly in a population-centric tradition. The doctrine is also partly based on previous British counterinsurgency doctrines.[437]

There are several parts of the doctrine that place it in a population-centric tradition. Firstly, the doctrine emphasises the political aspect of counterinsurgency. When defining counterinsurgency operation the doctrine argues that 'the thus **integrated political operation** – including the military actions – is often prolonged and designed to strip the insurgents of their credibility among the population.'[438] It continues by arguing that 'military action against insurgents should at most, therefore, be regarded as a means, an ultima ratio, supplementing and supporting the other government measures'[439], thus underlining both the political aspect of the conflict and that a comprehensive effort is needed to defeat insurgents. This view is further pursued when it comes to how the doctrine envisions that counterinsurgency efforts should be organised. All involved departments of government should be involved in order to make a coherent strategy for the operation as soon as possible, to ensure unity of effort. Furthermore, the government should form 'a **joint military-civil command and control structure**, in which the military commander is allocated a place alongside the representatives of the other components.'[440]

Secondly, the doctrine argues that the key to winning a counterinsurgency campaign is to control and ultimately win the support of the population.

[437] Royal Netherlands Army, *Combat Operations, Army Doctrine Publication II - Part C, Combat Operations against an Irregular Force* (The Hague: Doctrine committee of the Royal Netherlands Army, 2003), 481.
[438] *Ibid.,* 487.
[439] *Ibid.*
[440] *Ibid.,* 501.

> In an insurgency in a more traditional sense (insurrection against the government), the **support of the civilian population** for the insurgents tends to be the centre of gravity. [...] This must, therefore, also be the focus of the counterinsurgency operation, which means that the battle will not always be conducted in a purely military sense.[441]

Operations should hence not be directed towards defeating the armed insurgents in a military sense, but securing the population and separating these from the insurgents.[442]

The doctrine's main weakness is that it, like the British 2001 doctrine, is quite theoretical and does not provide a very detailed framework for how operations should be executed. The concepts of concentric or eccentric approaches to operations are clearly related to ink-spot or clear-hold-build approaches, but are not as elaborate as these.[443] In defence of the doctrine it should also be pointed out that it is a doctrine meant for higher staffs and not the lower tactical levels of the Netherlands Army.[444]

The Dutch counterinsurgency doctrine, if used, would provide the Dutch army with an updated and solid framework for how to approach and think about counterinsurgency operations. While it focuses less on the actual conduct of operations, it nevertheless provides clear guidance on important aspects such as planning, organisation, main tasks, and the role of intelligence. The doctrine stands firmly in a population-centric tradition and was hence well suited to fit into the overall ISAF approach to operations by 2006.

[441] *Ibid.*, 577.
[442] *Ibid.*, 659-64.
[443] *Ibid.*, 638-42.
[444] *Ibid.*, 479.

The primacy of politics

Map 4.1: Map of Uruzgan[445]

Strategic view

Of the three nations studied, the Netherlands was most effective at formulating a strategy that matched conditions on the ground before deployment. Dutch strategy was in many regards realistic and pragmatic, and balanced civil-military efforts in both organisation and execution. One of the aspects that set the Netherlands apart from Great Britain and Norway in regards to strategy is the strategic process. In 2001 the Netherlands constitution incorporated its article 100.

> The Government shall inform the States General in advance if the armed forces are to be deployed or made available to maintain or promote the international legal order. This shall include the provision of humanitarian aid in the event of armed conflict.[446]

The format in which this presentation is to be made is commonly known as *Toetsingskader* or assessment framework. Article 100 also formalises a set of

[445] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010."
[446] "The Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands 2008," ed. Dutch Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations (Den Hague: Boekje Grondwet, 2008), 24.

questions to be debated in parliament before Dutch troops are deployed. There are 19 different criteria that should be assessed before a decision is formulated. Among these are:

- There has to be a concrete military assignment,
- Government assesses whether the political and military goals are attainable,
- There must be a clear command structure,
- There need to be clear international agreements on the mission and the tasks are to be feasible,
- The Government states the reasons for participation as completely as possible,
- In assessing the feasibility, both the operation as a whole and the military feasibility are to be taken into account,
- The question is not which units have to take their turn, but which units are best fit to do the mission,
- A good exit strategy is needed.[447]

This procedure seems to form a solid basis for a formulation of strategy before deployment of forces. By asking questions that force the government to assess feasibility it also makes it assess the aims and means of an operation. At least in the case of Uruzgan this led to a process that formulated a clear strategy for the deployment of forces which was summarized in the Article 100 letter (*Kamerbrief)* to the Dutch parliament on 22 December 2005.[448]

> In accordance with the ISAF mandate, the Netherlands detachment will focus on promoting stability and security by increasing support for the Afghan authorities among the local population and by weakening support for the Taliban and related groups. Promoting good governance, an efficient police and army and the rule of law, preforming CIMIC and reconstruction activities, and promoting reconstruction activities by others are important elements of this approach.[449]

This was a more or less straightforward adoption of ISAF's strategic and operational goals. The main goal was to assist the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) in maintaining an increasing their control over Uruzgan. In order to do this the effort should focus on a balanced approach in

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[447] Ramses A Wessel, "The Netherlands and Nato," in *Legal Implications of Nato Membership - Focus on Finland and Five Allied States*, ed. Juha Rainne (Helsinki: The Erik Castrén Research Reports, 2008), 146-47.
[448] H.G.J Kamp B.R Bot, A.M.A Ardenne-Van der Hoeven, "Brief for the Second Chamber 22 December 2005 on the Dutch Participation in South Afghanistan (*Kamerbrief 22 December 2005 - Nederlandse Bijdrage Aan ISAF in Zuid-Afghanistan)* " (2005).
[449] *Ibid.*, 3.Translation from: and Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010."

three main areas: security, governance, and development. Although this was not stated in the 2005 decision it was later known as the 3D approach in the Netherlands. The 3D approach is simply an acronym for Defence, Diplomacy and Development. It is originally a Canadian concept used in peacekeeping missions, but became synonymous with the Dutch effort in Uruzgan. 'In the 3D approach military, diplomatic and development efforts are connected as much as possible and integrated where possible and desirable to achieve its final goal.'[450] In this regard the Dutch approach – to address all aspects of the conflict, not just the military ones – has striking similarities to theories of classic counterinsurgency.

> The government must have an overall plan. This plan must cover not just the security measures and military operations. It must include all political, social, economical, administrative, police and other measures which have bearing on the insurgency.[451]

While Dutch strategy as formulated in 2005 might not have constituted an overall plan as Thompson argues plan, there is still an understanding that a concerted government effort is needed in order to achieve the goals that are set. It also spelled out the strategic goals clearly enough for the Task Force Uruzgan (TFU) to operationalise this on the ground.

Setting clear goals for what an operation is to achieve is obviously an important part of strategic planning. Equally important is creating an organisation that sets the premises for reaching these goals. As already shown previously Dutch doctrine envisions a tight civil-military cooperation in both planning and execution of the operations. To this end the Dutch government formed the Military Operations Steering Group (SMO).[452] This group was responsible for national guidelines to ensure that the mission went in accordance with Dutch strategy, and to ensure that the effort was well coordinated between the different sectors of government involved.[453] The Chief of the Defence Staff and the Director-General Political

[450]Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 19.
[451] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 55.
[452] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 35.
[453] NL A, "Personal Interview," (2015).

Affairs of the ministry of Foreign Affairs headed the group.[454] In this manner the Dutch ensured an organisation where key decision makers regarding the Uruzgan mission met frequently and were able to discuss and overcome obstacles before they hampered the effort in the operation area.

The organisation of the TFU also promoted a primacy of politics much in line with what is advocated by counterinsurgency theory.
The task force was co-led by a commander and a civilian representative (CIVREP). The staff of the TFU also included cultural and development advisors in addition to the normal staff of a brigade size headquarter. In principle the commander was in charge of military operations while the civilian representative was in charge of the reconstruction and governance side of the mission. From August 2008 (TFU V) and onwards the civilian representative was also in direct command of the PRT. If the two were unable to agree they would raise their difference to the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs respectively where a decision would be made. None of the TFU commanders I have interviewed found this necessary during their deployment. TFU commanders were typically selected from the chief of staff level in a Dutch brigade and were rotated every 6 months. The battle group was composed from one of the battalions in the same brigade, but was rotated every 4 months.[455] This system meant that some of the TFU commanders for at least two months of their deployment had a battle group from a different brigade. According to the officers interviewed for this thesis there were both strengths and weaknesses with this rotation system. The main advantages were that a four-month deployment put less strain on both deployed personnel and their families back home. Furthermore, during a four-month deployment the personnel is not granted leaves and hence the battle group was always at full strength when deployed. The main drawback of the four-month system was obviously that one does not get to know the area or key partners as well as often is needed in these types of operations.[456]

[454] Jaïr van der Lijn, *3d 'the Next Generation' - Lessons Learned from Uruzgan for Future Operations* (Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 2011), 40.
[455] NL B, "Personal Interview," (2015).
[456] NL C, "Personal Interview," (2015).

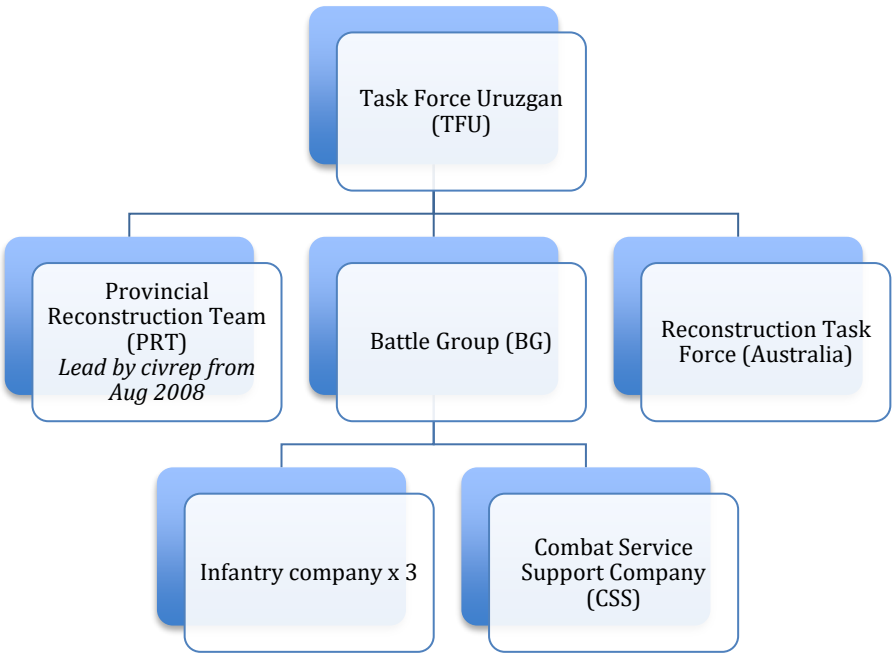

Figure 4.2: Principle organisation of Dutch elements of TFU[457]

Another aspect in which the Dutch organisation differed from both the British and in particular the Norwegian one, was the relatively close integration of military personnel and civilians in the leadership of the TFU. Counterinsurgency theory suggests that civilians, due to the political nature of the conflicts, should lead these types of operations.[458] While the Dutch model fell short of a pure civilian leadership of operations, it came a lot closer than what British and Norwegian models did. One challenge with the dual leadership model was that it presupposed a good working relationship between the TFU commander and the CIVREP. While this worked seamlessly in some cases, other TFU commanders found it more difficult to make it work in the intended manner.[459]

As discussed in the introduction, a strategy needs to offer something more than what the operation is to achieve if it is to provide commanders on the ground with meaningful guidance. It should also to formulate a how, something resembling a plan. Without necessarily building a coherent strategic logic Dutch strategy states several clear priorities for the TFU.

[457] Nederland Instituut voor Militaire Historie, "International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)," (2009).
[458] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 58-59.
[459] NL A, "Personal Interview." and NL B, "Personal Interview."

Firstly, Dutch forces were to focus their efforts on the two main towns in Uruzgan; the provincial capital of Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawod.[460] Even if the strategy directed a clear focus of effort for the Dutch forces, it did not rule out a gradual geographical widening of the operations. 'It is possible that if the security situation develops favourably, the Dutch activities will be gradually expanded northward.'[461] In this regard Dutch strategy resembles the ink-spot approach that is often used in classic counterinsurgency. Also, by limiting the effort to as few as one base in each of the towns, it did not tie down large numbers of the personnel in static guard duties.

Secondly, Dutch strategy put the PRT and not the battle group at the heart of the mission. 'The core of the Dutch taskforce in Uruzgan will be formed of the PRT.'[462] This policy seems to have been born out of the nature of the mission, and was clear and consistent in Dutch strategy from 2005 and not adjusted in the 2007 strategy. The interviewed TFU commanders were also of the view that the role to the battle group was to underpin the PRT, hence putting the PRT at the core of the mission.[463] The balance between reconstruction and combat operations became one of the most politically debated points in the Netherlands before the deployment of the TFU.'[464] This debate was primarily a result of domestic Dutch politics where the 'progressive parties mainly feared a "mission creep" and overlap with the American military *Operation Enduring Freedom*, something that in their view could impinge on the Dutch reconstruction activities.'[465] Just like in Norway, some of the political parties in the Netherlands were sceptical towards the US-led war on terror and wanted to distance themselves from this. In the Netherlands this was made even more difficult because of the Van Baalen motion of 24 November 2005. In order to ensure that Dutch operations were in accordance

[460] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010."
[461] B.R Bot, "Brief for the Second Chamber 22 December 2005 on the Dutch Participation in South Afghanistan (*Kamerbrief 22 December 2005 - Nederlandse Bijdrage Aan ISAF in Zuid-Afghanistan)* ", 16. (My translation. Original text: Niet uitgesloten is dat indien de veiligheidssituatie zich gunstig ontwikkelt, de Nederlandse activiteiten in onderling overleg geleidelijk in noordelijke richting zullen worden uitgebreid.)
[462] *Ibid.*, 14.(My translation. Original text: De kern van de Nederlandse taakgroep in Uruzgan zal worden gevormd door een Provincial Reconstruction Team.)
[463] NL A, "Personal Interview." and NL B, "Personal Interview."
[464] George Dimitriu & Beatrice de Graaf, "The Dutch COIN Approach: Three Years in Uruzgan, 2006-2009," 432.
[465] *Ibid.*

with international law it suggested that the Dutch should 'only cooperate with countries which respect international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions.'[466] While this did not exclude working with Afghan security forces, it made any cooperation with the OEF politically unacceptable in the Netherlands, due to the controversy over detainee treatment at Baghram and Guantanamo. Seen in this context the emphasis on the PRT in Dutch strategy could be interpreted as a way of pacifying the progressive parties in Parliament in order to get their consent for the mission.

This view is to some degree supported by Brocades Zaalberg. When discarding any notion of a Dutch approach to counterinsurgency, where a more development-driven approach is a key element, he argues that there is 'a politically driven tendency to present military operations by the Netherlands armed forces as separate and different from those of the Americans [...].'[467] The Dutch strategy and response to this uncertainty, on the other hand, seemed balanced and very pragmatic. When asked on his opinion on the matter, Colonel Theo Vleugels, Commander TFU I, simply answered that 'we are going to do what is necessary and possible.'[468] This phrase seemed to catch and was used in various formulations to describe the Dutch approach to the operations. It was even included in the 2007 *Kamerbrief* where the Dutch Parliament reviewed strategy and extended the mission to Uruzgan with another two years. 'In this regards the Dutch adage remains: "reconstruction where possible, and military action where necessary."'[469] This not only show a level of pragmatism from the tactical level when dealing with ambiguities on the strategic level. The inclusion of phrase used by the first task force commander in the following strategic guidance also shows a degree of reciprocity between the tactical and strategic level.

While there certainly was an interest in labelling the mission to Uruzgan as 'peaceful' as possible to win the support of the progressive parties, this does not

[466] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 46.
[467] Zaalberg, "The Use and Abuse of the 'Dutch Approach' to Counter-Insurgency," 892.
[468] Theo Koelé, "We Gaan Doen Wat Nodig En Mogelijk Is," *de Volkskrant*, 5 July 2006.
[469] E. van Middelkoop and A.G Koenders M.J.M Verhagen, "Kamerbrief Betreffende Artikel 100 Inzake De Nederlandse Bijdrage Aan ISAF Na 1 Augustus 2008," (Den Haag: 2007), 4.

fully explain the focus on the PRT in Dutch strategy. Firstly, this focus is constant and unvarying regardless of shifting domestic politics at the time. Secondly, it correlates with what Dutch doctrine on counterinsurgency argues. Thirdly, it was to the fullest extent possible carried out in the field, and was also supported by the commanders of the TFU. Especially the last point would have been difficult to envision if it was solely done to keep the more progressive parties in the Dutch parliament content.

There are three dimensions to the argument that Dutch strategy for Uruzgan was realistic, especially compared to that of Norway. Firstly, Dutch strategy attempted to match means and ends, in order to avoid biting off more than they could chew. As already discussed, Dutch deployment was initially limited to the two main population centres in Uruzgan. These also matched the ADZs formed in the area.[470] The strategy then envisioned an ink-spot approach with a gradual increase of the areas under government control. Secondly, and also unlike the Norwegian strategy, it is clearly stated that the efforts of the TFU would be opposed by the Taliban; 'The reconstruction effort [in South Afghanistan] is greatly complicated by [opposing militant forces] conducting raids on IOs and NGOs.'[471] Finally, it also underlined that achieving any tangible results would take effort and time. 'It is not realistic to expect that after two years in Uruzgan security, stability and prosperous economic developments will exist without outside help.'[472] While setting realistic goals that matched the ends of the mission, the Dutch strategy became more achievable and easier to implement on the ground from the outset than the approaches of either Norway or Britain.

Dutch strategy did not really go into great detail in either building a strict and coherent strategic logic, or in providing detailed guidelines for how the strategic goals should be reached. However, it did provide a clear framework to start from,

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[470] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 37.
[471] B.R Bot, "Brief for the Second Chamber 22 December 2005 on the Dutch Participation in South Afghanistan (*Kamerbrief 22 December 2005 - Nederlandse Bijdrage Aan ISAF in Zuid-Afghanistan)* ", 11.(My translation. Original text: De wederopbouw wordt sterk bemoeilijkt door het uitvoeren van aanvallen op IO's en NGO's.)
[472] *Ibid.*, 3. (My translation. Original text: Het is dan ook niet realistisch te verwachten dat na de twee jaar in Uruzgan veiligheid, stabiliteit en voorspoedige economische ontwikkelingen zullen kunnen bestaan zonder hulp van buiten.)

it is clear on the overall goals, and prioritises efforts geographically. At the same time, it left enough room for adaption so that commanders on the ground could adapt to the specific circumstances there. Dutch strategy, with its focus on a concerted effort and a balanced civil-military action, had a close resemblance to classic counterinsurgency theory. This chapter will progress by examining how the operations in Uruzgan adhered to the strategy formulated.

Priority of the political side of the conflict

A core aspect of population centric counterinsurgency is that victory is achieved through political compromise and settlement rather than through defeating the enemy military forces. As discussed in the theory chapter of this thesis this does not mean that counterinsurgency forces should not fight the enemy, but that 'the government must give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas.'[473] This aspect was present in Dutch strategy and behaviour from early on in Uruzgan.

> From the beginning of the Netherlands' participation in ISAF, it was recognised that the critical success factor of the mission would be less about the fight against the insurgents and more about depriving the insurgency of the local population's support and garnering support among the local people for the Afghan government.[474]

If the local population were to support the Afghan government, it was recognised that the legitimacy of the local authorities had to be significantly increased. In this regard the first steps were taken even before the TFU deployed in mid-2006. One of the conditions that were set by the Dutch before accepting responsibility for Uruzgan was the removal of the current governor Jan Mohammed Khan. From a Dutch point of view there were two main problems with Khan. Firstly, his 'violent and corrupt' past made him an unwanted partner for any western democracy, especially in the Netherlands where the nature of the mission was already debated. [475] Secondly, Khan came from the Popolzai tribe, a subgroup of the Pashtun tribe. The Popolzai tribe held most of the influential government posts in Uruzgan prior to the Dutch deployment despite being one of the smallest tribes in

[473] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 55.
[474] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 43.
[475] *Ibid.*, 55.

the complex tribal power structure of Uruzgan. As a result of this, and the high levels of corruption, the government in Uruzgan had very little legitimacy among the population.[476] The Dutch focus on governance was made even clearer in the 2007 *Kamerbrief* where strategy was adjusted. 'In the judgment of the Netherlands' government, the success of the mission is primarily dependent on the government and provincial administration of Afghanistan gaining legitimacy.'[477] Hence the political aspect was very much at the heart of the campaign in Uruzgan from a strategic perspective.

One challenge the Dutch forces faced in this regard was how to deal with the deposed former governor Jan Mohammed Khan. Even though he did not officially hold an office, he still held great influence in the province. Among other things, the failings of the new governor is partly ascribed to 'the influence that informal leaders, such as Jan Mohammed Khan, were able to exert.'[478] The official Dutch line on this was to not work with Khan unless he worked under Afghan government leadership, and not to attend *shuras* where he was present.[479] This created challenges for the forces on the ground when they got involved in tribal matters or local politics. Several of the interviewed TFF commanders pointed out that even if Khan held no official authority, he still influenced local politics in areas of Uruzgan to the extent that nothing was done unless he gave his consent.[480] He also had considerable military power in the region by *de facto* controlling the *Kandak Amniante Uruzgan* (KAU), a local militia formally commanded by his cousin Matiullah Khan. This militia was one of the main sources of income for Khan as it was able to tax travellers on some of the busiest roads in Uruzgan.

Even though efforts were made to incorporate the KAU into the local police force, the Dutch were never able to shift its loyalty from their former commander to Afghan authorities. The Dutch final evaluation pointed out that 'one problem with the stringent Dutch policy towards power brokers was that it did not allow the

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[476] *Ibid.*, 56.
[477] M.J.M Verhagen, "Kamerbrief Betreffende Artikel 100 Inzake De Nederlandse Bijdrage Aan ISAF Na 1 Augustus 2008," 5.Translation from and Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010."
[478] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 54.
[479] *Ibid.*, 55.
[480] NL A, "Personal Interview." and NL B, "Personal Interview."

Dutch mission leadership to enter into dialogue with Jan Mohammed Khan and Matiulla Khan.'[481] Balancing between creating workable local solutions and promoting a centralized government is very challenging in a complex conflict like Afghanistan. In this case the Dutch seemed to favour a top-down approach, which caused challenges for the mission on the ground in many regards. On the other hand, other tribes in Uruzgan who previously had been side-lined by Khan welcomed this approach. Protected by the Dutch presence these could 'get involved in local governance, [and] the support of such disadvantaged tribes for the Taliban gradually, but noticeably started to diminish.'[482] However, even if the Dutch had some local success with getting a large part of the population alienated from the Taliban, this does not necessarily mean that they fell down on the side of the central Afghan government. The Ghilzai, one of the largest tribes in Uruzgan, 'did not nominate any candidates for positions in *Wolesi Jirga* (the Afghan house of Representatives) because they had no trust in the elections being carried out fairly and honestly.'[483] Election turnouts have also dropped during the Dutch mission in Uruzgan just as in the rest of Afghanistan.[484]

Counter narcotics

Also when it comes to countering the narcotics production and trade the Netherlands adopted a pragmatic and limited goal. The strategic mission statement from 2005 clearly stated: 'ISAF does not have the power to destroy crops or to take independent action against drug producers.'[485] The goal of the TFU was to support the Afghan authorities in their efforts to counter drug production problems in Uruzgan. This was further strengthened in the 2007 strategy where an increased effort to counter opium production was to be made.[486] Among the measures taken was the embedding of a team from the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DES) who worked with Afghan authorities. In addition, Dutch forces

[481] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 55.
[482] *Ibid.*
[483] *Ibid.*, 57.
[484] (TLO), "The Dutch Engagement in Uruzgan: 2006 to 2010 - a TLO Socio-Political Assessment," 32.
[485] B.R Bot, "Brief for the Second Chamber 22 December 2005 on the Dutch Participation in South Afghanistan (*Kamerbrief 22 December 2005 - Nederlandse Bijdrage Aan ISAF in Zuid-Afghanistan)* ", 20. (My translation. Original text: ISAF heeft echter niet de bevoegdheid om oogsten te vernietigen of zelfstandig acties te ondernemen tegen drugsproducenten.)
[486] M.J.M Verhagen, "Kamerbrief Betreffende Artikel 100 Inzake De Nederlandse Bijdrage Aan ISAF Na 1 Augustus 2008," 10-11.

worked specifically in order to make alternative crops available for Afghan farmers in the areas under their control.[487] While the effort had modest results it is also another example where Dutch strategy set realistic and achievable goals for the Task Force compared to the British 2006 strategy.

Dutch overall strategy can be criticised for almost being too modest. If you set the bar low enough, you ensure that the chance of failure is minimal.[488] However, this would be an unfair criticism of the Dutch efforts. Dutch forces deployed to Uruzgan in 2006 with a balanced, realistic, and pragmatic strategy. It prioritised its resources to the most populated areas of the province and envisioned a gradual spread out from the areas they controlled. By setting limited goals for what they were to achieve they matched means to ends and avoided creating a gap between the strategy makers and the Task Force who were to realise the strategy on the ground. Dutch doctrine and strategy, as far as the principle of a primacy of politics is concerned, also adhered to theories for classic counterinsurgency. It focussed on engaging in local power structures and politics. It prioritised governance and development over enemy-centric combat operations. The approach was somewhat hampered by principles on how to deal with power brokers in the region, but the overall focus was still well within the scope of classic counterinsurgency theory.

Tactical view

The main issue to consider when discussing a primacy of politics on a tactical level is the adherence to the overall strategy by the units on the ground. As discussed above, the Dutch deployed to Uruzgan with a fairly clear and well-adapted strategy. However, this would only have an effect if the units deployed operated in accordance with this. In the case of Britain, the failure by the battle group to work within the geographical constraints set in the Helmand strategy had long-term negative consequences. In the case of the Netherlands the process ahead of the deployment of forces seems to have been a lot more rigorous and hence led to a clearer picture of what the forces on the ground should focus their efforts on. This

[487] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 62-63.
[488] King, "Understanding the Helmand Campaign: British Military Operations in Afghanistan," 322.See note 42

again led to a campaign plan which operationalized the strategic goals and provided necessary mid- and long-term guidance for the Task Force.

After the deliberations in the Dutch Parliament were concluded, the Operations Department in the Dutch Chief of Defence Staff conducted a reconnaissance and an initial assessment of the mission. As a result of this it was confirmed that the initial focus areas would indeed be the two cities of Deh Rawod and the provincial capital of Tarin Kowt. Furthermore it stressed the need not to overextend initially, but to get control an establish security in these areas before expanding gradually into the valleys beyond the main population centres.[489] The Netherlands, unlike Great Britain and Norway, does not have a permanent joint headquarters in their command structure. Instead the Dutch Chief of Defence has his own operations department. In practical terms this effectively merges the military strategic and operational levels in the Netherlands into one office. The overall strategic planning for the Uruzgan mission this was done in conjunction with the Department of Defence and the Chief of the Army Staff.[490] In this case one could make an argument that the lack of a permanent joint headquarters on the operational level in many ways helped to streamline the process. Instead of going through one more layer of command structure the Dutch Chief of Defence seems to have been more directly involved in the process. In Norway, where the Chief of Defence's role is only to advice the MoD while the operational joint headquarters is responsible for the execution of the mission, a less active role was taken by the Chief of Defence.

Another notable aspect of the Dutch approach to their mission in Uruzgan is the amount of planning done prior to the deployment. In late December 2005, as soon as the core elements of the first TFU staff were in place, they initiated a comprehensive planning process based on the strategic inputs given.[491] This process led to what became known as *The Task Force Uruzgan Masterplan.*[492] This *Masterplan* was in reality a campaign plan that should serve as 'a guideline for the

[489] NL D, "Personal Interview," (2015), 2:00-6:05.
[490] *Ibid.*, 6:05.
[491] *Ibid.*, 6:30.
[492] Task Force Uruzgan, "1 (NLD/AUS) Task Force Uruzgan Master Plan," (2006).

planning and execution of the mission of ISAF in the province of Uruzgan.'[493] The main function of the document that 'based on this Master Plan, priorities can be set and OPORDERS/OPLANS (and associated tasks) can be derived, constantly providing the big picture.'[494] In other words it clarified and operationalized the overall strategic goals for the tactical units on the ground. I will argue that the work done by the TFU staff in creating long-term plan was of vital importance. It played a pivotal role by ensuring that operations on the ground was conducted in line with the overall strategy laid down by the Dutch Government. Creating this "campaign plan" early on helped to ensure that a clear link existed between the strategic goals and operations on the ground. Furthermore, it also promoted a long-term perspective on operations and thereby negated the risks of becoming event-driven. The need for this structured planning is vital in counterinsurgency as it ensures a unity of effort from the strategic level down to the tactical one. The link between these two was in the case of the Netherlands provided by this *Masterplan.* As far as I have been able to establish, the Dutch forces in Uruzgan also operated within the constraints set by the overall strategy for the mission. The initial deployments were focused around Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawod in line with the strategic guidance.[495]

In regards to ensuring a primacy of politics on the tactical level the organisation of the effort in Uruzgan is also worth revisiting. Compared to Great Britain and Norway the Dutch had a more integrated civilian-military model at the tactical level. During the first deployments, the civilian side of the TFU administration consisted of a political advisor, a development advisor, and a cultural advisor. In theatre these held an advisory role and the TFU commander had the last word in all aspects of the mission.[496] In practice, however, the civilian and military parts of the mission seem to have been well integrated for the most part. A senior officer of the first TFU also expressed his surprise at this during an interview.

[493] *Ibid.,* 4.
[494] *Ibid.*
[495] NL D, "Personal Interview," 24:10 and Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 37.
[496] NL D, "Personal Interview," 47:50.

> First I was astonished of how positive the cooperation between the departments of defence, foreign affairs, and development was. Even before we deployed when we had a lot of discussions with them. It was not perfectly synchronised, but I was surprised that it even took place.[497]

The civilian presence in the TFU staff was further enhanced in 2007 and 2008 with two more members of staff. Also in 2008 the CIVREP assumed direct command of the Dutch PRT. From 2009 and onwards the CIVREP was further elevated to a position of joint command of the TFU alongside the military commander.[498] Based on the gradual increase in civilian staff over the first couple of years one could ask whether it would not have been better to make it more robust from the outset? On the other hand, this increase reflects the focus of the Dutch operation. The first deployments were more focussed on the military side of the mission. The first stage of the mission prioritized training of Afghan security forces and establishing control through security in the chosen areas.[499] In addition there was a need to conduct several assessments of needs before major development work went ahead. As security and situational awareness improved, the Dutch forces could pay more attention to the development side of the mission.

In a strict sense the Dutch organisation falls somewhat short of the civilian leadership in the implementation of classic counterinsurgency.[500] However, in comparison to the British and the Norwegians they had a much stronger civilian presence in their task force. Not only did these provide useful expertise on the governance and development side of the mission. The civilians in the TFU staff answered to their respective departments, not the Dutch MoD. Hence they provided a direct link to the political leadership who controlled the diplomacy and development side of the mission.[501] In this manner the civilian presence in the TFU also influenced the political and strategic level back in The Netherlands and provided inputs to the development and diplomacy part of the 3D approach.

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[497] *Ibid.*, 45:30.
[498] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 31-32.
[499] Task Force Uruzgan, "1 (NLD/AUS) Task Force Uruzgan Master Plan," 14.
[500] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 63 and Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 60-61.
[501] NL D, "Personal Interview," 47:50 and Lijn, *3d 'the Next Generation' - Lessons Learned from Uruzgan for Future Operations*, 41.

The population as the centre of gravity

One of the cornerstones of population-centric counterinsurgency is that the population, not the enemy, should be the centre of gravity for the operations. If the government forces are to prevail in the long run, they need to separate the insurgents from the people. As the insurgents are fluid and difficult to track down, counterinsurgency theory advocates that the most efficient way of approaching this is by securing and controlling the population. Even though the Dutch never officially adopted a counterinsurgency approach both Dutch strategy and operations were clearly population-centric. The Dutch choice of a 3D approach as the overall framework for their operations, and the manner in which this was operationalised led to a population-centric approach in practical terms.

Strategic view

One area where the Dutch strategy was clearly population-centric was in the guidance given for the initial deployment. Sir Robert Thompson argued that in the guerrilla phase of the insurgency the government should prioritise the security of its base areas.[502] Base areas in this context referred to the most populated areas of the state, where the main sources of power for a government can be found. In Uruzgan province these "bases" were primarily represented by the towns of Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawod. These two towns held almost 50% of the 330,000 inhabitants living in Uruzgan.[503] The article 100 letter of 2005 stated: 'The Dutch forces will deploy into two of the four available bases from operation Enduring Freedom in the province of Uruzgan. One in the capitol of Tarin Kowt and in Deh Rawod.'[504] The PRT was based in Tarin Kowt, the provincial capital, along with the headquarter for the TFU and the battle group. The battle group, consisting of three manoeuvre companies, was deployed with one company in Tarin Kowt and one company in Deh Rawod. The last company could be used to surge either of the

[502] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 57-58.
[503] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Settled Population of Urozgan Province* (2013 [cited 22 June 2013]).
[504] B.R Bot, "Brief for the Second Chamber 22 December 2005 on the Dutch Participation in South Afghanistan (*Kamerbrief 22 December 2005 - Nederlandse Bijdrage Aan ISAF in Zuid-Afghanistan)* ", 15. (My translation. Original text: Nederland zal in de provincie Uruzgan twee van de vier huidide bases van de operatie Enduring Freedom overnemen, die in de hoofstad Tarin Kowt en in Deh Rawod.)

two towns, or to conduct operations alone or in conjunction with the others.[505] Thus the deployment of the forces gave the Dutch operations a good point of departure for conducting population centric operations.

However, a mere deployment of forces to the most densely populated areas is not enough to argue that Dutch strategy and operations adhered to a population-centric approach to counterinsurgency. Another important aspect in this is the overall focus of the operations. As counterinsurgency was controversial in The Netherlands the strategic guidance given did not specify that this was a counterinsurgency operation. The only publicly available strategic guidance, which points in the direction of a population centric approach, was in the 2005 *kamerbrief*. Here the Balkende government stated: 'For a successful Dutch military action it is important to win the support of the population for their own presence.'[506] Yet this statement refers to the local population's support for the presence of the Dutch forces, not their support for GiROA. In this case the choice of a 3D approach indirectly created the necessary foundations for a population-centric approach. As noted above, the 3D approach emphasizes a tight cooperation between the defense, development and diplomacy components of a stabilization mission. These three factors, while somewhat different in wording, were in reality identical to the three main lines of operations for ISAFs counterinsurgency approach: security, development and governance.

Placing the Dutch PRT in lead, not only with regards to the development and diplomacy missions, but the mission as a whole, negated the risk of the military component becoming enemy-centric in its operations. In order of the development and diplomacy components of the mission to play their part the military component had to focus security operations in the same areas. Since there is no point in conducting diplomacy or governance and development outside populated areas Dutch operations became population-centric as a consequence. This was

[505] NL C, "Personal Interview."
[506] B.R Bot, "Brief for the Second Chamber 22 December 2005 on the Dutch Participation in South Afghanistan (*Kamerbrief 22 December 2005 - Nederlandse Bijdrage Aan ISAF in Zuid-Afghanistan)* ", 14. (My translation. Original text: Voor een succesvol Nederlands militair optreden is het van belang de steun van de bevolking te winnen voor de eigen aanwezigheid.)

further strengthened by the focus created by the ADZs which overlapped with the most populated areas.[507] While Dutch strategy was not explicitly population-centric, and indeed not officially focused on counterinsurgency at all, it nevertheless adhered closely to the theories of counterinsurgency, albeit in an unstated fashion.

Tactical view

The Dutch were not only able to generate a clearer strategic framework than the other states studied in this thesis. They also proved more apt at conducting operations at a tactical level that were useful within the scope of the strategy. While not necessarily preforming operations within the framework laid out by counterinsurgency theory, they managed, on the whole, to maintain a population-centric approach to operations also on a tactical level. A major reason for this was the initial design of operations laid down by the TFU I in the summer of 2006.

As far as the overall tactical design is concerned the Dutch chose a rather novel approach compared to the British and the Norwegians. The overall approach to the operation as stated by the *masterplan* was shaped by the theory of effects based operations (EBO).[508] This doctrinal concept needs some explanation in order to understand the Dutch case properly. While EBO comes in different shapes and forms it normally operates from three cornerstones or fundamentals: Firstly, it emphasises that one should have a comprehensive view of means employed, both civilian and military. Secondly, it believes in analysing the enemy as a system of systems. Thirdly, it stresses that 'all actions carried out must be justifiable on the basis of their contribution to the achievement of the *desired effect*.'[509] In doctrinal expressions of the concept it is often presented as a way of thinking, combined with a more prescriptive method of how to conduct operational planning.

[507] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 37.
[508] Task Force Uruzgan, "1 (NLD/AUS) Task Force Uruzgan Master Plan," 4.
[509] Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, "Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine," 82-83 and John A Warden, "The Enemy as a System", *Airpower Journal*, no. Spring 1995 (1995).

EBO was first introduced into military doctrine in the US in the 1980s. Initially the theories received most attention and was mainly developed in air-power circles.[510] In particular the works of John A. Warden III received a lot of attention. Warden designed the initial air campaign for the 1991 Gulf War, and later published extensively on how his ideas should be adopted in order to achieve success when employing military force. The overall argument posted by proponents of EBO was that traditionally armed forces emphasised more 'the actions themselves, attacking the targets, than […] the results.'[511]

Despite the popularity achieved by the EBO concept, in particular after the Gulf War, the concept also had its critics. While serving as US Joint Forces Commander General Mattis publicly removed the concept from joint US planning. Mattis argued that 'the various interpretations of EBO have caused confusion throughout the joint force and among our multinational partners.'[512] Mattis concedes that EBO has enhanced parts of military planning, in particular processes related to targeting, and operations against what he refers to as 'closed systems.'[513] On the other hand, Mattis is critical of its application in contemporary operations where the concept 'goes against the very nature of war to the point that it expands confusion and inflates a sense of predictability far beyond that which it can be expected to deliver.'[514]

Critics of EBO often point to Israel's failed campaign against Hezbollah in 2006 as a buttress for their argument. Prior to this war the Israeli Defence Force had adopted an EBO-inspired doctrine. Critical evaluations of the war pointed towards this, among other factors, when attempting to explain the lacklustre performance of the Israeli forces in this war.

> The Effects-Based Operations (EBO) and Systemic Operational Design (SOD) – inspired doctrine that vigorously embraced air power at the expense of a

[510] Paul K Davis, "Effects-Base Operations," (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001), 2.
[511] Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, "Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine," 82.
[512] James N Mattis, "USJFCOM Commander's Guidance for Effects-Based Operations", *Parameters*, no. Autumn 2008 (2008): 18.
[513] *Ibid.*, 21.
[514] *Ibid.*, 22.

> classic ground maneuver campaign was certainly a major factor in the IDF's disappointing performance.[515]

It is perhaps not all that surprising that Matthews and Mattis are critical of EBO. Matthews writes for a US Army institution and Mattis served his entire career as a US Marine. EBO, on the other hand, has traditionally held more sway in air power doctrines. The analysis of the 2006 war in Lebanon presented by Mattis and Matthews has also been challenged. Dag Henriksen, a lieutenant colonel and professor at the Norwegian Air Force Academy, argues that the criticism was to a large extent based on false premises. According to Henriksen, the main problem for Israel in 2006 was a lack of strategy, and not a doctrinal issue. 'The absence of a clearly identified military strategy for war or of one's objectives reduces the relevance of the concept of EBO – or indeed, of any military concept.'[516] Henriksen based his argument on both interviews with key Israeli officers and the official evaluation report published by the Israeli government.

While EBO remains a debated concept it is still part of many NATO members' doctrines. Both British and Norwegian doctrines that were valid in the period studied here cover EBO as one viable approach to operational planning. Both these argue that EBO is in particular suited in complex environments presented by modern conflicts.[517] A British joint doctrine note from 2005 argues that:

> In employing a common, effects-based way of thinking at all levels, as well as appropriate collaborative processes focused on properly identified long-term outcomes, military forces can maximise their contribution to crisis prevention and resolution.[518]

One thing that makes EBO more applicable for counterinsurgency compared to the manoeuvre theory which dominates most high-intensity doctrines lies in their relation to time. In manoeuvre theory the key to success is the ability to make

[515] Matt M Matthews, "We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War," in *The Long War Series* (Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 2008), 62.
[516] Dag Henriksen, "A Misapplied and Overextended Example - Gen J.N. Mattis's Critisism of Effects-Based Operations", *Air & Space Power Journal*, no. September-October 2012 (2012): 118.
[517] Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, "Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine," 82.
[518] British Joint Doctrine & Concepts Centre, "Joint Doctrine Note 1/5 - the UK Military Effects-Based Approach," ed. British Ministry of Defence (Shrivenham: 2005), paragraph 106.

decisions and to maintain a higher operational tempo than our opponent.[519] In a manoeuvre dominated environment a 60% solution applied with vigour now is better than an 80% solution applied in an hour. In EBO, on the other hand, it is regarded as more important to ensure that actions produce the desired effects than to maintain a higher operational tempo.[520]

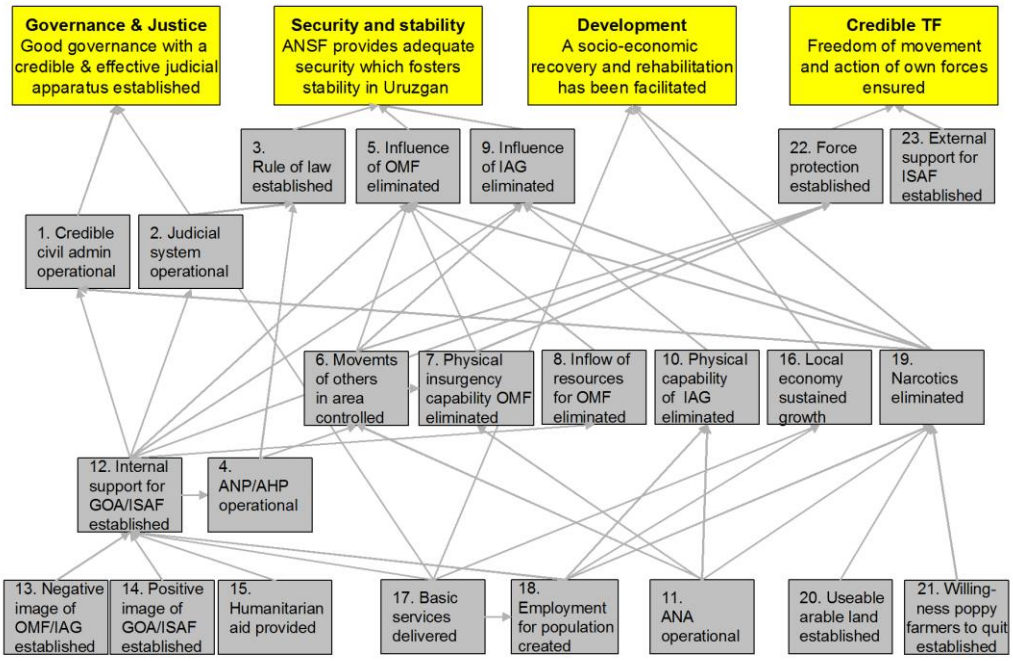
In this manner an EBO approach is more relevant in a counterinsurgency environment, as such operations have a lower operational tempo. These operations are not decided by flamboyant armoured breakthroughs or similar decisive military operations. It is rather the slow pace of combined efforts, often with military forces in the supporting role, that proves decisive. In a counterinsurgency environment it is more important to avoid mistakes than to maintain a high tempo. A high tempo is important in conventional and symmetrical fight where getting on the inside of an opponent's decision cycle often leads to success. However, the hard part of counterinsurgency is not to win the conventional battles and skirmishes, it is more of a marathon than a sprint. Hence an EBO approach could be useful in this manner.

As far as the evidence examined in this thesis is concerned, the Dutch forces in Uruzgan showed that an effects-based approach not only made a close civil-military coordination possible. They were also able to utilise the concept in order to conduct population-centric counterinsurgency operations that were largely in line with counterinsurgency theory. This mainly rests on three arguments. Firstly, an effects-based approach helped to focus operations. Secondly, an effects-based approach made a close civil-military cooperation possible, thus indirectly shaping operations into a more population-centric approach. Lastly, it helped Dutch forces with prioritizing in terms of force ratios.

One challenge in counterinsurgency operations is to ensure that efforts lead toward the desired end state, and to get all resources to pull in the same

[519] William S Lind, "The Theory and Practice of Maneuver Warfare," in *Maneuver Warfare - an Anthology*, ed. Richard Hooker (Novato: Presidio Press, 1993), 4.
[520] British Joint Doctrine & Concepts Centre, "Joint Doctrine Note 1/5 - the UK Military Effects-Based Approach," paragraph 115-17.

direction. Kinetic measurements, such as body counts, number of contacts, and IEDs found, are often misleading or even counterproductive.[521] However, most armies are trained for high-intensity warfare and are thus calibrated towards this. In such operations kinetic measurements are often the bread and butter of the military intelligence on a tactical level. Indicators such as the number of destroyed enemy vehicles, number of prisoners, and distance advanced towards a set target are commonplace during training for most officers. This is a part of the challenge of using conventional forces for counterinsurgency, as discussed by Galula.[522] The effects-based approach by the Dutch in Uruzgan helped them to overcome this challenge. The initial Dutch *masterplan* listed 23 desired effects to be achieved. These underpinned the overall goals of governance, security, development, and a credible task-force. In the first 2006 version of the plan these were listed with line indicators showing their perceived interconnection. Of the 23 effects listed, only two, the elimination of opposing military forces (OMF) and illegally armed groups (IAG), were focussed on the enemy in the area. These were also assessed to be underpinned by other, and less enemy-centric, effects.



[521] Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, 56-59.
[522] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 50-51.

Figure 4.3 Overall effects to be achieved in Uruzgan[523]

Furthermore, the TFU decided to continually assess their approach towards these effects in order to guide operations in the right direction. In order to achieve this, they employed a quite rigorous assessment tool. 'We had this battle rhythm where every day we evaluated and asked; what did we achieve today? What did we want to achieve and what did we achieve?"[524] This process was illustrated in the first *masterplan*. The planning cycles is here illustrated as part of the Boyd inspired observe-orient-decide-act loop, more commonly known as the OODA loop in military circles. It shows how reporting is fed into the operational assessment of effects. These lead to briefs which gives input, along with the commander's guidance (guidance C) to the decision making process (DMP). The decision making process leads to new plans and orders which gives tasks to sub-units, and then the whole process is repeated. The TFU had different effects assessment meetings where both short and long term effects of operations were analysed.[525] By using an effects-based approach combined with a clear plan for assessments the Dutch created a potentially effective tool to measure their effects. Effects measurement is extremely difficult in conventional operations, and even more so in low-intensity conflicts. Whether the Dutch approach to this worked or not is outside the scope of this thesis. What is relevant in our case is that the Dutch had a conscious approach in linking aims and performance. They also created the tools and processes to deal with this aspect of their operations.

[523] Task Force Uruzgan, "1 (NLD/AUS) Task Force Uruzgan Master Plan," 10.
[524] NL D, "Personal Interview," 11:34.
[525] *Ibid.*

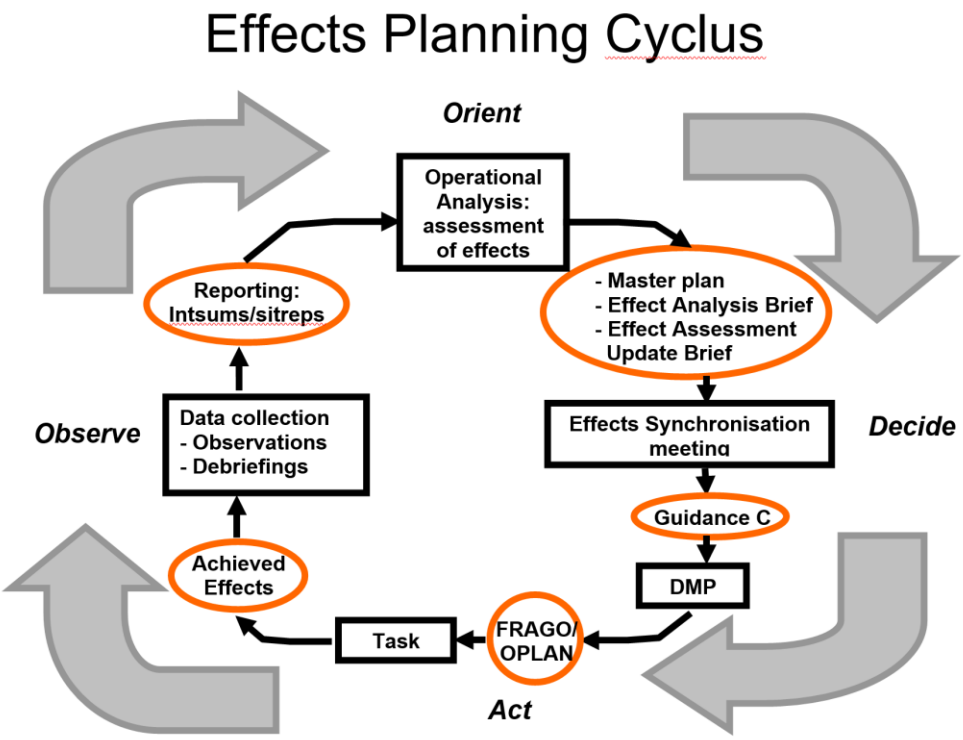


Figure 4.4 The effects planning cycle[526]

Both Norwegian and British planning and focus tended to shift from one deployment to the next. This was not so much the case with the Dutch in Uruzgan. Many Dutch orders from early on in the deployment were either missing or on corrupted hard drives. However, it was still possible to clearly trace the effects-based approach in the orders issued almost two years after the initial deployment. OPLAN 005 Haquida served as the framework order for TFU 4. This OPLAN provided an overall assessment of the situation, and gives general guidance for operations the following six months. The first point under "*Commander's intent*" covers the desired effects the operation aims for. 'In accordance with the guidance documents as referenced, this operation is based on several effects to be achieved within the mission in Uruzgan, on all three lines of operation.'[527] The oplan goes on to describe the different effects in more detail. It highlights the need for 'the insurgents to be separated from the population, both physically as mentally'

[526] Task Force Uruzgan, "1 (NLD/AUS) Task Force Uruzgan Master Plan," 6.
[527] Task Force Uruzgan, "Oplan 005 Haquida," (Tarin Kowt: 2008), 7.

alongside numerous other effects.[528] This approach appears to remain consistent throughout the operation in Uruzgan.

The OPLAN for the battlegroup in TFU 3 had a clear effects-based and population-centric approach in its design. The commander's intent, where the commander highlights his overall priority for the operation, stated: 'The people of AFG [Afghanistan] are our Centre of Gravity. […] Instead of fighting all the OMF I want to make them irrelevant by taking away the support of the people.'[529] Later framework orders from the TFU also remain unswerving in this approach.[530] Focusing on what effects to achieve, rather than what tasks to preform, aided the Dutch forces in Uruzgan to maintain a focus on the population rather than the enemy. This focus remained consistent throughout the deployment.

Secondly, an effects-based approach indirectly guided operations towards a population-centric approach by promoting a closer civil-military cooperation. As shown above, the analysis of effects to be achieved in order to succeed underlined that civilian and military efforts had to be closely aligned. As an example, the TFU saw the provision of basic services as one way to increase the support for GIRoA, and thus diminish the support for the Taliban. Similarly, the elimination of the physical capability of the OMF would strengthen the development side of the operation.[531] However, the most important aspect of this visualization of the effects was that it showed clearly that an enemy-centric approach to the problem would not solve the mission. In addition, an inclusion of the civilian efforts in the overall plan invariably directed operations towards the population, as such efforts would be of little use if employed directly towards the opposing forces. Also from early on, the leadership of the first TFU encouraged and worked towards a closely integrated approach.[532] This was not alone driven by an effects-based approach, but this approach provided a useful tool for that purpose.

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[528] *Ibid.*, 9.
[529] 1 (NLD) BG 44, "Oporder 001 Tor As," (Tarin Kowt: 2007), 1.
[530] Task Force Uruzgan, "Oplan 008 Baz," (Tarin Kowt: 2009) and Task Force Uruzgan, "Uruzgan Campaign Plan," (Tarin Kowt: 2010).
[531] Task Force Uruzgan, "1 (NLD/AUS) Task Force Uruzgan Master Plan," 10.
[532] NL D, "Personal Interview."

Lastly, as shown earlier in this thesis, counterinsurgency theory argues that the government must prioritise its efforts in order to be successful. The effects-based approach employed by the Dutch aided the TFU in prioritizing recourses. As all of the effects identified could not be achieved simultaneously, the 2006 *masterplan* also clearly prioritized the early efforts of the TFU. The five initially selected effects were:

1. Population supports Afghan Authorities and ISAF
2. ANA operational
3. Police operational
4. Movement of others in the area controlled
5. Force protection established.[533]

While not all of these effects are directly focussed on the population, they still promoted more of a population-centric approach than an enemy-centric approach. In particular, the emphasis on movement control gave guidance which led to a population centric approach. Especially when combined with the overall deployment of forces into the most populated areas it led the main effort towards the population and away from the enemy as suggested by counterinsurgency theory.

Regarding the Dutch use of effects-based operations in Uruzgan it is worth revisiting some of the criticism raised against the concept. General Mattis, in his criticism of EBO, claimed that:

> We must return clarity to our planning processes and operational concepts, especially if we want to break down cross-governmental barriers. This clarity will better enable us to link "ends" to policy, strategy, campaigns, and operations through clear "ways" and "means." The use of "effects" has confused what previously was a well-designed and straightforward process for determining "ends."[534]

There is little evidence in the three cases studied in this thesis that Mattis' claim holds a universal truth. Of the three nations studied here the Dutch were best able to link ends, ways, and means all the way from the political level down to tactical

[533] Task Force Uruzgan, "1 (NLD/AUS) Task Force Uruzgan Master Plan," 14.
[534] Mattis, "USJFCOM Commander's Guidance for Effects-Based Operations," 22.

operations. At the same time, the Dutch were the only nation who adopted an effects-based approach. I do not argue that the use of an effects-based approach was the sole reason for this, but in my opinion it was certainly more helpful than disruptive in this regard.

Clear-hold-build approach

Just as the British and the Norwegians, the Dutch used the clear-hold-build approach on the tactical level in Uruzgan. The Dutch managed to utilise this in a pragmatic and also inventive manner in guiding operations and also as an assessment tool.

For the first year of the deployment the concept of clear-hold-build is not that visible in the Dutch operations in Uruzgan. It is not mentioned in the 2006 *masterplan* and many of the OPORDERs and FRAGOs from that period are missing in the archives. In addition, the Dutch deployed most of their forces into the two biggest towns in Uruzgan in 2006, and thus had little need for clearing more areas. Initially they focussed on controlling the areas where they were deployed. In 2006 the Dutch battlegroup, which had three infantry companies, was deployed with one company more or less permanently in Tarin Kowt and one in Deh Rawod. The last company served as a the commander's freedom of action.[535] However, unlike the very classic approach by the Prince of Wales Company in Cha-e-Anjr the Dutch initially adopted a less rigid tactical concept more akin to the swarm tactics of the US Marine Corps.[536] Swarm tactics is a concept that has emerged in recent decades as an alternative to the traditional organisation of military units and operations. While it takes many forms, the core of the concept is to operate in small groups who converge, or swarm, on targets when it is deemed desirable.[537] In order for such a concept to work one must avoid having too many of one's forces tied down in permanent positions. All permanent positions need guarding, resupply, staffing, and construction work. Every permanent position of a unit ties up personnel in

[535] NL C, "Personal Interview."
[536] *Ibid.* and Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 41.
[537] Sean J.A Edwards, *Swarming on the Battlefield - Past, Present, and Future* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2000), 2-6.

these static duties and simultaneously reduces the number of boots on the ground. In brief, the Dutch aimed to avoid getting bogged down like the British got in Helmand with their platoon house strategy in 2006.[538]

The challenge with swarm tactics as employed by the Dutch was to establish control over the areas where one does not have permanent presence.

> As I have said, this is a competition for control, and the side that best establishes a resilient, full-spectrum system of control that can affect security, rule of law, and economic activity at the local level is most likely to prevail.[539]

If we accept the premise that counterinsurgency is a competition for governance and the population is the centre of gravity, is it possible to succeed with only an intermittent presence? The Dutch lines of operation were definitely in line with the recommendations of Kilcullen. But a key premise in population centric counterinsurgency is that support follows control.[540] While the Dutch were largely successful in keeping Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawod under control, the outlining areas proved more challenging. Geographically, the main populated part of Uruzgan is shaped like a lopsided V. In the bottom lies the capital of Tarin Kowt. West, through the Tanghi Valley lies Deh Rawod and to the north east, up the Baluchi valley, lies Chora. These valleys have villages and compounds along the green zone near the rivers. Initially the plan for the Dutch was to conduct an ink-spot strategy where influence was gradually spread out from the major cities.[541] As a part of this the whole Baluchi valley was cleared by Dutch and Australian troops during Operation Perth in July 2006. However, it became clear that there was no quick-fix to the security situation and the Baluchi Valley proved particularly challenging.

A final assessment of the Dutch efforts in Uruzgan reveals that Operation Perth had to be repeated at least three times before ANA and ISAF forces were able to exert even partial control of the area. The report highlighted the lack of an integrated

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[538] NL D, "Personal Interview," 10:30.
[539] Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, 159.
[540] *Ibid.*, 151 and Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, 118 and Boot, *Invisible Armies - an Epic History of Guerilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present*, 542.
[541] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 38-41.

approach as one of the reasons for this. 'The necessity of repeat operations in the Baluchi Valley highlighted the importance of an integrated approach.'[542] However, as also pointed out by the Dutch evaluation, the main challenge with the initial operations was not just the lack of an integrated approach. It was the lack of permanent presence of security forces after the "clear" phase of the operation was concluded.[543] Insurgents typically avoid decisive actions with government forces and then trickle back into the areas after these have left and remain the effective rulers of the area. Alternatively, insurgents will fight the security forces when these return to the area. If the insurgents resist the security forces' entries into the area, the population will often view this as a case of repetitive raiding when government forces tries to regain control.[544]

What is more, the population will not give up any valuable information without some certainty that the insurgents will not son regain control of the area. This dynamic was also observed in the British case during Operation Panchai Palang. It was only after the British forces had held the village for almost two months that a marked increase in intelligence from the locals was noticeable.[545] Thus a permanent presence is a necessity for an integrated approach. One cannot do the *hold* and *build* phases without necessary security forces to keep the insurgents from disrupting the work. At the same time *clear* operations without the *hold* and *build* phases are also inefficient.[546] Based on the evidence examined in the Dutch case this is one point where counterinsurgency theory remains valid. It furthermore underlies the difficulty of succeeding with such operations. The Dutch evaluation claims that the area was stabilised in late 2008.[547] However, based on evidence in the Dutch archives this seems somewhat exaggerated. The stated mission of Operation *Mani Ghar* in early May 2009 was to:

> Commence CLEAR OPs [operations], partnered with ANA, to NEUTRALIZE INS [insurgents] influence within KAKARAK and to project and expand the

[542] *Ibid.*, 37.
[543] *Ibid.*, 38.
[544] Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla, Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*, 96-97.
[545] UK A, "Personal Interview."
[546] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 111-12.
[547] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 39.

> TFU/ANSF security footprint and deepen the clear with focus on KAKARAK.[548]

The village Kakarak is in the Baluchi Valley about five kilometres north of the provincial capital Tarin Kowt. Also the 2010 campaign plan assessed that the clear phase of the Baluchi Valley was still not completed. When describing the situation in the area it stated:

> Although clearing operations have been conducted and efforts has been made to reach the *Clear* phase, the area is currently still in the Shape-phase due to the lack of permanent ANA/CF presence and the local atmospherics.[549]

The main challenge at this point was not that the Dutch conducted repetitive clear operations without leaving a government foothold in the area. Several operations since 2008, including Mani Ghar, included the construction of patrol bases in the Baluchi Valley with a permanent ANSF presence. The challenge seems rather to be that these were too dispersed to saturate the area and control the population sufficiently to tip them over to the side of the government. As pointed out in the 2010 Uruzgan campaign plan: 'the performance of the ANA and CF [Coalition Forces] on security is good, but isolated. Around the PBs [Patrol bases], the area is more permissive than in other parts of the valley.'[550]

This challenge should not have come as a surprise to the Dutch. Sir Robert Thompson emphasised in his work the need to link newly cleared areas to areas under government control. 'The area [to clear] itself should be selected as an extension of an area already securely held.'[551] This challenge is also discussed in the Dutch counterinsurgency doctrine. When debating operational designs for a counterinsurgency campaign the doctrine describes two principally different approaches. A concentric method, where the government forces work from the

[548] 11 (NLD) BG RHvS, "Frago 011 (Mani Ghar) to Oporder No. 001 Op Gargadan of Cdr 11 (Nld) Bg Rhvs " (Tarin Kowt: 2009), 2.
[549] Task Force Uruzgan, "Uruzgan Campaign Plan," 25.
[550] *Ibid.*, 26.
[551] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 111.

outside and inwards, and an eccentric method which is the opposite.[552] In relation to the areas surrounding the bases the doctrine argues:

> A constant presence in such areas often requires too many assets in relation to the success factors for the operation as a whole. If that is the case, it will not be possible to connect the various base areas with each other. Such areas must, however, be cleared as thoroughly as possible of insurgents and must remain clear.[553]

The problem with this is that without a permanent presence after areas are cleared it is virtually impossible to keep the insurgents out of the area. Since the Dutch experience in Uruzgan is mirrored by the that of the Norwegians in Faryab and the British in Helmand it seems safe to say that this is generic. Based on the evidence examined in this paper the advice of Sir Robert Thompson seems to still be valid. The best way to safeguard isolated government outposts is to only clear new areas adjacent to areas that are already secured in the manner done by British forces during Operation Panchai Palang.

Disruption of insurgents in periphery

Even if the government forces only gradually expand from areas already under control it still leaves the challenge of how to deal with areas outside of government control. The basic rationale for a *clear-hold-build* approach is that the government does not have enough forces to cover the entire area affected by the insurgency. If they had enough forces, there would not be a need for a *clear-hold-build* approach in the first place. This logic dictates that forces are prioritised to secure the areas already under control. Insurgents outside these areas are largely left in peace as long as they do not interfere with the secured areas. However, if the government lets the insurgents completely alone in areas they do not control, one risks the insurgents growing too strong to be dealt with later or that they will launch operations which greatly disturb the efforts inside government-held areas. The challenge for the counterinsurgent is to prioritise the efforts in areas under government control while not totally letting up the pressure on the insurgents in the periphery. Despite the challenges described above, the Dutch forces managed

[552] Royal Netherlands Army, *Combat Operations, Army Doctrine Publication II - Part C, Combat Operations against an Irregular Force*, 638-40.
[553] *Ibid.*, 641.

this balancing act better than their Norwegian and British counterparts. The main reason for this was that they had a clearer understanding and division between *clear* and *disruption*[554] operations. They were also, to a large extent, efficient in linking these operations together in a manner which underpinned the overall goal of the operation. Before going into the details it is useful to briefly clarify the distinction between the two forms of operations.

Clear operations aim at removing the overt part of an insurgency from an area to create a favourable situation for a *hold* and *build* phase. *Disrupt* operations aim at degrading the insurgents' force build-up and preventing them from growing to strong, and avoiding unwanted influence on areas under government control.[555] As these two tasks have very different aims they should also be conducted in different ways. The biggest difference lies in their relation to the population. *Clear* operations are conducted to prepare for the later *hold* and *build* phases. These are most often conducted in populated areas, and the troops should interact with the civilian population at early stages. This often include key-leader engagement, tribal mapping, quick-impact projects and rental of compounds or lands for permanent positions.[556]

While conducting *disrupt* operations, on the other hand, the troops have no intention to stay permanently in the area. This should affect how the troops conduct the operation. Preferably it should be conducted away from populated areas to minimize the risk for collateral damage. If this is not possible one should minimize the interaction between the local population and the government troops, mainly because it is not very productive. The population in contested areas does not normally provide any useful intelligence or other information without being sure that the government forces have become the dominant force in the area.[557]

[554] Some NATO members, such as the United States, sometimes use the tactical task *interdict* as a synonym to *disrupt*
[555] US Army & Marine Corps, *FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency*, Ch 5, p. 18-19 and Royal Netherlands Army, *Combat Operations, Army Doctrine Publication II - Part C, Combat Operations against an Irregular Force*, 633-42 and Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 112.
[556] US Army & Marine Corps, *FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency*, Ch 5, p. 19-20.
[557] Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, 124-32.

This makes information gathering, key-leader engagements and similar activities in disruption operations ineffective, or counterproductive.

Dutch forces in Uruzgan generally managed to utilize the two different forms of operations the way counterinsurgency theory intended. The framework order for TFU-5 (August 2008-January 2009) makes a clear distinction between *disrupt* and *clear* tasks. During this phase of the overall operation the Dutch forces were in the *hold* phase in the most populated areas of Uruzgan, but the surrounding areas had little or no permanent ISAF or ANSF presence. When describing the aim of the six-month deployment is states:

> As security is considered essential for stability, efforts still need to be invested in denying INS presence and influence in the ADZ, as well as disrupting INS in areas that are of influence to the ADZ's.[558]

The efforts to *disrupt* the insurgents were thus not stand-alone operations, but effectively tied into the overall operation which was centred on securing the population in the held areas. Operation Now Ghar 2, Operation Zier Tufaan, and Operation Zanbori are all examples of Dutch operations where units are tasked to disrupt insurgent activities in areas surrounding focus areas. Operation Now Ghar 2 was carried out by TFU-4 in April 2008. The main area of the operation was around the village of Khurma, north of Tarin Kowt. The entire phase A of the operation was focused on locating and disrupting insurgent activity in the area.[559] In a later stage, when the main effort was concentrated in the valley, a separate operation box named Rotterdam was established to the west of the main objective.[560] The mission for the forces in operation box Rotterdam was to conduct 'disrupt ops IOT [in order to] neutralise indicated locations and objects to prevent for further INS [insurgents] ops [operations].'[561] The purpose of this part of the operation was not to defeat an insurgency by killing off the insurgents, but to create conditions for success for the other forces who were the main effort of the operation as a whole.

[558] Task Force Uruzgan, "Oplan 005 Haquida," 10.
[559] 1 (NLD/AUS) TFU IV, "Conops - Level 1 Operation "Op Now Ghar 2"," (2008), 3.
[560] An operation box is a ground control measure used in ground operations. Only units designated to the mission are allowed to operate and fire in the area inside the operation box.
[561] 1 (NLD/AUS) TFU IV, "Conops - Level 1 Operation "Op Now Ghar 2"," 4.

A similar pattern can be observed in Operation Zier Tufaan. This was conducted in May 2008, also by the TFU-4. The operation was conducted in the three different focus areas in Uruzgan province: Tarin Kowt, Deh Rawod, and Chora. Arguably the key task of the operation was to construct a new patrol base for ANA in the Baluchi Valley.[562] As part of this operation all of the three involved companies were given *disrupt* tasks to perform in the periphery of the focus areas. A company was to 'Disrupt INS [insurgent] presence and activities […] and prevent for INS movement from the south.'[563] Likewise B and C companies were to 'disrupt INS [insurgent] and destroy C2 [command and control] nodes/ weapon caches' north of Tarin Kowt and in the vicinity of Chora.[564] Again these operations were not stand-alone efforts. They were either tied in with the holding operations in Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawod, or part of creating a more favourable situation for the construction of the patrol base for ANA.

Also Operation Zanbori was carried out in August 2009 shows the Dutch approach to disruption of the insurgents in the area. The operation as a whole focussed on the area north of Chora. The intelligence assessment prior to the operation was that the insurgents would attempt to re-establish a presence in areas north of Chora ahead of the elections.[565] The operations order clearly states that the main effort of the operations in this area was to 'deepen the effects inside the AOs [Areas of Operation] instead of expanding the ADZs.'[566] However, the Dutch battlegroup also underlined that in order to achieve this they had to conduct offensive operations against the insurgents in order to retain the initiative in the area. When describing the overall method of the operation the order clearly states that in order to keep the focus area stable they would have to conduct operations with the aim of 'degrading INS influence within the ADZs and minimizing external INS influences on the ADZs.'[567] The offensive operations against the insurgents

[562] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 128.
[563] 1 (NLD) BG, "Conops - Level 1 Operation "Op Zier Tufaan"," (Tarin Kowt: 2008), Acoy (DRW). The reference refers to the heading of the PPT orders brief for op Zier Tufaan
[564] *Ibid.*, Bcoy (DS) and Dcoy (CHORA).
[565] 17 (NLD) BG GFPI, "Frago 041/09 (Op Zanbori) of COM 17 (Nld) Bg Gfpi to Opord (Gargadan Rev 01) of COM TFU,," (Tarin Kowt: 2009), 1.
[566] *Ibid.*, 3.
[567] *Ibid.*, 2.

were thus not isolated actions, but closely connected with the main effort for this task force.[568]

As shown above the aim of the *disrupt* operations was not to defeat the insurgents militarily, but to reduce the insurgents' ability to influence the work done in the development zones after these areas were cleared. The order of the factors is in this case not irrelevant. While some of the operations carried out by the Dutch forces, such as Operation Zanbori, resemble those done by the Norwegians, there is yet a marked difference. Operation Zanbori, and the other operations analysed above, are offensive operations in relation to a *hold* operation in an adjacent area. The main effort as a whole is to secure the population in the controlled areas and the offensive operations are carried out in order to limit the influence by the insurgents on these. The operations carried out by the Norwegian forces were more isolated actions and as a result they were more enemy-centric in nature. This ability to execute *disrupt* operations in combination with the *clear-hold* phases both sets the Dutch apart from the Norwegians, and also aligns the Dutch operations closely with counterinsurgency theory and doctrine.

The final point concerning the Dutch operations in Uruzgan pertains to the role of doctrine as a guide for operations. One of my underlying assumptions when starting my work on this project was that the Dutch performed better than the Norwegian forces because the Dutch armed forces had an updated and modern counterinsurgency doctrine in place. Norway, on the other hand, had no national doctrine for counterinsurgency. However, the assumption of an available and well adapted national doctrine proved to be false. None of the Dutch officers interviewed for this study referred to the Dutch doctrine in relation to how they thought about their operations specifically, or when discussing counterinsurgency in general. While this shows that the role of a national doctrine might not be as central as I had imagined initially, it does not mean that the role of doctrine in general is unimportant. All of the Dutch officers interviewed showed a good theoretical grasp of counterinsurgency. Furthermore, several of the officers

[568] 11 (NLD) BG RHvS, "Operation Order No. 001 Op Gargadan of Cdr 11 (Nld) Bg Rhvs," (Tarin Kowt: 2009), 2.

referred to the doctrines of allies, in particular the US Army/ Marine Corps FM 3-24 and the British Army counterinsurgency doctrine.[569]

A concerted government effort

Overall, the Dutch efforts in Uruzgan was characterised by a high degree of civil-military cooperation in line with what is recommended by counterinsurgency theory. This was mainly a result of the strategic choice to focus on a 3D approach, clear strategic guidance and involvement, and an organisation of the effort which enabled a close civil-military cooperation.

Strategic view

From the outset of the mission the Dutch employed a comprehensive view on the conflict.[570] However, the term *3D approach*, which is often associated with the Dutch effort in Uruzgan, was not explicitly used in the 2005 *Kamerbrief*.[571] Nevertheless, the *Kamerbrief* is very balanced in its approach and focuses equally on the defence, diplomatic and development aspects of the mission.[572] In the 2007 reaffirmation of the mission the government statement refers directly to the three strands of the Uruzgan operation: defence, diplomacy, and development.[573] As mentioned earlier in this chapter the *3D approach* was a Canadian variety of comprehensive approach used in nation-building missions. The *3D approach* does not have roots in any doctrinal development, nor is there any substantial body of theory behind the concept. Just as integrated missions, whole of government approach, or comprehensive approach, the *3D approach* is based on the premise that military force alone will not be enough to stabilise countries torn by insurgencies or civil war.[574] With regards to its focus on the need for a close civil-military cooperation the *3D approach* is very similar to counterinsurgency theory.[575] The selection of the *3D approach* for the Dutch was in this sense

[569] NL A, "Personal Interview." and NL B, "Personal Interview." and NL C, "Personal Interview."
[570] Jaïr van der Lijn, "Comprehensive Approaches, Diverse Coherences: The Different Levels of Policy Coherence in the Dutch 3d Approach in Afghanistan", *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 26, no. 1 (2015): 73.
[571] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 19.
[572] B.R Bot, "Brief for the Second Chamber 22 December 2005 on the Dutch Participation in South Afghanistan (*Kamerbrief 22 December 2005 - Nederlandse Bijdrage Aan ISAF in Zuid-Afghanistan)* ".
[573] M.J.M Verhagen, "Kamerbrief Betreffende Artikel 100 Inzake De Nederlandse Bijdrage Aan ISAF Na 1 Augustus 2008," 19-20.
[574] Gabriëlse, "A 3d Approach to Security and Development," 67-68.
[575] Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 55 and Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, 84-85.

important. Just like in Norway, counterinsurgency was not very much in fashion in the Netherlands in 2006. Counterinsurgency brought back ghosts from their past as a colonial power, and was also associated with the US invasion and following occupation of Iraq.[576] The *3D approach*, even though closely resembling counterinsurgency in overall approach, thus represented an uncontroversial alternative which enabled the Dutch to approach the mission in the manner they did.[577]

The choice of a *3D approach* also set the conditions for a close cooperation between the different departments involved in the mission in Uruzgan. The ministries for defence and development and the foreign office worked closely from early on in the planning phase. The *Kamerbrief* on 22 December 2005, which outlines the main aspects of Dutch initial policy and strategy, was signed by all three ministers. Furthermore, a cross-departmental working group was established to oversee the operations at the strategic level.[578] This group met weekly on a high level, while staff from the different ministries met on a daily basis as the mission progressed. While this inter-departmental cooperation was important in order to ensure a concerted government effort for the Dutch in Uruzgan it also indirectly served a different purpose: it ensured a continual involvement from the political and strategic level in the mission in Uruzgan.

The overall organisation, and the integration of civil-military staff at the TFU level, has already been covered in the introduction to this chapter. Another important aspect of counterinsurgency concerning this topic is the organisation of the battlespace. In conventional war battlespace is divided and organised to avoid friendly fire and lessen the need for coordination. In counterinsurgency the challenge is rather to secure a unity of effort between the different actors in the area. The Dutch ensured this by overlapping the focus areas for the security forces with the ADZs where the development efforts would be prioritized.[579]

[576] George Dimitriu & Beatrice de Graaf, "The Dutch COIN Approach: Three Years in Uruzgan, 2006-2009," 433.
[577] Lijn, *3d 'the Next Generation' - Lessons Learned from Uruzgan for Future Operations*, 25.
[578] Gabriëlse, "A 3d Approach to Security and Development," 72.
[579] Lijn, *3d 'the Next Generation' - Lessons Learned from Uruzgan for Future Operations*, 34.

Counterinsurgency theory stresses the need to overlap the boundaries of the government forces with the existing boundaries of the local government.[580] This is to avoid unclear responsibilities and ensure a unity of effort between civil and military efforts. If a company commander was given the responsibility of a district it was easier to coordinate his actions with the mayor and chief of police of the same province instead of dealing with several districts. However, this way of organising an effort in many ways presupposes a functioning local government.

Most contemporary counterinsurgency efforts are expeditionary. In many modern conflicts the security forces, such as the Dutch in this case, does not represent the central authorities directly. Furthermore, in many of the cases local governments are either weak or virtually non-existent. In Uruzgan there was not much local government for the Dutch forces to cooperate with from the outset. In 2006 it was assessed that only 20% of the government positions in Uruzgan were filled.[581] Based on this it can be argued that it was more important to overlap the focus areas of the security forces with the ADZs in order to achieve a unity of effort between the military and the development effort than to base the deployment on existing structures of local government. These two different approaches need not be mutually exclusive, and in practical terms the ADZs were focussed on the main population centres in Uruzgan anyway. It is, however, worth keeping in mind that most contemporary counterinsurgency campaigns are expeditionary. Hence it is important to build local structures which can function when the international forces leave. In this regard it is advisable to use existing boundaries as much as possible.

Tactical view

Functioning civil-military cooperation on a tactical level is often difficult to establish. Cultures and interests differ between departments and these often influence the execution of a mission. Especially in the case of Norway, but also for the British these frictions tended to become even worse because the strategic

[580] Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, 61.
[581] (TLO), "The Dutch Engagement in Uruzgan: 2006 to 2010 - a TLO Socio-Political Assessment," viii.

guidance diverged, or was unclear, which allowed the efforts to go in different directions. In the case of the Netherlands the strategic goals were, as covered initially in this chapter, clearer from the outset, but the situation was nevertheless far from ideal. Even the official evaluation admits that while the overall strategy focussed on the importance of a close civil-military cooperation, there was still little integrated civil-military planning ahead of deployment.

> During the initial stage of the mission, the approach was not entirely comprehensive, however, especially not in The Hague. For instance, before the beginning of the mission, there was no interdepartmental mission design, i.e. a plan, agreed and coordinated by the various ministries, for the elaboration of the Article 100 objectives and the implementation of the mission.[582]

However, the command team of the first TFU partly alleviated this. Contrary to the civilian members of the TFU staff the military component of the TFU had a six-month period to plan their mission. Thus in June 2006 the *Masterplan*, which mainly covers the military side of the mission, was more or less ready. When the development advisor was teamed up with the rest of the staff only two days prior to deployment, he was handed the *Masterplan*. Not 'to influence his assessment,' but with a request that the same terms of reference were used.[583] While it was a good intention by the military staff of the TFU not to influence the development assessment it is hard to imagine that it did not. The plan for the military operations were already in place, and it would be hard for a single development advisor to change this around in two days if he deemed this necessary. On the other hand, the advantage of the military side of the planning being done already was that the development side could base their planning on this product. In the Dutch case this was beneficial since the military planning had taken the development side of the operation into consideration from the outset. The 2006 *masterplan* was clear that the civilian side of the mission was vital even though security operations were prioritized for the first deployments. An example of this is that 10 of the 22 identified effects to be achieved in order to have mission

[582] Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006-2010," 31.
[583] NL D, "Personal Interview," 46:02.

success in the 2006 *masterplan* were "civilian" effects.[584] Furthermore, as the emphasis early on was on security operations, it also provided more time to integrate and prepare the development side of the mission.

Furthermore, the Dutch military component in general showed a greater willingness to incorporate the civilian side of the mission compared to the British and the Norwegians. None of the Dutch officers interviewed was unwarrantedly critical of the civilian part of the mission. In the cases where they provided criticism it was balanced and would also contain self-criticism. Several of the Dutch officers interviewed pointed out that the civilian staff were both competent and of invaluable help in understanding and shaping the development and governance side of the mission.[585] While this should not be given too much emphasis it is still important in order to get a functioning civil-military cooperation. Cultural differences between the civilian and military staff are often one of the great hindrances for good cooperation. If the senior military staff shows a positive attitude towards the civilian component of the mission, it could make the cooperation easier for both parts. The relatively good cooperation between the military and civilian components of the TFU is also reflected in the van der Linj report from 2011 as well. He points to the fact that the Dutch Army had started work on better civil-military cooperation years before the Uruzgan mission.[586] Studies of the Dutch *3D approach* point out that the cooperation worked well in particular on TFU staff level, while there was less integration on the tactical level.[587] One of the reasons for the lack of a completely integrated approach at a tactical level is recognisable from the case of Norway. The question of a humanitarian space was debated both before and during the mission.[588] As discussed in the theory chapter of this thesis, NGOs working in conflict areas rely on their impartiality for security. If NGOs work too closely with counterinsurgents this impartiality would, in their opinion, be undermined and then leave them vulnerable for insurgent attacks. In the Dutch case there was a principal division of

[584] Task Force Uruzgan, "1 (NLD/AUS) Task Force Uruzgan Master Plan," 11-12.
[585] NL A, "Personal Interview." and NL D, "Personal Interview."
[586] Lijn, *3d 'the Next Generation' - Lessons Learned from Uruzgan for Future Operations*, 45.
[587] Jaïr van der Lijn, "Comprehensive Approaches, Diverse Coherences: The Different Levels of Policy Cohenrence in the Dutch 3d Approach in Afghanistan", *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 26, no. 1 (2015): 84-86.
[588] Lijn, *3d 'the Next Generation' - Lessons Learned from Uruzgan for Future Operations*, 45.

tasks where the military component would provide security, and the civilian component provided development.[589] Van der Lïjn also points out that there was a direct correlation regarding the cooperation between the Dutch PRT and NGOs and the increased footprint of the civilian component from 2008 and onwards.[590]

From a counterinsurgency point of view, the Dutch solution is probably what could be aimed for in modern conflicts. The theories of Galula, Thompson, and their like were all written well before the advent of NGOs as a major actor in conflict areas. The civilian component in their time was formed by government officials or representatives of the colonial administration and consequently fellow employees of the government. Nevertheless, in Uruzgan the Dutch were able to achieve a high degree of unity of effort between the civilian and military component, especially in the latter stages of the mission. This was done through a clear massing of resources in the ADZs where the civilian and military efforts were focused, and where the military planners incorporated the civilian side into the overall planning. Furthermore, the military forces focussed on creating security and thus a favourable environment for development to take place. Hence it was not an integrated effort on the tactical level, and based on the Dutch case it is probably fitting to ask whether it really needs to be. The paramount issue is that the overall planning done by the lead HQ in a province, whether this is on the operational or tactical level, integrates both the civilian and military aspects of the mission. The execution itself does not necessarily have to be integrated at the same level as long as both parties work towards the same goals.

The Dutch approach

The Dutch largely adhered to population-centric counterinsurgency theory. This despite never referring to their efforts in Uruzgan as a counterinsurgency effort. The Dutch developed a coherent, well suited and realistic strategy. The strategic guidance geographically prioritised Dutch efforts in Uruzgan. By pursuing a 3D approach, it also laid the foundations for a functioning civil-military cooperation at the tactical level. It also created an inter-departmental committee to oversee and control the operations from the strategic level. By doing so it not only provided a

[589] *Ibid.*
[590] *Ibid.*, 46.

forum for continual guidance from the strategic level, it also promoted ownership and interest in the mission. The main reason why the Dutch proved better at formulating a clear strategy compared to Norway and Britain seems to be procedural. Article 100 in the Dutch constitution forces the Dutch parliament to undergo a process which, when preformed rigorously, will produce the necessary elements of strategy. In the case of Uruzgan the Dutch government, by use of the article 100, produced a strategy which matched end and means, made clear priorities, and at the same time left enough flexibility for the tactical level to adopt to circumstances on the ground.

Similarly, the Dutch never officially pursued a population-centric approach. Dutch operations were nevertheless characterised more by a population-centric than an enemy-centric approach. The clear priority of the civilian components of the mission, and the task of the military component to create security in relation to these, helped shaping the Dutch operation in a population-centric direction. Also the creation of ADZs around the most populated areas of the province aided the Dutch in maintaining a clear focus on the population rather than the enemy during their campaign. At the tactical level the TFU used EBO as a doctrinal approach to their operations. While EBO is not an integral part of counterinsurgency theory the Dutch case shows how it could be an effective planning tool to create a unity of effort in counterinsurgency operations.

The Dutch also stood out in terms of creating a concerted government effort in Uruzgan. From the outset there was a small, but vital civilian presence in the TFU. From 2008 and onwards the Dutch PRT was under civilian command and the leadership of the TFU was shared. The ADZs provided a focal point for both security operations and development programs.

The question of whether there is a Dutch way of counterinsurgency is beyond the parameters of this thesis. However, particularly compared to the Norwegians and the British, the Dutch stand out for the seriousness with which they planned the deployment of their military forces. They fashioned comprehensive procedures for the creation of strategy in Parliament. The main purpose of the article 100 is to

create better parliamentary control. But a vital consequence of this legislation was the creation of a robust strategy for intervention in Afghanistan. Of the three national cases, the Dutch military alone forged a long-term campaign plan. The end-product was both a strategy and an execution on the tactical level that both largely adhered to the theories of population-centric counterinsurgency.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine the underlying premise of the most common criticism made of counterinsurgency doctrine based on experiences from Afghanistan. In order to achieve this the overall research questions were:

> **First, how did Norwegian, British, and Dutch operations in Afghanistan between 2006-10 adhere to classic counterinsurgency theory?**
> **Second, why did their approaches differ?**

All these three states were lead nations in provinces during the period studied. In the theory chapter this study analysed and discussed the theories of population-centric counterinsurgency. It argued that this theory is characterised by three factors: a primacy of politics, the population as a centre of gravity and a concerted government effort. Each of the three case studies has analysed how these three states adhered to these factor from both a strategic and tactical point of view. It was hard to find any evidence that Norway at all adhered to counterinsurgency theory during the period studied. Great Britain adhered to the theories of counterinsurgency in some aspects and periods of the mission. Overall only the Netherlands can be said to have largely adhered to counterinsurgency theories in their approach to the campaign in Afghanistan. In this conclusion I will address how each of these case studies relates to the overall research question.

The Dutch

The Netherlands is in many ways the paradox of this thesis. On the strategic level they never officially pursued the mission in Afghanistan as a counterinsurgency. Nevertheless, they were the only national case that in practical terms adhered the most closely to counterinsurgency theory. Only the Netherlands developed a coherent strategy prior to deployment. The article 100 of the Dutch constitution demands that any deployment of Dutch forces outside Dutch territories or in support of NATO article 5 operations must be debated and approved in parliament. This procedure includes specific questions related to the political aims, if these are achievable with military means and if the aims and means are balanced. The end product of this procedure is the basic components of a strategy.

Given the Netherland's history as a former colonial power, the doctrine of counterinsurgency was not deemed as a viable political option. The Dutch instead pursued a *3D approach* which emphasis a close cooperation between defence, development and diplomacy. However, this approach left enough room for adaptation on the ground for the Dutch to pursue what in practical terms was an approach which closely adhered to population-centric counterinsurgency. The Dutch also engaged with the political level in Uruzgan province ahead of their deployment. This helped to clarify expectations and prepare the ground ahead of the deployment of the task force. According to counterinsurgency theory, a coherent strategy is a prerequisite for success. But this is of little help if there is not a clear link between the strategy and the operations on the ground. In the case of the Netherlands, this link was ensured by the planning done by the first task force. Ahead of the deployment they developed a thorough and stringent campaign plan, the *Masterplan* for the Dutch mission to Uruzgan. This plan not only integrated strategic goals into tactical tasks. It also incorporated the development and political side of the mission into the plan. In this manner the Dutch laid an important foundation for a unity of effort in the mission from early on.

On the strategic level the Dutch also pursued a population-centric approach. The initial deployment was centred on the two major cities in Uruzgan, Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawod. However, this was not driven out of a counterinsurgency logic. The Dutch strategic level put the PRT and its development task at the heart of the mission. Since development was mostly done in the most populated areas initially, the focus became population-centric as a matter of course. On the tactical level TFU applied the concept of effects-based operations as the foundation for the planning. Through a thorough analysis of the operational environment it identified the key effects which had to be achieved in order to solve the mission. Through this work they put the groundwork for a population-centric approach on the tactical level. As the force ratios in Uruzgan were also stretched, the Dutch adopted a more mobile concept than what is generally recommended by counterinsurgency theory. As time went on they conducted *clear* and *hold* operations in the prioritised areas. The need for permanent presence of security

forces after the *clear* operations were also well highlighted in the Dutch case. The Baluchi Valley was in particular problematic as the Dutch had to conduct repeated *clear* operations in the area. Only when sufficient forces were left in the area to support the local security forces were the insurgents forced out on a more permanent basis. In the adjacent areas they conducted *disrupt* operations to avoid that the insurgents could recover here.

As a consequence of the overall *3D approach*, the Dutch were also able to integrate civilian and military efforts well during their mission. The Dutch also deployed more civilian staff and eventually put civilian leadership of the PRT in effect. They ensured that the focus areas for the security operations overlapped the ADZs where the main effort of the development work would happen. Through this they ensured a certain control over the development projects done while conducting security operations in the same area. On the tactical level the TFU integrated the civilian side into the long-term planning. The level of cooperation between the civilian and military side of the mission was also overall good.

In *On War* Clausewitz argued: 'War is no pastime; it is no mere joy in daring and winning, no place for irresponsible enthusiasts. It is a serious means to a serious end […].'[591] This quote is in many ways a fitting summary of the Dutch approach to the mission in Afghanistan, they seem to have taken all aspects of the operation seriously. They did not design their mission as a counterinsurgency effort. The execution nevertheless closely adhered to counterinsurgency theory.

The British

Britain deployed their forces into Helmand with an incoherent and poorly articulated strategy. The strategic goal of counter-narcotics proved particularly problematic. Leading officers in the first task force was convinced that any counter-narcotics operations would only serve to fuel the insurgency in Helmand. While the goal was logical from a domestic point of view it reduced the trust the task force had in their politicians understanding of the conflict. The United

[591] Clausewitz, *On War, Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret*, 98.

Kingdom also struggled to supervise the mission on the ground. The Helmand Triangle was defined as the area where British forces should operate by the strategic level. Yet one third of the manoeuvre force was relocated outside the Helmand Triangle before six months had passed.
Tootal and Butler were pressured by the Afghan authorities to support Afghan forces further north in Helmand. They deemed this to be a tactical decision and the MoD was only informed after the operation was executed. While the main part of the responsibility for the latter decision rests with the commanders on the ground one might still expect the strategic level to carry out a more thorough oversight of the operations. This move of British forces outside the Helmand triangle into villages further north in Helmand also had negative aspects for other parts of the mission. It also serves to exemplify a profound challenge in contemporary counterinsurgency: there are many political agendas at play in the same operation. The British forces in theatre had to decide whether to follow political guidance from the MoD and Whitehall or support Afghan authorities. In such a complex environment military forces need clear strategic guidance in order to navigate safely.

The initial deployment of British forces can be argued to have been population-centric. The Helmand Triangle encompassed most of Helmand's population with Gereshk and Lashkar Gah as the most important cities. The overall idea was to apply an ink-spot strategy where development and influence would expand from these areas. With what was effectively only one infantry battalion on the ground the British forces was from the outset spread rather thinly. When the movement of troops to the outlying villages to the north took place this situation was made even worse. The result was that British troops had such poor local force ratios that they were unable to dominate their areas. Without the ability to be the primary security provider in their areas the foundation for a population-centric approach was also greatly diminished. This created a perceived need to reduce the influence of insurgents that, at a crucial phase in the British deployment, led to a more enemy-centric approach. Later in the mission, when the British and the US deployed more troops into Helmand, this approach evolved towards the more population-centric focus prescribed in classis counterinsurgency doctrine. In

Operation Panchai Palang the British forces were able to adapt and pursue population-centric operations on the tactical level. The *hold* phase conducted in Operation Panchai Palang demonstrated that British forces understood the importance of securing the population. It also resulted in inventive and effective tactics when the Taliban harassed the Welsh troops securing Cha-e Anjir.

With regards to a concerted government effort, the British struggled throughout the period in question. The importance a concerted effort was understood at the strategic level. Efforts were made at integrated planning and to staff the PRT with qualified civilian staff to advise in development work. On the tactical level, this coordination never fully materialised. The security situation in Helmand presented powerful obstacles to development that were never overcome. The deployment of British platoons into isolated villages throughout the province compounded these obstacles. Different force-protection rules for civilian staff meant civilians were largely unable to work in tandem with the security forces. This led to predictable frustrations among the military personnel. Even though the importance of a tight civil-military cooperation seems to have been understood at the strategic level, these issues went largely unresolved.

Overall the British approach to the campaign in Helmand adhered to counterinsurgency theory only partially and primarily in particular in the latter stages of the period in question.

The Norwegians

Norway did not formulate a strategy for their efforts in Faryab until 2009. The initial Norwegian perspective was that Norway's forces were detached to ISAF. The coalition was expected to provide strategic and operational guidance. But in coalition operations this rarely happens. There is a general apprehensiveness about giving clear missions and guidance to the defence forces of member nations. Moreover, the one dimension where the 2009 strategy provided clear direction concerned the separation of civil and military efforts. This clearly broke with both ISAF strategy and counterinsurgency theory. Where counterinsurgency theory underlines the importance of a close civil-military co-operation, the "Norwegian

model" for civil-military cooperation emphasised a segregation of the two efforts. Prominent politicians and the NGO lobby in Norway were worried that a close affiliation with security forces would undermine the impartiality and thus the security of NGOs in conflict zones. On the strategic level, therefore Norway decided to adhere to the principle of impartiality for NGOs at the expense of a concerted government effort as advocated by counterinsurgency theory.

It has also been hard to find any evidence of the Norwegian intervention employing a population-centric approach to the conflict. The lack of clear strategic guidance gave the initial Norwegian PRT commanders great freedom of action. Unlike the Dutch there was not produced a long-term plan for Faryab in the initial stages. When the situation gradually worsened in Faryab in 2007 the Norwegian PRT seems to have been more dictated by circumstances as it did not have a long-term perspective on their operations. Poor force-ratios also made prolonged *hold-build* operations difficult to achieve. As a result, Norwegian operations were more characterised by a *clear-return to base* or repetitive raiding pattern than a population-centric approach.

Norway was also unable to generate a concerted government effort in Faryab. The main reason for this was the decision to separate its military and civilian efforts. Interestingly, Norway was the only one of the three states studied in this thesis that came close to balancing their spending on the military and civilian efforts. But this was not evidence of a concerted government effort. Most of the civilian spending was channelled through Afghan authorities and trust funds. It was thus not directly linked to the efforts of the security forces in Faryab in any way.

Overall it has been difficulty to find any evidence that Norway adhered to counterinsurgency theory during its campaign in Faryab. In some ways - the segregation of civil and military efforts for example - this was a conscious decision taken at the strategic level. The Norwegian case also highlights the challenges with a primacy of politics in contemporary operations. The importance of NGOs, both directly and indirectly, was not a consideration when Galula and Thompson developed their theories. In the Norwegian case, in particular, NGOs played an

important role in imbuing the conflict with a political character that had no precedent in the history of counterinsurgency. To developed a unified strategy in such a context while still adhering to classic counterinsurgency proved impossible.

Recommendations for further research

The work on this thesis has provided several ideas for further research on this topic. In this part, I will briefly outline three of these.

Firstly, the use of EBO in counterinsurgency should be explored more in depth. As discussed in the chapter covering The Netherlands the EBO concept was largely declared dead by general Mattis in 2008. While it is still present some doctrines, in particular for NATO airpower, it has lost much of its past appeal in military circles. The Dutch case, however, showed that it could be used as an effective tool to create a unity of effort between the civilian and military components of a mission. On the other hand, it might be the case that this was more due to specific Dutch circumstances than the concept itself. It would thus be interesting to examine if this has been the case in other missions as well.

Secondly, the concept of EBO and unity of effort should also be explored more in depth from the civilian component's point of view. In order to address the unity of effort challenges of counterinsurgency operations one should also do more comparative research on the new UN peacekeeping missions. Most NATO members still maintain a conceptual difference between peacekeeping and counterinsurgency, and it is probably prudent to continue this. However, if one examines the modern and robust UN operations, such as the operations in Congo, Mali, Central African Republic, and Sudan, the degree of impartiality is at best very limited. In all of these operations, certain factions, which are deemed as hostile, has been targeted directly by UN peacekeeping forces. In this manner the *de facto* conduct of the new robust peacekeeping missions are conceptually very close to counterinsurgency. In this regard, it could be fruitful to both compare the new peacekeeping with counterinsurgency in general, as well as comparing the UN's integrated missions approach to NATO's comprehensive approach. As the UN traditionally has been better at cooperation with NGOs in their missions the latter could in particular be interesting.

The last recommendation for further research has relates to the actual conduct of counterinsurgency operations for armed forces. The main object of study in this thesis was the theories and doctrines of counterinsurgency. The conduct of operations was studied within the framework of theory. However, many of the officers at platoon and company level interviewed for this thesis pointed to the actual day-to-day running of operations as the main challenge they faced. Many of these understood the theories of counterinsurgency. They knew, theoretically, that securing the population was key and that their troops had to take risks on behalf of the civilian population in their area. The most difficult, they argued, was to convince their NCOs and soldiers to actually do the job in a way which conformed to doctrine and theory. It hence had more to do with leadership than military theory. While there has been written many accounts and studies of leadership in general I believe that officers and soldiers could benefit from further studies on the challenges of leadership in modern counterinsurgency operations.

In summary

The argument that the Afghan case demonstrates that classic counterinsurgency theory is outmoded is only partially correct. Of the three states studied in this thesis only, the Netherlands adhered to the theories of counterinsurgency in the execution of the mission. Great Britain did so only partially and only towards the latter stages of the period under study. It is difficult, moreover, to identify any aspects of the Norwegian mission in Faryab that adhered to counterinsurgency theory. The Afghan case therefore does not provide sufficient evidence to support the case that counterinsurgency theory is no longer useful.

Glossary

ADZ: Afghan Development Zone
ANA: Afghan National Army
ANP: Afghan National Police
COMISAF: Commander International Security Assistance Force
CIVREP: Civilian representative (Dutch Task Force Uruzgan)
FM: Field Manual
GIRoA: Government Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
HCDC: House of Commons Defence Committee
NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
IAG: Illegally Armed Groups
IED: Improvised Explosive Device
ISAF: International Security Assistance Force
ANSF: Afghan National Security Forces
FOB: Forward Operating Base
FOH: Permanent Joint Headquarters (Norway)
FRAGO: Fragmentary Order
PJHQ: Permanent Joint Headquarters (Britain)
PSO: Peace Support Operation
PRT: Provincial Reconstruction Team
MoD: Ministry of Defense
MOG: Mobile Operations Group
MSR: Main Supply Route
NORAD: Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OPLAN: Operational plan
OMF: Opposing Military Forces
RMAS: Royal Military Academy Sandhurst
TFU: Task Force Uruzgan
TU: Task-unit (Norway)

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