NL ARMS
Netherlands Annual Review of Military Studies
2009

Complex operations:
Studies on Lebanon (2006) and Afghanistan (2006-present)

Michiel de Weger
Frans Osinga
Harry Kirkels
[Eds]
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NL-ARMS is published under the auspices of the Dean of the Faculty of Military Sciences of the Netherlands Defence Academy (NLDA).

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Typography & Design: Eric Franken AVC NLDA  
Printed by Koninklijke De Swart, The Hague  
ISSN 0166-9982
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Foreword

For over two years it has been my honour to lead a great group of Dutch military and civilian professionals at the Military Operational Arts and Sciences (MOAS) section of the Netherlands Defence Academy (NLDA). Our mission has been to generate research that has two simple aims. First, to enhance the chances of mission success for our colleagues deployed on operations at a level of risk commensurate with the task at hand. Second, to reinforce the education of cadets that has been led so ably by my friend and colleague Colonel Ton de Munnik. This book represents the fruits of that research. As could be expected of two outstanding scholars and researchers Dr Michiel de Weger and Colonel Dr Frans Osinga have produced an innovative and accessible edition reflective of our joint aim to establish a new interface between academic and military professionals. The case studies on Lebanon and Afghanistan demonstrate conclusively the need for intellectual input and challenge to conventional thinking because if there is one theme running through the entire book it is this: mission success in complex environments rests upon new partnerships but above all on creative thinking leading to creative effect. This is the stuff of this edition of NL-ARMS which also carries an implicit warning to policymakers and leaders alike. Any military establishment that turns in on itself for fear of short-term political and/or media turbulence will only likely accelerate mission failure.

This book also marks the end of my tenure as Professor of the MOAS section. I will henceforth have the singular honour of being the Eisenhower Professor of Defence Strategy at NLDA. As an Englishman working for the Dutch armed forces there have of course been anomalies, such as the strange insistence of my colleagues that the Netherlands actually won the Anglo-Dutch Wars in the 17th and 18th century. My greatest success has been to disabuse them of that erroneous interpretation of history. My departure from MOAS comes at a moment when accreditation of the bachelor course of War Studies has come within reach and the section stands ready to build on its burgeoning reputation both in the Netherlands and abroad as a centre of research and education excellence at an exciting time for the Faculty of Military Science.

I pay tribute to the Netherlands armed forces and the outstanding colleagues and partners with whom I have had the privilege to work.

Julian Lindley-French,
Eisenhower Professor of Defence Strategy, Netherlands Defence Academy,
Special Professor of Strategic Studies, University of Leiden,
Breda,
June 2009.
Introduction: towards understanding complex operations

Michiel de Weger, Frans Osinga and Harry Kirkels

NL-ARMS, 2009, 7-24

Background of the volume

As is the tradition of NL-ARMS, each year one section of the Faculty of Military Science of the Netherlands Defence Academy (NLDA) brings together authors and articles on its research domain. This year the Military Operational Arts and Sciences (MOAS) section is proud to present a series of studies on contemporary (military) conflicts. It is not only the first time the section does so, it is also one of just a few larger Dutch academic publications based on detailed study of military operations since the end of the Cold War. The individual contributions in this volume were derived from the two main MOAS-led research projects of 2008-2009 into a variety of aspects of the Second Lebanon War of 2006 and the ongoing operations in Afghanistan. Texts prepared in these projects were (considerably) reduced in length and translated into English. The research projects deliberately also involved academics and officers from other sections of the Faculty of Military Science. Thus, this volume encompasses not only an operational perspective, but also an international relations and legal one. Due attention is paid to other (security) actors, like police forces, civilian populations, non-governmental organisations, media and government. As is appropriate for academic research, the contributions in this volume air a healthy critical attitude. The findings are based on personal, independent, a-political and academic, so critical, analysis by the authors of open source material (and deliberately not of classified material). They do not reflect any opinion of the Netherlands armed forces or the Ministry of Defence. Their focus is entirely on improving our understanding of military operations.

The research directly reflects the leadership of professor Lindley-French, head of MOAS from 2007-2009, who stressed that academic education and research are inseparable, and that it is the mandate and mission of MOAS to explore current operations so as to inform and intellectually shape the officer corps of the future. Four arguments formed the intent of and underlying rationale for the research projects. First, a top-class military education requires maintaining a relevant and up-to-date curriculum, which in turn requires that educators, both academic and military, not only teach, but also conduct research. The two case studies have offered the faculty valuable research expertise, course material as well as a wealth of insights that they can bring into the classroom. Second,
as MOAS is charged with educating officers on the nature of contemporary operations, the section would be remiss if it did not focus on the two selected case studies. Both feature dynamics, operational problems, types of actors and approaches that will probably colour at least a part of the future operational environment today’s cadets will likely encounter during their future careers. Moreover, even though participation in high-intensity conflicts might be rather exceptional, the Dutch armed forces have the responsibility to be prepared for them. Thus, operations such as the Second Lebanon War and ongoing operations in Afghanistan are too relevant for understanding contemporary operations not to study. Third, the case studies offered an excellent vehicle for fostering interdisciplinary research, between NLDA faculty sections, and for improving research qualities and increasing research output within MOAS.

A fourth, somewhat more fundamental motive lies in the nature - and challenge - of military innovation. How military organisations innovate is a critical factor in their performance on the battlefields of the future, historian Wick Murray concluded in his landmark study. He observed that the education of the officer corps is a key variable for explaining effective innovation. The problem is of course that military forces under present world security conditions must innovate and prepare for operations (1) that will occur at some indeterminate point in the future, (2) against an opponent who may not yet be identified, (3) in political conditions which cannot accurately be predicted, and (4) in an arena of brutality and violence which cannot be replicated. As Murray noted, successful military organisations were marked by a culture of learning, a willingness to examine performance with a critical eye, and a keen eye for the importance of the intellectual climate within the organisation. Other features include a leadership that fosters debate and critical analysis, an absence of doctrinal rigidity and an acceptance of feedback that contradicts doctrine, existing force structures and vested interests. Without the intellectual effort and institutional commitment to develop a vision of the future, military institutions will almost certainly fail to take the first halting steps towards innovation, Murray concluded. It is in that spirit that these case studies were undertaken: they are also conscious attempts to fathom the contours of the potential future operational environment. A brief conceptual introduction of some of the issues involved will serve to illustrate the complexities of contemporary operations.

The problem of understanding

It is not easy to classify the operations that are the focus of the various studies in this volume. A core problem is that in the west employing forces and applying force suggests, even demands, that it will lead in a clear manner, according to a convincing logic, to the
achievement of a politically defined purpose. The *strategy canon* of the west is all about this rational relationship between input and output. To that end it has developed a clear conceptual framework. Dichotomies and categories are employed to mark distinctions, such as conventional-unconventional, high-intensity versus low-intensity, regular-irregular warfare, inter-state versus intra-state warfare, limited versus total warfare, war versus peace-enforcement versus peace-keeping, combatant-non combatant, soldier-civilian, military force-criminal violence, etc. These categories refer to actors, methods or scope. In each of those categories it is assumed that different dynamics are at play and, hence, for handling them different strategic factors need to be incorporated in plans. Western military doctrines and education are based on these categories of conflict.

Two observations suggest that contemporary conflicts defy such easy categorisations, are far more complex and provide a first-rate intellectual challenge. First, General Sir Rupert Smith’s suggests the fundamental nature of the changes in modern conflict:

*War no longer exists ... war as cognitively known to most non-combatants, war as battle in a field between men and machinery, war as a massive deciding event in a dispute in international affairs; such war no longer exists.*

What western armed forces face instead is a state of continuing hostility conducted largely by non-military means, as well as activities not even primarily directed against intervening western armed forces, like public disorder, crime and underdevelopment that for long have been neglected in (mainstream of) western military thinking. The essential difference is that military force is no longer used to decide a political dispute between states, but rather to create a security condition in which a strategic western foreign policy result is achieved. We are in a world of continual confrontations, conflicts and sheer (trans)national chaos in which the military acts support the achievement of the desired outcome by other means. The problem is, Smith noted, we are all engaging in *War Amongst the People* of states and non-state actors alike, in which our opponents appear to understand the utility of force better than we do.

Second, in recognition of the failings of our lexicon, in the light of recent US and Israeli experiences, and indicative of the new strategic complexity, General Mattis and Frank Hoffman claimed that current conflicts are “not irregular war or regular war, not conventional or guerrilla war, high-tech or low-tech, interstate or intra-state; peace keeping or war fighting. Instead, all of these sets of opposites converge in what they labelled ‘Hybrid Wars’.”

Going one step further, it is even fair to ask whether the word ‘war’ is used too easily, just too conveniently to the mainstream military mind to describe far more compli-
cated, multifaceted security conditions in operation areas. This is not just a semantic issue, as the larger parts of western armed forces are by now faced with challenges they have largely forgotten to effectively counter since the end of the colonial era. Irregular parts of the military, like special forces and parts of military intelligence, have remained active in these non-classic-war conditions. Moreover, western military thinking seems to have forgotten that before the start of the Cold War armed forces were deeply involved in definitively ‘non-war’ constabulary tasks, such as providing basic order and limiting general lawlessness, both in their motherlands and in colonies.5

In contemporary western military operations the functionality of military power is ambiguous. In such conflicts there are no formal declarations of war and no terminations. Non-state actors are the dominant players and they use a variety of methods and weapons. There is no easily defined human foe to attack and defeat. There is usually no specific territory to take and hold. Neither is there a single credible government or political actor with which to deal. Borders and the Geneva Conventions do not mean much for a number of non-state opponents. If agreements between or among contending authorities are made, there is no guarantee they will honour them. The ‘enemy’ is no longer a recognisable military entity or an industrial capability to make war (although such may still also exist in the conflict area). The ‘enemy’ is, for instance, endemic violence and the causes of it, the absence of the rule of law, tribal hatred, unequal access to economic and political resources. Fighting is not constant but ever a latent threat, there is not a defined battlefield or theatre of war but violence may erupt everywhere. Often steeped in deep and even mythic history, the rationality of motives and actions - sometimes seemingly only symbolic in nature - may not be of the sort we recognise as such.

Thus, conflicts that mobilise the employment of western militaries often have a mix of deep underlying causal factors that cannot be approached using our traditional strategic lexicon. As one Israeli analyst observed in the aftermath of the Second Lebanon War, whereas conventional wars are relatively simple, definitions blur when the enemy is an organisation rather than a state and it is not easy to define political objectives and to translate them into military missions. Indeed, the attempt to define strategic purpose or the army’s missions may be like trying to hold jelly in one’s hand. The more one grasps it the more it slips through one’s fingers, yet one continues to judge, appraise and evaluate the situation in terms of criteria that are increasingly less relevant.6
The vicious dynamics of ‘other’ wars

Another problem lies in understanding, and subsequently coping with, the range of ‘strategic spoilers’ in the conflict areas. One of the key insights (or rather re-discoveries) of recent years was that the western military and foreign security policy establishments had lost sight of the cultural nature of war. For some peoples and cultures war may have different purposes (symbolic, ritual or existential) and follow different rules, and may not be so linked and constrained by politics, and not be as instrumental as western nations with their high-technology armed forces have become accustomed to. In The Transformation of War Van Creveld argued that in the future the state will lose its dominance and ‘wars’ will be waged by tribes, religious groups, companies, criminal groups, insurgents, etc.

Such non-state actors wage war in a fundamentally different way than nation-states. Kinpolitics reign, as Ronfeldt argued. Honour, respect, pride, shame, revenge and compensation, blood feud, honourable reciprocity, these are traditional features of tribal warfare. Whereas the western nation-states have strongly regulated war and violence, and at least made a deliberate effort to tie war to specific political cost/benefit calculations, such groups and affiliated non-state actors wage war because of grievances, objectives, glory of individuals, or the status in a tribe; for obtaining the spoils of war - booty, slaves, territory, women; for obtaining prisoners for religious reasons; because of doctrinal, ethic or religious differences; because of revenge and justice to avenge perceived wrongs; because of community honour; or to assist an ally. Literally everybody takes part in such conflicts. Distinctions between war and crime can be made, as well as between armed forces and civilians, but in these conflicts all take part. Battles will be replaced by skirmishes, bombings and massacres, but financing these with all kinds of criminal activities is also considered acceptable. Intermingling with enemy forces, mixing with the civilian population, and extreme dispersion will (and have) become the norm – which can of course also be described by stating that opponents are part of the population in the area of operations. Considering the emotions involved, the side with the more rational interests will most likely lose. Tribal warfare often turns into merciless total societal conflict.

Mary Kaldor coined the term New Wars, in which she sees ‘identity politics’ as central: the exclusive claim to power on the basis of tribe, nation, clan or religious community. These identities are ‘politically constituted’. In wars between communities as opposed to armies everyone is automatically labelled a combatant merely by virtue of their identity. Military victory is not decisive, nor aimed at. Instead, territorial gains are aimed at
through acquiring political power, not through military force. Weapons and methods to gain political power include ethnic cleansing, rape, assassination of the opponent’s key figures, and terror. Instead of conventional armies, the participants are irregular militant factions, terrorist groups and criminal organisations.9

Interestingly, war is not something that needs to be finished. These wars rage in regions where local production has declined and state revenues are very low, owing to widespread corruption. In this context the warring states seek finance from external sources, including diaspora support, taxation of humanitarian aid, through looting, pillaging, enforcing unequal terms of trade through checkpoints and other restrictions, extorting money, etc. Moreover, as Kaldor observes, all of these sources of finance depend on continued violence. The consequence is a set of predatory social relations that have a tendency to spread. Because the various warring parties share the aim of sowing fear and hatred, they operate in a way that is mutually re-inforcing, helping each other to create a climate of insecurity and suspicion.

Although classical insurgency literature addresses many of these dynamics, Kilcullen asserts that current era insurgencies indeed display distinctly new features that classical literature does not cover, in terms of organisation, goals, and modes of operations. These days insurgencies occur in the ungoverned spaces offered by failing states, and insurgents are intent on maintaining those spaces, fragmenting the state, and not, as in the past, on taking over the state.10 Second, whereas classical insurgencies occurred within one country or district between an internal non-state actor and a single government, modern insurgents are often transnational in character, with cross pollination and real-time cooperation between insurgents in different countries. Third, and related, the insurgency involves many diffuse and often competing movements. It is not a binary struggle between insurgent and counter-insurgent. Instead, there is a complex, inchoate and disorganised swarm of opponents and a wide array of government-loyal security organisations countering them. Fourth, today’s insurgencies consist of cell-based groups, that operate like a self-synchronising swarm of independent yet cooperating units, rather than a formal organisation with centralised leadership. Religious ideology, too, creates a new dynamic, in the sense that the struggle is or is at least depicted as being of a metaphysical nature and not one of national liberation. Finally, classical insurgents had to rely on the population for funding and resources. Operating in a web of criminal groups, insurgents are now generally wealthier than the population, receive world-wide financial support and can pay locals to pick up arms to fight for the insurgent cause.

The virtual dimension warrants separate attention as it is a key technology aspect of conflict in the postmodern era. Michael Ignatieff and Colin McInnes commented on
how NATO’s war in Kosovo has been experienced by the western publics by labelling it ‘virtual war’ and ‘spectator sport warfare’, respectively.\textsuperscript{11} For the military this was a reality in the sense that the deep presence of media during military operations created an unprecedented level of transparency and hence accountability for the western military. With each tactical incident immediately broadcast around the world, often resulting in negative strategic spin-off, the perception of the military of the CNN effect was that it resulted in more scrutiny and direct involvement from the political to the tactical level of operations, or as it is sometimes called, ‘the 6000 mile screwdriver’. For western militaries, both at the tactical and the strategic level, the presence of media resulted in an ever energised legitimisation process of military actions.

For adaptive opponents, on the other hand, the virtual arena has turned into a wonderful gift.\textsuperscript{12} The proliferation of the Internet empowers individuals and small groups. Insurgents and guerrillas have always capitalised on the public perception, but the new media offers them powerful novel tools. Through the emergence of insurgent mass media, media penetration has reached unprecedented levels,\textsuperscript{13} compressing the operational level of war and giving each tactical action immediate strategic impact. It also offers them an unreachable sanctuary and allows them to create and disseminate a coherent strategic narrative for both internal recruitment purposes as well as for exploiting the western CNN effect.

At the same time, with each soldier having possession of cell phones with digital cameras and wireless Internet access and a ubiquitous Internet, organisations such as the armed forces are made increasingly porous. Now soldiers themselves often upload imagery of the actual battlefield and distribute it through channels such as YouTube. Meanwhile, the innovative use of web-based media by groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas is well documented. Their sophisticated media campaign includes daily press releases, weekly and monthly magazines, video clips and full-length films; in this way they are having a considerable degree of success creating an alternate reality in which to win hearts and minds. Recently a British officer unwittingly illustrated the overriding importance of the virtual arena when he warned his superior it would be a major PR disaster if his unit were driven from its defensive position by the Taliban.\textsuperscript{14} Indeed, the virtual now may well matter more than the physical dimension of operations.

What is also new is that strategy-making in these complex operations is tactics-driven. It is a fight of NCOs, lieutenants and captains. In fragmented societies, without effective legitimate state apparatus, where grievances, hardship and loyalties are localised, and the goal of military operations is winning the hearts and minds of the population, and denying it to the insurgents, tactical opportunities and constraints dictate strategy,
whether the game is counter-insurgency or stabilisation and reconstruction. It is a bottom-up process. However, on the other hand, tactical victory, defined in the military domain is, if not irrelevant, certainly not a sufficient predictor for the question whether political aims will be achieved. Victory may need to be re-defined as the disarming and reintegration of insurgents into society. The military task then is not the defeat of the insurgent, but rather to impose order on an unstable and chaotic environment. Indeed, in contemporary conflicts with a complex array of causes and actors, military victory as a concept defined by the enemy's defeat, laying down of his arms and reducing his future war-making potential needs to be replaced by the idea of strategic victory, and such strategic victory (and strategic interventions) requires a holistic political, diplomatic, socio-economic, psychological police effort, or in more difficult terms, a multi-dimensional, multi-organisational, multi-cultural and multi-national paradigm as stipulated in concepts like the Comprehensive Approach, Whole of Government Approach, the Interagency Approach and the 3D Approach (Defence, Diplomacy and Development). Expressed somewhat simplistically in classic lexicon, it involves developing and applying ‘grand strategy’- the integrated application of all instruments of state power with the addition of non-state means - in the theatre of operations, even down to the tactical level.

The consequences for military leaders

While such an approach sounds sensible, it is pregnant with inherent dilemmas and potential pitfalls that the military leader, as one of the prime architects of the activities, needs to deal with. State-building contains some deep contradictions and tensions, even without the coordination problems or resources deficiencies of such coalition operations. First, outside intervention is used to foster self-government. Intervention can easily been be regarded as invasion and occupation. Second, international control of the region and the local institutions aim to establish local ownership. This obviously affects the perception of legitimacy and credibility of motives of the intervention force. Third, universal values are promoted as a remedy for local problems, but these may be incompatible with local customs, cultural expectations and political traditions, once again raising issues concerning the perception of legitimacy. Finally, short-term imperatives often conflict with longer-term objectives. Establishing security may require harsh actions and disruption of existing power structures in the immediate term that might also have served to maintain local order and stability in the immediate post-hostilities phase. Alternatively, that phase may require bargaining with existing ruling elites, whose continued power is undesirable and counter-productive for building indigenous legitimate and effective institutions in the long term.
Related is another set of operational level dilemmas. First, there is a footprint dilemma: large intrusive presence may be required initially but may over time be perceived as foreign and hostile and may also hamper the process of initiating political and economic reforms. Second, state building is a long-term enterprise, but prolonged presence can also result in passivity of the local population and overdependence on external assistance. Finally, there are common fallacies surrounding such operations that will translate into false expectations, resource constraints and impatience towards military leaders. The intervenients are likely to:

- overestimate their understanding of the host society and the obstacles to progress;
- overestimate the capabilities of armed forces and their technologies in subduing local resistance, and their ability to pursue both stability and justice;
- overestimate the ease and speed of transforming the political system and transfer of power to local authorities;
- underestimate the costs and time involved in economic reconstruction;
- overestimate the readiness of the local population to adopt external values and norms
- underestimate the severity of local social turmoil in the post-hostilities phase;
- overestimate the external legitimacy accorded to post-war arrangements;
- overestimate their capacity to mobilise and sustain domestic and international support.

In addition to this, research has indicated that cooperation between autonomous institutions also manifests inherent dilemmas, both among the affected government departments, between state and non-governmental agencies and between organisations – and individuals - from different countries. Actors come from different backgrounds and perceive problems and available information differently. Not all organisations view the military as a legitimate or desired partner. The military’s short time frame and solution-oriented focus may not always be attractive for other parties. Alternatively, the military may be seen as operating on the same ‘turf’ of another agency and may therefore be regarded as a competitor. Moreover, organisations operate according to specific operating procedures, rules, language, etc. How plans are to be executed is thus subject of negotiation and experiment. It takes time and trust to develop an effective *modus operandi.*

This brief introduction illustrates how contemporary complex operations pose distinct challenges for today’s military leaders. It is with the intent to understand these features of the contemporary operational environment and their likely consequences for modern
military organisations, rather than the aim to develop solutions, that the chapters in this volume were developed. A brief summary of the individual chapters will offer a flavour of the volume.

**Analysing the Second Lebanon War**

The chapters on the Second Lebanon War of 2006 benefited from a growing body of literature on this war. It has been described by both US and Israeli analysts in terms of a Hybrid War. Hezbollah posed the IDF with very distinct problems and the operation’s failings have resulted in intense soul-searching within the IDF, in particular in the light of the allegedly poor performance of the ground forces. It posed questions concerning the preparedness of the IDF for such high-intensity combined arms operations in urban environments against an adaptive and well-prepared opponent. Second, it raised questions concerning the appropriateness of both Israeli strategic culture as well as the nature of its civil-military relations. The NLDA research-project on this conflict was structured to shed light on the societal and organisational aspects of Hezbollah as well as on the legal, military-operational and service-specific dimensions of the war.

Offering the societal perspective, Theo Brinkel most of all deals with state building and the role of religion in Lebanon, prior to, during and after the 2006 war. The internal Lebanese problem is also an element in the international tensions between Sunnis and Shiites, between the Arab/Islamic world and Israel, between the United States and Iran. Lebanon is described as a failed, weak or fragile state, like there are many more in the world, and of which a number are likely to become the theatres of operations for western military forces somewhere in the (not so distant) future. In today’s conflicts, social, political and institutional phenomena are as relevant as military and security issues. Tensions and the rising distrust about and among the different religions and ethnic groups provide important explanations as well. This case study emphasises the need to strengthen state systems, which, incidentally, was not addressed that much during the 2006 conflict itself.

Paul Ducheine and Eric Pouw take a legal perspective at the 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli conflict, but also illustrate the difficulty states’ armed forces have when facing non-state adversaries. International law (*ius ad bellum*) and the laws of war (*ius in bello*) both seem to originate most of all from the history of western, interstate war, just like western armed forces are. Applying international law to conflicts with less defined entities like Hezbollah, does stretch the system and demands reinterpretation of what has become widely accepted, even deeply internalised in western security thinking during the 20th
century. Nevertheless, as the authors conclude, every country has an inherent right to defend itself against an armed attack, even if that attack is launched by a non-state actor. Defending itself, the state should abide by the law of armed conflict (*ius in bello*).

Sjoerd Both, in his contribution, focuses on the complex phenomenon of Hezbollah and its supporters. Although concluding it is unique in its combination of strategic objectives, military capabilities, the weak state of Lebanon, Iranian and Syrian military and political support, and the religious theocratic ideology, this is the kind of adversary western armed forces are dealing with and probably will have to deal with in the decades ahead. It raises the questions whether a superior military should use disproportionate force to deter a weaker adversary, but also how to handle the far more dangerous enemies behind direct adversaries (Iran), who have far more freedom of action, as through organisations like Hezbollah they can take the fight to their enemy at any time and level of violence of their choosing. This becomes even more disquieting when considering the missile - and terrorist - capabilities, the Hezbollah-Iran combination has, to deliver a range of nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological charges.

Ted Jansen compares Israeli and Hezbollah land warfare with the principles stipulated for this in Dutch Army doctrine. It reveals the difficulty any western regular army would have when faced with an adversary partially employing irregular war fighting methods. This asymmetry includes some more structural features, such as the fact that Hezbollah was better prepared, as it could more easily study its opponent on whom much more information can be found in the public information domain. As in any other western country, Israeli politics and military leaders as much as possible tried to avoid casualties of their own, minimising risks, but, by doing so, also limiting flexibility. Hezbollah could take the initiative, often had the advantage of surprise and unpredictability. Jansen concludes, interestingly, that the Israelis underestimated their opponent, which also harbours a lesson for other armed forces, that less technologically developed and smaller adversaries can be as strong and effective as regular, western forces.

Guus de Koster compiled what became public of Israel's air force activities, raising the question of its effectiveness. Of course, Hezbollah was no match for air superiority, but fired rockets at Israel from an extensive network of tunnels and subterranean bunkers and shelters. In this conflict the added value of the air force was to support ground forces and being able to eliminate the missile threat as much a possible by precision bombings of launching installations within an extremely short period of time after launch. The critical question in this asymmetric duel is how many other western air forces would be able to do that. It also prompts the feeling that for this kind of conflicts western public opinion and politics could expect too much from its high-tech air forces,
so much advertised in popular literature and documentaries still depicting the Cold War and 1991 Gulf War.

Roy Lindelauf demonstrates the relevance of operations research and game theory by applying mathematical methods to analyse the issue of optimal route allocation in order to limit the chances of being ambushed by irregular forces. The models he proposes can also be used to minimise the number of encounters with improvised explosive devices. In addition, he proposes techniques to analyse historical data. This kind of research contributes a lot to our understanding of the current complex military-operational environment, and it assists in finding creative solutions to its rather new challenges.

Marcel de Goede’s perspective on the 2006 war is that of IDF’s strategic culture, meaning the ‘ideas, attitudes, traditions, habits of mind and preferred methods of operation’ that have been developed during its unique historical experience. He lists explanations for IDF’s disappointing performance, describes how its strategic culture developed and how it determined the way Israel fought the war. Time-honoured principles that worked well against its neighbouring countries do not necessarily lead to clear-cut successes against a non-state adversary like Hezbollah. IDF’s problems during the war highlighted the transformation it is going through. It has not yet found the balance needed to cope with the wide range of threats facing the country. What this balance should look like remains subject to debate. The war, furthermore, exemplifies the difficulty of tackling security strategy primarily from a military angle, so prominent a feature in Israel’s strategic culture. External and domestic reality at times force Israel to resort to military action, while, in doing so, short-term imperatives conflict with longer-term objectives.

Assessing operations in Afghanistan

The research on the ongoing (Dutch) operations in Afghanistan was hampered by exactly the fact that operations continue. Critical distance is also not easy when it concerns a national operation. Moreover, it takes substantial effort to gather relevant information that is timely and timeless in nature. Of course, operational security and classification of information also affects such an analysis. Nevertheless, even when each chapter offers only a limited perspective, combined, the contributions offer considerable food for thought, also justifying continuing research efforts. The NATO mission in Afghanistan is a very complex international operation (and one that defies easy classification) indeed, taking place in an evolving environment with substantial strategic
dilemmas and a very adaptive opponent as well as a range of state and non-state actors as partners.

Allard Wagemaker sketches the context of military operations in Afghanistan. Afghanistan in essence is a pre-modern state, with a legacy of war and civil war. In the global security system its function is that of a buffer or insulator state in between regional and world powers. Too poor to develop itself, it needs foreign financial and security assistance, with the Afghan administration and foreign powers sharing the interest to develop the exploitation of natural resources and to make it into a north-south and east-west ‘energy bridge’ of pipelines systems. Military, but also diplomatic and intelligence, activities take place against this complex geo-political background.

Lenny Hazelbag reconstructed the lengthy political decision making process on deploying a Dutch military task force to the Afghan province of Uruzgan. Interdepartmental cooperation was not a major hindrance, but political opposition to the mission was, especially as one party of the ruling coalition tried to increase public support with tactical manoeuvring. To obtain enough public and political support, the mission had to be presented, partially, as a reconstruction operation, which would prove to be much less the case once it started. Another issue in the decision making process was how to balance international expectations that the Netherlands would send troops, while the Dutch parliament still had to decide to do so.

Peter van den Aker homes in on the tension inherent in the mission: finding the balance in conducting reconstruction operations while also providing security including the application of considerable force, if necessary. He analyses the effectiveness and efficiency of Dutch land forces in the Afghan province of Uruzgan by describing and comparing doctrine, planning, execution, command & control and leadership. Considering both main goals of providing security and reconstruction, this illustrates the complexity and difficulty of the operation. While Dutch forces are found to be operating at high professional standards, Van den Aker warns that the balance between efficiency and effectiveness in Dutch defence policies has been disturbed, with too much emphasis put on the former. Commanders must have the means to operate in a broad violence spectrum, which requires having more forces than actually currently deployed, also to ensure escalation dominance and the ability to provide sufficient protection to Dutch forces and partners, and, if necessary, sustain it for years. To guarantee effectiveness during actual operations the military therefore will inevitably have to sacrifice efficiency, much more so than other organisations.
Freek Meulman, the only author in this book writing directly from his personal experiences, describes the difficulty of leading air force activities in a complex operation like in Afghanistan. Not only gaining and maintaining air superiority, and providing air support and transport, was on the agenda of ISAF’s air force headquarters and military leaders. Difficult geographical and topographical conditions made air traffic control impossible in most of the country, among others causing unique challenges in deconfliction of missions. Doctrinal differences had to be coped with for air-ground synchronisation. An insufficiently timely exchange of mutual know-how about capabilities and restrictions led to a sub-optimal use of the air forces. National caveats were another point of concern, as was preventing collateral damage. Like ground forces, air force headquarters was tasked with reconstruction and development of the Afghan civilian (aviation) sector. In today’s conflicts air forces, but also navies, have to fulfil a complex set of tasks, not all of them being military by nature.

Hans Hovens’ contribution is on police reform and police reconstruction in Afghanistan, absolutely crucial for stabilising and pacifying the country. After briefly describing Afghan police history, he portrays the evolution of reform policies and the challenges in international cooperation, also among the donor countries involved. Two police models and approaches, the German civilian law and order strategy and US counter-insurgency strategy, conflicted and were never really integrated into one international strategy. In spite of modest progress, to date the police reform in Afghanistan cannot be called a success. As Hovens concludes, Dutch efforts in this field can also be improved.

Michiel de Weger explores the challenges military forces, in both their combat or counter-insurgency and reconstruction roles, have in working with a weak state as a partner. He describes how limited the scope of the Afghan central state organisations was throughout its history and the little influence it still has in the Afghan province of Uruzgan. By now the Afghan army is a factor to be reckoned with, but police corruption and underdevelopment of local administration and public services in fact make it difficult to win over the hearts and minds of the population to support the formal Afghan government in Kabul. In the occasional, real military combat operations, like in Chora in 2006, the Afghan state cannot yet contribute much to the fighting. Nor can it do much to support the population afterwards. Local militia and local strong men, on the contrary, are crucial partners, which at present is not recognised enough in military doctrine and thinking.

Julian Lindley-French contributes to this book with an analysis of the newest US strategy on Afghanistan and Pakistan. As such, it raises the questions what are realistic goals
and ambition levels, differences between strategies of western partners, as well as burden sharing among them. Whether the new strategy will succeed, of course, also depends on Afghan efforts. Illustrating just how complex the whole effort has become, the new strategy encompasses not only the two countries, neighbouring states, other countries and international organisations involved, both stabilisation and reconstruction, but also counter-terror, counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics. Military organisations have to fulfil a crucial role in this, but only in cooperation with civilian organisations. In present-day complex operations, all this has to be managed into a comprehensive approach of also dozens of countries.

Some concluding remarks

Over the past two decades, there has been a lively debate on the question whether the character of war has changed. Historians argue that there is more continuity than change in the history of warfare. That may not always be helpful for military leaders in the field, who are facing real and, at least for them, novel challenges. Indeed, as Lawrence Freedman indicated, we may be witnessing a transformation in strategic affairs.\textsuperscript{20} Senior military leaders, too, claim that, in the light of the Israeli experiences, the Iraqi insurgency and the ongoing, evolving and expanding insurgency in Afghanistan (and Pakistan), the nature of war has changed, and our military and government are striving to adapt to fight and win in this new environment.\textsuperscript{21}

There is a danger in emphasising change and the fighting side of current operations of course, and in seeing too much coherence and coordination in the modes of operations of organisations such as Hezbollah, the Taliban and the various other violent groups in those areas of operations. As for southern Afghanistan, the interests, grievances and goals of groupings are local and unrelated to one another, so approaches for dealing with them must be tailored to the specific context. Also, it is an open question to what extent NATO’s involvement in Afghanistan really constitutes a kind of ‘war of necessity’ that is directly related to the security interests of the Alliance. Finally, one needs to be careful in reading large and comprehensive signs in a few selected case studies.

What is not subject of debate is the awareness that for the military organisations involved, the ‘art of the general’ - strategy - these days is different and arguably more complex than even a decade ago. Indeed, the operational environment, with its sometimes conflicting objectives, with a myriad of actors that need to be coordinated with, with the prolonged nature and distant locations affecting logistics, command and control and sustainability, or the type of actors that need to be confronted, calls for a high
level of original strategic, operational and tactical thought and depth of understanding. Over the last couple of years the US military has undergone a dramatic doctrinal and intellectual update in response to today’s military challenges. As Hoffman and others warn, all western armed forces need to substantially invest in the development of the appropriate intellectual skills and adaptability of their officer corps. Indeed, a failure to learn is one of the prime causes of military misfortunes, Cohen and Gooch concluded long ago. With that admonition, the following chapters aspire to stimulate learning.

Notes

1. Dr. M. (Michiel) J. de Weger is a researcher at the Military Operational Arts and Sciences section of the Netherlands Defence Academy. Colonel Dr. F. (Frans) P.B. Osinga is an associate professor at the same section. H. (Harry) F.M.H. Kirkels MA contributed as language editor to this volume.


10. This of course raises the question whether ‘insurgency’ is the right label to use, as
in these conditions the so-called insurgents do not have much of a state to organise an insurrection against. In many cases it might be more adequate to describe the situation as ‘ungoverned’ and label activities to end this ‘state building’, ‘pacification’ or ‘countering general lawlessness’.

In the summer of 2006 war was waged between Israel and Hezbollah, mainly on Lebanese territory. Most of the victims were coming from the population of that country. However, the state of Lebanon and its government were conspicuously absent. The conflict was one between the state of Israel and Hezbollah, a so-called non-state actor, an organisation with a politico-societal character and armed militias. Where was the Lebanese government? What was the reason for its apparent absence of the monopoly on the use of violence? Is Lebanon a fragile or a failing state? What is the role of Hezbollah in this? These are the questions which will be addressed in the present contribution.

As the article will show, it is indeed justified to call the Lebanese government fragile. Since its independence in 1943 numerous crises and conflicts have hampered the functioning of its political system. In 2006 – the year of the Summer War – the country was deeply involved in a process of state building after the Syrian troops had left Lebanon after a twenty-year occupation. There was talk of a Cedar Revolution and it attracted much international attention. A positive outcome of that process would project the unique position of Lebanon in the Middle East as a democratic, multi-religious country with a relatively generous freedom of speech, freedom of association and of artistic expression. Precisely in that period war broke out.

There are several explanations for the vulnerability of the Lebanese state system, which some view as springing from the opposition between Christian, Sunni, Shiite and Druze factions. Others see it as a political difference between those who stress the Arabic character of the country and advocates of close ties with Syria and Iran. A third explanation distinguishes between a moderate, democratic and pro-western camp, on the one hand, and a radical, authoritarian and Islamic camp, on the other. Finally, Lebanon is a side stage of the Israeli-Palestine problem, with all the consequences thereof for internal relations.

This article deals with state building in Lebanon and it focuses in particular on the role of religion because, as the course of the article will show, the membership of religious communities is relevant in Lebanese political relations. First, the concept of state
building will be dwelled on briefly, followed by an historical survey. The subsequent section will present a description of the communities exerting an influence on identity and state building in Lebanon, and will provide an insight into the constitutional and political system of the country. After this, the attention will be on international factors that have an impact on the internal relations, in particular the Summer War of 2006. Finally, an attempt will be made to assess the chances of successful state building in Lebanon in the period after 2006.

The article will attempt to discern relevant tendencies in the development of social phenomena and to show how they may be related. The author’s ambition is to first understand this situation. Understanding is important, in view of the tensions and the rising distrust about and among the different religions.

The plea has been made before: “Comprehending the experiences, values, psychological anchors, broken moorings, soaring pride and debilitating fears of the ‘other’ is where accommodation begins.”2 Lebanon is worth a thorough study. In an age of Muslim radicals and moderates, of clashing civilisations and failing and fragile states there is every reason to study a country like Lebanon closer. Success or failure of the process of state building in this country, moreover, has consequences for national as well as international security.

State building

First-hand experience with and know-how on peace operations, reconstruction and state building is growing. Several approaches have been developed to view the failing of states and state building. In the first place, there is the international law approach. Here, a state is seen as an institution with a territory, a population and sovereignty. Any functioning government must have the power to make its authority felt over the territory and its population, to take those measures which are deemed beneficial for its inhabitants, and be free from interference by other states in its internal affairs.3

Secondly, there is also a politico-scientific approach of state building, in which not so much the exterior characteristics of a state are studied, but its inner features. According to Fukuyama, the ability to guarantee safety is one of the central functions of the state. It is in this that its fundamental and unique role appears.4 In case of a failing state the opposite is happening. When a state is in danger of failing, it is called fragile. In a recent study of the Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid - Advisory Council on
Government Policy (WRR) - failing states are characterised by the absence of a ‘consolidated central power’, a functioning legal system and good governance, and, apart from that, poverty. Finally, according to WRR, a failing state runs a great risk of the distrust between the various ethnic groups leading to an outbreak of conflicts.5

This latter element refers to a third approach, which stresses the relations between the ethnic groups within a state. They, too, are relevant for state building. The American Fund for Peace issues its annual Failed States Index, in which, apart from political indicators, it uses social and economic indicators to ascertain whether the state is in danger of failing. Some of these indicators are directly or indirectly related to the relations between ethnic groups.6 Among them are demographic developments, problems with refugees or displaced persons or dissatisfaction among groups in the society. With regard to economic indicators, the Fund for Peace refers to unbalanced economic development or economic deterioration, which run parallel to group boundaries. Political indicators are, among others, a weakening legitimacy of state institutions, violations of human rights, forming of factions among elites and interventions by other states or by external political actors in internal affairs.7

The present article pays attention to several of the above-mentioned elements in Lebanon: the ability of the government to guarantee safety for its inhabitants, the effectiveness of government power in the entire territory and the relations between the various ethnic groups. Such relations can be tense in a country, and there may even be violent conflicts, in which frequently, identity, be it cultural, linguistic, religious or other, plays a major role. There are also other loyalties, such as that of clan, economic position, ideology, financial interests and international networks. State building, the search for common values, the forming of social cohesion: dealing with the characteristics of the identity of ethnic groups has everything to do with them. In brief, state building can be defined as a political and societal process directed at a functioning legal system and good governance, fighting poverty and distrust between ethnic groups. On top of that, in Lebanon, religion is seen as a factor of significance for the political system, as will be made clear below. But first an historical and political survey will be given.

**Historical background**

For over 500 years the areas that constitute the present-day Lebanon made up part of the former Ottoman Empire. This was a vast multinational empire, dominated by a Sunni and Turkish dynasty, in which room for political of religious individuality was limited. Apart from the Sunnis, there were also other religious communities in the region:
Alevites, Christians, Druze and Shiite. Societies were primarily organised in clans led by a patriarch, who provided safety and prosperity to the clan members in exchange of their loyalty. Two communities were dominant in the central area of the present-day Lebanon, the so-called Mount Lebanon: Maronites and Druze. Intra-clan cohesion was strengthened by their religions that set them apart from the other clans. The Maronites had religious and commercial ties with European countries, such as France.

In the nineteenth century trade relations between Lebanon and Europe began to intensify, while simultaneously the Ottoman Empire was going into decline. In 1861 civil war broke out between the Maronites and Druze, and France, which, according to Salibi, saw itself as the protector of the former, landed troops in Lebanon. Eventually, the Ottoman Sultan had to recognise the autonomy of Mount Lebanon. A Christian governor was installed and the autonomy was protected by the large European powers. After World War I the Ottoman Empire was dismantled, and the entire region, encompassing the present-day Lebanon and Syria, became a French Mandate area under the League of Nations.

France expanded the central area of Lebanon to the present-day Lebanon and separated it administratively from Syria. In 1926 the French monitored the drafting of a first constitution. By creating the separate state of Lebanon, the French mainly had the protection of the position of the Christians, in particular the Maronites, in mind. With French help the latter were enabled to dominate the fledgling state politically, the Christians making up about half of the population at the time. Economically, Beirut became a centre of commerce and services. In comparison with the rest of the Middle East, Lebanon saw the rise of a strong middle class consisting of Christians as well as Sunnis.

In 1943 the Lebanese political leadership declared the country independent. An oral agreement was concluded - the National Pact – in which the key positions in the state system were divided between Muslims and Christians, giving religious identity political relevance. Christians retained their dominant position in the state institutions, with the Maronites controlling politics and the armed forces. The Sunday became the official holiday. In the parliament seats were assigned to Christians and Muslims in a proportion of six to five, a ratio which did not reflect the composition of the population. The last census had been held in 1932, but since then nobody had ventured an attempt to ascertain how large the size of the various religions in Lebanon really was.
The National Pact, however, could not prevent Lebanese politics from becoming infested with political instability and frequent violent conflicts once the country had gained independence. The main political bone of contention was that between the Arabic nationalists, mainly Sunni, striving for a political union with Syria, on the one hand, and the Maronite Christians, who stressed the special character of Lebanon and who sought stronger ties with the west, on the other. For the Arabic nationalists Lebanon's past had always been tied up with the history of Syria, and eventually with Arabic history as a whole. They were supported in this by the Syrian government. The Shiite minority in Lebanon constituted the poorest and least developed segment of the population and remained under-represented in public life. Although Shiites viewed themselves as Arabs, they felt more affinity with their Shiite fellow-believers in Persia/Iran than with the Lebanese Sunni. Under a thin veneer of democracy lay a basis of tribal and religious oppositions. It was in essence a clan society, with a strong patriarch at the head. Religious identity served as a binder within the clan and as a distinguishing feature vis-à-vis other families.

Soon after its independence Lebanon got involved in international conflicts. 1948 saw the establishment of the state of Israel, with hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fleeing to the neighbouring countries, including Lebanon. In the sixties these refugees began to organise themselves into the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), which began to use bases in Lebanon from which to launch attacks on Israeli territory. The tensions this brought along in Lebanon itself formed one of the causes of the civil war that broke out in 1975, which was to last until 1990 with varying degrees of intensity.

This civil war began as a conflict between two factions. On the one hand, there was the Leftist Alliance, consisting of Druze, Sunni and the PLO. Opposing them was the group which was called ‘right’, the Maronite Christians, organised in the Falangist Party, the Kataeb. All groups had their own armed militias. In 1978 the Syrian army, with the approval of the Arab League, intervened to stabilise the situation and to prevent the Left Alliance from gaining victory. In the same year Israel invaded Lebanon from the south in order to drive the PLO out. The United States sent a peace force to Lebanon – UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) in which also Dutch soldiers took part. The peace force proved unable to bring an end to the hostilities.

In 1982 the Israeli ambassador in London was assassinated, which was a reason for Israel to occupy the south of Lebanon. Upon this, the PLO was forced to leave the country. Israel's hope was to establish a Christian vassal state in the south which would serve its interests. Christian militias there organised themselves in the so-called South Lebanese Army, which was armed and trained by Israel. In September 1982, under the
eyes of the Israeli, Christian militias massacred between 1,000 and 2,000 Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. Soon after this, a multi-national force, consisting of Americans, Italians and French, landed in Beirut. In late 1983 more than 300 American and French military were killed in a series of suicide attacks. According to Norton, there is little doubt that these attacks were carried out by Lebanese Shiites under Iranian leadership.10 Shortly after this the western troops were pulled out again. In the south, Shiite communities, organised in the radical Islamic organisation Hezbollah, had begun to resist the Israeli occupation. In 1985 Israel withdrew to a 10-mile wide buffer zone along the border.

The civil war flared up again in 1988, pushing Arabic governments to come into action and force a solution by bringing Lebanese politicians together in the city of Taef in Saudi Arabia. A new peace agreement was concluded and a new president elected. This Taef Peace Agreement redefined the power relations between the three main religious groups in Lebanon. A complex electoral system was set up, combining a constituency system with assigned seats for every religious community. Syria was to politically and militarily monitor law and order in Lebanon. In 1990 the civil war came to an end, having cost the lives of 150,000 Lebanese, with 17,000 people missing. The book of the war was quickly closed. There was no public process of dealing with the suffering of all those years of civil strife or attempts to reconcile the former warring factions.

Supported by Saudi Arabia and Syria, Rafiq Hariri became prime minister, a post which he held from 1992 to 1998 and between 2000 and 2004. Hariri had made his fortune in oil and had excellent ties with the Saudi royal family. His government tried to strengthen the relations with western countries. In the nineteen-nineties Israel kept occupying the south of Lebanon, while Syria controlled the rest of the country. In 2000, Israel withdrew from Lebanon. The Syrian occupation was underlined in 1991 with an Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Coordination, which was interpreted by Syria as a license for an intensive interference with Lebanese internal politics. Police, judiciary and intelligence services were infiltrated by Syrian agents, and like Iran, Syria supported and armed Hezbollah.

But Damascus overreached itself when it tried to force the Lebanese parliament into extending by three years the constitutional term for pro-Syrian president Lahoud. Hariri put together an anti-Syrian coalition. On 14 February 2005, in the run-up to the parliamentary elections, Hariri was assassinated. There were rumours that Syria had been involved. During a large anti-Syrian demonstration on 14 March more than a million people showed up - a quarter of the total population of Lebanon. The pressure was
so great that within a month the Syrian troops withdrew from Lebanon. The parties which had organised the demonstration joined forces in what they called the 14 March Coalition. They won the elections and the new cabinet was led by Prime Minister Fouad Siniora.

The civil war had devastated the economy. The level of the Gross Domestic Product in 1990 was half that of 1975. The war had brought illegal arms trade, drugs trafficking and an extensive black market. The nineteen-nineties, however, were a period of relative political stability, which gave the country the opportunity to recover its economy and to develop itself. The economy was supported by commerce, tourism, agricultural and financial services. Lebanon became the financial centre of the Middle East. The large-scale reconstruction projects were financed by loans, which caused the national debt to rise. The wealth was concentrated in the Sunni and Christian families in and around Beirut, whereas the rest of the country and the Shiite Lebanese did not keep up with the growth in prosperity.

The role of clans and religious communities

The inhabitants of Lebanon derive their identity in the first place from their family and clan, their religious identity and only in the last instance from the national community. As the dividing lines between different clans and different religious communities generally coincide, there are also strong cultural differences. Over the years a regional concentration of clans and religious communities has taken place; in regions, villages, and residential areas. The various religious communities also have their own distinctive media, each presenting a slanted picture of what is happening in the country. There is only a weakly developed national sense of community in Lebanon.

Religious identity is officially recognised in the political system and political consequences ensue from this. The law categorises every citizen into one of the religious communities, and this gives everyone two identities: a national and a religious one. Moreover, every religious community has authorities in the area of religious and family law within the confines of the community, such as matrimonial and inheritance law. The religious communities have their own courts for this, which are recognised as forming a part of the judiciary. This gives Sunnis and Shiites legal space for their own interpretation of the *sharia*. 
It is extremely hard to get access to reliable numerical data on the size of the various religious communities in Lebanon. As was said before, the last official census was held in 1932. According to the latest figures of the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, some 60 per cent of the 4.1 million inhabitants can be called Islamic. The institute states that the largest communities are the Shiites (32 per cent), Sunnis (21 per cent) and Druze (7 per cent). Around 40 per cent of the population is Christian. The numbers of followers of the largest denominations within that category are as follows: Maronite (25 per cent), Greek Orthodox (7 per cent), Greek Catholic (5 per cent) and Armenian (4 per cent).11 Of the 400,000 Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon 90 per cent are Sunni Muslim and 10 per cent are Christian. In what follows, a brief description is given of the most important religious communities.

Sunni Muslims in Lebanon had always entertained close ties with the ruling Ottomans. They were economically active as traders and merchants on the Mediterranean coast. Nowadays they are concentrated in the cities of Beirut, Sidon and Tripoli. From a political perspective the Sunni Muslims mainly support the Future Movement, Saad Hariri’s party. In these circles there are many worries about the emergence of Hezbollah and the Shiite Islam, a concern which is shared internationally by countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan. Some parliamentarians of the Future Movement are rumoured to have ties with violent Sunni organisations which are building up armed militias under the guise of private security companies.12

Shiite Muslims distinguish themselves from Sunnis by the importance they attribute to the authority of the clergy – imams. During the Ottoman Empire they were considered second-rank citizens by the Sunni Muslims. They have traditionally maintained strong theological and familial ties with Iranian Shiites. The religious leader, Iranian born Sayyed Musa al-Sadr, was the first to strive for political emancipation and spiritual and material welfare of the Shiite community. On the one hand, this entailed a return to the origins of their religion, and, on the other, the build-up of their own social organisations. In the early seventies he established Amal, a resistance movement and political party for Shiites. Later Sayyed Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah became the leading religious leader within the Shiite community.

Important impulses for the emancipation of the Shiite community were the seizing of power in Iran by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1979, and Israel’s actions in southern Lebanon. Iran was transformed into an Islamic republic, based on Islamic law. Politics in this country came to be controlled by the religious authorities. In the years following, Hezbollah was to expand into the most influential and talked-about, but also the most radical Shiite organisation in Lebanon. According to the International Crisis Group
(ICG) the support among Shiites for Hezbollah is solid and the latter hold a strong grip on the Shiite community.\textsuperscript{13} It is mainly concentrated in southern Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley and the slums of South Beirut.

Over the past decades a new activism has emerged within Islam, spawning different movements and different degrees of radicalism. It is important to distinguish between radical-Islamic groups that strive for peaceful change and those radicals who are prepared to use violence to reach their objectives. Examples of the latter are Al-Qaida, Hamas and Fatah al-Islam. What binds most of them, however, is the return to the religious doctrines and practices of the early years of Islam. Radical Islamic organisations often spring from a discontent with the authoritarian and corrupt regimes, which abound in many countries in the Islamic and Arab world. In this respect, they are in line with a broadly-shared wish among the masses of these countries. Many of the radical-Islamic organisations have taken over tasks that were neglected by their governments, such as social security, health care, housing or education.

The relations between radical Sunni and radical Shiite organisations are complex. On a theological level there are fundamental differences and animosities, with a lot of mutual distrust between Shiite and Sunni Muslims. On a more practical level both camps are united in their struggle against the state of Israel and its ally the United States. Radical Islamic circles fight their struggle against Israel because of the eviction of the Palestinian Arabs from their homeland. Besides, they use religious arguments to the effect that the Jewish state was established on soil which Muslims consider sacred. Hezbollah declared its solidarity with the cause of Hamas, the radical organisation that rules in the Gaza strip and which shares with Hezbollah the ideal of the annihilation of the state of Israel.\textsuperscript{14} In spite of their theological differences, Hezbollah is admired by many extremist Sunnis as Israel’s most important foe.

Founded in the eleventh century, the Druze, with their strongly mystical profession of faith, belong to the Shiite branch of the Islam. Their teachings had deviated so far from the other more accepted forms of Islam that they kept their religion secret. And even today, the Druze still form a closed community, within which a distinction is made between a minority of ‘initiates’, who have access to the holy scriptures and who produce the religious leaders, and a large majority of common believers, who produce the political leaders. They live in concentrations in the Shouf Mountains and in Syria. Orthodox Muslims consider Druze as heretics.

The Christians in Lebanon form a heterogeneous group. The Maronite Church finds its roots in the fifth century. Later it joined in with the Roman Catholic Church. It derives
its name from a Syrian monk, Saint Maron. The Maronites have always maintained close religious, cultural and commercial contacts with Europe. Then, there is the Armenian Church. The members of this community are descendants of the Armenians who fled Turkish persecution and genocide during World War I. A third community is the Greek Orthodox Church. Over the years the members of this church have always had better relations with the Sunni than with the Maronite community. During the civil war they sided with the Leftist Alliance.

Maronites and Druze formed close-knit clans in which tribal cohesion was strengthened by the religious institutions and customs; in the case of the Maronites this was the church, and, among the Druze, the councils of initiates. According to Salibi, the religious institutions were the depositories of the history of the clan.\textsuperscript{15} The patriarch of the Maronite Church Mar Nasrallah Sfeir, strives for a greater unity among the Christians in Lebanon. In 2001 he visited the Druze community in Mukhtara in the Sjouf Mountains, the tribal area of the Jumblatt clan, as a token of reconciliation between Maronites and Druze.

Political power in Lebanon is related to religious identity in accordance with the above-mentioned agreements. In this respect, it is significant that the relative number of Christians in the Lebanon is decreasing. For decades Christians have emigrated from Lebanon to France, the United States and Brazil. By now there is a world-wide Lebanese community outside Lebanon of between 5 and 10 million people and the majority of them are Christians. The fastest growing community, in absolute and relative terms, in Lebanon is that of the Shiites.

The political system

Religious diversification in Lebanon is politically accommodated through the assignment of political functions to the most important religious communities. The 1989 Taef Peace Agreement laid down that the president is always a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim and the Speaker of Parliament, the National assembly, a Shiite Muslim. All religious communities are represented proportionally in the higher public offices. The commander-in-chief of the armed forces, for instance, is a Christian. The system has a built-in right of veto for the president and the prime minister The right of veto of the Speaker of the parliament is limited in that it depends on the majority in the National Assembly.
The National Assembly encompasses a single chamber with 128 MPs, elected for four years. Half of the seats have been assigned to Christians, the other half to Muslims. Within this main division the Maronite get 34 seats, the Greek Orthodox 14, Greek Catholics 8, Armenian Orthodox 5, Armenian Catholics 1, Protestants 1, and other Christians 1. Within the Muslim segment 27 seats are assigned to Sunnis, 27 to Shiites, 8 to Druze and 2 to Alevites. Elections are held on the basis of a district system with multiple seats per districts. Every seat is earmarked for the religious group it is assigned to. The voter has as many votes as there are eligible seats in his district. The winner in a district takes all, regardless of the actual number of votes. The intricate electoral system is liable to manipulation, amongst others with the size of the electoral districts. It invites electoral alliances prior to the elections, usually between the Christian parties and candidates, on the one hand, and the Sunni or Shiite parties on the other.

The political position of the Christians in Lebanon has deteriorated as a result of the Taef Peace Agreement. The president got less authority and the numerical proportion in the parliament changed. Instead of 40:60, the proportion between Christians and Muslims became 50:50. At the same time the electoral system invites party formation on the basis of religion. The political parties in Lebanon do not really base themselves on a political philosophy or political programme. They are rather a reflection of the patronage groups around the ‘zaim’, the patriarchs and their supporters in a certain region. Examples of this are the Chamoun, Gemayel, Karim and Jumblatt families. Such families or clans form the nuclei of networks of solidarity and loyalty. Political leaders are more focussed on guarding the interests of the clan than that of the commonwealth, if need be at the expense of other communities, and if the situation demands, with help from abroad. During the civil war all the clans had their own armed militias. The system of patronage has led to nepotism, corruption and illegal trade. Political ambition is limited to those public offices that have been assigned to a religious community. Thus, a Shiite politician cannot aim for a higher public office than that of Speaker of Parliament.

In the 2005 elections three major blocs emerged. The first was the 14 March List, the coalition that supported Rafiq Hariri, consisting of: Tayyar al-Moustaqbal, the Future Movement, the largest party in the coalition, led by Saad Hariri, representing the Sunnis; the Progressive Socialist Party, led by Walid Jumblatt, the Druze Party; the Lebanese Forces, the Maronite party, led by Samir Gemayel. The second was the Development and Resistance Bloc, consisting of the Shiite Amal, led by Nahib Berry, the Shiite Hezbollah, led by Hassan Nasrallah and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party. Finally, there was the Change and Reform Bloc, consisting of the Christian Free Patriotic Movement, led by Michel Aoun and a few smaller parties.
After the civil war Syria dominated the political scene in Lebanon. Many Christian leaders went into exile or were incarcerated. After Syria’s withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005 these leaders returned to the political stage. They became divided into two camps. In the one, the Lebanese Forces and the Falangists joined the 14 March Coalition, under the leadership of Saad Hariri, which worked towards a restoration of the independence of Lebanon with regard to Syria. On the other side, the Free Patriotic Movement of general Aoun went into opposition and joined the Hezbollah camp. It was Aoun’s intention to politically unite the Christian community and to fight the corrupt establishment.

At the time this article was written, the Future Movement was the most important Sunni political party. Their leader is Saad Hariri, son of Rafiq Hariri, assassinated in 2005. According to Abdel Latif, the Sunnis have the feeling that their group is coming under increasing pressure, stemming from the murder of Hariri and the rise of the Shiite Hezbollah. Extremist Sunni elements get enough leeway to express freely their anti-Shiite sentiments, with which the Movement of the Future is trying to win the support of the Sunni community.19

The older of the two Shiite parties in the Lebanese parliament is Amal (Arabic for ‘hope’). It was established in 1947 and in the second half of the civil war it got entangled in a fierce competition with the other Shiite party, Hezbollah (Arabic for ‘the Party of God’). Since 1979 Nabih Berri has been the political leader of Amal. He and his party have become deeply involved in the political culture of patronage and corruption, which is a common feature of most other parties. At the time of writing of this article, Berri is Speaker of the Lebanese parliament, a function that is predetermined for representatives of the Shiite community.

Hezbollah is the other Shiite political party. Amal and Hezbollah are represented with roughly the same number of seats in the parliament. Apart from being a political party, Hezbollah is also a social organisation which has set up an extensive network of social services, education, media and health care for the Shiite community, whose interests had been neglected by the Lebanese government. Hezbollah stays away from the customary corruption and nepotism. Its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, is one of the most influential and popular political leaders in Lebanon. Hezbollah adheres to the teaching of the wilayat al-faqih, which means it acknowledges the authority of the highest religious leader in Iran, even though in practice it takes independent decisions.20 Iran has given Hezbollah military and financial support since its establishment.
According to Shatz, Hezbollah’s ideology is a blending of revolutionary Khomeinism, Shiite nationalism, glorification of martyrdom and a militant anti-Zionism which from time to time is accompanied by a blatant, neo-fascist anti-Semitism. Alagha describes how Ahmed Qasir, Hezbollah’s first suicide terrorist, blew himself up on 11 November 1982 in the Israeli Headquarters, killing 76 Israeli servicemen. The long-term goal of Hezbollah is the establishment of an Islamic republic in Lebanon and the annihilation of the state of Israel.

Hezbollah sees Israel as the ‘rapist, destroyer, terrorist cancerous entity which has absolutely no legitimacy or legal status’. For Hezbollah there are no innocent civilians inside the state of Israel, but only Zionists that must be destroyed. The perpetrators of suicide attacks against Israeli targets may be considered martyrs. The organisation seeks the dismantlement of the state of Israel and the repatriation of all the Jews who emigrated to the then Palestine and Israel after 1916. Hezbollah is viewed by many, including the Dutch government, as a terrorist organisation. Within the EU there is no consensus on this issue. The British government, for instance, distinguishes between a political and a military branch and has added the latter to its list of terrorist organisations. The Dutch government does not make that distinction.

One of the strategic objectives of Hezbollah is the establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon. According to the ICG, Hezbollah is aware that installing sharia rule by force will lead to war between the religious communities. Besides, Hezbollah seeks the political support of all Shiites and therefore has to steer a moderate course. Nevertheless, the ICG does not exclude the possibility that Hezbollah will choose a more radical stance in a situation of more polarisation. Political leader Nasrallah has stated that an Islamic state will only be established in Lebanon if there is an overwhelming wish of the population to do so. That wish would have to be expressed by a large majority and not just 50 per cent plus one. That majority Nasrallah did not see at that moment, and he did not expect that it would ever come. According to Alagha and Shatz, Hezbollah seems to have adopted a more pragmatic stance in the Lebanese political system. Hezbollah seeks alliances with other – even Christian – parties and does not seem to be involved anymore in terrorist attacks against western or Lebanese targets.

The main function of political parties in Lebanon is to represent the interests of the clans or religious communities. For none of the parties, except Hezbollah, does the religious foundation inspire a specific political doctrine. In fact, Lebanon can be compared to a confederation in which the religious communities are the supporting partners and in which each has a right of veto to an extent. The political system can only function when the political leaders of the Christian, Sunni and Shiite communities are prepared
to cooperate. It is also clear that apart from the division in clans and religious communities, there is another dividing line in the country's politics, i.e. the choice for or against a special relation with Syria. International relations, too, have an impact on the developments, as will be seen in the next section.

**International involvement**

There are many examples of foreign interference in the internal affairs of Lebanon: western interests and religious ties with Lebanese Christians, Syrian disgruntlement about the existence of Lebanon as an independent state, the foundation of the state of Israel and the Palestinian problem, the Islamic Revolution in Iran and Islamist fundamentalism. They all have consequences for the integrity and strength of the state of Lebanon, to which the 2006 Summer War added its share. Here, the western interest in Lebanon, the involvement of the United Nations, Syria's interference, the spill-over of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, and, finally, the Summer War itself, will be discussed.

Western interest in Lebanon was mainly inspired by a special relation that was felt with the Maronite community in the country. It was based on religious affinity and commercial interests. Cultural relations go back as far as 1866 when the Americans opened a College that was later to become the American University of Beirut. In 1874 France founded the Saint Joseph University. Compared with the rest of the Arabic world, Lebanon is a free and democratic country. Besides, there is a large Christian majority, a fact which made western governments follow developments there with special interest.

In 1958 American troops landed in Beirut to support the then pro-western Lebanese government in a conflict with Pan-Arab nationalists. It was possible to work out a compromise, upon which the Americans withdrew. During the civil war (1975-1990) American, French and Italian militaries intervened again, albeit briefly. They became victims themselves of attacks and were not able to bring the hostilities to a close. After the attacks on New York and Washington in September 2001 the United States and its allies declared war on terrorism. Lebanon has become a front in that war. When the United States had ousted Saddam Hussein from Iraq within a few weeks, other tyrannical governments in the Middle East began to feel uncomfortable. At the same time Rafiq Hariri's government strengthened its relations with the United States and France. After the assassination of Hariri the 14 March Coalition received support from both countries, as well as from the Saudi royal family and the League of Arab States. America aided the Lebanese government by pledging $250 million to shore up the armed forces. But in
the war against terrorism which, has been waged since 11 September 2001, Israel is the United States’ most important ally in the Middle East.

The United States and France are striving for an involvement of the United Nations in Lebanon. In 1978 The United Nations deployed the UNIFIL peace force in Lebanon with the assignment to monitor the withdrawal of the Israeli troops, to restore peace and security and to assist the government of Lebanon in establishing its legitimate authority over the south of the country. From 1978 until 2006 UN troops were stationed right in the middle of the volatile south of Lebanon. They witnessed armed conflicts between the PLO, the Maronite South Lebanese Army, Hezbollah and Israel. UNIFIL was able to observe and help the local population, but, as was stated above, was powerless to end the hostilities.

More recently, the United Nations Security Council has passed successive resolutions with regard to the security in Lebanon. Resolution 1559 (2004) called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops, the disbandment and disarmament of all militias, and the establishment of the authority of the government over the entire Lebanese territory. This was an implicit hint that Syrian troops had to withdraw from Lebanon and that Hezbollah and the Palestinian factions that were still inside the country had to disarm. Security Council Resolutions 1614 (2005), 1655 (2006), 1701 (2006) and 1773 (2007) all reiterated the call upon the Lebanese government to extend its authority over the south of the country and to deploy its armed forces there.

In Resolution 1595 (2005) the United Nations Security Council condemned the murder of Rafiq Hariri and decided on the installation of an independent international investigation commission to assist the Lebanese authorities in the investigation into all aspects of what the Security Council called “this terrorist act”. This was reiterated more forcefully in Resolution 1636 (2005), which stated that terrorism in all forms and manifestations constituted one of the worst threats for peace and security. This qualification placed the assassination of Hariri in the context of the war against terrorism. The Resolution – under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter – called Syria by name in relation to the obligation to cooperate with the investigation commission. Resolution 1757 (2007) decided on the installation of a Special UN Tribunal for Lebanon, which was to carry on the work done by the investigation commission.

The Security Council resolutions relating to the investigation into the assassination of Hariri had a strong impact on the internal political climate in Lebanon. As was said above, Lebanese politics are strongly divided over the influence of Syria on the internal affairs. An international condemnation of Syria as the instigator of the murder of Hariri
would inevitably mean support for the 14 March Coalition. Secondly, the installation of the international investigation commission and later the UN Tribunal is a sign that the international community realises that the Lebanese government is not capable of successfully conducting an investigation into the murder and staging a fair trial and incarcerating the perpetrators.

Syria interferes intensively with the internal affairs in Lebanon. As was mentioned above, the country was created as a political entity by France. After the end of the civil war in 1990 Lebanon came in Syria’s sphere of influence. The Syrian dictator Hafez al-Assad died in 2000 and was succeeded by his son Bashar al-Assad, who has a somewhat more tenuous hold of power than his father. According to Bilal Saab of the Brookings Institute, Assad’s regime is involved in a continuous struggle for survival. If it loses its grip on Lebanon and if the anti-Syrian opposition becomes stronger, the internal Syrian opposition will also gain strength and the survival of the Damascus regime will be endangered.28 This is the reason why Damascus tried to destabilise the Siniora government. Since the withdrawal of the Syrian troops from Lebanon this has mainly been attempted through clandestine operations. Syria was suspected of involvement in the murder of Rafiq Hariri, a claim which is very difficult to prove. In the meantime, the relations between Lebanon and Syria have normalised, with Syria accepting Lebanon as an independent state and both countries having exchanged ambassadors.

Lebanon serves as a front for many Arab nationalists in the struggle with Israel. In Lebanon there are still 400,000 Palestinian refugees, divided over 12 camps under the auspices of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). This comes down to 10 per cent of the Lebanese population. According to a 1969 agreement, the Lebanese government has no jurisdiction inside the camps, which are impoverished and over-populated, with an unemployment running as high as 70 per cent of the population. There are particularly few prospects for the future and the camps are hotbeds of radical organisations.

Among them was Fatah al-Islam, a radical Sunni group which had its basis in the Palestinian refugee camp Nahr al-Bared near Tripoli. In September 2007 hostilities broke out between the Lebanese army and Fatah al-Islam. The conflict erupted when the Lebanese police were investigating a bank robbery and stumbled upon this organisation. According to a Reuters report, in a large-scale operation the army shelled the camp, killing 222 militant Palestinians, 163 Lebanese soldiers and 42 civilians.29 The PLO denied any involvement. Fatah al-Islam is a relatively recent phenomenon: a radical Sunni Palestine organisation, supposed to have ties with Al-Qaida, which is believed to have strengthened its presence in the refugee camps during the Summer War. This organisa-
tion is thought to be active in the refugee camp Ain Héroué, in Sunni territory in the Bekaa Valley and in certain impoverished residential areas of Beirut.\textsuperscript{30}

The Israeli interventions in Lebanon in the nineteen-seventies and eighties were inspired by the urge to take action against the PLO, which was conducting attacks on targets inside Israel from Lebanon. In the nineteen-nineties and the early twenty-first century it moved against Hezbollah for the same reason. After the Yom Kippur War of 1973 Lebanon was the only country from which attacks on Israel were conducted, and they came from the PLO. Israel reacted in 1978 and 1982 with an invasion of Lebanon. The second time the Israeli troops pushed as far as Beirut. They left the city again, but stayed in the south, where they supported a Christian rump state that was to serve Israel’s interests. The integrity of the state of Lebanon came second.\textsuperscript{31} In 2000 Israel withdrew from Lebanon.

This was the beginning of the discussion on the so-called Sheba Farms, an area of 22 square kilometers between Lebanon and the Golan Heights. According to the United Nations, this bit of land is a part of the Golan Heights occupied by Israel, and, therefore, Syrian territory, so in the vision of the United Nations, Israel has fully withdrawn from Lebanon.\textsuperscript{32} Hezbollah claims that the area belongs to Lebanon and that its fight against Israel must be continued. Syria deems it opportune not to resolve this question and has informed the United Nations that Sheba Farms is indeed Lebanese territory and therefore still needs to be ‘liberated’.

Hezbollah used the years after the withdrawal of the Israeli military from southern Lebanon to build up its arms arsenal and to prepare positions for possible attacks on Israel. The Summer War began on 12 July 2006 after a raid by Hezbollah during which several Israeli soldiers were taken prisoner. Initially, Israel responded with air raids against the rocket and guided weapons systems of Hezbollah. Then a ground offensive followed, during which large-scale devastation was wrought upon Lebanon by the destruction of houses, buildings and infra-structure. Jerusalem wanted to give off a signal to the Lebanese government that the latter was accountable for the actions of Hezbollah, as it operated from Lebanese territory. According to Norton, the Israeli policy was directed at punishing Lebanese civilians for the attacks of Hezbollah on Israeli soil.\textsuperscript{33}

In its turn, Hezbollah attacked targets in northern Israel. In spite of its military might, Israel failed to defeat Hezbollah. The organisation had some ten to fifteen thousand rockets and guided weapons, most of which had been dispersed over caves, cellars, houses and mosques. Iran and Syria probably took care of the re-supply of expended stores. On 11 August the United Nations Security Council called for a cessation of hostilities
(Resolution 1701). Three days later a cease-fire was indeed concluded and in December 2006 the last Israeli troops had left Lebanon.

According to a report of the United Nations Secretary-General almost a million people had lost their homes, 1,200 had been killed and thousands wounded, most of them women and children. An estimated 15,000 houses had been destroyed and 140 bridges had been hit. On 13 July Israel had also bombed Beirut airport, making use of cluster bombs during the attack. According to United Nations representatives more than a million unexploded munitions were left behind. A quarter of the population of Lebanon was displaced. The damage to the Lebanese economy was an estimated $7 billion.

In Resolution 1701 (2006), mentioned above, the United Nations Security Council did not only call for a cease-fire. It also laid down that the situation in Lebanon was a threat to international peace and security. Besides, the Resolution strengthened the mandate of UNIFIL, which had been deployed in southern Lebanon since the beginning of the Lebanese civil war. The number of troops was to be increased to 15,000, and they would have to operate in cooperation with the Lebanese armed forces. UNIFIL’s mandate now also incorporated, “to take all necessary action in areas of deployment of its forces, and as it deems within its capacities, to ensure that its area of operations is not utilized for hostile activities of any kind”. Relevant is UNIFIL’s task, as mentioned above, to accompany the Lebanese armed forces and to support them in their deployment in the south of the country and in the prevention of import of weapons and related materiel without the authorisation of the Lebanese government. About 13,000 troops are stationed on land and on vessels in the territorial waters of Lebanon. Since the reinforcement of UNIFIL no armed militias – with the exception of Hezbollah – have been active and the Lebanese army has extended its area of operations to southern Lebanon.

The Summer War was the last in a series of invasions into Lebanon, this time directed against Hezbollah. At first, Israel still enjoyed the sympathy of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, a support that melted away after the large-scale Israeli bombardments on targets in Lebanon. For the public opinion in Lebanon it was not a conflict that Israel was fighting out with Hezbollah, but with the country as a whole. Hezbollah’s prestige had increased enormously, and criticism on America had grown, also among the Christian community. In Lebanon the United States was seen as a power that would always give prevalence to the interests of Israel. This was a setback for the pro-western Siniora government.
For the American administration support to Lebanon’s democracy depends on the relations with Israel and the war on terrorism. According to Mearsheimer, the American government supported Israel unconditionally during the Summer War. Thus, Washington succeeded in putting off the conclusion of a cease-fire between the belligerents as long as possible, so that Israel could complete its military operation against Hezbollah. After all, in the west Hezbollah is seen as a terrorist organisation of the first order, financed and supported by Iran. And not without reason: after Al-Qaida, Hezbollah comes second with regard to the number of Americans killed in terrorist attacks. Thus, one of the aims of the western support for the 14 March Coalition is to keep Lebanon out of the sphere of influence of Syria and Iran and to take the wind out of Hezbollah’s sails.

Of all things, the Summer War took place in a period in which Lebanon was in the middle of a process of finding back its political independence. The Siniora government, formed a year before, suffered heavily from the war and the period of instability that followed it. The following section will focus on the development of the political situation in Lebanon after the Summer War.

Developments after the Summer War

In the years after the war the internal politics of Lebanon were tormented by political violence, paralysis of the government and a damaged economy. Parliamentarians were assassinated, street fights broke out in Beirut and there was a three-month battle with a terrorist group in the Palestinian Nahr al-Bared camp (see above). Hezbollah embarked on a campaign to expand its political power and oppositions sharpened. Hezbollah entered into a coalition with Michel Aoun, the leader of the largest Maronite party, the Free Patriotic Movement. With five Shiite and one Christian ministers resigning, this bloc quit the government in November 2006. The remaining parties did not draw the conclusion from this that the cabinet as a whole should step down and a period of political stalemate ensued.

The oppositional bloc claimed to be fighting corruption and to be listening better to the wishes of the voters. In early 2007 Hezbollah organised strikes, which in Beirut ended in armed clashes. It campaigned for early elections, the formation of a government of national unity and for a political right of veto. Besides, Hezbollah was convinced the government was collaborating with the west. When in November 2007 the constitutional term of office of the president expired, Hezbollah boycotted the election by the parliament of a new head of state.
In May 2008 a major crisis erupted, which brought the country on the brink of civil war. The occasion was the decision of the government to confront Hezbollah and to bring up the matter of the armed militias of this organisation. The government did this by announcing its intention to replace the head of the airport security in Beirut and to start an investigation into a glass fiber network which was in Hezbollah’s hands. The head of the airport security was suspected of passing on information on the comings and goings of high-ranking Lebanese citizens at the airport to Hezbollah. The glass fiber network was part of Hezbollah’s command and control system, having formed a link in the communication network during the war against Israel in 2006.

Hezbollah reacted sharply. Together with Amal and the Syrian Nationalist Socialist Party it occupied West-Beirut, the residential area where the governmental buildings are situated and the traditional Sunni supporters of the Future Movement live. In the fighting 80 people were killed. The army, incidentally, remained neutral. A solution was finally reached when the government gave up its plans and the Hezbollah militias left their positions in the city. It was a significant moment: this time Hezbollah had committed its armed militias in deciding internal differences. Hezbollah leader Nasrallah explained this with the argument that it had been done to ‘defend our weapons with our weapons’.39

Just as in 1989 it took a renewed diplomatic intervention from one of the Arab countries to call the Lebanese politicians to order. Under the auspices of the Emir of Qatar the government and the oppositional bloc of Hezbollah and Aoun managed to conclude an agreement, the first result of which was the election of the commander-in-chief of the army, General Michel Suleiman, as president of Lebanon. As commander of the armed forces, Suleiman had led the operation against the Palestinian Nahr al-Bared camp in 2007. In general, he enjoys the confidence of the Lebanon population. A new government of national unity was formed, consisting of 30 ministers: 16 of the 14 March Coalition, 11 from the opposition and 3 appointed by the president, the opposition having a blocking minority in the new government.

At the same time it was agreed that a new electoral system would be set up, which was to come into effect for the parliamentary elections in the spring of 2009. This system would be more favourable for the Christian candidates, which would allow them not to seek alliances prior to the elections with Sunni or Shiite parties. Finally, a so-called national dialogue would be set up on the consolidation of the authority of the state over the entire territory. The problem of Hezbollah’s armed militias and the monopoly on violence was deferred to later negotiations.
On the one hand, the concerns among Sunnis about the rise of political power of Hezbollah must have increased. According to Abdel Latif, the Future Movement is making an all-out effort to unite the Sunnis behind its banners, also with the help of prominent religious leaders within the Sunni community. According to a report of the ICG, the Sunni community became anxious about the government’s ability to resist Hezbollah and Amal. More fundamentalist Sunnis were rubbing shoulders with the Future Movement.

In its turn, according to the ICG, Hezbollah has manoeuvered itself into a situation in which it has created a profile of itself as an interest organisation for the Shiite community. The organisation still has an extensive weapons arsenal, and many Lebanese fear that Hezbollah keeps this store as a preparation for a possible civil war. According to Bilal Saab of the Brookings Institute, the aspirations of the Shiite community are frustrated. It has been a long time since censuses were held in Lebanon, but it is likely that the Shiite community is the largest in the country. The Sunnis and the Christians are thwarting reforms out of fear that Hezbollah will become the majority party and jeopardise the democratic and secular character of Lebanon.

Hezbollah owes its prestige, amongst other things, to the manner in which it makes an effort for the emancipation of underprivileged ethnic communities, the Shiite community in particular. What must be taken into account here, is that the socio-economic contrasts are still very great in Lebanon. The Summer War of 2006 and the recurrence of internal violence following it again meant an economic setback. The national debt is about twice the volume of the GDP; unemployment is 20 per cent and 28 per cent of the population are living below the poverty line, the Shiite community being afflicted the hardest. 89 per cent of the Lebanese population live in urban areas. The capital Beirut has 1.8 million inhabitants, almost half the population of the country. The per capita GDP was around $10,400 in 2008, with an economic growth of 0.3 per cent. There was a structural budget deficit.

The Fund for Peace put Lebanon eighteenth on its 2008 Index of failing states, at the same critical level as Nigeria. This ranking is based on social indicators, such as the number of refugees and displaced persons, the political violence and the dissatisfaction among the Shiite segment of the population. What is economically relevant is the unequal development, with the Shiite lagging behind the rest of the population. In a political respect, there was the failure of the parliament to elect a president. On top of that, the government proved to be unable to keep order in the south of the country. The government does not have a monopoly on violence and there are ethnic communities which distrust the state and each other.
In the period after the Summer War of 2006 Lebanon went through two years of political instability, which in May 2008 culminated in a crisis that seemed to bring the country on the brink of civil war. The agreement that was subsequently concluded amounted to a strengthening of the position of Hezbollah, but at the same time had a calming effect on the internal relations. Simultaneously, analysts observed a sharpening of religious and political differences. On 7 June 2009 elections were held for Parliament. On the eve of the polls, there was a fear that Hezbollah would gain a large victory. Like in 2005, however, the elections resulted in a majority for the 14 March Coalition of 71 seats, whereas the Hezbollah led opposition got 57 seats. It was generally seen as a victory for the Hariri government. Hezbollah leader Nasrallah declared that Hezbollah accepted the election results, but “the arms of the Resistance are not up for discussion. They are present because of the people's will, and will be left for the dialogue table.”

Conclusion

This paper has presented an analysis of the political system and the social cohesion of Lebanon, defining three important moments in the recent political developments. The first was the departure of Syrian troops from Lebanon and the leeway this offered for political development. The second was the Summer War of 2006, which seriously disturbed this process. The crisis of May 2008 was the third, marking the beginning of a new phase in the democratic development of the Cedar Revolution.

Strengthening the legitimacy of the government and its institutions is a necessary element in state building. Mostly the government of Lebanon is the weak party, especially in those areas where Hezbollah has the upper hand, where the latter has often taken over the tasks the former neglected, such as health care, social security or culture. The absence of the state is an important reason why non-state actors, such as Hezbollah, have taken over the functions of the state.

The weakness of the state especially relates to the failure of the government to establish its monopoly on violence in the entire country. The intention to do precisely that has been reiterated regularly by the government and the international community. It was an explicit policy of the United States in 1982, and it was part of the Taef agreement in 1989. It has been laid down in Security Council resolutions time and again. In 2007 the government did indeed act tough against the armed Palestinian groups in the Nahr al-Bared camp. The 2008 compromise, however, demonstrates that the attainment of the objective still lies far into the future. Militarily speaking, with the support of Iran, Hezbollah is a match for the government. This also illustrates the complexity of the prob-
lem: the internal problem is an element in the international tensions between Sunnis and Shiites, between the Arab/Islamic world and Israel, between the United States and Iran. It is clearly too early to predict whether the June 2009 parliamentary elections have led to a strengthening of the position of the government vis a vis Hezbollah.

As was stated above, fragile states are also characterised by oppositions between ethnic communities, which erode social cohesion. In Lebanon there is the distrust which still exists between the different clans and religious communities, one of which, from a socio-economic perspective, finds itself in an underprivileged situation. Where does this distrust of the religious communities in Lebanon stem from? There are several reasons, such as anxiety about the continued existence of the own community, the dominant political culture and the support requested from foreign powers.

The first relates to the fear, present in each of the communities, that their way of life is threatened. In order to protect it, the political system is built upon the principle of power sharing, the most important positions having been divided over the three major religious groups. The electoral system frustrates dynamism in the political relations. Care for the interests of the clans or religious groups is deeply rooted in the political system, which, however, has not prevented the outbreak of conflicts and long periods of instability.

The dominant political culture is the second reason for the distrust between the various ethnic groups. The political leaders do not invest so much in the functioning of the structures of the state than in the interests of their religious supporters and their clan, of which corruption, nepotism and byzantine decision making are the main features. It is a political culture that goes at the expense of social cohesion. Apart from the civil war there were at least three times – 1958, 1989 and 2008 – when intervention from abroad was necessary to make the country governable again.

The distrust between the various ethnic groups, finally, is strengthened by the fact that they all appeal for support from foreign powers: European countries and the United States, Syria, Iran and Israel. Such support is not given for free. Lebanon has become a puppet in the war on terrorism. The country would be much better off with a coordinated international effort that makes the interests of the integrity of the state and its inhabitants paramount, i.e. international support for Lebanese aspirations to shore up democracy and to come to a stable political system, in which the different religious identities of the population will be respected. Transparency, accountability and the fight against corruption are necessary elements in this. It also takes ways of international support that help rebuild the country in such a way that it leads to a strengthening of
the position of the government. That this is necessary, is what this contribution set out to demonstrate.

Notes

1. Dr. T. (Theo) B.F.M. Brinkel (1958) is an associate professor of international relations at the Netherlands Defence Academy. He is working on research of religion and international security.


4. Francis Fukuyama (2004), State-Building; Governance and World Order in the 21st Century, Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, p. 120.


7. See: www.fundforpeace.org/web.


17. Salibi, op. cit., p. 189.

18. This article was finalised on 12 June 2009.

19. Omaya Abdel-Latif (2008), Lebanon’s Sunni Islamists; A Growing Force, Carnegie


21. Ibid., p. 35.


23. Alagha, pp. 175-177.


26. “We believe the requirement for an Islamic state is to have an overwhelming popular desire, and we’re not talking about fifty percent plus one, but a large majority. And this is not available in Lebanon and probably never will be.” Quoted in: Shatz, op. cit.

27. Ibid.


32. Feki and de Ficquelmont, op. cit., p. 87.


38. Mooney, op. cit., pp. 28 and 32.

40. Abdel-Latif, op. cit..
42. Ibid., p. 4.
43. *Lebanon, the Forgotten Crisis* (2008).
47. Mooney, op. cit., p. 33.
Operation Change of Direction: A short survey of the legal basis and the applicable legal regimes

Paul Ducheine and Eric Pouw

NL-ARMS, 2009, 51-96

Introduction

The Second Lebanon War of 2006 (henceforth: the conflict) contains a number of elements which are not only relevant for a good insight into present-day (combat) operations, but also controversial with regard to certain aspects of legal bases and legal regimes. Thus, the Israeli decision to launch a large-scale military operation in response to what seemed a minor attack of Hezbollah fighters on an Israeli border patrol is criticised because Israel lacked the legal basis for this operation, called Change of Direction. In other words, the ius ad bellum supposedly did not offer a foundation for the operation. Israel, on the other hand, appeals to its inherent right of self-defence, as laid down in the UN Charter. In doing so, it takes the position that self-defence against a non-state actor (Hezbollah) is possible. Also, the manner in which the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) carried out the operation raises questions. For instance, which legal regimes are applicable to their actions? The law of armed conflict, ius in bello, is central in this. For instance, is this an ‘armed conflict’ between Israel and a non-state actor (Hezbollah) according to the law of armed conflict? If so, which type of conflict (non-international or international armed conflict) is it, and, as a consequence of this, which part of the law of armed conflict is applicable to the actions of the belligerents/Israel?

It cannot be ruled out that the Netherlands, too, can fall victim to an attack by non-state actors, making use of the territory of a third state in carrying out the attack. In such a situation both these issues – legal bases and legal regimes – are also relevant to both the Netherlands and its armed forces. The first issue offers the reader an insight into the option a state has for launching a cross-border military operation against a non-state entity. The second issue gives an understanding of the legal rules that are applicable during (the execution of) such an operation.

The objective of this research, therefore, is to consider the relevant aspects of the conflict with a view to possible Dutch military extra-territorial operations. The pertinent central questions are: What was the legal basis for the Israeli operation Change of Direction, and which legal regimes were applicable to the Israeli actions?
It is important to emphasise that Israel’s actions as a state and its armed forces, the IDF, have been taken as the starting point, and not that of Hezbollah or Lebanon. This is related to the instrumental character of the armed forces of a state. It is decisive in this that Israel (and the Netherlands) is considered a democratic constitutional state, which implies that the government exercises its monopoly on force within the constraints of the democratic constitutional state. In other words, the armed forces, as an instrument in extremis of this monopoly on force, are exclusively employed by the government. This also means that these states will not only (have to) operate within the constitutional boundaries, but also within those of the international legal order. After all, western democratic constitutional states strive for legitimacy in their national and international (military) actions. Therefore, on the one hand, in particular in the case of extra-territorial actions, there will have to be a legitimate foundation - a legal basis – to legitimise their military operations. On the other hand, the states will (have to) comply with the legal rules that are applicable during the execution of military operations.

The set-up of this contribution follows the above-mentioned division. The issue of the legal bases will be dealt with first, after which the potential foundations in the ius ad bellum will be considered. In particular the state’s right of self-defence will be discussed, where a distinction will be made between the addressee of the operation: Hezbollah and Lebanon. Secondly, the legal regimes applicable to the operation will be analysed. Finally, a conclusion will be presented in which the central question will be answered.

Legal bases for extra-territorial military operations

Irrespective of their objectives, military operations such as Change of Direction are only allowed in the international legal order within the boundaries of international law and the ius ad bellum. Within these, the inter-state prohibition of force and the principle of non-intervention in the UN Charter determine the room that states have to carry out military (counter-terror) operations. Cross-border military (counter-terror) operations can only be founded on three principles:

– intervention with consent of or invitation by a (host) nation;
– authorisation of the UN Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter;
– self-defence.

Although a liberal view on the extent and purport of the prohibition on force is sometimes heard, here – in line with the accepted view – the extensive interpretation of the inter-state prohibition on force is used: threatening with or using any military force is
forbidden in international relations.\textsuperscript{5} This absolute prohibition, incidentally, has a customary law as well as a \textit{ius cogens} character.

The potential foundations for operation \textit{Change of Direction} will be analysed below. First, the meaning of the inter-state prohibition on force will be considered briefly,\textsuperscript{6} after which the exceptions on the general rule introduced above will be dealt with. In doing so, the main focus will be on the last legal basis advanced for \textit{Change of Direction}: self-defence.

\textbf{General rule \textquote{ius ad bellum}: the prohibition of force}

The meaning and purport of the inter-state prohibition on force forms the basis for all discussions in the \textit{ius ad bellum} on the legitimacy of extra-territorial military operations. The prohibition is laid down in article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which is also sometimes called the ‘heart of the Charter’;\textsuperscript{7} it functions as the corner stone of the present-day \textit{ius ad bellum}:\textsuperscript{8}

\textit{All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.}

The accepted interpretation of the prohibition on force applied here is that \textit{any} use of (or threat with) cross-border armed (i.e. military) violence by UN member states, for whatever reason, is forbidden, except when the UN Charter or international law provides in an exception to this rule.\textsuperscript{9} The threat with force, too, is forbidden when this use of force itself cannot be legitimised.\textsuperscript{10} Armed or military use of force can encompass many shapes and means. The essence relates to the application of physical force, and the scale of this force does not play any role in this.

Although the prohibition on force primarily refers to inter-state relations, it also covers cross-border use of force against non-state actors, like Hezbollah, as such an operation also concerns the territorial integrity of the state where the non-state actor (NSA) is located.\textsuperscript{11}

\textit{An invasion, however brief in duration, violates the essence of territorial integrity (the right of a state to control access to its territory).}\textsuperscript{12}

Operation \textit{Change of Direction} was the Israeli invasion of the Lebanese territory.
The prohibition on force does not only protect the territorial integrity of a state, but also its political independence. This pair of concepts points at the totality of rights that a sovereign state possesses. Therefore, temporary or limited breaches of the territorial integrity or political independence, for instance, in the form of a brief liberation action against a non-state actor, as was the case in the Israeli Thunderbolt operation in Entebbe (1971) – irrespective of their objectives - also fall under the prohibition.

Israel’s action in rescuing the hostages clearly involved a temporary breach of the territorial integrity of Uganda. Normally such action would be impermissible under the Charter of the United Nations.

Apart from that, any use of force that goes against the purposes of the United Nations is forbidden. The main objective of the United Nations is maintaining international peace and security and - in view of that - preventing and ending any threats against that peace, and repressing acts of aggression or other breaches against peace.

Change of Direction can unmistakably be qualified as cross-border military use of force, and in the accepted view this operation falls under the prohibition of force. If Israel cannot appeal to one of the exceptions to the general rule, a sound legal basis is absent. Below, it will be considered whether an exception to the prohibition on force is applicable.

Exceptions

Intervention with consent

Within the boundaries of international law, a sovereign state is allowed to give another state permission to carry out military operations on its territory. This is, for instance, the case in Afghanistan, where (Dutch) ISAF armed forces operate with the consent of the Afghan government and fight the Taliban, amongst others (see Figure 1). Although intervention with consent is not considered an exception to the prohibition of force, it is a circumstance that precludes the wrongfulness of an extra-territorial military action. Consent also implies that the foreign troops are not there in contravention with the territorial integrity and political independence of the sovereign state.
The Lebanese protests clearly show that there was no consent with the Israeli operation.\textsuperscript{19} This implies that the operations must be founded on a different legal basis, i.e. one of the two remaining exceptions to the prohibition of force. This will be considered in the following section.

**Authorisation by the United Nations Security Council under Chapter VII**

Although in case of international use of force states usually - rightfully or not - appeal to the state’s right of self-defence, the primary exception to the prohibition on force as it has been in effect since 1945, concerns the use of force on the authority of a decision of the UN Security Council. In the collective security system of the UN this body holds the primacy for maintaining (and restoring) international peace and security.\textsuperscript{20} As the occasion arises, the UN Security Council will define a situation as “a threat to the peace, a breach of the peace or an act of aggression”.\textsuperscript{21} Such a definition opens the road to, and is a *conditio sine qua non* for, the authorisation of the use of force against state or non-state actors. This authorisation is based on the authorities that have been adjudicated to the Security Council under (article 42) of Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The authorisation of the use of force is the legal basis for one or more states, or a regional organisation, to use force against the specified state or non-state actor(s) in order to impose the will of the international community on those actors.\textsuperscript{22} This authorisation usually contains the
phrase “to use all necessary means” or “to take all necessary measures”, which - as the occasion requires – also includes the use of force.

However, the UN Security Council does not come to an authorisation of the use of force in all cases which it qualifies as a threat to the peace (etc). In fact, such an assessment is often absent. There are several reasons for this. First of all, the UN Security Council is a political body, which means that, apart from the collective security system, there are other (geo)political interests that play a role. Beside the interests of the permanent members of the Council, who can veto an assessment ex art. 39 or an authorisation under Chapter VII, also other members of the UN Security Council have their own geopolitical considerations and interests.

In the case of the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel both conditions for an armed action were lacking. Although Israel had immediately reported the Hezbollah actions of 12 July 2006 to the UN Security Council,23 and the Council had held a meeting on the matter on 14 July,24 it did not come to an assessment that this was a case of “threat against the peace, etc.”. In Resolution 1697 of 31 July 2006 the Council did no go beyond expressing its grave concerns.25 Though Resolution 1701 of 11 August 2006 contains an authorisation for the use of force, this relates to UNIFIL, which had to monitor a proposed cease-fire.26

The conclusion, therefore, is that the UN Security Council did not give an authorisation for the use of force against Hezbollah and/or Lebanon, which means that the Israeli operation could not be founded on the primary exception to the prohibition of force. The only remaining exception/legal basis to be considered, therefore, is self-defence.

Self-defence

Self-defence concerns the (reactive) use of inter-state force, in order for a state to defend itself against the use of force by others, and in doing so, protect its sovereignty and independence. The dual purpose of self-defence is defensive: (1) fending off an attack in progress or impending and negate the consequences thereof;27 (2) preventing a sequel to the initial attack.28

Because of the fact that the collective security system of the UN shows various defects in practice, states appeal to this inherent right in the majority of cases of inter-state use of force. The right to self-defence has been laid down in article 51 of the UN Charter:
Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Member in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Self-defence is allowed conditionally. It can, first of all, be invoked only after an armed attack or an imminent threat (of an armed attack), which does not allow a moment of deliberation or choice of other means. Also a series of multiple smaller attacks can qualify as an armed attack on the basis of the accumulation of events in their mutual relation. Secondly, self-defence is a temporary right until the UN Security Council – which, after all, has the primacy on maintaining and restoring international peace and security – has taken effective measures in the matter. Self-defence operations, thirdly, have to be reported immediately to the UN Security Council.

Fourthly, self-defence has to meet the intrinsic requirements of necessity (including immediacy) and proportionality. These principles first of all pertain to the question whether an operation may be carried out, i.e. whether the operation is legitimate. If either of both principles is flawed, the operation lacks a correct legal basis and will be considered illegitimate. Apart from that, the principles determine the content of the operation, in that they determine size, the intended intensity and effects, as well as the form of the operation. These principles are closely related and carefully balanced. Both principles can be applied via partial aspects.

Necessity is related to (1) the armed attack (assaults) and the purpose of self-defence, (2) the purpose of the author of the attack (assaults), (3) the availability of alternatives.

Proportionality refers to both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of self-defence, and is related to (1) the parity between the attack and the defence measured in terms of the total scale and effects of both, and (2) the purpose of the attack(er) and the defence. The parity between form and scale of the attack and the defence can be assessed through a combination of quantitative and qualitative aspects. The total scale of the armed attacks that give rise to the reaction may be taken into account in this. Also, the purpose of the armed attack plays a role. All these elements must be taken into account in the reaction.
Necessity, first of all, implies that peaceful alternatives prevail over military reactions. If force has to be applied out of necessity against a group like Hezbollah, this is primarily a responsibility of the state in which the group is located: Lebanon. Lebanon could have given Israel permission on request for an operation on its territory. If Lebanon does not want to or is unable to give this permission, it must be considered whether such an operation is possible via the collective security system of the UN. If these alternatives are not available (in time), or not opportune in the sense that they may be expected to be effective, the necessity to self-defence is present. As soon as realistic alternatives present themselves during a reaction of self-defence, or the threat or the source of the attacks has been taken away, the necessity for self-defence terminates. This is also the case when the Security Council takes effective measures, after all.

It falls primarily to the inflicted state to determine whether it is a case of armed attack or self-defence. This classification prevails until the international community - for instance, the UN Security Council – decides otherwise.32

In the case of the conflict between Israel, on the one hand, and Hezbollah, on the other, Israel reported the attacks on its territory, which it conceived as acts of war, to the UN Security Council on 12 July 2006.33 Israel simultaneously announced measures, explicitly appealing to its right of self-defence.34

In the meeting of the Security Council it appeared that several members endorsed Israel’s right of self-defence within the conditions from the Charter and customary law.35 This did not mean that there were no concerns, in which, in particular, the principle of proportionality played a prominent role. Furthermore, it is of importance that both the UN Security Council and Lebanon proved unable to defuse the conflict in an effective manner until well into August.36

It is possible to make a realistic plea for the Israeli appeal to self-defence in response to Hezbollah’s action. Below, this will be further explained in two different situations, the first of which relates to the reaction against Hezbollah, and the second to the reaction against Lebanon itself. In the analysis of the two situations three aspects play an important role in the acceptation of self-defence as a legal basis for Change of Direction. In the first place, there is the fact that the direct author of the armed attack appeared to be not a state but a non-state actor: Hezbollah. Secondly, there is the fact that this non-state actor is ‘dealt with’ inside another country, and in connection with this, thirdly, that Israel directed its reaction not only against the non-state actor Hezbollah, but also against the state of Lebanon, which was involved indirectly. So, this was a situation of a dual addressee. These aspects have been presented schematically in Figure 2.
These facets—non-state actor, non-state addressee and an indirectly involved state as co-addressee—are apparently new within self-defence and the *ius ad bellum*. Therefore, they will be discussed at some length here. In doing so, a distinction will be made with regard to the addressee of the Israeli operation. First, self-defence against Hezbollah will be dealt with, and, subsequently, against Lebanon.

**Self-defence against Hezbollah**

Self-defence against Hezbollah raises several questions which will have to be answered below. They relate to the above-mentioned conditions for self-defence, and in this the Israeli operation does not stand on its own. Also other countries sometimes react via self-defence against non-state actors. Thus, Colombia appealed to self-defence in an operation against the FARC in Ecuador (2008). This was also the case with Turkish operations against the PKK on Iraqi territory (1995, 2007-2008), the American operation *Infinite Reach* against Al Qa’ida in Sudan and Afghanistan (1998), the American actions against Al Qa’ida fighters in Somalia (2007-2008) and Ethiopia (2002), and the recent attacks on Taliban fighters and locations in Pakistan.
Three issues will be considered specifically. First, the issue of authorship will be addressed: can Hezbollah be the author of an armed attack? Secondly, the proportionality and necessity of Israel’s reaction against Hezbollah, and, finally, the addressee of the self-defence will be considered: the non-state actor Hezbollah.

**Hezbollah as the author of an armed attack**

Before answering the question whether a non-state actor can be seen as the author of an armed attack, the preliminary question to be asked is when the use of force can be qualified as an armed attack, according to article 51 of the UN Charter at all. For this, the threshold value in separate situations, or, alternatively, in a series of uses of force is of importance.

– *Threshold value armed attack*

Armed attacks are characterised by a combination of elements. They have, first of all, a cross-border character. Besides, a combination of quantitative and qualitative aspects is a determiner, as this is about the nature (qualitative) and the scale and the effects of the attack (quantitative). A first indicator is the nature of the attack. This encompasses qualitative elements, such as the method applied, the means used and the status of the attacker. The next two indicators are of a quantitative nature. Scale of the attack is related to the measure of the method used and the means. The third indicator, effects, concerns the scale and the type of consequences (material, physical and symbolic damage) of the attack. These three indicators will be discussed in their relation.

The qualitative element is decisive for the sub-division in direct attacks by the armed forces of a state and indirect ones. In the latter case, a state participates in the armed activities of third parties, either by sending irregular troops that carry out armed actions, or by its substantial involvement in armed actions carried out by third parties.

Crucial - although contested in doctrine - is the quantitative element, which requires sufficient gravity of the attack. In this, scale and effect of the attack are relevant. With regard to the effects the doctrine points at “severity of injury, human casualties and/or serious destruction of property”.48

The state of technology allows the use of force not only to include purely military classic kinetic force. Also unconventional or alternative techniques, new methods and means can be used for an armed attack. A completely effect-oriented approach, incidentally, must be rejected. Therefore, an armed attack will also have to contain ‘classic’ military elements. When these unorthodox techniques are applied with the same purpose as classic use of force, i.e. the generation of physical (kinetic) effects, a classification as an
armed attack will not be problematical. In connection with this, three conditions apply: (1) the unconventional techniques (means and methods) must be used as weapons, causing (2) physical damage of casualties, while (3) this is intentional.49

In this conflict the armed actions of Hezbollah play the role of ‘trigger’ of the conflict. In any case, it is clear that this is cross-border use of force. Although Hezbollah is considered a terrorist organisation, it employs in this conflict, amongst others, classic military means and methods, such as the missile barrages from pre-positioned mobile as well as fixed launching installations.50 So, there were clear qualitative characteristics of an armed attack. What remains is the question whether the quantitative criteria were met; were these cross-border firings and the attack on the patrol on 12 July 2006 of sufficient gravity, in view of their scale and effects? In this it is irrelevant whether they were classic military attacks or acts of terrorism. The size is the same.51 This was, for instance, clear in the 9/11 attacks. When acts of terrorism are sufficiently grave they qualify as an armed attack.

On 12 July Hezbollah launched several missiles against Israeli military positions and border villages. This barrage was a diversionary manoeuvre to support another Hezbollah-unit that in a different location – near Zarit and Shtula - crossed the border and ambushed an Israeli patrol (two armoured vehicles).52 In this attack three of the seven patrol members were killed and two were abducted. It can be argued that the action of 12 July 2006 on itself was of sufficient gravity, in view of scale and effects, to qualify as an armed attack. The actions were of a different order than a “mere frontier incident”, which was not deemed an armed attack by the International Court of Justice in the Nicaragua case.53 The organisation and coordination of the Hezbollah action, the quantity of employed weapon systems and the eventual effects in the sense of material damage, abduction and loss of human lives, were considerable.54 Also the fact that anti-tank weapons and pre-positioned explosives were used in the ambush, endorses this view.55 In the terminology of the International Court of Justice, these actions were “of such gravity” that they would qualify as armed attacks if they had been carried out by regular armed forces.

– Accumulation of multiple armed action: ‘Nadelstichtaktik’

Even if the action of 12 July should not reach the quantitative threshold value, it is possible to qualify them as an armed attack by Hezbollah on the basis of the accumulation of events doctrine. As it is, the attacks do not stand on themselves, but form part of a more comprehensive armed campaign against Israel. After its full withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 Israel had had to suffer from the firings.56 In case the individual armed (terrorist) actions should lack sufficient gravity, it is possible under certain conditions
to consider a series of connected actions as a totality - cumulative - as an armed attack.\footnote{57} For this, four criteria must be met.\footnote{58} There must be (1) a consistent pattern of - non-sporadic – violent actions not separated by long intervals. The actions (2) come from one and the same author – state or non-state –, and they are (3) directed at one and the same addressee. Finally (4), the gravity (as for scale and effect) of the attacks seen in their mutual relation must be of such a nature that they would qualify as armed attacks if they had been carried out by regular armed forces.

The accumulation of events doctrine, or \textit{Nadelstichtaktik}, is applied in practice by a number of states. Since the Qibya incident in 1953 (operation \textit{Shoshana})\footnote{59} Israel has used the argument that (the proportionality of) counter-measures must be seen in the context of “the overall pattern of past and projected acts”.\footnote{60}

The United States has used the doctrine since 1986.\footnote{61} On 14 April 1986 the United States launched operation \textit{El Dorado Canyon} against Libya. It was a reaction against an “ongoing pattern of attacks” against American targets in 1985 and the early months of 1986.\footnote{62} The terror attacks were ascribed to Libya as an indirect attack. After the bomb attack on the Berlin discotheque La Belle, a popular venue for American servicemen, the USA had enough.\footnote{63} Libya’s involvement was assumed on the basis of intelligence. The USA reacted and appealed to self-defence. In accordance with article 51 of the UN Charter it reported the operations to the Security Council:

\begin{quote}
\textit{In accordance with Art. 51 of the Charter (...) US Forces have exercised the US right of self-defence by responding to an ongoing pattern of attacks by the government of Libya. (...) Over a considerable period of time Libya has openly targeted American citizens and US installations.}\footnote{64}
\end{quote}

On 7 August 1998 bombs exploded near the American Embassies in Nairobi (Kenia) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania). The attacks were ascribed to Osama bin Laden’s Al Qa’ida. On 20 August 1998 the United States again appealed to self-defence via the accumulation of events theory. It launched operation \textit{Infinite Reach} because of “a series of armed attacks against the United States embassies and United States nationals”.\footnote{65} The American reaction was criticised on a number of other grounds by several states.\footnote{66} The British report on 7 October 2001 to the Security Council, by which the United Kingdom announced operation \textit{Veritas}\footnote{67}, referred to Al Qa’ida’s “concerted campaign against the United States and its allies”.\footnote{68} In doing so, the United Kingdom seemed to be referring (implicitly) to the accumulation theory.\footnote{69}

Hezbollah’s actions of July 2006, too, were not the first in a series. In November and December 2005, for instance, there were reports in the UN Security Council of missile
barrages carried out against Israel from southern Lebanon.\textsuperscript{69} Seen in relation with these actions, those of 12 July 2006 in any case exceeded the threshold value.\textsuperscript{71}

\textit{Non-state author: Hezbollah}

Now that it has been ascertained that Hezbollah’s actions of 12 July 2006 - in any case in relation to prior firings – reached the threshold value of an armed attack, it is important that the actions were carried out by a non-state actor. This circumstance \textit{seemingly} deviates from the accepted views on self-defence. At present, however, it can be argued that - certainly in view of the practice and views since 2001 – also non-state actors can qualify as authors of an armed attack.\textsuperscript{72}

Five arguments for this can be brought forward. In the first place, there is the normal purport of the UN Charter.\textsuperscript{73} Article 51 does \textit{not} require that there be an armed attack by a \textit{state}.\textsuperscript{74} The article merely describes self-defence after an armed attack, without specifying who or what carries out that attack. Secondly, the \textit{travaux préparatoires} show that article 51 was not intended to only facilitate inter-state self-defence reactions.\textsuperscript{75} Although the phrase “in the event of an attack \textit{by any state} against any member state”\textsuperscript{76} originally made up part of one of the proposals, “by any state” was deleted in later proposals, because of the issue of collective self-defence. A third argument is enclosed in the customary law meaning of self-defence. The famous \textit{Caroline case} – from which the classic definition of self-defence is still derived – concerned a British-Canadian self-defence reaction after attacks of non-state actors (in this case Canadian insurgents) who received support from American sympathising citizens. The reaction followed a threat of an attack by a non-state actor.\textsuperscript{77} Fourthly, state practice endorses the alternative view. The broad support (amongst other from NATO, EU, and OAS) for the American-British reaction against Afghanistan (operation \textit{Enduring Freedom}) is indicative of this.\textsuperscript{78} It also holds, fifthly, for the decisions of international organisations. As early as 1967 the UN Security Council already condemned explicitly “armed attacks committed (against the DRC) by foreign forces of mercenaries”. With this, the Council implies that the armed attack had been carried out by non-state actors.\textsuperscript{79} The Security Council expressed a similar notion on the occasion of the 9/11 attacks by Al Qa’ida.\textsuperscript{80} Although it is also possible to point at the ambiguous character of those resolutions,\textsuperscript{81} it is difficult to explain that there can be an inherent right of self-defence, without the required presence for this of an armed attack.\textsuperscript{82}

In conclusion, it can be said that in 2008 there were good arguments to assume that also non-state actors such as Hezbollah and Al Qa’ida may qualify as authors of an armed attack.
Intrinsic conditions: proportionality and necessity

Above, three aspects of the armed attack as *conditio sine qua non* for self-defence have been analysed. Now, the second issue, the intrinsic conditions for self-defence, will be discussed. Proportionality and necessity (including immediacy) are aspects of the same principle. In a juridical sense, a flaw leads to a loss of legitimacy. Apart from that, the principles actually shape the self-defence reaction: they influence form, size, method or means of the military reaction.

The customary law principles apply in full to self-defence against attacks from non-state actors. Within the international community there were grave concerns whether Israel’s reaction to the armed attack by Hezbollah (12 July 2006) did indeed meet the principles, in particular, that of proportionality. Both principles will be discussed below.

– Necessity

As was said above, necessity is related to (1) the armed attack (assaults) and the purpose of self-defence, (2) the purpose of the author of the attack, (3) the availability of alternatives. With regard to alternative methods for solution, it was already observed that consent of Lebanon with the Israeli action against Hezbollah, as well as an authorisation from the UN Security Council, was absent. Apparently, Israel deemed it equally inopportune to resort to peaceful means, such as negotiations. After all, Hezbollah had had a long history of use of force on the Israeli northern border. In spite of appeals by Israel and the UN Security Council, Lebanon also proved to be unable to stop the firings up to that moment. Consequently, Israel had few, if no, other reasonable alternatives which could be expected to be effective than a military operation with an appeal to self-defence.

Self-defence is intended, necessarily, to fend off and beat back an attack, or to prevent its (renewed) success. It is also allowed to prevent an attack from having a sequel. In order to liberate the abducted servicemen and to counter any further attacks on military and civilian targets from southern Lebanon, Israel decided - six years after its withdrawal from southern Lebanon – to a renewed armed reaction. Hezbollah’s anti-Israeli objectives - among which allegedly the annihilation of the state of Israel – certainly plays a role in this. The fact that Hezbollah was capable of continually launching attacks with sizeable armed forces, which it had been able to build up with the support of states such as Iran and Syria, is a relevant factor in this. As soon as Hezbollah is prevented from carrying out further attacks, the necessity of further self-defence ceases.

The aspect of immediacy was also met, as Israel reacted within the day.
Because of the principle of necessity, in case of a non-state author self-defence measures against the direct author of the attack (Hezbollah) prevail over measures against an involved state (Lebanon).90

In this light it is defensible that Israel had to resort to an armed self-defence reaction against Hezbollah; after all, a state does not have to accept such breaches. This does not mean that Israel's reaction was a sensible one. What matters, here, however, is that the right of self-defence comes about by an armed attack, and that also the other conditions, attached to the right, are met.

– Proportionality

Proportionality cannot be considered separately from necessity. As was said above, it relates to the parity between the total scale and effects of an attack versus defence, and it also concerns the relation between the purpose of the defence and the attack preceding it. Parity between attack and defence must be viewed at the macro level. In general, the intensity of the reaction correlates with the intensity of the attack, without identical means, methods in reaction to the attack, having to be used.91 Sometimes a large-scale reaction to a relatively limited attack is unavoidable. This may be related to the purpose of the attacker. This is, for instance, relevant in case of a danger of continuation or repetition of those attacks. In such a case the ability of the attacker must sometimes be countered in order to undo the consequences of the attack and avoid a repetition.92

When the single ‘trigger’ for self-defence is not considered separately, but a series of acts of armed violence is seen in relation as an armed attack, it is defensible that the reaction has a larger scale than each of the separate occasions.93

Proportionality also influences the choice of the addressee of self-defence, with the primary author (Hezbollah) prevailing.94

Addressee (Hezbollah)

The third and last issue of self-defence against Hezbollah concerns the addressee. Normally speaking, i.e. in a classic inter-state conflict, there are relatively few problems to determine the addressee of a self-defence reaction. This is usually the author of the armed attack, the attacker. In other words, in classic inter-state conflicts authorship (of an armed attack) and the addressee (of the self-defence reaction) are one and the same.

In attacks by non-state actors, in general, and in terrorist attacks, in particular, this is more problematical.95 there is a non-state author/attacker. In spite of this, it is defensible that in this kind of cases, too, self-defence is directed against the author of the armed
attack, irrespective of his status. In the first place, this is not in violation of the UN Charter. In fact, just as article 51 ‘is silent’ about the authorship, it says nothing about the addressee. The logic and purpose of self-defence require, secondly, that the attacked state defends itself against the attacker, the author. Thirdly, the Caroline case in international customary law shows that defence can be directed against non-state actors. The essence of self-defence, fourthly, is self-help. This takes the form of fending off attacks, undoing consequences of attacks and preventing subsequent breaches in the form of attacks. Self-defence would be illusory if the addressee and the author were not one and the same. A counter-argument might be derived from the rulings of the International Court of Justice: for the time being, the Court does not share this view. The Court, however, does not reject it either, which can be seen as a fifth argument, in particular, as the Court is internally divided over this issue, and as several prominent judges have voiced criticism with regard to this aspect. Sixthly, the international reactions following the 9/11 attacks and the ensuing Enduring Freedom operation confirm the validity of this thesis. Finally, there is support in legal doctrine for this view, as is shown in the report of the Expert Meeting on Counter-Terrorism Strategies:

_It appears that a new understanding is emerging that the right of self-defence also exists in relation to an armed attack which cannot directly be ascribed to another state._

One of the basic principles of international law is that states must respect the sovereignty of other states, and, that, therefore, they are not allowed - without a legitimate basis - to exert their authority on the territory of another state. This was confirmed in the Lotus case. The right of self-defence – provided the limiting conditions of necessity and proportionality are met – is such a legal basis, a ‘permissive rule’.

Thus, that the right of self-defence arises, also in the case of a non-state author, implies that Israel can also project this right and therefore has a legal basis for the breach of Lebanese sovereignty. This is quite apart from the question whether Lebanon can also be considered as author and addressee. Lebanon must allow that Israel manifests the right of self-defence and carries out a necessary and proportional action against the author of the preceding attack.

In the conflict there was a dual addressee of Israel's self-defence: Hezbollah and Lebanon. As was explained above, that decision is reasonable, in any case insofar as it concerns addressee Hezbollah. From the perspective of necessity and proportionality the direct author of an attack prevails as addressee of self-defence.
Self-defence against Lebanon

Israel held Lebanon responsible for Hezbollah’s attacks and considered that state as (co-) addressee. On the face of it, this situation is somewhat similar to operation *Enduring Freedom*, which was not only directed against Al Qa’ida, but also against Afghanistan. Gill argues that there was no other option than to decide on “eradication of the Al Qaeda network in Afghanistan and consequently the overthrow of the Taliban regime”. The ‘symbiotic’ relation between Al Qa’ida and the Taliban regime which held power in Afghanistan probably had a strong influence on that option. That relation, incidentally, is clearly different in Lebanon.

Above, it was concluded that the self-defence reaction against Hezbollah is legitimate in any case. Self-defence against Lebanon is controversial for two reasons. First, it is not clear in advance whether Lebanon can be considered the author of an armed attack. Second, as a result, it is unclear whether the self-defence reaction can also be directed against Lebanon; in other words, whether Lebanon (along with Hezbollah) can and may be considered an addressee.

**Lebanon as co-author by attribution?**

Insofar as an armed attack is carried out by a non-state actor, that attack is considered as a *direct* attack by that actor. In this conflict Hezbollah is the direct author of the armed attack. Above, it was explained that this view is valid in present-day insights. Classic armed attacks are carried out by armed forces, and these attacks are ascribed to the attacking states without any problems. In such a case the state is the direct author of such an attack.

Insofar as a state cannot be considered as the direct author, it is still possible in a number of cases to ascribe *indirect* use of force (by third parties) to an involved state. In that case there is an indirect armed attack (by that state). Such states can be considered as co-authors, of the armed attack, and as such they can also become the addressees of a self-defence reaction. In such a situation the right of self-defence legitimises the (temporary) violation of territorial integrity. The various positions have been presented in the scheme in Figure 3.

Attribution, first of all, follows the primary rules of the *ius ad bellum*. In the famous *Nicaragua case* the International Court of Justice ascertained that, apart from direct attacks, states can also (have) carry out indirect attacks:
In particular, it may be considered to be agreed that an armed attack must be understood as not merely (1) action by regular armed forces across an international border, but also (2) ‘the sending by or on behalf of a State of armed bands, groups, irregulars or mercenaries which carry out acts of armed force against another State of such gravity as to amount to’ (inter alia) an actual armed attack conducted by regular forces, ‘or (3) the substantial involvement therein’.¹¹⁰

Up to the present moment the most attention in the doctrine has gone to the interpretation of the “sending of” via the secondary rules of state responsibility for international wrongful acts. These, however, have only rarely led directly to attribution to a state. There is attribution when the non-state actor de facto acts according to the instructions, or, alternatively, under the effective control of the state involved.¹¹¹ This was once more confirmed in the recent Genocide case.¹¹²

The Lebanon-Hezbollah relation is not such that there will be attribution of the Hezbollah attack(s) to the state of Lebanon via the secondary rules for state responsibility.¹¹³ Under the primary rules of the ius ad bellum the question remains valid whether the Lebanon-Hezbollah relation is such that Lebanon is substantially involved in the Hezbollah actions, so that those actions must be attributed to Lebanon. To this end, the concept of substantial involvement from the Nicaragua case is used.¹¹⁴ The components of substantial involvement are constituted as follows:¹¹⁵
- Cognizance requirement. Lebanon has knowledge (or should have as a sovereign state) of the fact that Hezbollah is committing international wrongful acts against Israel.\textsuperscript{116}

- Conduct Lebanon. In spite of this knowledge, Lebanon refrains from taking suitable measures to prevent this abuse of its territory, while it does have the possibilities to do so. On the basis of due diligence requirements\textsuperscript{117} with regard to resolutions of the UN Security Council and anti-terror stipulations, it should take those preventive measures.\textsuperscript{118} In the extreme case Lebanon supports Hezbollah’s activities.\textsuperscript{119}

- Substantiality. Through this omission or active support, Lebanon contributes substantially to Hezbollah’s wrongful acts,\textsuperscript{120} making them easier to carry out.

- Causality. The substantial contribution in the form of omitting or supporting Lebanon has a causal relation\textsuperscript{121} with Hezbollah’s international wrongful acts ([terror] assaults that reach the level of an armed attack) and is foreseeable for every objective observer.\textsuperscript{122}

It is almost unimaginable that Lebanon did have no knowledge of the fact that Hezbollah had made preparations from Lebanese territory for the attacks and had also carried them out on earlier occasions.\textsuperscript{123} In any case, Lebanon should have known this as a sovereign state.\textsuperscript{124} In spite of this knowledge and the obligation to do so, Lebanon took no or insufficient action to prevent Hezbollah’s attacks (in the future). In other words, Lebanon is unable, or unwilling to establish its authority in parts of its territory.\textsuperscript{125} Therefore, Israel claimed that this was complicity of Lebanon (and Syria) in the attacks by Hezbollah.\textsuperscript{126} With regard to this aspect caution is of the essence. The distinction between unable and unwilling is very subtle. Is, for instance, a state, which in theory might be able to interfere, but by doing so would probably ‘blow itself up’, and therefore does not do so, unable or unwilling? The outcome might be that unable carries an absolute and objective element, while unwilling harbours a subjective element.

Apart from that, harbouring can be qualified as substantial if the attack had been impossible without this harbouring.\textsuperscript{127} What is crucial is not the fact that Lebanon harbours, but that other countries give shelter anyway, in defiance of the obligations that ensue from Security Council resolutions, international anti-terrorism treaties and customary law. States have to refrain unconditionally from supporting or harbouring terrorists.\textsuperscript{128} When harbouring coincides with other forms of support, this may be qualified as a substantial contribution.\textsuperscript{129}

On the basis of the above analysis there may be a “substantial involvement” of Lebanon in the assaults/attacks committed by Hezbollah. As they exceeded the threshold of an armed attack, Lebanon could be considered as co-author of the attacks on the basis of its substantial involvement.
Intrinsic conditions: necessity and proportionality

Although there may be substantial involvement which makes it possible to regard Lebanon as co-author, this does not necessarily mean that Lebanon can be the addressee of the Israeli self-defence. After all, for that to be the case the intrinsic conditions of necessity and proportionality must be met.

For operations which are not (only) directed against the non-state author, but (also) against a ‘host nation’ as co-author, logic demands a double necessity test: (1) peaceful counter-measures are not sufficient to deter future attacks; and (2) measures (use of force) against the non-state actor himself are not adequate to fend off the danger of any future assaults.130

The second necessity test implies that self-defence measures against the non-states prevail over measures against the harbouring state.131 This can be explained from various perspectives. In the first place, from the combination of the necessity and the proportionality principles it follows that a self-defence operation be as limited as possible. The purpose of the operation is to tackle the primary source of the assaults. Secondly, it falls within the ius ad bellum that the exception to the general rule of the prohibition of force is used as limited as possible. The general rule needs to be respected to a maximum. Thirdly, the - legitimate - breach of the sovereignty of Lebanon that the operation constitutes (in this case) must be as limited as possible; not more than necessary for the purpose of the defence.

In the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah it is imaginable that an operation purely directed against Hezbollah might have met the purpose of self-defence. By limiting Change of Direction to Hezbollah, it is not unthinkably that the threat of further assaults could also have been allayed. If this limitation had not led to a satisfactory result against Hezbollah, Israel – in the second instance - could have regarded Lebanon as an addressee after all. This was not the case now, as Israel chose not only to attack Hezbollah but also Lebanese (military and civilian) targets.132 Apart from the fact that an action against Hezbollah – the non-state direct author – should have prevailed, the necessity of the actions against Lebanon is hard to imagine. It is not quite clear how Lebanese targets enhanced Hezbollah’s attack capabilities,133 what the necessity was of those attacks in relation to the purpose of the primary attacker (Hezbollah) and the purpose of self-defence. Moreover, it is doubtful whether from the perspective of proportionality, too, Israel, with the scale of the actions against Lebanese targets, stayed within the limits of the ius ad bellum After all, in this way the impact on the Lebanese sovereignty is greater than when the operation had been limited to Hezbollah, most certainly so when the
impact of the blockade off the Lebanese coast and the disrupting effect of the ample use of cluster ammunition as a method of waging the war are taken into account.\footnote{134}

Although this ex post assessment is relatively simple in hindsight, it seems that international reactions also supported this conclusion at the time.\footnote{135} This is clear from the concerns that were expressed in the discussion in the UN Security Council of 14 and 21 July 2006, during which the term ‘disproportional’ was used several times.\footnote{136} All in all, it seems that the intrinsic conditions for a self-defence action, which was also directed against the Lebanese state and infrastructure, were not met. In other words, from the perspective of necessity and proportionality Israel’s reaction against Lebanon is hard to justify.

**Addressee (Lebanon)**

If Lebanon is to be considered a legitimate addressee of Israel’s self-defence, it must be regarded as (co) author of the armed attack, and the intrinsic conditions of necessity and proportionality must be met.

Above, it was found that Hezbollah is to be regarded as the direct author of the attacks. Besides, it is probable that Lebanon can be considered co-author. However, on the basis of the principle of necessity, the self-defence measures – in case of a non-state author - against the direct author of the attack (Hezbollah) prevail over measures against an involved state (Lebanon).\footnote{137} Only if self-defence against the direct author does not yield the desired effect, is self-defence against the co-author acceptable.\footnote{138} Israel did not use this phasing.

Also from the perspective of proportionality it seems that Israel’s reaction against Lebanon did not stay within the conditions for self-defence. The breach of sovereignty as it was committed now was unnecessarily disproportionate. The choice to regard Lebanon as an addressee is at odds with the intrinsic conditions of necessity and proportionality.

**Conclusion legal bases**

What is the legal basis for the Israeli operation *Change of Direction* directed against Lebanon as well as the non-state actor Hezbollah? Israel explicitly appealed to its inherent right of self-defence.

From the above analysis it is clear that Israel was *right* in appealing to this basis insofar as it concerns the operations directed against Hezbollah (addressee). This interpretation is possible as Hezbollah’s use of force can be regarded as an armed attack. In addition
to this, the accumulation of events doctrine or Nadelstichtaktik may be used if necessary, which makes it possible to regard a series of connected smaller attacks as one armed attack. The operations against Hezbollah were reported to the UN Security Council in conformity with the procedural conditions and stayed within the intrinsic pre-requisites of necessity and proportionality. The fact that it concerns a non-state author and ditto addressee, falls within the present-day insights into the concept of self-defence.

However, the operations directed against (military and civilian) Lebanese targets, cannot be founded on this legal basis. As there was no Lebanese consent for the intervention, either, and a UN Security Council mandate to that effect was absent, this part of the operation appears to be without a basis in the *ius ad bellum*. Therefore, the operation against Lebanon seems to lack a proper legal basis. This conclusion is based on the analysis that self-defence against Lebanon (addressee) was disproportionate and not necessary – although in itself it would be possible to argue that Lebanon could be regarded as co-author of Hezbollah's attack, as it was probably substantially involved in Hezbollah's actions.

**Legal regimes during extra-territorial military operations**

This contribution will limit itself to the law of armed conflict perspective. Normally speaking, also the applicability of the human rights treaties should be considered. The fact that this aspect cannot be investigated here does not detract from the relevance of the legal regime as a normative framework prior to and during the execution of military operations. As said, the discussion is limited to the question whether the law of armed conflict is applicable, and if so, which partial regime is relevant.

*Introduction: law of armed conflict*

Usually, states try to move within the constraints of international law. This implies that they will not only appeal to a legal basis for the use of force under the *ius ad bellum*, but that they will also want to respect the legal regimes that apply during the execution of operations. In this case, this concerns primarily the law of armed conflict, whereby it will first be considered whether the law of armed conflict is indeed applicable to the conflict between the IDF and Hezbollah (and Lebanon), and if so, which part is relevant.

The issue of the legal regimes is separate from the legal basis of the operation. In other words, even if the legal basis under the *ius ad bellum* is lacking for the Israeli operations, as seems to be partially the case, one or more legal regimes apply. Extra-territorial military use of force, after all, is never unlimited. This is one of the principles of the democratic constitutional states and international law.
Once an armed conflict exists, the law of war automatically applies to the parties in the conflict - irrespective of their status. Given the phenomenon of war – *war being what it is* – the *ius in bello* – has of old tried to find a balance between the requirements and the reality of the phenomenon of war, on the one hand, and the principle of humanity, on the other. In other words, the law of armed conflict has an internal balance between war (military necessity) and humanity. This is expressed in its dual purpose: 

- the protection of those who do not (any longer) take part in the hostilities (especially civilians, but also combatants who have been put *hors de combat*); 
- regulating the allowed means and methods of warfare.

The law of armed conflict applies to armed conflicts, as is clearly shown in the comments on the law of armed conflict:

> *Humanitarian law should apply in all circumstance (of armed conflict: PD&EP) to all persons (and objects) protected by it, without taking into account the nature or origin of the conflict, or the causes actually espoused by or attributed to the Parties of the conflict.*

The primary question here is: what is an armed conflict? This concept is not defined in the law of war treaties. The following definition can be derived from ICTY case law:

> *An armed conflict exists whenever there is a resort to armed force (1) between States or (2) protracted armed violence between (a) governmental authorities and organised armed groups or (b) between such groups within a State.*

The Commentaries to the treaties support this definition. An armed conflict is a factual situation that exists when there are open hostilities - acts of combat – between more or less organised ‘armed forces’, regular or irregular armed forces.

The concept of armed conflict, in principle, requires the existence of organised armed groups that are capable of and actually do engage in combat and other military operations against each other.

The opinion of the parties involved about the existence of an armed conflict is not decisive here, as is shown in position of the Dutch government.

Therefore, the question that must first be raised is when use of force can be regarded an armed conflict. When it is ascertained that an armed conflict exists, it must then be
determined what part of the law of armed conflict is relevant as legal regime. Eventually, those findings must be applied to Change of Direction.

**Threshold: armed conflict**

Not every use of force will be regarded as an armed conflict. Only qualified forms come up for consideration. This is the lower limit to the *genus* armed conflict. Below this lower limit there is no armed conflict and consequently the law of armed conflict does not apply.

For an armed conflict two cumulative conditions must be met. There must be (1) actual hostilities of certain intensity, consisting of a number of related armed “incidents”, which (2) are carried out by opposing organised armed groups capable of undertaking military operations over longer periods of time. Below, these conditions will be considered briefly.

**Intensity of violence**

ICTY case law shows that – in contrast to crime or internal unrest – the emphasis in an armed conflict lies on “the protracted extent of the armed violence and the extent of the organisation of the parties involved.” The ‘protracted’ criterion must be seen as a re-formulation of the general rule that excludes “isolated and sporadic acts of violence (disorganized and short-lived)” from the scope of application of the law of armed conflict. In a recent ruling ICTY indicated that the “protracted armed violence” criterion is determined more by the intensity of the violence than by its duration. Intensity must be assessed by several indicative criteria:

*These indicative factors include the number, duration and intensity of individual confrontations; the type of weapons and other military equipment used; the number and calibre of munitions fired; the number of persons and type of forces partaking in the fighting; the number of casualties; the extent of material destruction; and the number of civilians fleeing combat zones. The involvement of the UN Security Council may also be a reflection of the intensity of a conflict.*

It seems evident that the violence in question is of more than enough intensity to meet this condition. On top of that, the conflict lasted for 33 days, during which Hezbollah fired some 4,000 missiles on Israeli targets. There were 55 dead, 100 heavily and 1,338 lightly wounded. Israel carried out large-scale combat operations with air, land and naval forces, during which more than 1,000 Lebanese civilian and an estimated 500 Hezbollah fighters were killed, several hundred thousands of people on both sides
fled their homes and heavy damage was inflicted on the infrastructure on both sides of the borders.162

Organisation
The second requirement concerns opposing armed groups that are capable of undertaking military operations over a longer period of time.163 This is the organisation requirement: “an armed conflict can exist only between parties that are sufficiently organised to confront each other with military means”.164 Regular armed forces, such as the IDF and the Lebanese armed forces, are deemed to meet this requirement.165 For irregular forces, armed groups, an assessment must be made with the help of a number of indicative criteria:

- the existence of a command structure and disciplinary rules and mechanisms within the group;
- the existence of a headquarters; the fact that the group controls a certain territory; the ability of the group to gain access to weapons, other military equipment, recruits and military training;
- its ability to plan, coordinate and carry out military operations, including troop movements and logistics; its ability to define a unified military strategy and use military tactics; and its ability to speak with one voice and negotiate and conclude agreements such as cease-fire or peace accords.166

That Hezbollah is not only a political organisation but also an armed group, is clear, amongst others, from the missile attacks carried out during the conflict. It has weapons stores and launching installations on Lebanese territory, and it uses them.167 It is also clearly capable of planning, coordinating and conducting military operations, a fact which was evident from the attack on 12 July alone. But also during the conflict Hezbollah showed evidence of using (classic) military tactics:

_Hizballah, on the other hand, operated in a manner compatible with the battlefield conditions. Its fighters used their defensive capabilities – advanced but easy-to-operate weapons, effective evasion and hit-and-run tactics, bunkers network, and familiarity with the terrain and population – to engage small Israeli combat teams in battle under advantageous conditions._168

In short, Hezbollah is an organised armed group within the meaning of the law of armed conflict.

Regime
Above, it was ascertained that the conflict is an armed conflict and for that reason the law of armed conflict is applicable to the hostilities. It now remains to be seen which regime is relevant. In other words, which rules from the law of armed conflict apply to
the conflict. In order to give the answer to that question, the conflict must by classified. Is it an international, a non-international armed conflict, or possibly another form of armed conflict?

**Israel-Lebanon**

As was concluded above, *Change of Direction* is considered an international armed conflict between Israel and Lebanon. The fact that the Lebanese armed forces put up no or hardly any resistance, does not detract from this. On this situation in any case the international customary law for international armed conflicts applies. *Besides*, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 apply, as appears from the Common Article 2 (CA 2):

> the (...) *Convention shall apply to all cases of declared war or of any other armed conflict which may arise between two or more of the High Contracting Parties, even if the state of war is not recognized by one of them. The Convention shall also apply to all cases of partial or total occupation of the territory of a High Contracting Party, even if the said occupation meets with no armed resistance.*

As Israel is not a contracting party of the First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 (AP I), this Protocol, which monitors international armed conflicts, does not apply to the IDF operations. As substantial parts from AP I, however, have the status of international customary law, Israel is bound by these customary law stipulations in AP I. Lebanon is a party to AP I, and insofar the Lebanese armed forces have partaken in the hostilities AP I applies.

**Israel-Hezbollah**

In themselves the hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah must be qualified as an armed conflict. It is, however, a type that does not fall within the definition of *international* armed conflicts used in the CA 2 and article 1(4) of AP I. After all, there is no inter-state conflict, but a conflict between a state and a non-state actor, while there are no situations applying ex art. 1(4).

Nor is it, however, a conflict that takes place on the territory of a single state, a situation which Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions (CA 3) and the Second Additional Protocol (AP II) for non-international armed conflicts (mainly) focus at. As it is, in that respect, too, there is no intra-state armed conflict.

> Speaking generally, it must be recognized that the conflicts referred to in Article 3 are armed conflicts, with ‘armed forces’ on either side engaged in ‘hostilities’ - conflicts, in short, which are
in many respects similar to an international war, but take place within the confines of a single country.\textsuperscript{176}

It is, however, unacceptable that no law of armed conflict regime is applicable at all, while a war is being waged. This goes against the history, purpose and ratio of the law of armed conflict.\textsuperscript{177} After all, this would constitute a black hole in the law of armed conflict.

Although there is no intra-state, but a trans-national armed conflict against Hezbollah, the regime of CA 3 is applicable, according to its letter and purpose.

\textit{In the case of armed conflict not of an international character occurring in the territory of one of the High Contracting Parties (…)}\textsuperscript{178}

This position is confirmed in the much debated decision of the US Supreme Court in \textit{Hamdan v. Rumsfeld}.\textsuperscript{179} The Court rejected the position of the US government that the CA 3 did not apply to the fight against Al Qa‘ida (either).

The Court of Appeals thought, and the Government asserts, that Common Article 3 does not apply to Hamdan because the conflict with al Qaeda, being ‘international in scope’, does not qualify as a ‘conflict not of an international character’. (…) That reasoning is erroneous. The term ‘conflict not of an international character’ is used here in contradistinction to a conflict between nations (…)

Common Article 3 (…) affords some minimal protection, falling short of full protection under the Conventions, to individuals associated with neither signatory nor even a nonsignatory ‘Power’ who are involved in a conflict ‘in the territory of’ a signatory. The latter kind of conflict is distinguishable from the conflict described in Common Article 2 chiefly because it does not involve a clash between nations (whether signatories or not). In context, then, the phrase ‘not of an international character’ bears its literal meaning.\textsuperscript{180}

The position of the Supreme Court implies that if a conflict is not an international conflict, it must be deemed a non-international armed conflict on the basis of (the literal meaning of) CA 3.\textsuperscript{181} This would lead to the conclusion that – seen on itself – the regime for non-international armed conflicts, consisting of the relevant customary law and CA 3, applies to the armed conflict between Hezbollah and Israel.\textsuperscript{182} This conclusion, however, ignores the fact that apart from the non-international conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, there is also the international conflict between Israel and Lebanon. It is therefore relevant to see both conflicts in their relation.
Overall picture regime

In the opinion of the UN Human Rights Council the conflict concerned a *sui generis* situation which was qualified as an armed conflict, in which Hezbollah and Lebanon were parties.

*It is the view of the Commission that hostilities were in fact and in the main only between IDF and Hezbollah. The fact that the Lebanese Armed Forces did not take an active part in them neither denies the character of the conflict as a legally cognizable international armed conflict, nor does it negate that Israel, Lebanon and Hezbollah were parties to it.*

In finding so, the Council made use of an analogy with an occupation that does not meet with any resistance: even then it is an international armed conflict.

Moreover, the Council explicitly states that Hezbollah was one of the parties in the international armed conflict and, as such, bound by the legal regime applicable to it. The fact that Hezbollah is not a state, and consequently cannot be a contracting party in the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols, does not detract from this. Also non-state actors in an armed conflict are bound by the law of armed conflict.

This situation is in a sense comparable to the armed conflict in the period of October 2001- June 2002 between the US (and its allies, amongst which the Netherlands), on the one hand, and Afghanistan and Al Qa’ida, on the other, which must be seen as an international armed conflict in that period. As Israel, too, attacked Lebanese as well as Hezbollah targets, this seems a defensible position.

Another solution would be to use two separate regimes, but this would lead to practical problems with the planning and execution of the IDF operations. In such a case attacks on Hezbollah targets would fall under a different regime than attacks on Lebanese targets, while both might be attacked in one and the same mission. Incidentally, because of the fading distinction between international customary law for international and non-international armed conflicts, the practical significance of the various legal regimes is decreasing further. The practical problems might also be obviated by a policy decision to the effect that for both addressees the more comprehensive regime for international armed conflicts applies.

Conclusion legal regime

Which legal regimes were applicable to the Israeli operations? As was said above, this is limited to the question whether the law of armed conflict applies, and if so, which partial regime is relevant.
The law of armed conflict applies during armed conflicts. An armed conflict requires (1) actual hostilities of a certain intensity, consisting of related armed ‘incidents’, which (2) are carried out by opposing organised armed groups capable of undertaking military operations over a longer period of time. There was an actual armed conflict between Israel, on the one hand, and Hezbollah and Lebanon, on the other, as the threshold value for an armed conflict on both cumulative criteria - intensity and organisation - was far exceeded.

The law of armed conflict regime applicable to this conflict depends on the type of conflict. Israel attacked Hezbollah as well as Lebanese targets, with the Lebanese armed forces barely putting up any resistance. This situation has been deemed a unique (sui generis) situation, whereby the comparison with the hostile occupation without resistance forces itself upon us. That approach leads to the full regime for international armed conflicts being applicable. This regime primarily consists of the Geneva Conventions, the First Additional Protocol applying to Israel insofar as the stipulations are of a customary law character.

Conclusion for extra-territorial military operations

Military operations take place within the constraints of a democratic constitutional state and international law. This also holds for extra-territorial operations and, likewise, for operations against non-state actors, such as Hezbollah. They are founded – or should be – on a legal basis under the ius ad bellum. Besides, such operations – also against non-state entities or actors – must be carried out within the legal regimes that apply. In particular in modern conflicts, determining the right regime is not always simple. These two issues – legal basis and legal regime – are also of importance for the Netherlands and its armed forces. After all, in the present-day security situation confrontations between Dutch units and non-state actors are foreseeable.

In the case of operation Change of Direction the basis – the legal basis – must be found in the state’s right of self-defence, as laid down in article 51 UN Charter. This is also the legal basis brought forward by Israel. This right arises after an armed attack, whereby, according to modern insights, the status of the author (state or non-state) of that attack is irrelevant. However, the threshold value for an armed attack must be reached. This can also happen via the accumulation of events doctrine, in which a number of smaller attacks are seen in relation. The logic of self-defence demands that it must be directed against the author of the attack. Preferably, this addressee is the direct author, in this case Hezbollah. In a number of cases an involved state can have substantial involvement
in the attack to such an extent that it can be deemed co-author. This might be argued with regard to Lebanon. All the same, self-defence against the direct author prevails over actions against the co-author because of the principles of proportionality and necessity. For that reason, an appeal to self-defence against Lebanon must be rejected, where self-defence against Hezbollah is a legal basis.

Apart from the legal bases, the legal regime during operations is of significant relevance. In the case of Change of Direction it has been established that the conflict exceeded the threshold value of an armed conflict, which results in the law of armed conflict being applicable. There must be (1) actual hostilities of a certain intensity, consisting of a number of related armed “incidents”, which (2) are carried out by opposing organised armed groups capable of undertaking military operations over a longer period of time. Both requirements are met. The next question is which part of the law of armed conflict relates to the conflict. In the view of the Human Rights Council this is the regime for international armed conflicts. In an alternative view this would depend on the addressee: with respect to Lebanon, the regime for international armed conflicts; with respect to Hezbollah, the regime for non-international armed conflicts. The practical difference is ‘subdued’ due to the decreasing difference between both regimes, caused by congruence in customary law.

Notes

1. Colonel dr. P. (Paul) A.L. Ducheine and major mr. E. (Eric) H. Pouw are legal advisors (Army Legal Service). Colonel Ducheine is an associate professor and major Pouw is a researcher within the Military Law section of the Netherlands Defence Academy.

2. We do not differentiate for the goal or objectives of a military operation: this could be a regular conventional operation, as well as a counter-terrorism operation. What is decisive, is the fact that armed force may be used.

3. As it is also valid for the armed forces themselves. This can be deduced from the principle of ‘legitimacy of military operations’ (Royal Netherlands Army (1996), Military Doctrine (ADP-I), The Hague, p. 89). It must be noted that this principle is not used in The Netherlands Defence Doctrine (2005), The Hague: Ministry of Defence, pp. 55-59. For criticism in this respect: Ducheine, P.A.L. (2008), Krijgsmacht, Geweldgebruik & Terreurbestrijding; een onderzoek naar juridische aspecten van de rol van strijdkrachten bij de bestrijding van terrorisme, Nijmegen: Wolf Legal Publishers, (dissertation University of Amsterdam, pp. 27 and 561.
4. Object of self-defence: the actor against whom the operation is directed (Ducheine (2008), p. 133).


6. An ‘intervention with consent’ is *stricto sensu* no exception to the prohibition of force. Although it serves as a separate legal basis in Public International Law for extra-territorial military operations, it is used here as one of the ‘exceptions’.


16. As used in the Preamble as well as in Article 1 UN Charter.


18. So-called ‘circumstances precluding wrongfulness’.

19. Un Doc A/60/948; S/2006/550 (letters dated 19 July 2006 from the Chargé d’affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the UN addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council). UN Doc. S/2006/550; A/60/948 (2006) (Letters from the Chargé d’affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the (UN) addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the (SC)).

20. Art. 24(1) UN Charter.

21. Art. 39 UN Charter. Hereafter: ‘threat to the peace (etc.)’.


23. UN Doc. S/2006/515; A/60/937 (2006) (Letters from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the (UN) addressed to the SG and the President of the SC); and UN Doc. S/RES/1655 (2006).

24. UN Doc. S/PV.5489 (2006) (Provisional Records of the 5489th meeting of de SC (61th year)).


29. We accept the concept of preemptive of anticipatory self-defence. Preventive self-defence, however, is not accepted, and cannot be used as an adequate legal basis for the use of force. See: Ducheine (2008), pp. 222-230.


33. For a description of the events initiating the Israeli reaction, see the briefing of Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations in UN Doc. S/PV.5489 (2006) (Provisional Records of the 5489th meeting of de SC (61th year)), pp. 2-3; and UN Doc. S/2006/515; A/60/937 (2006) (Letters from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the (UN) addressed to the SG and the President of the SC).

34. UN Doc. S/2006/515; A/60/937 (2006) (Letters from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the (UN) addressed to the SG and the President of the SC).

35. In favour: UK, Greece, Japan, Peru, Denmark. Against (i.a. as a result of the lack of proportionality): Russia, Ghana, Argentina, Qatar, China (‘armed aggression’) and the DRC. See UN Doc. S/PV.5489 (2006) (Provisional Records of the 5489th meeting of de SC (61th year)).


38. In a classic inter-state armed conflict, the author (of an armed attack) and the subject of self-defence are one and the same. This is also valid in a terrorist situation: Duchêne (2008), pp. 256-259.

39. Israel qualified the actions as a Lebanese attack: UN Doc. S/2006/515; A/60/937 (2006) (Letters from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the (UN) addressed to the SG and the President of the SC).


42. See the Notification to the SC, UN Doc. S/1998/780 (1998) (Letter from the Permanent Representative of the (USA) to the (UN) addressed to the President of the (SC)), p. 1; Manusama (2006), pp. 288-289.


47. See the overview in: Ducheine (2008), p. 154. Some authors are of the opinion that every use of armed force is sufficient (Higgins). The International Court of Justice, as well as other authors, apply the threshold of ‘sufficient gravity’: ICJ (1986), Nicaragua case, p. 103, § 195.


65. See the notification to the SC, UN Doc. S/1998/780 (1998) (Letter from the Permanent Representative of the (USA) to the (UN) addressed to the President of the (SC)), p. 1; Manusama (2006), pp. 288-289, memorising the ‘chain’ of Al Qa’ida attacks.

66. I.e. the reaction against the Al Shifa chemical plant (Sudan).


82. The authors mentioned refer rightfully to the fact that the SC remained silent with regard to the qualification of armed attack and the related authorship of that attack.


90. Ducheine (2008), p. 245. See also below on self-defence against Lebanon.


92. As is the case after an occupation that met no resistance. See also the destruction of Germany’s military capabilities in 1945.


95. Apart from the fact that the author (of the terrorist attack) may not be known, or that there is otherwise doubt or uncertainty on the origin of the attacks.


98. See the Opinions of the judges Higgins (§ 33-34), Buergenthal (§ 6), Kooijmans (§ 35) in ICJ (2004a), Palestinian Wall case, and Simma (§ 6-11), Kooijmans (§ 26-30) in ICJ (2005), DRC-Uganda case.

99. I.a. Manusama (2006), pp. 292-293, noting that in UN Doc S/PV.4370 (2001) (Provisional Records of the 4370th meeting of the SC (56th year)) self-defence was not mentioned, as it was obvious; also UN Doc. S/PV.4413 (2001) (Provisional Records of the 4413th Meeting of the SC), pp. 6-7, 10, where France and Norway supported self-defence prior to acceptance of UN SC Resolution 1377.


102. PCIJ (1927), S.S. Lotus (France v. Turkey), 7-9-1927, Series A No. 10 PCIJ (Lotus case), p. 18.


104. UN Doc. S/2006/515; A/60/937 (2006) (Letters from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the (UN) addressed to the SG and the President of the SC).


108. This follows from the fact that acts committed by state organs (i.a. armed forces) are acts of the state. See Art. 4 Draft articles on Responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts (ASR 2001).
110. ICJ (1986), Nicaragua case, p. 103, § 195. (Accent: PD). In ICJ (2005), DRC-Uganda case, § 146, the existence of a direct and indirect was rejected.
111. Art. 8 ASR Conduct directed or controlled by a State: ‘The conduct of a person or group of persons shall be considered an act of a State under international law if the person or group of persons is in fact acting on the instructions of, or under the direction or control of, that State in carrying out the conduct.’ (Accent: PD). Also: ICJ (1986), Nicaragua case, p. 48, § 80, and ICJ (1986), Nicaragua case, pp. 64-65, § 115. The ICTY applied a lower threshold: ‘overall control’: ICTY (1999), Tadic (Appeal: judgement), § 120, 122. The ICJ maintained its own norm: ICJ (2007), Genocide case (judgement).
112. ICJ (2007), Genocide case (judgement), § 401.
117. See i.a. ICJ (1949), Corfu Channel case, p. 23. Due diligence obligations require a certain effort, rather than guaranteeing result.
118. Also Becker, T. (2006), Terrorism and the State. Rethinking the Rules of State
Responsibility, Oxford: Hart Publishing, p. 130, based on UN SC Resolutions 1373 and 1368, States are obliged ‘to exercise due diligence in preventing all acts or terrorism […]’, the duty to actively and fully cooperate with other states […] in preventing terrorist offences […]; the duty to abstain any form of toleration, acquiescence, encouragement, or support for acts of terrorism’.


120. After Nicaragua and by analogy of art. 16 ASR. See i.a.: Gill (2003), p. 29.


Rubin (2007), pp. 8-9; for previous attacks, supra note 70. Lebanon claimed to be ‘unaware’, see UN Doc. S/2006/518; A/60/938 (2006) (Letters from the Chargé d’affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the (UN) addressed to the SG and the President of the SC).


133. This assessment is not related to the issue whether Lebanese objects are legitimate targets under the law of armed conflict.
134. Without mixing *ius in bello* aspects with the current *ius ad bellum* issue. The effect of a blockade, attacking other Lebanese lines of communications, and the effects of air-and ground operations (including the use of cluster munitions) is our concern.
135. Ruys (2007), p. 292. The fact that Lebanese armed forces were not involved, is of no relevance, since Lebanon was a party to the conflict otherwise, see International Crisis Group (2006), Israel/Palestine/Lebanon: Climbing Out of the Abyss, ICG, Middle East Report No. 57 (2006, July 25), pp. 11-14.


147. In the classic meaning ‘war’ (de jure) existed after a declaration of war. This practice is outdated. Unlike others, Dinstein (2005), p. 15, still uses ‘war’ (in a specific meaning).


149. Armed forces has a broad meaning. They could be armed rebels, insurgents, or paramilitary groups. See: Sandoz, Swinarski and Zimmerman (1987), p. 1352, § 4462.


154. For example ICRC (2003), *International humanitarian law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts*, Report prepared by the ICRC, 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Geneva, 2 to 6 December 2003), 03/IC/09 (December), p. 18-19: ‘Armed conflict of any type requires a certain intensity of violence and, among other things, the existence of opposing parties’.


156. ICTY (1998), Celibici (Trial), § 185.


158. ICTY (2008), Haradinaj, § 49. Also: IACommHR (1997, Nov 18), Abella case, where a rebellion of 30 hours qualified as armed conflict.

159. ICTY (2008), Haradinaj, § 49.


164. ICTY (2008), Haradinaj, § 60.


175. For a similar issue: Ducheine (2008), pp. 531-548 (Transnational armed conflict).


178. Art. 3 GC I-IV.


184. See CA 2.


186. Whether this non-state actor acts in conformity with the laws of war, is another question.


188. An alternative approach resulting in the same applicable regime is the so-called ‘global approach’: two separate conflicts, an interstate international armed conflict between Israel and Lebanon, as well as a non-international armed conflict between Israel and Hezbollah exist at the same time. Those who favour this approach are of the opinion that the overall result is a conflict that is governed by the regime of international armed conflict. See: Ducheine (2008), p. 503.
The Hezbollah enigma

Sjoerd Both

NL-ARMS, 2009, 97-122

Introduction

The armed conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in the summer of 2006 – henceforth ‘the Second Lebanon War’ – came as a surprise for a large part of the international community and public opinion. It also appears to have taken the warring parties by surprise. While Hezbollah evoked an unexpectedly fierce Israeli reaction by abducting two Israeli soldiers in the border area near Zarit and thus triggered the Second Lebanon War, Israel on its turn, was taken by surprise by the quality and tenacity of Hezbollah’s military defensive and offensive capability. The present contribution investigates to what extent the surprise can be related to the nature, objectives and way of operating of Hezbollah. The primary research questions of this contribution relate to the very nature of Hezbollah and the character and magnitude of the threat it poses to its neighbours. Should Hezbollah be regarded as a Lebanese Shiite political-military movement which in the last instance champions purely Lebanese interests, or is it a movement with a much more far-reaching agenda and close ties abroad? The set-up for answering the above questions is as follows. After a brief description of the origins, nature and objectives of Hezbollah, a number of significant developments and events with regard to the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah will be discussed. Not only the warring parties, but also the role and influence of third parties, such as Syria, Iran and the United Nations, will be dealt with. The reason for this is that the conduct of a religious political-societal movement like Hezbollah in the complex and opaque political-societal environment of Lebanon and the Middle-East can only be analysed by positioning and considering the phenomenon of Hezbollah in the broader context of this environment.

After a discussion pertaining to the major actors directly and indirectly involved in the conflict, the analysis will be concluded with a summary and observation in which the main questions will be addressed. Because of the recent character of the events and developments described, this contribution has made relatively frequent use of sources originating from the media. By making the choice from these sources as broad as possi-
ble, an attempt has been made to obviate the existing quantitative and qualitative unbalance amongst the often partisan sources.

**Origin, nature and objectives**

The name Hezbollah comes from Hizbu-Allah and is Arabic for the ‘Party of God’. Hezbollah derives its inspiration from the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1979, and maintains close relations with that country. Especially after the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) the movement evolved into a major power factor within the Lebanese political arena. The explanation for this can be found in the fact that Hezbollah is essentially different from other political parties and movements in Lebanon. In fact, it is much more than the combination of a political faction with its own militia, so common during the Lebanese civil war. First of all, the political-religious ideology of Hezbollah is grafted on the Islamic Republic of Iran. Inspired by the Iranian Shiite Islamism, Hezbollah strives, in word and deed, for the realisation of two strategic objections: the annihilation, dismantlement or in any other way obliteration of the state of Israel, and the establishment of a Lebanese Islamic Theocracy. In combination with the perceived military success of Hezbollah during the Second Lebanon War the first strategic objective has caused the movement to enjoy some popularity among the peoples of the states surrounding Israel. Up to now Hezbollah, nevertheless, has always presented itself as a resistance movement striving to defend and liberate Lebanese territory. This is the reason why in the first instance the internationalist aspects of Hezbollah’s struggle against Israel have been somewhat overlooked. After the Second Lebanon War, little doubt remains that Hezbollah considers the offensive use of violence a legitimate means in its struggle against Israel. After Hezbollah leader Nasrallah announced that a Lebanese Islamic state can only be established with an “overwhelming popular desire”, the second strategic objective seems to have been postponed for the time being. Nevertheless, many facets of Hezbollah’s conduct are ultimately in line with the irreconcilable dogmas of the Iranian Shiite fundamentalist Islamism embraced by Hezbollah.

A second reason for Hezbollah’s unique position is the way in which the movement is organised and the mutually carefully orchestrated manner in which the party echelons operate. The political and administrative wings of Hezbollah have a history of continued extremely successful adaptation to the Lebanese internal and external political relations of the day. As a result the movement is represented in the Lebanese parliament. Participation in regular Lebanese politics has not prevented Hezbollah, though, from independently entering into relations with countries such as Syria and Iran and from
exploiting these ties for its struggle against Israel and to shore up its domestic position.\textsuperscript{6}

A third reason for Hezbollah’s remarkable position in the Lebanese political relations is the social activism of the organisation. For many years, Hezbollah has been actively trying to improve the political-societal position of the underprivileged and impoverished Shiite Lebanese community. To that end, Hezbollah has put in place a close-knit regional organisational structure which, at the local level, effectively manages to transform Hezbollah social engagement into tangible social action and services for the benefit of the poor– including non-Shiites. All this is done with an administrative integrity which as a rule is unheard of in the Middle-East.\textsuperscript{7}

A fourth reason for Hezbollah’s special position in Lebanon is its military wing, which in the course of the years has grown into a substantial military force and by its very existence has greatly contributed to Hezbollah’s prestige and dominant position in Lebanon. A combination of political will and substantial military might have eventually enabled Hezbollah to vest its authority in large parts of southern Lebanon at the expense of the weakened and divided Lebanese state. UN reports clearly reflect Hezbollah’s considerable influence in southern Lebanon in the run-up to the Second Lebanon War.\textsuperscript{8} Yet, until the summer of 2006, Hezbollah’s increasing power was given little attention in the international media and on the international political agenda. First and foremost, this was due to Hezbollah’s political instinct and feeling for publicity, which ensured that the easily digestible positive elements of its political and societal role came prominently in the spotlights, while simultaneously the military build-up steadily went on relatively unnoticed. Additionally, the events in Afghanistan and Iraq, the presence of UNIFIL and a combination of real and perceived positive developments in Lebanon caused the world’s attention to be drawn even further away from the troubling situation in south Lebanon.

Hezbollah strives to attain its objectives by means of a rather unusual combination of regular and irregular ways of exerting power and influence. The organisation thus combines the characteristics of a political party with those of a popular movement and, on top of that, fulfils a number of military and political-societal functions that fall within the domain of the Lebanese state. Salamey and Pearson, therefore, tersely characterise Hezbollah as a proletarian party with an Islamic manifesto.\textsuperscript{9} Whether the centre of gravity of Hezbollah’s loyalty will in the long run lie with Lebanon or Iran is an open question for the time being. The political crisis of 2008, though, clearly revealed that Hezbollah is willing to use violence against the legitimate Lebanese authorities in certain instances. In order to gain a better insight into the gravity and nature of the existing and potential
threat posed by Hezbollah, the development and dynamics of the mutual interaction between the major regional state actors in and around the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel will be dealt with hereafter.

The conflict between Hezbollah and Israel

From Ta’if to the Israeli withdrawal

The contours for post-civil war Lebanon were laid down in the September 1989 Ta’if agreement. Apart from a framework for political, governmental and juridical reforms along ethnic-religious lines – a political model known as confessionalism – the agreement also provided a plan for the restoration of central state authority over the entire Lebanese territory. Disbanding and disarming all militias operating in the country, internal and foreign, was part and parcel of the plan. In relation to Israel, Lebanon was to respect the Israeli-Arab cease-fire agreement of 23 March 1949. Furthermore, the Ta’if agreement aimed to implement UN Security Council Resolution 425 in order to end the Israeli presence in southern Lebanon. On 4 November 1989 the Lebanese parliament ratified the Ta’if agreement. Concluded by the Lebanese factions under the auspices of Saudi Arabia and Syria, the agreement provided for an indefinite Syrian military presence in Lebanon, to assist the Lebanese government in bringing back the entire territory under its control. The presence of Syrian troops subsequently prompted Israel into retaining the Security Zone it had established in 1985.

At first Hezbollah rejected the Ta’if agreement, as it did not end the unequal representation of the Shiite Muslims in the Lebanese parliament. Moreover, a combination of constitution and electoral system barred the Shiites, who constitute around 40 percent of the Lebanese population, from the office of president and prime minister. After the de facto occupation of Lebanon by Syria in October 1990, Hezbollah, under Syrian pressure, finally agreed to the terms of the Ta’if agreement.

As for the disarmament of the militias, the Ta’if agreement has never been fully implemented. Hezbollah, but also Palestinian factions marginally present in Lebanon, such as Hamas, Fatah, and the PFPL, were not disarmed. With regard to Hezbollah, the argument used by Lebanon for this was that, in the absence of a comprehensive peace between Israel and Lebanon and because of a continued Israeli presence in southern Lebanon, Hezbollah should be considered a legitimate resistance group against Israel and not as a militia. It is generally acknowledged that Hezbollah prior to the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon did indeed play an important role in the struggle
against the Israeli occupier and by doing so considerably strengthened its power base in the period leading up to the outbreak of the Second Lebanon War.

**The Israeli withdrawal**

With a statement from the then Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Anan, on 6 June 2000, the international community recognised that Israel had finally complied with the 1978 United Nations Security Council Resolution 425. Hezbollah grasped the occasion of Israel's withdrawal with both hands to project itself as the liberator and protector of Lebanon and to emphasise its leading role in the struggle against the Zionist foe. The Israeli government's decision to withdraw from southern Lebanon, however, was mainly based on political security considerations, in which war fatigue of the Israeli public played a major role. On the basis of a weigh-up in terms of money and victims the Israeli presence could have been continued indefinitely. After all, a substantial part of the effort was made by the pro-Israeli and Israeli-backed SLA. The Hezbollah claim that it liberated southern Lebanon of the Israelis, therefore, is not based on military facts.

What did not change after the completion of the Israeli withdrawal in June 2000 were six factors and circumstances which allowed Hezbollah to prepare itself for a military confrontation with Israel. Albeit in a slightly obscured way due to other major developments in the world, four of these factors and circumstances exposed Hezbollah's ambitions and concomitantly the developing threat against Israel prior to the Second Lebanon War. The last two circumstances mentioned below only became fully apparent from the course of the war and the developments in the ensuing period. In the aforementioned sequence these circumstances are: (1) the Syrian military presence and influence in Lebanon, (2) the conflict between Lebanon, Syria and Israel regarding the precise location of Lebanon's southern border, in particular in the Sheba Farms area, (3) the presence of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), operating under an unchanged mandate, (4) the inability of the Lebanese government to establish its authority over the entire Lebanese territory (5) Hezbollah's preparedness to pursue its far-reaching strategic objectives and (6) the substantial foreign financial and military support to Hezbollah.

**The Syrian military presence**

The conclusion of the Ta'if agreement formalized the special relation between Lebanon and Syria, but also the Syrian military presence in Lebanon, in an international legal framework. However, within the Lebanese society and politics the presence of Syrian troops and with it the presence and influence of the Syrian secret service it inevitably ensued, remained a very controversial issue. After the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, in which Syria was allegedly involved, Syria withdrew its
troops in April 2005 under vast international pressure. Up to that moment the military build-up and deployment of Hezbollah must have taken place right under the eyes of the Syrian troops and the omnipresent Syrian secret service. Irrespective of the role that Syria has played in the military build-up of Hezbollah, the very presence of its troops until 2004 causes the country to bear partial responsibility for the unchecked build-up of Hezbollah military might.

Border conflicts

Of Israel’s five neighbours only Egypt and Jordan have signed a peace agreement with Israel. Though Lebanon has not, it de facto recognises the border established by the United Nations, behind which Israel withdrew in June 2000. On the border between the two countries, however, there is an area of land, measuring some 20 square kilometres, which in the course of the 20th century was claimed by both Lebanon and Syria as belonging to their respective national territories. The subject area is known as Sheba Farms, and has been occupied by Israel as part of the annexed Golan Heights since the six-day war of 1967. An additional problem is that the border between Lebanon and Syria has never been precisely determined. While the Syrian government has repeatedly made contradictory statements regarding Lebanon’s sovereignty over the past years, ‘Greater Syria’ proponents even consider Lebanon as part of Syria. In any case, Syria considers Lebanon as an entity in its direct sphere of influence. Damascus’ ambiguous attitude towards Lebanon stems from the fact that both states originate from an area administered by France. Also driven by regional power politics, Syria, as a result, still nurtures a strong relationship with Lebanon. Apart from its much contested influence and involvement in Lebanese domestic affairs, Lebanon provides Syria with an instrument to keep up the pressure on Israel, with the ultimate goal of getting back the Golan Heights. Nevertheless, for a long time Syria considered Sheba Farms to be a part of Syria. Ironically, the current Syrian position is that the area belongs to Lebanon, which allows Hezbollah to legitimise its status as a resistance movement against Israel. After the end of the Second Lebanon War the UN started to redefine the border between Lebanon and Syria with regard to the Sheba Farms.

UNIFIL under resolution 425/426

Since 1978 there has been an uninterrupted presence of international troops in Lebanon under the name of UNIFIL. The original mandate of UNIFIL was based on the UN Security Council resolutions 425 and 426 of 20 March 1978. The mandate encompassed three sub-tasks:
1. Confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon;
2. Restore international peace and security;
3. Assist the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area.

The extent to which the UN has succeeded in implementing resolutions 425 and 426 - and 1701 after the Second Lebanon War – is a question that is not only relevant with regard to the events of 2006, but also in view of any future development in the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel. Two aspects take centre stage in this: the restoration of the Lebanese central authority over the entire Lebanese territory and the disarmament of Hezbollah.

Twenty-two years after the adoption of resolutions 425 and 426 UNIFIL could ultimately confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon. The ensuing acknowledgment of this fact by the international community was expressed in the UN Secretary General’s statement of 16 June 2000. For UNIFIL it signified the start of a phase in which the further implementation of the UNSCR 425/426 mandate appeared to have come within reach, a period which abruptly ended with the abduction of two IDF servicemen by Hezbollah on 12 July 2006, and the subsequent outbreak of the Second Lebanon War.

*Lebanon and UNIFIL*

In his 16 June 2000 report on the completion of the Israeli withdrawal the UN Secretary General underscored the necessity for a coordinated combined deployment of Lebanese and UNIFIL troops in the area vacated by Israel up to the so-called *Blue Line*, the UN-defined border between Israel and Lebanon. In the immediate vicinity of the *Blue Line* the authorities left the control to Hezbollah, many of whose members were usually not wearing uniforms or carrying arms. The Lebanese authorities declared that Lebanese forces could not act as border troops for Israel without a comprehensive peace agreement between Lebanon and Israel, and consequently could not be stationed on the border with Israel. In this period UNIFIL concentrated on monitoring the security situation from the ground and air and establishing liaison with the various parties. Nevertheless, and in spite of repeated exhortations by the UN and Israel, the UN did not manage to convince the Lebanese authorities to take up positions on the *Blue Line* in the run-up to the Second Lebanon War. In this period a great number of incidents took place along the *Blue Line*, with Hezbollah frequently firing at Israeli military and civilian targets. From the Israeli side the violations of resolution 425 mostly consisted of recurrent and sometimes daily incursions into Lebanese air space in order to conduct airborne ground surveillance of Lebanese (and Syrian) territory. Up to the outbreak of
hostilities UNIFIL carried out observer tasks inside the UNIFIL mandate area. Many of the incidental exchanges of fire between the IDF and Hezbollah - in a number of cases supported by other factions - took place in the vicinity of Sheba Farms. These actions link up seamlessly with Hezbollah’s point of view that the Lebanese border near Sheba Farms leaves Lebanese territory to Israel. In the period between 2000 and the summer of 2006, the UN repeatedly extended the UNIFIL mandate by six months, meanwhile gradually decreasing the number of troops to approximately 2,000. In the period leading up to the Second Lebanon War the UN restricted itself to condemning the military and security incidents and reiterating its appeals to the Lebanese government to expand its central authority up to the Blue Line, in conformity with resolution 425. Also the fact that Hezbollah occasionally had an active hand in making UNIFIL’s work impossible, did not prompt a more energetic reaction from the side of the UN.

In retrospect, it is fair to say that the presence of UNIFIL under UNSCR 425/426 mandate did not constitute a serious hindrance to Hezbollah’s military deployment in southern Lebanon. In fact, Hezbollah, operating in the shadow of a limited UNIFIL presence, and, paradoxically, outside the view of the international community, may even have been provided with an excellent opportunity to considerably strengthen its administrative and military hold on southern Lebanon. Clearly, UNIFIL between 1978 and the summer of 2006 did not achieve the second and third objectives of its mandate. Besides, the question remains whether the mandate UNSCR 425/426 was sufficiently robust. The extent to which Hezbollah had been able to prepare itself for a substantial military confrontation with Israel, in spite of, or perhaps even thanks to the presence of Syrian and UNIFIL troops in southern Lebanon, became apparent in the course of The Second Lebanon War.

Hezbollah military actions

The Israeli reaction to fight Hezbollah on Lebanese soil after the coordinated attack on an Israeli border patrol and the ensuing abduction of two IDF-servicemen in hindsight appears to have been an unpleasant surprise for Hezbollah. Nevertheless, Hezbollah was surprisingly well prepared to fight Israel in a coherent way. In doing so, Hezbollah employed an operational concept that displayed defensive and offensive components, which in their turn involved conventional along with irregular elements. Thus, according to Hofman, the Second Lebanon War can be considered as a Hybrid War. Furthermore, the way in which Hezbollah has fought it, arguably reveals Hezbollah’s true nature and objectives but also the potential threat the organisation poses to the (wider) region.

Operating from a well organised military command structure, thoroughly embedded in the southern Lebanese civilian infrastructure, Hezbollah put up a surprisingly well
coordinated defence against the Israeli ground troops. Building this intricate military infrastructure must have taken place in the six years between the Israeli withdrawal in 2000 and the summer of 2006, in a number of cases in the immediate proximity of UNIFIL. Also, it is unlikely that the Syrians and the Lebanese government were not aware of this military build-up. Many of the weapons used by Hezbollah in its battle against the IDF ground forces appeared to have come from Syria and Iran. One example is the RPG-29, a Syrian-purchased Russian anti-tank weapon, used with great success by Hezbollah against the Israeli Merkava tanks.24 The Russian Federation denies having supplied such weapons to Hezbollah, but does not exclude the possibility of them having been passed on by Syria.25

Furthermore, in its defence of the southern Lebanese territory, Hezbollah used rather sophisticated weapon systems and communication systems from abroad. Of these, in particular, the deployment of C802 anti-ship missiles - an Iranian-produced variety of the Chinese Silkworm anti-ship missile- was a complete surprise and a clear sign that Hezbollah has become able to successfully deploy a number of advanced sensor, command and weapon systems. Incidentally, this is not to say that Hezbollah can freely dispose of such weapon systems. After all, it is quite possible that Iran used the opportunity of the 2006 conflict to certify a number of weapon systems as combat proven. The fact that only one attack was conducted on an Israeli Navy ship, and the way in which Hezbollah confirmed and used the attack for propaganda purposes, seem to confirm this.26 Irrespective of the question whether Hezbollah carried out the actual ASM attack on the Israeli corvette INS Hanit independently or with the direct assistance of Iranian military advisors, the employment of this advanced coastal defence system strongly indicates that Iran has rendered substantial military assistance to Hezbollah. The same, incidentally, holds for a number of other sophisticated weapon systems employed by Hezbollah during the Second Lebanon War.27 The attack on Hanit not only displays Hezbollah’s new military capabilities, but also the organisation’s proficiency in presenting a military action almost real time as a success in the media. The Hanit incident also makes clear the extent to which the Israeli intelligence service and the IDF misjudged Hezbollah military capabilities.28

During the conflict Hezbollah employed various types of short and medium-range missiles, most of which were of Syrian descent and constructed on the basis of Syrian, former Soviet Union and North Korean missile technology. According to Rubin, an estimated number of 200 somewhat sophisticated long-range missiles, originating from Iran, were either destroyed on the ground by the Israeli air force on 13 July and in subsequent air raids, or not used at all.29 The missiles were mostly fired from densely populated areas from mobile, sometimes improvised launch pads. The massiveness of
the missile attacks carried out by Hezbollah and the fact that only a fraction of the fired missiles hit an Israeli military target or important infrastructure leads to the conclusion that none of the used missile types had accurate guidance. Nevertheless, the massive deployment of these missiles constituted an essential element in Hezbollah’s operational concept and strategy. After all, Israel was unable to stop the missile offensive from the air and had to come up with alternatives to stop or decrease the missile attacks in some way or another under great pressure of time. The resulting Israeli ground offensive gave Hezbollah an opportunity to fight the Israeli ground troops on terms favourable to itself, a fight Hezbollah showed itself to be surprisingly well prepared for. The Israeli ground troops sustained considerable losses, and, moreover, failed to stop the missile attacks. These operational successes, in combination with the missile attacks, allowed Hezbollah to claim a great strategic success by merely having resisted the Israeli forces for the duration of the conflict. The estimates of missiles fired against Israel vary somewhat, but come down to approximately 4,000. The damage done by these missiles was relatively minor, but they seriously disrupted life in a considerable part of Israel. On top of that came the fear that Hezbollah might have larger-range missiles capable of reaching Tel Aviv. Currently, destroying the missiles prior to launch is about the only viable defence option against a missile barrage. In this, the IDF probably was only successful with regard to the long-range missiles. As a weapon of terror Hezbollah’s missiles certainly lived up to expectations. Consequently, Hezbollah’s missile attacks on Israel can rightly be considered a strategic terror bombardment.

Based on Hezbollah’s weapons deployment during the Second Lebanon War it is fair to say that Iran, apart from ideological and political support, also provided Hezbollah with military resources and advice on a large scale, including such capital weapon systems as anti-ship missiles. Apart from that, Hezbollah employed large quantities of weapons coming from Syria. It is also clear that Iranian and Syrian military and financial support does not only enable Hezbollah to fight Israel, but also allows it to influence Lebanese domestic developments and politics. Furthermore, it can be concluded that Hezbollah prepared thoroughly for a conflict with Israel and that the military operational concept was sufficiently robust to withstand the Israeli ground operation whilst keeping the pressure on Israel with missile barrages in spite of uncontested Israeli air superiority. Consequently, there is not much point in describing and classifying the ‘Hezbollah way of waging war’ in terms of regular and irregular operations, terrorism and insurgency. In fact, such classification might even obscure the true nature of this organisation and by the same token its hybrid approach to warfare.

After the Second Lebanon War the efforts of the international community through the UN were directed at preventing a renewed outbreak of the conflict or worse. Two related
aspects were central in this: the strengthening of the Lebanese central authority and the prevention of clandestine weapon deliveries to Lebanon. Whether the central Lebanese government, supported by UNIFIL, will eventually succeed in preventing rearmament of Hezbollah and gaining effective authority over the entire Lebanese territory ultimately depends on the level of mutual loyalty that exists between Hezbollah and the lawful Lebanese authority.

**UNIFIL under resolution 1701**

The adoption of resolution 1701 on 11 August 2006 brought an end to 32 days of fighting between Hezbollah and Israel. For the formal parties involved in its coming about, Israel and Lebanon, but also for Hezbollah, this resolution apparently constituted an acceptable closure to the war. The central Lebanese government was basically held hostage by the conflict and presumably viewed resolution 1701 as a means to avoid further war damage and, coming from a situation in which Hezbollah had been able to operate freely from Lebanese territory, an opportunity to considerably strengthen its central authority vis-à-vis this organisation. Confronted with this unexpected reality of the war, Hezbollah initially adopted the stance of defender of Lebanon, only to subsequently have itself represented to an increasing extent by the central government. This was done with the intent to come to a cease-fire and further stabilisation of the situation via the UN Security Council at a moment the perception had taken hold that Hezbollah had been the first Arab force to have withstood the IDF in an open military conflict. As a result Hezbollah achieved an extremely important success that could be exploited to the full in the strategic and propagandistic realm after the cease-fire. For the Israelis the course of the battle and, in particular, its inability to effectively stop the Hezbollah missile barrages and to defeat Hezbollah militarily arguably also was enough motivation to agree with resolution 1701.

Resolution 1701 provided UNIFIL with a considerably strengthened and broadened mandate, including six further sub-tasks:

1. Monitor the cessation of hostilities;
2. Accompany and support the Lebanese armed forces as they deploy throughout the south, including along the Blue Line, as Israel withdraws its armed forces from Lebanon;
3. Coordinate its activities referred to in the preceding paragraph (above) with the Government of Lebanon and the Government of Israel;
4. Extend its assistance to help ensure humanitarian access to civilian populations and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons;
5. Assist the Lebanese armed forces in taking steps towards the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani river of an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL deployed in this area;

6. Assist the Government of Lebanon, at its request, in securing its borders and other entry points to prevent the entry of Lebanon without its consent of arms or related materiel.

Resolution 1701 consequently tasked UNIFIL to actively prevent the clandestine import of weapons and related materiel in cooperation with the Lebanese authorities. UNIFIL found itself in a supporting role with regard to the Lebanese authorities. As a result, the prevention of clandestine import of weapons remained a responsibility of the same government which in the previous years had been unable to withstand the will and power of Hezbollah both inside and outside the regular political domain, and which, on top of that, had never managed to expand its authority over the entire Lebanese territory in conformity with the resolutions 425 and 426. That Hezbollah accepted resolution 1701 is remarkable, as its implementation would effectively prevent any rearming of Hezbollah not expressly consented to by the regular Lebanese government. As a consequence, Israel will arguably hold the Lebanese government directly accountable for any large-scale Hezbollah attack directed against Israel that might occur in the future.

In the mean time, the broader mandate based on resolutions 425, 426 and 1701 has led to a number of tangible results. Thus, in October 2006 the deployment of Lebanese troops along the Blue Line became a fact and UNIFIL is succeeding in coordinating the activities of the peace force with the Lebanese and Israeli authorities. Supporting the Lebanese armed forces in the selective demilitarisation of the area between the Litani River and the Blue Line is ‘work in progress’, with UNIFIL up to the present moment stating that there is no indication of the presence of military materiel and personnel other than that of UNIFIL and the Lebanese government forces. Even if the Lebanese armed forces, supported by UNIFIL, were to succeed in making the UNIFIL area of operations “free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL deployed in this area”, this will only initially form a certain barrier against the firing of short-range missiles on Israel. Eventually, the Lebanese government will have to restore its authority, and with it the monopoly on the use of armed force, over the entire Lebanese territory. Also, UNIFIL succeeded in rendering support to the Lebanese government at its request, in securing its borders and other entry points soon after the adoption of resolution 1701. The UNIFIL strength was increased from 2,000 to 9,000 personnel, while at short notice a UNIFIL Maritime
Task Force (MTF), with some 2,000 personnel, was established in order to prevent clandestine arms transports by sea. After all, sea transport is the most efficient way of conveying large quantities of goods over long distances. Moreover, smuggling large quantities of arms hidden away in ships is relatively simple. From the start it was clear that the Lebanese Navy and coast guard lacked the required capabilities by far to guard and secure the Lebanese maritime borders. Consequently, it became necessary to establish and deploy a UNIFIL maritime presence. The maritime blockade imposed by Israel on 13 July 2006 in order to prevent a re-supply of Hezbollah from the sea was extended until the arrival of an Italian maritime task group on 8 September 2006. A short time later this Italian maritime task group handed over the guarding of the Lebanese maritime borders to the UNIFIL MTF, which became operational on 15 October 2006. To control and coordinate the UNIFIL operation a UNIFIL Headquarters was established in the southern Lebanese coastal town of Naqoura in close cooperation with the Lebanese authorities. In hindsight it can be said that the tasks for which UNIFIL was mandated in resolution 1701 were taken up by all parties involved expeditiously and that UNIFIL is fulfilling all its sub-tasks within the framework of the mandate.

Nevertheless, the extent to which resolution 1701 has prevented clandestine arms shipments and rearmament of Hezbollah from abroad is dependent in the last instance on effectively securing Lebanese maritime, land and air borders. Incidentally, within the Lebanese context the concept of ‘border’, and with it the interpretation of resolution 1701, has an interesting subjective dimension, where it concerns consent/authorisation by the Lebanese government with regard to the import of arms for the Hezbollah “resistance movement”. As will be seen below, the ostensible success of resolution 1701 is not quite what meets the eye.

The rearmament of Hezbollah

The missile campaign significantly added to the widespread perception carefully nurtured by Hezbollah, that it had won the conflict with Israel. It is therefore likely that Hezbollah will attempt to bring up its war supplies of missiles up to the pre-war levels. Furthermore, there is also the possibility that in the future Hezbollah will begin producing a number of less sophisticated weapons – such as Katyusha missiles – itself. Incidentally, there is a host of unconfirmed information that rearmament has already taken place in the mean time.

Clandestine arms shipments to Lebanon can only be prevented if the access to the Lebanese territory can be guarded adequately. While a load of 10,000 missiles can easily be shipped by a single medium-sized freighter, it would take an assessed 20-50 flights and 200-500 transport movements to ship the same amount of cargo by road.
question, therefore, presents itself whether the bid to seal off the access to Lebanon over
land, air and sea, has been successful.

*Guarding the Lebanese borders*

With the Mediterranean as its westernmost border, Lebanon is enclosed by two neigh-
bours: Israel in the south and Syria in the east and north. After the summer of 2006, UNIFIL deployed over the southern Lebanese territory between the Litani River and the *Blue Line*. The UNIFIL area constitutes a buffer zone between Lebanon, Israel and the Israeli occupied Golan Heights. The size and shape of the area is comparable to the *Security Zone*, established by Israel in the nineteen-nineties and, from and Israeli perspective arguably has a similar function. Although the UNIFIL area will presumably in many cases be the final destination of any Hezbollah arms supplies, any road transports to that end may reach Lebanon undetected by UNIFIL. Beirut can be reached by road fairly easily from Damascus unseen to UNIFIL. Securing the national border with Syria and preventing clandestine arms shipments is a sole responsibility of the Lebanese govern-
ment, and the UN and the international community have no other means to monitor what is going on than through the Lebanese authorities and the activities of national intelligence agencies. With the government, the armed forces and Hezbollah being the main players in the Lebanese domestic arena, the Lebanese government, ironically enough, is highly dependent on Syria for the effective guarding of its national borders.

Beirut’s Rafic Hariri’s International airport is the only major airport of the country. Apart from that, there are two military airfields and a number of dirt landing strips. Consequently, Beirut is arguably the preferred venue for the shipment of clandestine arms by air. The political turmoil of May 2008 underscores the importance that Hezbollah, too, attributes to this airport. A brief search on the Internet reveals that there are regular flights between Tehran and Damascus and Tehran and Beirut. Although it is quite possible for Israel and for the UNIFIL MTF to guard Lebanese air space and to establish the identity of air contacts, it is not really feasible to ascertain the nature of the cargo of these flights without a UNIFIL presence at the airport.

Lebanon has four sea ports of some importance, with Beirut as the most important one. The Lebanese coast is fairly low and straight, which facilitates the detection of ship movements from the sea, also when that movement is close to the coast. So, in princi-
ple, the maritime borders are relatively easy to close off. UNIFIL, MTF, the maritime component of UNIFIL, operates in an area that is designated as the *Area of Maritime Operations* (AMO), a trapezoid-shaped area with a depth of some 50 nautical miles hugging the Lebanese coast and confined to the north and south by the parallels that mark the corresponding national borders of Lebanon. The AMO has been divided into an inner
and outer zone. As a rule, the Lebanese Navy patrols the inner zone, whereas UNIFIL units patrol the outer zone. As a matter of fact, the sensors of the UNIFIL ships are perfectly capable of covering the entire area of operations, so that a continued awareness of what is happening in the AMO is ensured. The operational commander of C-UNIFIL TMF task group has rather robust Rules of Engagement (ROE),\(^42\) which also allow for boarding, i.e. going on board ships to check crew, cargo and the ship’s log, papers and documents. C-UNIFIL MTF, however, leaves boarding to the Lebanese authorities. In practice, though, the Lebanese Navy, in its turn, questions a ship detected and classified as suspect by UNIFIL MTF over the radio and usually escorts it to a Lebanese port where it is searched.\(^43\) This means that UNIFIL TMF limits itself to monitoring ship movement in the area and identifying suspect ships. At best, the Lebanese authorities carry out the in-port inspections with the sincere intention of intercepting clandestine arms shipments. In the worst case, however, UNIFIL MTF functions as a splendid framework, comforting to outsiders, for the sea-borne rearmament of Hezbollah and other militias.

\(\text{The crisis of May 2008}\)

How fragile the stability in Lebanon is became apparent when in May 2008 a crisis developed in reaction to a governmental decision. Although opinions differ on the gravity and nature of this crisis, it provided an interesting insight into the actual Lebanese power relations at the time.\(^44\) The crisis began when, in a speech on 5 May 2008, Walid Jumblat, the leader of the \textit{Progressive Socialist Party}, accused Hezbollah of having installed a camera system and an illegal telecommunication system at Rafiq Hariri international airport. The following day the Council of Ministers opened an inquiry and decided to dismiss with immediate effect the head of security of Beirut airport, Brigadier Wafiq Shqeir (a member of the Shiite Amal) on grounds of alleged pro-Hezbollah sympathies and to bring the telecommunication system under government control.\(^45\) After Hezbollah’s leader, Nasrallah, had called the government action an act of war against Hezbollah, he intimated that Hezbollah would react tough with his announcement that “we will cut off the hand that targets the weapons of the resistance”.\(^46\) Shortly after this, street fights broke out and Hezbollah militias occupied the western part of Beirut, supported by the Amal. After a period of rhetorical to-ing and fro-ing between Prime Minister Siniora and Hezbollah leader Nasrallah, the former, in a televised speech on 10 May 2008, asked the army to restore peace and order. With regard to the measures so objectionable for Hezbollah he remarked that “the two decisions of the government have not yet been decreed, and will be left to the discretion of the army”, and subsequently formulated his request to the army as follows: “we request the army to fulfil their role in protecting the Lebanese and to the fullest without delay, which they have not yet done... I ask them to enforce stability in all regions and withdraw all arms from the streets, end the sit-in and restore life to the capital and all of Lebanon”.\(^47\)
The army followed up this ‘request’ by ordering the parties to restore the status quo ante – pending the inquiry into any possible Hezbollah activities at or around the airport.\textsuperscript{48} This episode clearly shows that, in case of unwelcome developments and decisions for the organisation, Hezbollah is prepared to take up arms against its compatriots – and government. It also emerged that, although at a crucial moment it chose the side of the Prime Minister and the government, in the last instance the army must be considered an independent power factor, whose loyalty to the government is not self-evident. In the final analysis this realisation is not so surprising, as the Lebanese army, though not composed along sectarian delineations,\textsuperscript{49} is made up of service personnel coming from the same factions that fought each other in changing coalitions during the Lebanese civil war.\textsuperscript{50} Clearly, the Lebanese political practice is more unruly than the terms of the Ta’if agreement, in which it is laid down that the president of the republic is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, which in their turn are accountable to the cabinet and as such to the Prime Minister.

The current state of affairs

The political struggle in Lebanon is being fought at the sharp end and repeatedly erupted in violence also after the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000. Nevertheless, the country has gained a certain measure of stability, to a large extent due to the Ta’if agreement, which in fact serves as a national covenant for a Lebanese population divided along sectarian lines. In the context of the fragile Lebanese political system a number of main players can be distinguished: the Lebanese government and the parliament, the Lebanese armed forces and Hezbollah. Furthermore, Syria, Iran and Israel all try to influence the course of events in Lebanon to their advantage. Syria’s influence as protector and partner of Lebanon has been institutionalised in the Ta’if agreement. Iran exerts unofficial influence through the close ties the country maintains with Hezbollah, while Israel’s influence on the course of events is mainly limited to secret service activities and the option of a military intervention. Also after the Second Lebanon War Hezbollah’s military and political power remains unbroken, and up to the present day the Lebanese government is not its own master. As the chance of a voluntary disarmament by Hezbollah is small,\textsuperscript{51} Lebanon remains a weak state, whose stability and prosperity lie to a large extent in the hands of the parties mentioned above.

Syria

The Syrian power structures and political relations under president Bashar al-Assad do not differ widely from those under his father Hafez al-Assad. The same seems to hold for the Syrian foreign policy, which is mainly directed at winning back the Golan
Heights annexed by Israel and the dismantlement of Israel on behalf of the Palestinians, next to acquiring maximum influence and power in the region. As for internal relations, maintaining existing power structures and relations, in other words, the survival of the regime, is paramount. Except with the president, power in Syria lies with a powerful and omnipresent secret service – and to a lesser extent – the armed forces. Unlike Iran, Syria is a secular state based on a Syrian version of the socialist Arabic Ba’ath ideology. The country has a parliament and a multi-party system with political parties which are without exception virtually unconditionally loyal to the president. Every form of real opposition against the Syrian government is brutally repressed. Syria strives to reach its objectives by a system of ‘Realpolitik’. Thus, the country is consistent, inflexible and without too many scruples where it concerns matters of principle, but flexible and opportunistic when it comes to choosing the means and ways to attain its objectives. It is therefore not surprising that, in attaining its foreign political objectives, Syria is prepared to cooperate with Shiite Islamists of Hezbollah and Iran, a situation for which there are several indications. By the same token, it absolutely cannot be ruled out that in due course Syria will be prepared to conclude a contract with the devil, provided it would expect enough advantage coming from it: an understanding with Israel. Due to its close ties and involvement with Lebanon, but in particular because of its geographical position bordering on Israel and Iraq and thus situated between Lebanon and Iran, Syria is a threat as well as an opportunity for the stabilisation of the region. In any case, its geographical position and its influence in Lebanon, formalised in the Ta’if agreement, puts Syria in the position to make or break Hezbollah’s military power.

**Iran**

Whereas the relation between Syria and Lebanon has been framed in the Ta’if agreement, the Iranian influence is far more opaque. Iran does not have a monolithic political structure, as is often supposed, but possesses a number of democratic structures. Ultimately, however, the political process and societal developments are tightly supervised by the Shiite clergy. On top of that, the Iranian population is rather pro-western. Iran is in the fast lane towards becoming a regional military super power on the basis of its nuclear and space programmes and its active attempts to expand its influence in the wider region, such as in Iraq and Lebanon, through its religious kindred spirits. President Ahmedinejadh’s statements with regard to “wiping Israel off the map” may have been translated incorrectly in the media, but in combination with his remarks on the Holocaust, cannot be discarded as harmless rhetoric. After all, this is a country, which on the basis of an authoritarian religious ideology and the possession of growing military might, has the capability to conduct a proxy war, against Israel through Hezbollah from the fragile democratic Lebanon. As Iran’s thinking and acting is ultimately based on a fundamentalist religious ideology rather than on ‘Realpolitik’, as is
the case for Syria, the Iranian theocratic regime is arguably a much more dangerous opponent for Israel than the chess players in Damascus.

Israel

Israel has paid dearly for its month-long conflict with Hezbollah in the summer of 2006, as it suffered a serious loss of military prestige when failing to inflict a decisive defeat on an Arab opponent for the first time since 1948. The fact that this time Israel was fighting a well-organised irregular enemy operating from the territory of a sovereign but powerless neighbouring country was of course a factor that to some extent determined the course and the outcome of the conflict. The Israeli political and military decision making with regard to the Second Lebanon War was investigated by the Winograd commission and documented in a report of the same name to the Israeli parliament, which had ordered the inquiry. The report concludes that the political leadership failed to adequately weigh up the Israeli political and military options after the abduction of the two IDF soldiers on 12 July 2006. Subsequently, a choice was made for an ill-devised military option, without taking good store of the actual readiness and plans of the IDF. In its turn, the military leadership failed to present the political leadership with a clear picture of the actual readiness of the IDF. As deterrence is predominantly based on perception by the opponent rather than on military facts and figures, Israeli incurred considerable strategic damage. For Israel, effective deterrence is a matter of life and death, certainly as long as the country has to deal with such implacable opponents as Hezbollah, Iran and Hamas.

There are various not mutually exclusive options for Israel to restore its military deterrence, but they are limited to preventive military action against Hezbollah, Iran or Syria. Such a preventive operation against Hezbollah or Iran must be substantial in size and decisive, or else the remedy may be worse than the disease. The fact that Israel was able to carry out a preventive attack on a suspected Syrian nuclear facility on 6 September 2007 without provoking an immediate Syrian military action is telling and confirms that ‘Realpolitik’ is indeed the most important motive for Syrian support to Hezbollah.

One option, which on the face of it is quite obvious and has often been discussed in the media, is neutralising Iran’s nuclear military strategic capability by carrying out a surprise attack on Iranian facilities for the production of weapons of mass destruction. Apart from a doubtful chance of success, it is clear that such an undertaking must be successful in one go: failure is no option. Anyway, a successful Israeli attack will not undo the threat of a nuclear Iran, since, as the adage with regard to the atom bomb goes, you cannot uninvent it. Even if an Israeli (or American) military action is successful, Iran will sooner or later be able to produce or acquire atomic weapons if it chooses
to do so. Another option to restore the deterrence is a surprise attack directed at taking out the Hezbollah leadership and preferably its military capability. Both the ‘Iranian’ and ‘Hezbollah’ option will no doubt lead to war. A third military option is to no longer distinguish between Hezbollah and Lebanon and to attack Lebanon in its entirety. The question is, of course, whether Iran and Syria would stand idly by if such a large-scale Israeli military attack were to take place. A fourth military option is the development of innovative counter-missile systems in order to be able to withstand Hezbollah’s missile barrages.

Apart from military means for the restoration of the military deterrence there may be possibilities for Israel in the realm of diplomacy, directed at gradually diminishing the need for military deterrence. Its purpose would be to isolate Hezbollah, by taking away Iran’s possibilities and Syria’s reasons to threaten and fight Israel through Hezbollah. An Israeli initiative to come to an understanding with Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinians on the basis of the peace proposal brokered by Saudi Arabia in 2002 might be appropriate to that end. This peace initiative proposes an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict and peace with Israel in exchange for: (1) an Israeli withdrawal behind the pre- Six-day War (1967) borders; (2) Israeli acceptance of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza strip with East Jerusalem as its capital and (3) finding a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem in accordance with UN resolution of 11 December 1948. The EU and NATO might provide economic and security support for a peace process along these lines.

Hezbollah

For how long Hezbollah is prepared – or able – to operate within the constraints of the current political and societal power structures, without colliding with them, remains an open question. The events of May 2008, though, confirm the suspicion that Hezbollah only accepts the rules of the Lebanese political system as long as it does not go against the interests of the movement too much. Although Hezbollah’s power and influence in Lebanon is disproportionate with the number of seats in parliament the organisation has in its guise as a political party, the movement finally is only one of the many players in the Lebanese political arena. The Second Lebanon War caused Lebanon great economic damage and by the same token bolstered the opposition against Hezbollah. Nevertheless, Hezbollah’s military might is sufficient to give it two far-reaching options: seizing power, with a civil war as a likely result, or new hostilities against Israel, with the Lebanese government and society becoming involved as reluctant parties, if not hostages. A transformation of Hezbollah into a ‘normal’ Lebanese party would really only be possible if it were prepared to accept the rules of the Lebanese democracy. Given the strategic objectives of the organisation, the ensuing unforgiving stance towards
Israel, and the fundamental friction between the secular Lebanese democracy and the form of government desired by Hezbollah, this does not seem very likely for the time being. Should, however, Hezbollah be prepared to operate peacefully within the context of the Lebanese democratic system, the strong political and societal involvement of this relatively uncorrupted organisation could make a significant positive contribution to the further build-up of Lebanon. However, in the mean time, and in the aftermath of the Second Lebanon War, Hezbollah has made it perfectly clear that it is going to re-arm and is ready to defend itself against Israel. Hezbollah enjoys the support of Iran, Syria and Hamas, but also of substantial sections of the populations of the neighbouring Arab countries and Pakistan. Therefore, in its present form the organisation constitutes a threat for Lebanon and the entire region.

Concluding observations

First and foremost, Hezbollah presents itself as a Lebanese resistance movement, indicating at the same time that the struggle will not stop at Lebanon’s southern border. Furthermore, a declared enemy of Israel and champion of the Palestinian cause, Hezbollah enjoys support and popularity from far beyond the Lebanese national borders, including that from the supporters of the Palestinian Hamas. So, embedded in a weak and divided Lebanese state, Hezbollah holds a unique front line position against Israel and - should the movement so choose - it has the possibility to form a spearhead for any coalition of forces that aim to dismantle or destroy the state of Israel. This also includes Islamist networks hostile to the secular forces in the Islamic world and beyond.

The fact that Hezbollah finds itself in this unique position is caused by a combination of internal and external factors: Hezbollah’s strategic objectives, its military capabilities, the weak state of Lebanon, the military support of Iran and Syria to Hezbollah, the religious fundamental theocratic ideology shared by Hezbollah and Iran, the military strategic capability and potential of Iran, the regional ambitions of Iran as well as Syria and the geographical location of Lebanon with regard to Israel, Syria and Iran. Apart from the latter, these factors also represent the focal areas for parties wishing to influence the developments in and around Lebanon.

The political-societal positioning of Hezbollah makes it possible to obscure rather effectively from public view the inherently totalitarian character and far-reaching ambitions of the organisation. Hezbollah holds a firm grip on Lebanon and must be viewed as an exponent and spearhead of fundamentalist Islamic ideologies and forces. Apart from the way in which it developed, the Second Lebanon War should not have been much
of a surprise itself. Whether the forceful Israeli action, disproportional to many, will be sufficient to deter Hezbollah from seeking a new confrontation with Israel is an open question. Martin van Creveld, however, makes an interesting point when he states that it is precisely the disproportionality of Israel’s military action that will deter Hezbollah (and Hamas) from any further military adventures against Israel.

In a strictly military sense Israel has escalation dominance over Hezbollah, Lebanon and Syria, but, due to the large distance, not over Iran, its most dangerous enemy in what might now be termed a (temporarily) frozen conflict. In this situation Iran and Syria have considerably more freedom of action than Israel, and in principle can take the fight to the Zionist enemy at a time of their choosing and at any level of violence through Hezbollah. Of course, in such a situation Hezbollah would not be a passive instrument in the hands of Iran and Syria. Nevertheless, Hezbollah will arguably be inclined to accommodate its foreign sponsors because of its financial and military dependence. On top of that, the strategic objectives of Hezbollah and Iran with regard to Israel and the desired form of government of Lebanon coincide.

In the mean time, a number of missiles in the Hezbollah arsenal have enough range and calibre to deliver a nuclear, chemical or biological charge. Irrespective of the question whether Hezbollah would ultimately be prepared to deploy such weapons, it is a rather disquieting thought that a non-state organisation cherishing such far-reaching strategic objectives and driven by a radical religious ideology might have this kind of weapons at its disposal in the future. This is not only so because of the situation in the Middle East, but ultimately also with a view to the struggle against global Dijihadism. Because of the persistent hostile rhetoric of Hezbollah and Iran against Israel and the far-reaching international consequences of weapons of mass destruction deployment it would not be wise to denounce such a development as unlikely.

Hezbollah is a complex and in many respects unique Lebanese movement, whose thinking and acting is related to the Iranian Shiite fundamentalist Islamism. Hezbollah has the military and political power to conduct itself as a ‘state within a state’, and did exactly that in its confrontation with the Lebanese government in May 2008. It is evident that such an organisation poses a continuous potential threat to the very political system it is part of. Moreover, Hezbollah’s military might, in combination with its fundamentalist Islamic ideology not only causes the organisation to be a threat to Lebanon and Israel, but by the same token constitutes a threat with an international dimension. Whether Hezbollah in the end will be able to realise its ambitions, depends to a large extent on the strength of the Lebanese government. Even if Hezbollah were to transform into a normal political party – voluntarily or not -, it would be quite a challenge for the
Lebanese government to recapture the terrain lost to Hezbollah in the political societal arena. Establishing Lebanese governmental authority over the entire Lebanese territory and blocking foreign aid to Hezbollah would therefore be the most important instruments in neutralising Hezbollah’s role as a dominant factor in the region. In the last instance, the key to the realisation of UN resolution 1701 lies in Damascus.

Notes

1. Captain S. (Sjoerd) J.J. Both (Royal Netherlands Navy) is an associate professor at the Military Operational Arts and Sciences section of the Netherlands Defence Academy.
18. Massive Syrian political pressure caused the concept Peace Treaty agreed between Israel and Lebanon on 17 May 1983 never to be ratified.
19. Dr. Reuven Erlich (2006), *Raising the issue of the Sheba’a Farms in the proposed American-French Security Council draft resolution for ending the fighting: background information and significance*, Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies (CSS), August 9, 2006.
20. Ibid.
30. Dr. Reuven Erlich, *Hezbollah’s use of Lebanese civilians as human shields*, Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the CSS, 5 December 2006.


34. Letter dated 1 December 2006 from the Secretary-General, addressed to the President of the Security Council, UN Doc S/2006/933.

35. Ibid.


37. Resolution 1701 paragraph 8 explicitly states ‘so that pursuant to the Lebanese cabinet decision of 27 July 2006, there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than that of the Lebanese State.’


40. Assessment based on a ‘generic’ missile with a volume of 3 cubic meters and a weight of 200 kg and a few larger missiles up to 10 cubic meters and 4000kg including launching pads.

41. The May 2008 crisis was solved by resuming the status quo ante. As a result the head of the security services of Beirut airport, an Amal member and an alleged active Hezbollah supporter, is still in function.


43. Feedback to MTF ships on Lebanese inspection results was provided by CTF daily situational reports.


46. Aaron Klein, ‘Hezbollah seizes western Beirut ‘Hellish’ street fighting paralyzes

47. ‘Prime Minister Fouad Siniora addresses Lebanese from Grand Serail live’, *Now Lebanon*, May 10, 2008.


50. Lucy Fielder, ‘Sending in the troops’, *Al Ahram weekly*, 17-23 August 2006.


58. Ibid.

59. Sanu Kainikara and Russel Parkin, op. cit., draw similar conclusions.


Mission Impossible? The deployment of the ground forces during Operation Change of Direction

Ted Jansen

NL-ARMS, 2009, 123-152

Introduction

If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither your enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

This contribution describes the ground operations of the Israel Defense Force (IDF) and Hezbollah during their confrontation in the summer of 2006, which began with an ambush on an Israeli patrol on 12 July, during which two servicemen were abducted, and which ended with a cease-fire on 14 August. This conflict was characterised by the deployment of a western-oriented armed force as an instrument of state against an irregularly, but also partially regularly, operating non-state opponent in southern Lebanon.

The IDF ground forces had the greatest trouble dealing with the resistance Hezbollah put up, and when it was all over, both parties claimed victory. The question is whether defeating Hezbollah was a ‘mission impossible’ for the IDF ground forces. By studying the ground operations of both parties, conclusions can be drawn that can contribute towards finding an answer to this question.

This contribution begins with a description of the principles on which the Dutch army doctrine is based, as an instrument of analysis, and is followed by an overview of the preparations both parties made prior to the outbreak of the conflict. Subsequently, the ground operations of the parties will be described by means of a chronological survey of the combat actions. With the help of the principles the ground operations will be analysed, and the conclusions drawn from this can give an indication about the extent to which it was indeed a mission impossible for the IDF ground forces to defeat Hezbollah. Moreover, the conclusion may be of help to western armed forces in the preparation of their operations against a possible opponent operating in both a regular and irregular manner.
Principles

In order to analyse the ground operations of both parties the principles laid down in the Dutch doctrines will be used. They are:

1. Retention of morale: This principle relates to the combat readiness of personnel, and covers such concepts as group cohesion, motivation, et cetera.
2. Security: This principle is essential for retaining own assets, freedom of action, concentrating the force and for taking risks outside the point of main effort. Withholding information from the enemy is a contributing factor to it and security encompasses taking active and passive measures.
3. Concentration of assets: By concentrating means at the right place and time, a point of main effort can be created, so that a decision can be forced or an effect with a high priority achieved.
4. Effectiveness: Every soldier should be focused on an unambiguous, clearly defined and attainable objective. If this is not the case, it usually results in the failure of the operation.
5. Economy of effort: Military means are almost always scarce, and in order to create a point of main effort, a commander must deploy his assets according to type and quantity in relation to the set objective. In this respect, he is expected to take well-considered risks.
6. Unity of effort: The assets and effort applied in the pursuit of a single objective have to be synchronised. This enables the commander to deploy all available military capacity to achieve his objective efficiently, while at the same time reducing his vulnerability to the enemy.
7. Simplicity: Composite and difficult plans and orders increase the likelihood of confusion, especially at times when events rapidly succeed each other. The complexity of the modern military operations also creates chaos, stress, et cetera. Clear plans and simple orders, therefore, increase the chance of success.
8. Flexibility: Commanders are expected to be able to adapt their plans if necessary and respond to unexpected opportunities or threats in order to achieve their objective. An important aspect of flexibility is mobility.
9. Initiative: Commanders should strive to achieve or maintain their freedom of action. The objective is to act sooner and faster than the opponent and to avoid a situation in which they can only respond to the actions of other parties.
10. Offensive operations: This principle is considered the most important means available to a commander to enable him to act effectively and decisively to achieve his objective. This requires the right attitude for constantly gaining and holding the initiative.
11. Surprise: By attacking an opponent before he finds out where, when and how the attack is to occur, or by deploying means for which he is not prepared, a decision or an advantage for the own operations can be achieved.

12. Sustainability: A force must be able to sustain an operation once it has embarked on it until the objective set has been achieved. This can only be done if the logistic preparation has been included in the planning and can be realised.

The run-up to the conflict: Hezbollah

Between 2000 and the summer of 2006 Hezbollah formed a well-trained, well-armed, motivated and highly-developed war machine on the border with northern Israel. The movement transformed from a successful guerrilla organisation directed against the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon between 1982 and 2000 to an organisation which was to employ conventional, guerrilla as well as terrorist methods.

Hezbollah had prepared itself well for a future conflict by carefully studying Israel and the IDF’s manner of operating in the past and present as well as the terrain. It had learned many lessons during the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, and expected large-scale Israeli ground operations in reaction to its irregular operations directed at bringing war-fatigue to the IDF and its allies and at chasing them from southern Lebanon. The IDF mainly reacted with precision firepower by artillery and air strikes, combined with limited ground actions. In 1993 Israel had taken Hezbollah off guard with this method, inflicting considerable losses. During the second IDF operation in 1996 Hezbollah had been better prepared and mainly carried out missile barrages on Israel. In spite of the losses and a destroyed Lebanese infrastructure (with much collateral damage and civilian casualties) Hezbollah kept carrying out actions against the IDF and its allies in southern Lebanon and firing missiles against Israel. Eventually, Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah was convinced that in a future conflict Israel would increasingly rely on precision firepower and less on the deployment of ground troops. It thought that Israel would not risk substantial losses during large-scale operations any longer, while also the prevention of collateral damage and civilian casualties would play an important role. From an historic perspective Hezbollah was aware that it should not engage mechanised battalions and brigades in direct combat. Moreover, the organisation was convinced that the Israeli society, as a modern open western society, would be vulnerable and that the mental resilience would greatly decrease as a result of continuous missile barrages.
That is why Hezbollah chose for an approach that would exploit these Israeli vulnerabilities, which was to become the basis for its operational and tactical planning.9 The modus operandi consisted of two elements:

- Maximum degrading of the civilian life and causing casualties and damage by firing missiles at Israel.10
- Attrition and disruption of the IDF, by delaying it and inflicting losses in a defence from reinforced positions, whereby the loss of terrain was not essential, and by fighting as a guerrilla force.

Hezbollah used two principles:

- A defence line on the Lebanese-Israeli border and a second line with depth up to the Litani river.
- A deeper area with logistics, training and control and command centres.

The organisation formed large quantities of missile units on the basis of their range, something it did not make a secret of, as with its other military potential, in view of its deterrence strategy towards Israel.11 In order to make it more difficult for the IDF to attack targets, Hezbollah had dismantled as many possible targets as possible on the strategic and operational level, such as command centres, expecting them to be attacked first. On the tactical level the weapon signature and exposure of the missile systems was decreased by mobility, concealment and dispersion, even if the Israeli Air Force (IAF) destroyed certain amounts of them.

In order to protect the missile systems and to attrit the Israeli ground forces a defence system consisting of two lines was implemented to delay the IDF and to inflict as many losses as possible. The Hezbollah intent was a tenacious defence, completely independent and self-sustained, operating for a longer period of time.

To the south of the Litani river up to the Israeli border a network of bunkers, tunnels, positions, anti-tank obstacles, caches and command, control and communication (C3) centres were established and prepared. All this was spread out, concealed, camouflaged and reinforced in order to be able to withstand heavier weapon systems. There were even hydraulic doors, multiple entrances and exits, store rooms and cameras at the entrances. Houses and entire sections of villages were changed into fortifications. Hezbollah divid-
ed southern Lebanon up into three main areas, each with several sectors, consisting of some 12-15 villages.\(^{12}\)

It implemented an elaborate deception and security programme with dummy bunkers and the Hezbollah fighters each only knowing about part of the defence positions.\(^{13}\) The southern Lebanese population was denied access to certain areas where secret bunkers, positions and ambushes had been prepared.\(^{14}\)

After an extensive terrain analysis, the organisation prepared ambushes for as many IDF approaches as possible. Southern Lebanon is mountainous terrain, canalising because of the many wadis, with little and low growth, offering good possibilities for concealment. In the summer the heat and high humidity make circumstances more difficult for manoeuvring troops. The many villages offer excellent possibilities for fortifications by the concealment and cover, and the many hilltops in front of the villages give good fields of observation and fire, sometimes even deep into Israel. The villages consist of many narrow streets and alleys and all the roads lie within a few hundred metres’ distance from the villages and built-up areas. Because of these circumstances southern Lebanon is infantry terrain par excellence, and less suitable for mechanised units, as they lack the room for manoeuvre.\(^{15}\)

The effect of the positions and ambushes was reinforced by the use of obstacles, anti-tank systems, mortars, mines, IEDs and booby traps. As a result, the IDF units could be canalised, delayed and held up, while they were simultaneously pounded with concentrated fire.

Hezbollah learned the tactics to engage mechanised units with light infantry, anti-tank means and fire support from ambushes and reinforced positions.\(^{16}\) Thus, the IDF ground troops would be forced to also operate in the rough terrain outside the approaches, which would greatly delay their advance.\(^{17}\)

At the moment the IDF could push through its attacks and the tactical value of the positions had been degraded, the Hezbollah fighters would be allowed to fall back to deeper positions or to melt away among the population. Thus, Hezbollah could attack the IDF repeatedly. Because of its static positions and the IAF’s air superiority, Hezbollah’s room for manoeuvre was limited to the movement of small units, which were spread out and organised in such a way that they could shore up and re-supply weak sectors.

Hezbollah groups consisted of seven to ten fighters and the anti-tank teams were made up of two well-trained operators with two or three less well-trained men for sup-
Hezbollah opted to fight the battle with a minimum number of fighters. Opinions differed on the uniforms of the Hezbollah fighters. According to Erlich, the fighters wore civilian clothes in order not to be recognisable as combatants and confuse the IDF. Biddle states that regular Hezbollah fighters were uniformed apart from a few exceptions. There were several occasions where the IDF dared not open fire because it was thought they might be own troops. It is reasonable to assume that sympathisers and fighters in the villages were not uniformed. It is estimated that Hezbollah deployed between 1,000 and 3,000 regular fighters, some of whom were part-time fighters, such as villagers who took part in the fighting. Hezbollah was able to call up between 10,000 and 25,000 extra fighters and sympathisers, whose level of training and possible options for deployment were unknown.

Hezbollah’s arsenal mainly consisted of simple and cheap arms, ammunition and explosives that could easily be acquired. It also had at its disposal modern and advanced anti-tank systems, necessary to put up an effective fight against the IDF mechanised units. The organisation had technologically advanced means, such as listening devices, computers, night-vision devices and a C3-network with mainly dug-in glass fibre lines, radios with encrypted codes and GSM cell phones. Thus, a network of independent sectors and autonomous cells had been created.

Hezbollah also received external support in its preparation, training and supplies, with Iran and Syria providing most weapon systems, ammunition, know-how and technology. Many Hezbollah fighters had received training in Syria and Iran, in particular for the advanced weapon systems, while the organisation took care of much of its own training in the relatively safe areas in the Bekaa valley in northern Lebanon, making use of its combat experience and tactical insights acquired in earlier conflicts with the IDF.

Hezbollah managed to counter the Israeli electronic warfare through its glass fibre communication lines, encryptions, strict communication discipline and by listening in on Israeli communication networks and GSMs.

It also succeeded in applying Human Intelligence, with much information coming from Israeli Arabs and Druze. Money and drugs were used to buy informants in Israel, and by working together with the Lebanese intelligence officers an Israeli spy network was uncovered and a number of Israeli agents were persuaded to defect. Fake information was played into the hands of the Israelis and Hezbollah had its own agents operate in northern Israel and observed IDF activities along the border.

As a continuous missile barrage on military and civilian targets in Israel was crucial, Hezbollah commanders held strict operational control over the missile units, while they
gave more freedom to their ground troops, which gave the more junior commanders flexibility and room for initiative in their fight against the IDF. This tactical freedom for the ground troops can be seen as a form of mission command.

Hezbollah estimated that, in spite of its modern C3 means, it would not be capable of controlling the number of small units in case of large-scale IDF ground operations. The decentralised manner of operating and the establishment of fortifications had brought along the disadvantage of a more static defence, which meant that Hezbollah could not react faster than the Israeli decision making cycle, but it forced the IDF to fight on its terms by waiting for it, carrying out infiltrations, choosing the moments of opening fire and carrying out ambushes. The lack of room for manoeuvre was compensated for by sacrifice and resilience, attrition and having fighters operate as stay-behinds behind the IDF lines. Besides, the bulk of the southern Lebanese population and many local companies supported Hezbollah by solving its logistical problems, such as electricity, water, vehicles and medicines.

Hezbollah ignored and intentionally abused international treaties and the humanitarian war law by firing at civilian targets in Israel and in executing its operations. The Lebanese population was held as a shield against the IDF firepower, especially in the Shiite villages. In the north-eastern part of southern Lebanon Hezbollah left the Christian and Druze villages relatively alone, as it lacked support there and because of the estimation that these villages would fall outside the main effort of the IDF attack. Hezbollah spread out as much as possible between the villages of southern Lebanon, often in locations where it was sure Israel would not dare attack immediately, such as hospitals, centres of population and mosques. The Shiite majority of the southern Lebanon mainly cooperated voluntarily, but Hezbollah also sometimes paid rent, exerted pressure or kept people in the dark. Farmers were even paid to fire missiles from their orchards. Besides, Hezbollah abused ambulances, Red Cross vehicles, humanitarian convoys and civilian vehicles by transporting materiel and fighters in them or by driving behind them at an extremely short distance. The organisation realised that it would work to their advantage from a media perspective if Israel attacked these targets, which then could be exploited for propaganda purposes.

Hezbollah knew that time would be on its side because protracted military campaigns lead to many losses and are very expensive, as the Israelis experienced between 1982 and 2000. Moreover, Hezbollah stood to gain much public support, especially within the Arabic world, if it showed that Israel could not bring it to heel.
The organisation created a situation in which Israel would have to choose between two undesirable options, should a conflict arise: avoiding ground operations, which would leave Israel's vulnerability (to missile attacks) clearly apparent, or invading southern Lebanon and engaging in a war of attrition with a (semi) guerrilla movement, in which substantial losses were to be expected.36

The run-up to the conflict: Israel

After the withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000 Israel was forced to react immediately to the Palestinian insurgencies (Intifada) in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The IDF directed its attention on training for and carrying out counter-insurgency (COIN) operations.

This emphasis came at the expense of the build-up of experience, education and training for regular combat actions. With regard to Hezbollah, Israel opted for the method of deterrence. Besides, it was convinced that an inter-state war was a thing of the past because of its effect of deterrence and the superiority of the Israeli military might. The future for the IDF would be one of mainly low-intensity asymmetric conflicts.

After its withdrawal from Lebanon the IDF had embarked on the development of a new doctrine for the operational level, embracing theories of new developments mainly originating in the United States. The ideas ensued from technological developments, future expectations of having to operate mainly against irregular opponents and the maximum aversion of own losses.37 Precision firepower, Effects Based Operations (EBO) and Systematic Operational Design (SOD) became the foundations upon which the new doctrine was to be built.

EBO encompasses the neutralising of key capacities, such as command posts, logistic installations, radar systems, et cetera, with precision weapons, so that an opponent can no longer deploy his military capability, and consequently is unable to reach his military objectives. It is all about attacking his “cognitive domain” and systems, rather than destroying his troops. Important advantages are the containing of collateral damage and military casualties, and the limitation of elaborate ground operations.38 After the withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 conducting a large-scale ground offensive had become unpopular because of the high costs it brought along, the many losses and the limited results.39 EBO created a sort of short cut to attaining strategic targets, by considering the opponent as a system and taking out his essential elements, where formerly successes on the tactical and operational levels, mainly through ground operations, were required.40
The successes of the air campaigns in the Gulf War (1991) and Kosovo (1999) fuelled this idea. On top of that, the development of high-tech means and the technological advantage over any possible opponents played a role. Ground forces had to transform into small high-quality units, which, instead of seeking traditional control of terrain (physical retention or conquest), were to cooperate with the air force. Henceforth, they were to monitor an area, and then create “effects” in a sort of joint network, by finding targets for the Israeli Air Force (IAF), protecting the Israeli borders against intrusions and fighting any possible opponents who could not be targeted from the air.

The formation level of the army corps was abolished and the IDF was in the process of abolishing the division level when the war broke out. There was to be a role for the brigade at best to keep an area under control. These brigades were not any longer organic units, but composed mainly of special forces, light infantry and other expertises.

This Israeli composition was different from the globally accepted ideas on firepower having to be in balance with classic ground troops and their operations.

Another theory for the new doctrine was SOD, an instrument developed to help commanders with campaign planning (operational level) by thinking critically, systematically and methodologically about warfare. The SOD focuses on “the concept of an enemy” and gives operational commanders the tools to conceptualise the enemy as well as his own troops in order to design feasible campaigns. The terminology and methodology of the new doctrine was also disseminated to the lower tactical and technical levels, which was to lead to great problems.

Many IDF officers thought this SOD perspective an elitist programme, at odds with the familiar IDF manner of conducting war and executing command and control, or that the new doctrine was way above their heads. The tactical and technical levels would have wanted the old system of intention, mission, et cetera, to continue. Ron Tira, an IAF officer, who has researched the new doctrine, indicates that especially field commanders did not know what to do or when their mission had been achieved.

The Chief of the General Staff of the IDF, Lieutenant General Halutz, with his faith in Air Power and precision weapons, already went to the point in 2001 where he stated that the IDF would have to say farewell to the concept of the ground war, and declared in April 2006 the new doctrine (called Vulture and Snake, whereby the IAF was the Vulture engaging the localised guerrillas, the Snake) had gone into effect.
The reasonably successful COIN operations against the Palestinian Intifada seemed to vindicate the new doctrine. The over-reliance on EBO, SOD, precision fire power and the application of the new doctrine on the wrong levels in the end were contributing factors to the problems the IDF experienced during the conflict. Nevertheless, Halutz was confident that with this doctrine Israel could defeat any opponent bold enough to attack it.47

As a result of the new ways of thinking, but also the budget cuts that had been going on for years, the IDF went through a number of reorganisations. With budgets mainly reserved for the IAF and other technological means, the cuts impacted innovation, education and training, maintenance and supply management of the ground forces, which, as a consequence, lost some of their technological advantage with regard to Hezbollah.48

The IDF is composed of standing units with regular and conscript personnel (20 per cent) and reserve units with reservists (80 per cent), who are sometimes called up for operational tasks. As Israel did not need to carry out large-scale ground operations anymore, the IDF had to become “smaller and smarter”.49 In order to monitor areas, rather than control them, fewer troops were needed. Especially the reserve units and the reserve pools were reduced, also because of the high costs of maintaining these units.

The cuts were mainly felt in the education and training of units and the maintenance of materiel. For this reason and the continuing Palestinian insurgency the ground forces were barely able to carry out their tasks. In particular the reserve units were badly hit and in fact two armies began to evolve: a standing army and a reserve army, which was less well trained, less professional and less equipped. There were many logistical problems for newly-called up reserve units, with essential materials and supplies lacking.

Personnel with specific capacities, such as tank crews, were used to patrol in the Palestinian areas, often even for years on end, without exercising and training with their own materiel. Regular as well as reserve personnel at brigade level and up lacked the tactical and technical skills, adequate individual and formation training.50 Reserve units had not exercised in large formations for years, and in 2003 there had been no exercise at all for reserve units, nor were any tactical staff exercises held. Also, the new doctrine and the abolition of the formation levels contributed to this lack of know-how and experience.

The budget cuts also had an impact on the military intelligence service (AMAN) for the supply of tactical information. Intelligence, aerial photography and maps related to Hezbollah had not been up-to-date for a long time due to lack of finances, and, besides,
they had no priority anyway. Moreover, intelligence was not passed on from the strategic level to the lower levels, which had to do which strict classification, bureaucracy and compartmentalisation. Thus, Hezbollah’s development was known, but the exact locations of bunkers, positions, caches and weapon systems were not. Apart from that, AMAN over-relied on technological means for the gathering of information, while its HUMINT unit had failed to infiltrate Hezbollah or to obtain information from the close-knit Shiite community in southern Lebanon.

The logistics were reorganised drastically, too. As fire power became more important than manoeuvre, a modular logistic system was established with centralised logistic areas. In accordance with the operational planning and the developments on the battlefield, a modular structure could be set up, which ensured availability, flexibility and efficiency. Thus, units were deprived of their own support units, which generated a considerable economy.

The IDF had a number of operational theatres: Northern, Central and Southern Command and the Home Front, each with its own joint staff, which controlled the units of the various Services. Northern Command was responsible for the border area with Lebanon and Syria. The ground forces were responsible for southern Lebanon up to the Litani river. For air operations, particular Close Air Support (CAS) south of the Litani river, a special IAF section had been accommodated in Northern Command HQ. In Northern Command, prior to the start of the conflict, Division 91 was responsible for the border area of Israel and Lebanon. During the conflict more (reserve) units were assigned to Northern Command and Division 91, including units from other operational theatres.

The course of the battle

10-17 July

On 12 July 2006 Hezbollah unexpectedly succeeded in abducting two Israeli soldiers. A patrol of a reserve battalion (Brigade 300, Division 91) was ambushed near border post 105. It was to have been the last patrol of this unit and on completion of their task they were to go straight home. The patrol did not follow a number of SOPs (Standing Operating Procedures) in their preparation and instead of approaching the wadi near border post 105 tactically, both Humvees drove on bumper to bumper.

At 09:00 hrs an IED exploded next to the two vehicles. One Humvee was destroyed by a guided anti-tank missiles and the other was hit by several RPG rockets. Three men
were killed and four wounded. Hezbollah fighters captured two wounded Israeli soldiers and quickly crossed the border again. In order to mask their attack and to create confusion, there was simultaneous firing on IDF locations and Israeli villages in the environment of border post 105. The battalion commander responsible for this sector sent the codeword ‘Hannibal’ (abduction IDF soldiers) to all units in Northern Command. The codeword should have led to a number of emergency procedures and retaliatory actions. The battalion commander should immediately have sent units into Lebanon in order to cut off the retreat of the Hezbollah fighters, but refrained from doing so, out of fear of mine and IED threats. The IDF reacted with some elements from Hannibal, like targeting Hezbollah positions with artillery fire and air strikes.

At 11:00 hrs, finally, one Merkava IV tank and an armoured infantry platoon were sent into Lebanon, after all, to attack the abductors and liberate their hostages. When they were approaching a possible escape route of Hezbollah, a heavy IED exploded under the tank, destroying it and killing its crew. Hezbollah had planned a solid retreat with mines and IEDs in order to get its fighters (and the hostages) into a safe area and to anticipate any Israeli counter-attacks and liberation attempts. In the mean time, the IAF partially executed operation Hannibal and bombed a number of bridges in southern Lebanon in an attempt to seal off any escape routes of Hezbollah to the north.

In response to the abduction and attacks of Hezbollah, the Israeli government decided to stage a large-scale operation: Change of Direction, which later was called Just Reward. Halutz informed the Cabinet that a large-scale military operation according to an existing plan, Country’s Shield, would last nine to ten weeks. Within a week and a half the IDF would gain control of southern Lebanon from the Litani river southwards (hammer) and from the Lebanese-Israeli border northwards (anvil) with (indirect) precision fire and small units (not conquering and occupying it). Six to eight weeks would then be used to find and neutralise as many Katyusha missile systems as possible. Subsequently, if the objectives had been attained, the IDF would conduct an orderly retreat over a period of two weeks to the border.

Out of fear of many losses and civilian casualties the Cabinet, however, opted for an offensive strategy with precision weapons against strategic and operational Hezbollah targets. The consequence of this decision was that Israel would become less flexible if at some point it was decided to invade after all, because the preparation and the call-up of reserve units would be delayed. In order to prevent Syrian interference, the military operations were to be limited to Lebanese territory.
The intention of crushing Hezbollah with secondary objectives to weaken, reduce or neutralise it, led to some confusion, as clear measures for attaining the objectives, such as duration and result indications, were not specified. The result was that, also in line with the new doctrine, the IDF was less prepared to take risks for the ground operations, with a view to the prevention of own losses. During the afternoon and night of 12 July there was regular exchange of fire between the IDF and Hezbollah.

Apart from the precision fire power, ground forces and special forces were deployed to attack Hezbollah positions on a limited scale, particularly in the first defence line. On 13 July the IAF had destroyed almost all long-range missile installations. Hezbollah had expected a limited reaction from Israel with artillery bombardments and air strikes, followed by negotiations, but was taken by surprise by the scale and ferocity of the Israeli air campaign. Israel, however, did not succeed in transforming this strategic surprise into a tactical one by launching a ground offensive. The IAF continued attacking tactical targets (Katyushas), which became increasingly difficult due to a lack of good intelligence, something the ground troops would be hampered by during the entire conflict. In the night of 13 and 14 July IDF ground troops carried out attacks on villages and positions of Hezbollah along the Israeli-Lebanese border.

The continuing missile barrages on Israel and the failure to liberate the hostages made clear that a ground offensive would probably be necessary if Israel wanted to reach its objectives. The decision not to do so for the time being, however, gave Hezbollah even more time and opportunity to prepare. Alarming reports came in from the units that were carrying out offensive actions on the ridge along the Israeli-Lebanese border. The IDF units were surprised by the ferocity and tenacity of the Hezbollah defence, which unexpectedly kept fighting even under heavy artillery fire and air strikes and also at night. This was something the IDF has not been used to with its former opponents. CAS and fire support were given only sparingly with a view to the danger of fratricide and the faded know-how and skills of air support and fire support procedures. CAS, in particular, was also limited because of an obsolete liaison system between air forces and ground troops, which led to assigned targets not being attacked in time. The IAF air operations control section of Northern Command did not work properly, either. Besides, the IAF decided in an early stage to a limited deployment of combat helicopters out of fear of the anti-air capacity of Hezbollah. The granted CAS flown by combat aircraft was mostly executed in time and accurately. The above-mentioned problems with regard to fire and air support were to continue during the entire conflict.
At the end of day on 15 July IDF units began to carry out temporary incursions of about a kilometre in depth into southern Lebanon along the entire border in order to destroy positions and missile installations of Hezbollah, which was finally achieved with great difficulty. Israel was convinced on the basis of its intelligence that the defence along the border was Hezbollah’s main defence line. If this line was broken, the IDF would have access to southern Lebanon, Hezbollah would be blinded and the organisation would have incurred so many losses that the missile barrages on Israel would stop.

17-21 July

Halutz still had no intention of launching a massive ground offensive and mobilising reserve units on a large-scale, in spite of pressure from the ground forces to do so. Eventually, he gave his ground commanders permission to carry out attacks on Hezbollah targets inside Lebanon on the battalion and brigade levels. These raids, however, had no tactical objectives and time frames, but, in the context of the new doctrine they were intended to create an “awareness of the victory” for Israel and a “cognitive perception of a defeat” for Hezbollah. A great number of IDF officers did not like this approach because the terrain was not under control and the men would die for nothing due to a lack of specific targets.

The IDF warned the Lebanese civilian population with leaflets to leave the combat area, in order to prevent as many civilian casualties as possible, which led to the IDF losing the element of surprise in certain actions. On 17 July the first Israeli offensive on a larger scale began near Maroun-al-Ras intended to get a foothold inside Lebanon that could function as a base for any possible further attacks inside Lebanon.

The first (elite) unit to go in was taken by surprise by the quantity of fire and tenacity of the Hezbollah fighters. Their intelligence proved to be wrong, for instead of light resistance, they met with a well-prepared and equipped network of tunnels and bunkers from which fanatic fighting came. The following morning this unit was surrounded, something Adam and Halutz could hardly believe, and new troops had to be sent in to relieve them. In the night of 18 and 19 July the IDF managed to timely detect and thwart inside Lebanon two infiltration attempts of Hezabollah centrally along the Israeli-Lebanese border. Due to the intensifying of the fighting at Maroun-al-Ras the IDF was forced to deploy more troops.

On 19 July also fire contacts took place along the coast and near the small town of Marwaheen where Israeli tanks and bulldozers crossed the border, only to withdraw again on 21 July. That same day Israeli tanks entered the area south-east of Bint Jbeil and Maroun-al-Ras and the first big major battle ensued. Again, the Israeli were surprised
by the tactical and fanatical actions of Hezbollah. They fought tenaciously, knew the terrain well, defended their positions and managed to outmanoeuvre the IDF locally. The Hezbollah fighters allowed the Israeli troops to come so close in order to create a maximum effect of surprise and to make optimal use of their weapon systems. Fire fights lasted longer and often took place at a closer range than the IDF had expected of a guerrilla organisation. Many tank crews were wounded by anti-tank rockets and because tank commanders were exposed from the turrets. Hezbollah even carried out a conventional counter-attack with a fire base on Israeli troops in houses on a hill near Maroun-al-Ras. Only after six days of intensive fighting, mainly in built-up terrain, was most of Maroun-al-Ras under IDF control on 24 July. As Maroun-al-Ras was the only location along the border where the IDF penetrated deeper into Lebanon, Hezbollah concluded that Bent Jbeil, a town to the north of Maroun-al-Ras, would be the next objective and that the IDF was making preparations to that end. Upon this, Hezbollah began to reinforce the town further with dozens of fighters and specialists in sabotage, anti-tank combat and air defence. It was reported that the IDF commanders were operating with exaggerated caution out of concern for the increasing number of casualties. Other reports confirmed that there was too little expertise to conduct the fight with joint arms and that the basic combat skills were at too low a level. Hezbollah commanders found the Israeli soldiers, even the best trained among them, badly organised and disciplined, something which was also observed by IDF commanders. This, however, was even worse in the reserve units and some commanders actually doubted whether they could be committed in combat situations. One brigade commander had an engineer platoon arrested because their commander, a reserve officer, refused an order to clear a road of mines and explosives, as his people were complaining that in that environment already 10 Israeli soldiers had been killed.

21 July-4 August

The limited tactical effectiveness of the air campaign and the tenacious resistance caused Halutz to call up reserve units on 21 July. This mobilisation was chaotic because key functionaries were taken by surprise by the call up and had not received any warning orders. The logistics of the reserve units lagged behind some 24 to 48 hours with their deployment, with the result that many reservists lacked basic items in their personal equipment. Moreover, there was a shortage of bullet-proof vests, vests for medical personnel, radios, ammunition, thermal optical equipment, food and water. The reserve units needed a week's training before they could be deployed, but many reservists felt this training was too short and inadequate. In contrast to the chaotic mobilisation there was a high turn-out and most IDF personnel were highly motivated to go and teach Hezbollah a lesson. In spite of the possibilities the mobilisation gave Halutz to concentrate troops on the Lebanese border and to deploy them from there, his basic
plan remained unchanged: no determined ground attack in order to drive out Hezbollah north of the Litani river or to systematically destroy its missile installations. A general in Halutz’ staff indicated that it was not the intention to eliminate every missile,\textsuperscript{81} but to upset the military logic of Hezbollah, entirely along the lines of the SOD of the new doctrine. In spite of the disappointing results, Halutz and his staff continued making efforts to secure the above-mentioned “awareness of the victory” and to give Hezbollah the “cognitive perception of defeat”.\textsuperscript{82} The battle for Bint Jbeil played a major role in this.

On 23 July the ground offensive against Bint Jbeil started and around 24 July elements of the Golani Brigade and the 7th Tank Brigade had taken up positions on the ridges surrounding Bint Jbeil. On 25 July the 35th Paratrooper Brigade began to cordon off the town from the north-west, so that Hezbollah could not leave or enter. That same day the commander of Division 91 already stated to the press that his troops had Bint Jbeil under control. “We can give precision fire wherever it is required and attack specific targets with offensive actions when they are localised”, exactly in line with the new doctrine.

Nevertheless, Halutz considered that it would be necessary to capture Bint Jbeil, after all. It would not be a tactical victory but have symbolic value and create a “victory spectacle”, which in turn would influence the “cognitive perception” of Hezbollah.\textsuperscript{83} From an historical perspective, Bint Jbeil was considered a Centre of Gravity of Hezbollah.\textsuperscript{84} Its fall would be a psychological blow for Hezbollah, while it would mean a boost to Israeli morale. However, the battle was to have more repercussions for the Israeli public opinion on the professionalism and capacity for judgement of the IDF. Halutz ordered Adam to capture the town with only one battalion, which prompted Adam into reminding Halutz that the ancient city alone had more than 5,000 houses.\textsuperscript{85} His protest fell on deaf ears and after an intensive artillery barrage the 51st battalion of the Golani Brigade entered the town from the east. Amidst the artillery barrage Hezbollah reinforcements had still been taking up positions inside the town. Two companies of the battalion were ambushed. The Hezbollah fighters were up in the higher stories of the buildings and had a good view on the advancing Israelis. There were fatalities and many wounded. When the fighting intensified, groups of Hezbollah fighters manoeuvred on the Israeli flanks and kept delivering direct and indirect fire on the troops. The two companies continued to beat off the heavy attacks, while other companies tried to evacuate the dead and the wounded. Hirsch informed Halutz and reported that no helicopters could land due to the intensive fighting. Eventually, it took the entire night to evacuate the casualties. By the end of the conflict the IDF had not even secured Bint Jbeil completely.
As the IDF ground units were concentrated in a narrow corridor leading up to Bint Jbeil and had to fight themselves through the Hezbollah defence system, Hezbollah took the opportunity to inflict casualties on the IDF and to bring up more reinforcements. The IDF ground troops continued their offensive actions along the entire border in order to destroy Hezbollah positions, caches and missile installations, without systematically controlling these areas. On 29 July the IDF extended its ground operations to create a security buffer north of the Israeli-Lebanese border. As the operations in Bint Jbeil were mostly completed, the IDF directed its efforts against the small village of Ayta A-Sha’ab in order to open up a central front there; the attack was launched on 30 July. Here, too, the troops were confronted with a stubborn defence, with Hezbollah carrying out ‘hit and run’ actions, and other fighters laying ambushes in the surrounding hills. The population which had fled or had been moved away left the doors of their houses open, giving Hezbollah the chance to use them. During the air strikes Hezbollah fighters, who even got used to these bombardments, sheltered in the bunkers underneath the houses.

On 30 July a ground offensive was launched in the east with an attack near Kfar Kila, a village that had been identified as a logistic centre on the basis of captured documents. Special units successfully attacked targets deeper inside Lebanon, but appeared to generate too little effect on the strategic level. The special forces were committed too sparingly on the operational and tactical levels, which limited their contribution to the total war effort to a minimum. Their operational effectiveness, moreover, was also impaired by poor tactical intelligence and reconnaissance. Apart from their limited deployment, the expertise and capacity within the Northern Command staffs were insufficient to lead the special operations, let alone simultaneously with the other operations.

The limitations of the new logistic system, too, became apparent. As the units no longer took along their own logistic means and supplies, sustainability was seriously impaired a number of times. One unit was delayed by a shortage of water and food which was not supplied in time, causing the evacuation of 25 dehydrated and exhausted soldiers. As the ground troops did not control any territory in southern Lebanon and they lacked a (safe) rear area, the logistic convoys had to be secured with combat power. Hezbollah regularly attacked these convoys, often hitting the escorting tanks due to their slow speed. Many units were complaining about the poor combat support and the lack of buffer supplies at the moment when they were actually in southern Lebanon. The Logistic Corps of the IDF could not meet the requirements of the IDF ground troops, as the IDF leadership had given them no instructions to make preparations for this kind of conflict.
The ground war dragged along slowly and ineffectively, while expectations among the Israeli public kept rising. The national media heavily criticised the actions of the IDF, but in spite of this negative press, the population remained standing firmly behind the IDF. Due to the alleged excessive Israeli violence and the damage inflicted, in addition to the collateral damage, the international opinion increasingly began to turn against Israel. Halutz remained convinced that the manner of operating was still valid and rejected the advice of higher staff echelons to begin a massive ground offensive.

Nevertheless, the IDF ground troops succeeded in gaining the upper hand with much difficulty and tenacious fighting in direct engagements with Hezbollah. The latter, however, was successful because the missile barrages continued, even from camouflaged and concealed positions behind the Israeli lines and because the IDF never had full control over the many areas and villages.92

On 31 July the Israeli government decided that ground operations could be extended further in order to create a safety buffer several kilometres deep into Lebanon. Around 10,000 troops of eight brigades were deployed, with reserve units operating for the first time on a large scale.

In the night of 4 and 5 August in the east near the village of Markabeh units of a tank brigade and a battalion of the Golani Brigade began to advance. Tanks and armoured vehicles were frequently damaged or sometimes destroyed, caused by poor education and training of the crews and a deployment for which they were not suitable, as convoy escort or operations without infantry, which gave the Hezbollah anti-tank teams the opportunity to use their weapon systems even better.

5 August-14 August

After three weeks the IDF had penetrated some seven kilometres deep and did not seem poised for a large-scale invasion.93 The IDF divisions were still fighting against the first-line defences, while the border area and the towns of Maroun-al-Ras and Bint Jbeil had still not been secured. Hezbollah did not mobilise any further reinforcements and sympathisers. So far, there was no “spectacle of victory” for the IDF, or any signs of an impending defeat for Hezbollah. Halutz was irritated by the lack of success and on 8 August replaced Adam for his own personal representative. Around 9 August the IDF had penetrated the central part of the border area, up to the village of Debel (4.5 kilometres from the border) and near the village of Qantara (7 kilometres from the border).94

Many Israeli soldiers, in the mean time, were convinced they were fighting a lost war. Hezbollah kept firing missiles at Israel, the ground offensive went slowly and the
collateral damage inflicted by the IDF was great, which had the effect of creating more opponents for Israel than neutralising them. Hezbollah was described as a master of deception, as they managed to bind an entire armed force with a few thousand men. Many politicians and former officers wondered what the objectives were in southern Lebanon and why not an old-fashioned IDF plan was executed to advance on the Litani river within 48 hours in a sort of Blitzkrieg of mechanised and air-mobile units, isolate Hezbollah and destroy it by rounding it up from north to south. Now no territory was occupied, which meant that IDF troops had to fight for the same villages and areas several times over. The politicians and former soldiers conveniently neglected to mention that Hezbollah had prepared for this over a period of six years.

The government realised that the IDF was not forcing a decision on the battlefield and that the international pressure to conclude a cease-fire was growing. The only way to take away the missile threat was to occupy the area between the Israeli-Lebanese border and the Litani river. On 9 August the government decided on a large-scale ground offensive to reach the Litani river. The most bizarre thing was that no order was given to attack Hezbollah or the missile installations systematically. The operation had been developed as a “battle for the awareness against Hezbollah”, as some high-ranking IDF officers stated after the war. In this phase the number of Israeli troops in southern Lebanon tripled up to some 30,000.

In the north-east Division 162 of Brigadier General Tzur began a western advance towards Qantara and Ghandouriyeh. Before the advance the division had been positioned on a higher terrain overlooking the Litani river. Tzur considered the village of Ghandouriyeh, 12 kilometres from the border, as a controlling part of the terrain because of its elaborate junction of roads. For a week he had wanted to take the village, but each time his plans were cancelled by the higher echelon. Probably, Tzur’s plans were not in line with the concept of raids and area control and it was not until 10 August that he was given permission for the attack. Hezbollah, in the mean time, had used the opportunity to improve its defences.

Once he had received the go-ahead, Tzur launched elements of his mechanised infantry brigade, the Nahal Brigade, with an air assault onto the higher terrain commanding the Al-Saluki wadi to clear it of enemy and to support the mechanised units advancing on Ghandouriyeh. The infantry troops landed unopposed in the outer areas of Ghandouriyeh and the village of Farun. They probably did not clear the higher end of the wadi any further, but they did inform their commander that they had secured the area. On the basis of this assumption a tank column of Brigade 401 crossed the wadi. The front tanks were stopped at a collapsed building which served as a road obstacle and at
that moment the road behind the column was blown up. At the same time the tank of the column commander was hit by a guided anti-tank missile and pounded with anti-tank rockets. Many tank crews failed to use the smoke canisters as a protection against the anti-tank rockets. At the same time, the men of the Nahal brigade were attacked and were unable to support the tank column. There was hardly any coordination between the tanks and the infantry and requests for air support were denied by Northern Command out of fear of fratricide. Finally, the column managed to make good its escape across the steep slopes of the wadi. When the ambush was over, 11 of the 24 Merkava tanks had been hit, and eight crew members and four infantrymen had been killed. Without the latest version of the Merkava, type IV, tank, with its resilience, high-quality technology, self-defence means and climbing capacity on steep slopes, the losses would have been higher. In the end Division 162 managed to capture Ghandouriyeh with much difficulty, although by that time it had lost much of its tactical value for the IDF.

In spite of the successful combination of mines, mortar fire and anti-tank systems, employed near Maroun-al-Ras, Bint Jbeila and Ghandouriyeh, most of the Hezbollah mortar fire appeared not concentrated enough to inflict much damage on the IDF. Also, most of the minefields were not under constant observation and fire, so that the IDF engineers could easily breach them.

On 11 August the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1701, calling for the implementation of a cease-fire as soon as possible. On the same day the IDF began its advance on the Litani River in consequence of the governmental decision of 9 August. It was already too late by that time to gain a victory of any significance on Hezbollah. The two days of preparation had been too short for such a large-scale operation, but long enough for Hezbollah to prepare for it. In order to move forward the IDF was forced to advance along predictable routes of advance, a fact that was exploited by Hezbollah. The IDF did not plan or execute with this last operation any actions to block the routes of retreat of Hezbollah towards the north either. Because of the short period of time to push through to the Litani river there was not enough time or troops to control the captured areas and to mop up and neutralise any Hezbollah troops that had stayed behind.

The Reserve Paratrooper Division began its advance north on 11 August in the direction of Debel and Qantarah. It suffered a great loss of 9 dead and 31 wounded when a house in Debel was targeted with guided anti-tank missiles. The Division had not progressed beyond 1.5 kilometres north of Debel, when the cease-fire came into effect on 14 August. The quick succession of contradictory orders continued to amaze the officers of this division. Each time when they were ordered to attack, their orders were rescinded at the last possible moment. The reason that was given for this after the war was that
the division commander did not want them to die, be abducted or hit by friendly fire. The mechanised units of Brigades 609 and 188 advanced along the coastal road and on 14 August had not got beyond 1.5 kilometres north of Mansuri. The advance of Division 162 eventually did not go beyond the captured Gandouriyeh.

North of Division 162 the Reserve Tank Division of Brigadier General Zuckerman found it hard to implement the so-called “battle of awareness”. The tank units of this division performed badly and there were major problems in the command echelon of this division. An IDF inquiry after the conflict indicated that Zuckerman’s lack of training had led to many mistakes.

Division 91 began an advance north of Bint Jbeil in the direction of the Mediterranean Sea, an action which went as chaotically as earlier fights. An official inquiry after the war indicated that this was caused by a serious lack of professionalism and skills inside the division to even carry out the simplest of tactical assignments. The division commander used methodology and terminology from the new doctrine instead of the standard terms and written formats. Orders also lacked objectives linked to time aspects. The result was that the subordinate commanders did not understand their orders, did not know what their objectives were and within which time frame they had to be carried out.

Another aspect of the chaotic execution by the IDF was that almost all brigade commanders were often absent from their units at crucial moments, while this always used to be a characteristic of the traditional Israeli leadership. With the new C3 systems the commanders tried to follow the battle behind a screen in order to build up their situational awareness. There was a great reliance on technology but the C3 systems as well as other communications systems appeared to be erratic, which resulted in the situational awareness not always being real-time and complete. On 12 August the Lebanese government and Hezbollah agreed on the UN brokered cease-fire, which was to come into effect as of 14 August.

In order to gain control over the areas south of the Litani river the IDF carried out a number of air assault landings, which were immediately surrounded and attacked by Hezbollah fighters. The IDF units advancing on the Litani river, and in particular the reserve units, could not be supplied adequately in these last few days. The Israeli government accepted the UN cease-fire that came into effect on 14 August at 08:00 hrs. The IDF refrained from offensive actions against Hezbollah targets, but still killed several Hezbollah fighters when they fired at IDF troops. On 15 August the IDF began its withdrawal of a part of its ground forces, pending the arrival of the Lebanese armed
forces and the UN troops. Both parties proclaimed themselves the victor, after which soon different accounts, objective or not, established themselves.

The conflict cost the lives of 119 IDF soldiers\textsuperscript{110} and approximately 750 Hezbollah fighters.\textsuperscript{111} Most of the latter were not regular Hezbollah fighters but villagers and sympathisers. In spite of the losses, many Hezbollah fighters survived the conflict and gained valuable combat experience. The IDF probably destroyed most of the facilities and supplies of Hezbollah in the first defence line and a large part in the second line, which, incidentally were means that could easily be replenished or replaced.\textsuperscript{112} Of the around 500 Merkava II, III and IV tanks 6 were destroyed by mines and IEDs and just over 20 penetrated by the approximately 500 fired guided anti-tank missiles.\textsuperscript{113} How many of those tanks were to be considered destroyed is not clear. Dozens of tanks and armoured vehicles were damaged and many were redeployed after repairs.

Analysis

To what extent did both parties give substance to the basic principles laid down in the Dutch doctrine?

Morale

Both parties were motivated before the conflict began. The turn-up of reservists in the IDF was high and there was a strong will to defeat Hezbollah. Discipline within the IDF ground forces, however, was poor and the troop commanders in various cases doubted the combat readiness and willingness of their units, in particular, that of the reservists. Contrary to what Hezbollah had expected, their continuous missile barrages had not eroded Israeli morale. Apart from that, most of the Israeli population kept supporting their IDF throughout the war. Morale in the IDF decreased because of the eroded professionalism, problems in command and control, the chaotic course of the actions, the abuse of the humanitarian war law by Hezbollah, but also because Hezbollah put up such a determined and well-organised fight. Public opinion had become very critical due to the disappointing results and the poor performance of the IDF.

The enormous motivation of Hezbollah manifested itself in frequent fighting to the death and in the support of the southern Lebanese population for Hezbollah. Morale was also boosted by the successful execution of many actions and an increasingly critical international public opinion towards Israel.
Security

It is relatively easy to acquire many data on the IDF, as Israel is a largely transparent society. The ground operations of the IDF were mostly predictable, as is borne out by the elaborate study of the IDF by Hezbollah. The organisation had exploited IDF predictability to the maximum, which became apparent in the prediction of the Israeli intention to capture Bint Jbeil. The cautious manner of operating of the IDF, too, and the preparation for an action, which sometimes lasted for days, in full view of Hezbollah, contributed to this predictability. Hezbollah had taken several measures prior to and during the conflict, such as camouflage, spreading out, abuse of war law, encryption, secrecy, et cetera.

Concentration of means

The IDF began the first three weeks with small-scale operations along the entire border; small actions with special forces and units at the battalion and later brigade levels. No centre of gravity was created in order to attack and neutralise the Katuyschas by invading southern Lebanon and occupying certain areas discriminately. The only actions deeper into Lebanon at that time were the ones near Bint Jbeil. The concentration in the narrow corridor, however, made the IDF units an easier target for Hezbollah, because of the ponderous advance, while Hezbollah could bring in reinforcements. The reserves that had been called up and would have made a concentrated attack possible were only committed at the last moment and had stood deployed idly along the border awaiting their orders. The IDF had at its disposal a large arsenal of fire power but could not exploit it effectively because Hezbollah abused the war law and because the IDF wanted to avoid collateral damage. Hezbollah had only concentrated small groups, temporarily and locally at most, for counter-attacks and ambushes, during which it also concentrated combined weapons systems. Other than that there was no concentration, as this was too risky due to discovery by the IDF, but also out of an inability of Hezbollah to command and control larger concentrations.

Effectiveness

Inside the Israeli ground forces the objectives often were not clear; in fact, they were couched in vague doctrine terminology. Division 91 is a good example of subordinate commanders misunderstanding orders which were then poorly executed. This was also related with the caution of commanders with regard to incurring any losses, as a result of which the orientation on the assignment weakened. Hezbollah commanders had a clear mission: keep firing missiles, defend tenaciously, survive and inflict losses on the IDF.
Economy of effort
During and towards the end of the conflict the IDF ground forces were mainly deployed on the high grounds in order to monitor the areas, but they did not control the surrounding terrain and the areas between their positions and the border. The special forces were mainly deployed strategically and hardly operationally or tactically, as a result of which no intelligence became available on those levels or no damage could be inflicted on Hezbollah. The IDF tank units were deployed incorrectly by having them negotiate the canalising terrain slowly, operate without infantry support and carry out convoy escorts. By not carrying out CAS with combat helicopters, the ground troops were denied an asset. The limited artillery support out of fear of fratricide and the bad command of fire support procedures, too, was a limiting factor for the combat power of IDF ground forces. Hezbollah grouped its means and fighters in such a way that they could be used to a maximum, as was the case with the anti-tank assets. With a few exceptions mortar fire was not concentrated, but only served as harassment, and minefields were hardly kept under observation.

Unity of effort
Because of the unclear objectives and vague assignments the soldiers of the IDF did not have a clear goal. Hezbollah’s force operation was clear: survive, keep pounding Israel and delaying the IDF and inflict as many losses as possible. All Hezbollah activities were geared to this objective.

Simplicity
Controlling terrain and attaining objectives with precision weapons and raids did not lead to a simple deployment. Division 91 issued its orders according to the principles of the new doctrine, which created confusion rather than simplicity. Hezbollah had organised its defence relatively simply, with sectors in which units could operate autonomously. Because of the somewhat static defence and a limited freedom of movement the Hezbollah operations were not complex.

Flexibility
The wish to limit the number of losses impaired the flexibility of the IDF, as certain risks were not taken. Calling up and deploying the reservists late reduced the IDF’s flexibility to carry out different options. The new logistics system robbed the divisions and brigades of their own logistic units, which made them less flexible in their actions. The Israeli strategy of the gradual escalation gave Hezbollah the necessary flexibility and freedom of action to carry out its operations. In many situations Hezbollah fighters got the opportunity to retreat northwards, to fall back on new positions or to abscond from the conflict at the moment when a position became untenable. Yet, the Hezbollah posi-
tions were mainly static, which gave them little flexibility in their own actions, except for small reserves. The IAF superiority made it almost impossible for Hezbollah to operate with large groups of fighters or materiel. By abusing the war law, some of that inflexibility was compensated for.

**Initiative**

The IDF was very cautious in its manoeuvring and because of that missed opportunities for taking the initiative. The ground forces mostly had to respond to Hezbollah’s actions, rather than the other way around. For the most part Hezbollah wrested the initiative away from the IDF, in spite of having set up a defence with many static strong points. Time and again, Hezbollah surprised the IDF with its ambushes and moments of opening fire.

**Offensive operations**

The IDF was on the offensive but did not act accordingly. It operated cautiously without any form of aggressiveness, not creating and maintaining any momentum. There were some offensive actions on a small scale, but without any specific objectives. Hezbollah had offensive actions carried out on a small scale and even counter-attacks, in spite of its conducting a static defence. Only after three weeks did the IDF launch a major offensive aimed at forcing some sort of decision.

**Surprise**

The IDF acted predictably and did not create any momentum in its attacks, which made surprise during the ground operations an illusion. The slow build-up, too, along the border and the careful preparations of various offensive actions did not enhance the element of surprise of the IDF. This allowed Hezbollah to impose its will on the IDF relatively simply and carry out surprise actions itself with ambushes and small raids. Moreover, supported by Syria and Iran, Hezbollah had some technological surprises in store, in the guise of very modern means of communication, electronic war assets, counter-measures and anti-tank weapons. The budgets cuts, also on investments and technological innovations, had caused the IDF to partially lose its technological advantage.

**Sustainability**

The new logistics system, an outcome of the budget costs, and the new doctrine had robbed the IDF forces of their own logistic units and buffer supplies, which was felt as a limitation to an independent action in southern Lebanon. As there was no front line with an own sector, the logistic supply from logistic centres was made difficult. In order to guarantee the logistics, tanks were withdrawn from the battlefield to protect the logistic movements. The mobilisation was late in coming, and, in addition, much equipment
was absent in the depots, the material was old and unsuitable and there were shortages of water and food. Hezbollah had the supplies of arms, ammunition, food and water to hold out for a month. There were central storage sites and civilian vehicles, protected under the humanitarian war law, distributed ammunition. The supply from Syria and Iran was mostly denied by blockades and the destruction of the Lebanese infrastructure. Should Israel have decided not to accept a cease-fire and continue its military operations, it is a question how long Hezbollah would have been able to go on with the fight.

Hezbollah had thought through almost all the basic principles better than the IDF, which is also admitted in Israeli military circles. The question whether it was a ‘mission impossible’ for the IDF ground forces to defeat Hezbollah can be answered by a qualified ‘yes’. Hezbollah had studied the IDF thoroughly and adjusted its operations accordingly. The IDF had developed a doctrine that was not geared to a possible showdown with Hezbollah. Israel had ignored Hezbollah’s transformation from a guerrilla organisation into a hybrid one.

The IDF should not have underestimated Hezbollah and should have studied its opponent carefully. By adhering to the basic principles, the ground forces could have performed better. A combination of precision fire power, mechanised units (fire power, mobility, security and observation) and light units (in villages and difficult and mountainous terrain) offers possibilities of fighting an opponent like Hezbollah. The ground troops should conquer and occupy terrain in the classic way to deny the opponent freedom of movement. By isolating positions, supplying and reinforcing them becomes impossible, while a choice can be made to either take them out immediately or to attrit them. This manner of operating would have made it much more difficult for Hezbollah to prepare adequately.

Notes

1. Major T. (Ted) Jansen BC is a ground operations doctrine lecturer at the Military Operational Arts and Sciences section of the Netherlands Defence Academy.
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10. Dr. Reuven Erlich (Col. Ret.) (2006), *Study of Hezbollah’s use of Lebanese civilians as human shield*, Intelligence and Terrorism Information Centre at the Centre for Special Studies (CSS), 5 December 2006.


42. Idem.
49. Matthews (2008), p. 27.
57. Mathhews (2008), p. 34.
70. Matthews (2008), p. 43.
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The use of the air arm during Operation Change of Direction

Guus de Koster

NL-ARMS, 2009, 153-178

Introduction

In the morning of 12 July 2006 Hezbollah employed missiles, mortars and snipers in southern Lebanon. In a well-coordinated action three Israeli servicemen were killed and two were abducted. As a reaction Israel carried out standard artillery bombardments. An Israeli Defense Force (IDF) unit was ordered to pursue the Hezbollah group in Lebanon, but was ambushed, during which a main battle tank was destroyed and the crew killed.

Subsequently, Israel got entangled in an armed conflict from 12 July up to and including 13 August, when, after intensive consultation, the UN adopted a resolution calling for the cessation of hostilities. After the conflict both Hezbollah and Israel claimed victory. In the aftermath of the conflict there was much criticism in Israel on the way the IDF, and in particular the Israeli Air Force (IAF), had conducted the war. This article is an attempt to analyse what the IAF’s contribution was and how effective this contribution was in relation to the outcome of the war.

In doing so, this contribution will be divided into two parts. In the first part the political arena in Israel will be considered, as it is there where certain strategic choices were made that determined the outcome of the conflict in advance. Subsequently, the tactical concept of Hezbollah will be reviewed, in its role as Israel's opponent. The second part is a chronology of the IAF’s air actions. In the third part IAF’s effectiveness and contribution to Israel reaching its strategic objectives will be discussed.

Preparation and doctrine

In order to come to a correct analysis of the manner in which the military actions were conducted and why they were carried out in this way, it is necessary to go into the doctrines and preparation of the belligerents. Generally speaking, they are less well-known for Hezbollah and as there are fewer similarities with that of western armed forces, this will be dealt with in greater detail.
Experience has taught Israel that an occupation of Lebanon is an exhausting enterprise, both with regard to the number of losses and casualties and the loss of public (national and international) support. Based on the experiences from the Lebanese occupation (1982-2000) the IDF Institute for Campaign Doctrine Studies (ICDS) developed a new doctrine. An unclassified excerpt was published as an academic article entitled *The Vulture and the Snake*. In essence the doctrine prescribes that Israel should rely more on its air supremacy, in order to acquire an asymmetric superiority over an (irregular) opponent. This would make the IAF the predominantly offensive element (vulture) against terrorists or guerrilla fighters (snake), wherever they might be. In order to achieve this, a number of elements are necessary:

- the possibility for a continued surveillance (observation) of certain areas, for which unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) could be employed;
- fighter aircraft equipped with precision weapons for the kinetic effect;
- a robust, effective and fast command and control system able to attack time-sensitive targets;
- helicopters for carrying out air raids and supporting of air mobile operations.

In this concept land forces would mainly be employed in the defence of the Israeli border. In exceptional circumstances small units (special forces) could be used offensively against targets or persons that cannot be attacked from the air.

The concept depended heavily on the premise that dominance in the air would lead to victory. This assumption was politically acceptable as it allowed the well-known weak spots of the IDF ground forces to be ignored. Apart from that, it was deemed the solution for a long-cherished Israeli desire to prevent collateral damage through technology, especially during operations in urban terrain.

The decision to go for an immediate response with an intensive military action was not founded on a detailed, comprehensive and authorised military plan on the basis of a thorough study of the complexity of the Lebanese theatre. In advance, it was not certain whether the political objectives could be attained through military action. Nor was it clear whether military action would provoke the firing of more missiles on Israel, or whether the launches could only be made to stop by a (lengthy and intensive) occupation of the areas from which Hezbollah carried them out. Also in the light of the situation described above, it is understandable that the ground troops, in particular, were taken by surprise by the governmental decision to go to war against Hezbollah.
The Hezbollah ‘doctrine’

If there is or was something like a (formal) Hezbollah doctrine, it will not be easy to describe, even if its actions are directed at attaining long-term political objectives. What is clear, though, is that Hezbollah made a thorough study of the Israeli doctrine and also carefully observed and analysed the actions of the IDF in the Israeli occupied areas. It is rather remarkable that an organisation like Hezbollah seriously considers the most effective course of action against the ‘Zionist foe’. In describing the options at its disposal, terms like deterrence are also used. Besides, it is clear that Hezbollah has studied the IDF way of operating well and geared its organisation and tactics to it. This can be illustrated by the fact that Hezbollah in operation Accountability (1993) still assumed a large-scale Israeli ground offensive. The IDF, however, exploited its technological superiority via artillery shellings and a comprehensive precision bombardment by its air forces, taking Hezbollah by surprise. This prompted Hezbollah - in response to Israel’s focus on the deployment of air forces and artillery – during operation Grapes of Wrath (1996) to trust on its ability to launch Katyusha missiles.

The lessons Hezbollah drew were mainly directed at the logistic sustainability of its actions and the method of decision making and command and control in order to optimise their effect. In the years after the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon (2000) Hezbollah, taking into account the lessons from the past, prepared itself extremely thoroughly for a new confrontation. In doing so, it received extensive support from Iran and Syria. In the preparations a decreased Israeli capacity to receive considerable numbers of casualties was taken into account. In order to be able to conduct a lengthy future conflict effectively, Hezbollah prepared for a war of attrition against the Israeli home front. In order to achieve this, three ‘rings’ were developed. The first ring would consist of short-range missiles, the Katyushas, while the second ring would be formed by artillery, equipped with Syrian 220-mm missiles and Katyushas with an increased range, positioned south of the Litani River. The third ring was to consist of missiles with a maximum range of 250 kilometres, positioned between the Litani and Beirut. The main target for these missiles was the most densely populated areas of Israel, between Haifa and Tel Aviv. Apart from that, a large number of vehicles had been fitted out with launching pads for medium-range missiles. A possible reason for this mobile option was the protection of launching capacity against attacks by the IDF. Apart from this ‘kinetic’ equipment Hezbollah set up a strongly hierarchical organisational structure which allowed units to operate in a coordinated manner – making use of the three rings.

The doctrine that could be maintained with the help of these systems was based on two basic methods of operations. The first comes down to ‘flooding’ northern Israel with Katyusha missiles. To this end, Hezbollah had a large number of caches south of
the Litani and an extensive network of tunnels and subterranean bunkers and shelters, mainly built with a view to giving the fighters a chance of surviving IDF attacks and being able to continue the operations against the IDF and Israel.

The effect, the tactical execution

After the action of Hezbollah on 12 July the Israeli air force carried out an air raid which had been planned in advance. The targets consisted of some 17 Hezbollah command posts and bases and bridges in southern Lebanon across the Litani River. The action of Hezbollah took place at around 09:00 hrs and not even 90 minutes later Israeli fighter aircraft took to the air. The first actions of the IAF were confirmed at around 11:00 hrs by the Lebanese government. One of the objectives of attacking the bridges across the Litani was blocking a route of escape for the abductors.

Israeli reaction

In the course of the afternoon of 12 July a second attack wave was launched during which around 40 targets were attacked. In the first 24 hours of the operation around 100 air raids were carried out by the IAF. The information on what had been attacked and what had been destroyed and what the effect had been on Hezbollah, however, was not clear. This was demonstrated by the statement of Major General Adam during a press conference on 12 July, during which he stated that the IDF had the situation under control, “We are in control (...) we have destroyed all the Hezbollah outposts in the border and we are now continuing to operate in depth.” His statement implied that an important part of the targets had been attacked effectively, but this could not be confirmed at the moment. There was an unopposed use of the Lebanese air space, but this was not remarkable. It is true that Hezbollah had done much to make the air space over Lebanon less accessible for the IAF by means of air defence, but neither the Lebanese armed forces nor Hezbollah had an air force of any significance. Apart from a number of bridges and command posts of Hezbollah, the international airport of Beirut was attacked on 13 July. This latter target was attacked by the IAF to give the Lebanese government once more the message that it was held responsible for the freedom of movement that Hezbollah had acquired over past few years.

Israeli objectives

On 12 July 2006 the IDF proposed the following objectives to the Prime Minister and the cabinet:

- The removal of Hezbollah from the border areas with Israel;
- Giving a significant blow to Hezbollah’s military capabilities in order to end the terrorist threat from Lebanon;
The strengthening of the military deterrence towards Hezbollah and the surrounding countries;
- Forcing the Lebanese government to interfere in the situation and dismantle Hezbollah as a state within a state;
- Creating circumstances leading to the release of the two abducted Israeli service-men;
- Ensuring that Syria does not become involved in the realisation of the above-mentioned objectives.

Below, the subsequent actions carried out by the IAF and the extent to which they contributed to the realisation of these objectives will be considered.

Chronology of the air actions

12 July 2006
The first day of the conflict is characterised by two attack waves; the first at 10:20 hrs local time and the other at around 16:00 hrs. The first attack takes place within 90 minutes after the initial Hezbollah action. The air raids target in particular Hezbollah positions and several bridges in southern Lebanon. In total some 100 targets are attacked on this day.

13 July 2006
Aircraft of the IAF carry out air raids against Beirut, hitting, amongst others, targets at Rafic Hariri, the international airport of Beirut. The most important reason Israel gives for attacking this airport is that, apart from facilitating commercial flights, it is also used for the transport of weapons from Iran and Syria for Hezbollah. Besides the airport some 80 other targets are attacked, such as Hezbollah headquarters and command posts, supply routes and bridges, missile launch pads and weapons storages.

Later in the day leaflets are dropped over southern Beirut calling upon the population to stay away from buildings that could be linked to Hezbollah activities. A remarkable attack on this day is the one on the broadcasting station of the Lebanese Al Manar in Beirut, a broadcasting organisation sponsored by Hezbollah which is used for broadcasting Hezbollah propaganda and appeals for suicide missions against Israel. An Al Manar relay station in Baalbek is attacked simultaneously. Two military airfields in Lebanon, Qulayaat and Riyak are also attacked as, like the Rafic Hariri International Airport, they are linked to the supply lines along which weapons transports from Iran
and Syria enter the country. During an action, lasting 34 minutes, 59 permanent missile launch installations of Hezbollah are attacked and destroyed. The installations are mainly intended for medium and long-range missiles. During the night of 13 on 14 July air raids are carried out on Haret Hreik in Beirut, a Shiite residential area known for being used by Hezbollah for locating its infrastructure in several apartment buildings.

14 July 2006
Apart from the attacks on Beirut described above, later this night also bridges and roads around Beirut are targeted, as well as various oil storage facilities and electricity installations that could be linked to the support of GSM communication.

15 July 2006
The IAF carries out attacks on radar installations in Joenieh, Tripoli and other northern ports in response to the Hezbollah attack on an Israeli naval vessel, during which a shore-launched missile is fired. Israel accuses the Lebanese army of lending support in this attack and sees in this statement a justification for the attack on the radar installations. There were also attacks on houses or offices of Mohammed Nazzal in Beirut and Hussayn Musawi in the Baalbek valley, both senior Hezbollah leaders. Due to the threat of attacks on Lebanese energy facilities a spokesman of the Lebanese energy company Electricity du Liban (EDL) announces the closure of its plant in Jiyyeh in the interest of the safety of its employees.

16 July 2006
IAF aircraft attack the Haret Hreik residential area. During the attack, which lasts for several hours, several buildings are destroyed. In the Manara residential area a light house is hit and the small village of Aitarun is attacked, during which eight Canadian holidaymakers are killed. A spokesman of the IAF headquarters indicates in a press conference that IAF has flown more than 1,000 fixed wing sorties up to that moment and more than 350 rotary wing sorties. In the press conference it is also stated that, according to the IDF, 60 per cent of the long-range missile launching installations have been destroyed.

17 July 2006
The Israeli air raids are intensified and carried out all over Lebanon. The targets that are attacked on this day are army barracks in Tripoli and Baalbek, fuel storage tanks of Beirut airport and several buildings in the Haret Hreik residential area. During an air raid a missile is fired at a minibus in Reileh, killing 12 civilians. An IDF spokesperson states that “if their missiles hit petrochemical plants in Haifa we will consider bombing plants in Lebanon”. During the night of 17 and 18 July a total of 60 objectives is
targeted, including targets in Baalbek, missile launching installations and radar installations of the Lebanese army to the north of Beirut. According to the IDF the targeted radar installations have been used in the attack on the naval vessel Hanit. Besides, targets in the harbour of Beirut and the ‘Al Abda’ harbour to the north of Tripoli are attacked. In Tyrus an apartment building is attacked which, according to the Israelis, is used as a Hezbollah headquarters. Several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) report a bloodbath in Tyrus after the attack on a multi-storey apartment building, upon which Israel provides convincing proof that the destroyed building has been used as a Hezbollah headquarters. Furthermore, there are attacks on communication systems used by Hezbollah, among which the Al Manar relay station.

18 July 2006
This day’s attacks are directed at cutting off the supply lines between Syria and Lebanon. Of the 52 targets there are 12 that could qualify as supply lines. Israel has always held Syria responsible for supplying Hezbollah. Over a number of villages in southern Lebanon leaflets are dropped calling upon the population to leave the locations from which missiles have been fired as quickly as possible. At the same time it is announced that any transports by lorry will be considered suspect.

19 July 2006
Several targets in Beirut are attacked, including the airport. According to the IDF 23 tons of bombs are dropped in an attack on a bunker in South-Beirut. According to Hezbollah, this is a mosque under construction. During a press conference it is reported that weapons are being smuggled from Syria and that several trucks involved in these activities have been attacked.

20 July 2006
The targets on this day can be qualified as communication facilities, launching installations, roads and an airfield. According to IDF officers, about 50 per cent of Hezbollah’s weapons arsenal has been destroyed, and one of them (brigadier Alon Friedman, Chief of Staff of Northern Command) states he is convinced that it will only be a matter of time to destroy what has remained. Again leaflets are dropped in which the IDF promises rewards for giving valuable information on Hezbollah.

21 July 2006
On this day 124 targets in Lebanon are attacked, more than 40 of which during the night. The targets are mainly Hezbollah headquarters, weapons caches, missile launching installations, roads and bridges. The Mdeirej bridge, part of the most important connecting road between Damascus and Beirut, is once more attacked.
22 July 2006

According to the IDF, 2,000 targets have been attacked and the IAF has carried out 4,000 sorties since the beginning of the conflict on 12 July. The targets that are attacked on this day include roads, tunnels, missiles launching installations and the roads leading towards them, command posts and ammunition storage sites. The roads that are attacked are all connecting roads between Syria and Lebanon. Moreover, attacks are made on television masts and GSM installations. Over a number of villages in the area south of the Litani River leaflets are dropped calling upon the population to leave the area and seek shelter to the north of the river.

23 July 2006

The installations of the Al Manar television station near Beirut are targeted again by the IAF. A launching installation of a 220-mm missile, set up in the garden of a house, is identified and successfully attacked. Many attacks are carried out on communication systems that are thought to be used for Hezbollah command and control purposes. The IAF is accused that day of attacking two vehicles near the village of Qana which were clearly marked as ambulances of the Red Cross. The IAF denies the accusations. Two more weapons caches and bunkers are attacked.

24 July 2006

Possibly in connection with a visit of the American Secretary of State Rice only a small number of targets is attacked this day. The raids are directed at suppressing Hezbollah’s capacity to launch missiles on northern Israel. To that end a launching installation is attacked, including alleged storage sites and bunkers used by Hezbollah fighters as hide-outs during Israeli attacks. Also the roads leading to launching locations are attacked, along with several trucks in the area south of the Litani River. The population was already warned of these attacks by means of leaflets on 18 July. For the first time leaflets are dropped calling upon Hezbollah fighters to stop fighting. During an action an Apache helicopter of the IAF crashes because its main rotor has become dislodged. Hezbollah claims to have shot down the helicopter, a statement that is immediately denied by the IAF.

25 July 2006

This day the IAF carries out 180 air raids, mainly directed against locations that are used as shelters by Hezbollah fighters. Additionally, a number of locations is attacked from which missiles have been fired into Israel.
26 July 2006
The targets attacked are comparable to the ones of the past few days. In addition to the target list of the previous day, some vehicles are attacked that have been linked to the preparation of execution of missile attacks on Israel.43

27 July 2006
The attention for the IAF on this day is mainly directed at the locations from which Hezbollah might be able to launch its missiles on Israel or has already done so. Apart from that, targets are attacked so that their destruction may make reaching the launching locations more difficult. Ammunition storage sites are also targeted.44 To the north of Beirut a radar facility of the Lebanese army is attacked and destroyed.45

28 July 2006
The air raids on this day are mainly aimed at Hezbollah’s weapons caches and their resupply. In this context several trucks and containers are attacked. Besides, the attacks on possible locations from which missiles can be fired on Israel continue. Also, the access roads to these locations remain a target in the air raids.46

29 July 2006
The main objective of the air raids is the road connections between Damascus and Beirut, while Israeli IDF personnel state they have closed off the border between Syria and Lebanon in order to prevent the smuggling of arms and the re-supply of Hezbollah.47

30 July 2006
The IAF attacks weapon storage sites and locations from which missiles were launched on Israel.48 One of those places is Qana, where three objectives are attacked and where somewhere a big mistake has been made in the identification of the targets, resulting in the destruction of an apartment building and a large number of civilian casualties. The incident is given broad attention in the media49 and the IDF gives a press conference during which it accepts the responsibility and tries to explain how the mistake could have happened.50

31 July and 1 August 2006
In connection with the incident in Qana the IAF suspends its air actions over southern Lebanon for 48 hours, which allows an inquiry into the facts surrounding the incident. The IAF, though, maintains a constant presence in the air to be able to support the ground troops if need be. Arkin reports that for the first time in the conflict the IAF has made use of unmanned, armed, aerial vehicles.51 It is possible that these unmanned
aerial vehicles attacked personnel operating at rocket launch installations in other parts of Lebanon. Furthermore, there are attacks on several Hezbollah targets, such as command posts, ammunition storage sites and missile launching installations and launch locations.52

2 August 2006
The IAF continues its attacks on various Hezbollah targets, such as ammunition storage sites and launch locations for the missiles. For the first time, there is a report from the IDF on the provision of covering fire for the ground troops.53

3 August 2006
During nightly air raids some 120 sorties are flown, mainly directed against buildings in and around Beirut linked to Hezbollah activities, locations suitable for missile launching installations and access roads. Besides, several launching installations for medium-range missiles are destroyed.55

4 August 2006
This day the IAF attacks targets in Beirut, such as an ammunition bunker beneath a football stadium.56 Aircraft of the IAF for the first time raid targets in the predominantly Christian area to the north of Beirut. These attacks are directed at cutting off the last significant connecting road between Syria and Lebanon.57

5 August 2006
According to the Lebanese media, the IAF has carried out the most intensive air raids on southern Lebanon so far, with a total of 250 sorties, during which some 4,000 bombs and missiles have been dropped against several targets.58 Leaflets are dropped to call upon the population of Sidon, one of the biggest towns in southern Lebanon, to leave the town.

6 August 2006
According to the IAF more than 4,600 targets have been attacked since 12 July. On this day the attacks are directed against bunkers, tunnel entrances, weapon storage sites and other Hezbollah infrastructure.59

7 August 2006
Apart from a number of launching installations and Hezbollah infrastructure, the IAF also has intercepted and shot down a Hezbollah unmanned aerial vehicle. According to the IDF, it was detected before it crossed the border with Israel and subsequently flew
at low altitude over the Mediterranean before it was shot down. The Israeli Navy, which has salvaged the wreckage, reports that the aircraft had been unarmed.\textsuperscript{60}

\hspace*{1cm} \textbf{8 August 2006}

That day the IAF has flown some 200 sorties and attacked a number of Hezbollah targets, such as missiles, launching installations and the access roads leading to them.\textsuperscript{61}

\hspace*{1cm} \textbf{9 August 2006}

The number of sorties flown remains high but the description of the objectives attacked is becoming increasingly vague.\textsuperscript{62}

\hspace*{1cm} \textbf{10 August 2006}

The 150 sorties of this day are mainly directed against several Hezbollah buildings used for various purposes, such as command posts and storage sites. Apart from that, six missile launching installations, three petrol stations and two bridges are attacked. The attack on the historical light house in Beirut is remarkable, as Hezbollah has threatened to launch missiles against Tel Aviv if the IDF attacks residential areas of Beirut not controlled by Hezbollah.\textsuperscript{63}

\hspace*{1cm} \textbf{11 August 2006}

During air raids 60 Hezbollah command posts are attacked. In the morning of this day heavy raids are carried out on the southern residential areas of Beirut, targeting the Hezbollah leadership. Apart from that, leaflets are dropped over Sidon and Beirut in which Nasrallah is accused of twisting the facts on the number of Hezbollah fighters who have died up to now.\textsuperscript{64}

\hspace*{1cm} \textbf{12 August 2006}

The IAF carries out attacks against various Hezbollah buildings, bridges and approaches and launching locations. According to several media, the IAF has attacked a building in Baalbek which accommodates a Hezbollah charity.\textsuperscript{65} Also, power plants are targeted, which leads to power cuts in Tyrus and Sidon. Hezbollah claims to have shot down an Israeli CH-53 transport helicopter, which may have been hit by anti-tank missiles.\textsuperscript{66}

\hspace*{1cm} \textbf{13 August 2006}

The last day before the cease-fire comes into effect at 08:00 hrs on Monday 14 August local time there are still intensive bombardments on southern Beirut on bridges and roads that still make a connection possible with Syria and several petrol stations.\textsuperscript{67} Also,
several vehicles are attacked of which it is assumed that they are used for shipping weapons.\textsuperscript{68}

\textbf{15 August 2006}

In the last hours before the cease-fire takes effect another 178 targets are attacked by the IAF, mostly in the area of Sidon, Tyrus and Khiam.

**Objectives realised?**

Below, for each IDF objective it will be assessed whether and to what extent it was realised.

\textit{Removing Hezbollah from the border areas with Israel}

Israel had two important reasons for removing Hezbollah from its border areas with Lebanon. The first one was related to the capability of Hezbollah to infiltrate into northern Israel, and the second reason, possibly even more important, was the suppression of the missile threat. According to Cordesman, Israeli experts estimated that Hezbollah had somewhere between 10,000 and 16,000 \textit{Katyusha} missiles at its disposal at the beginning of the war, although he indicates the estimate may have a margin of error of about 5,000 missiles. This might be caused by the fact that shortly before the war Syria had intensified its supplies and that it was discovered only later that Syria had supplied more missiles than was originally assumed.\textsuperscript{69} For this reason, the IDF set great store by locating and destroying the launching installations for the medium and long-range missiles. According to others these missiles were capable even of reaching Tel Aviv or any other target in Israel, from Lebanon, and this was a new threat to Israel, requiring a forceful response.

According to Cordesman, in the first attack wave of the IAF 18 of the 19 to 21 launching installations of these medium and long-range missiles were destroyed.\textsuperscript{70} After the first attack wave, which lasted about 35 minutes, General Halutz is reported to have told Olmert that all long-range missiles had been destroyed and that the war had been won.\textsuperscript{71} Both were convinced that this had worked the shock and awe effect, resulting in an historic victory for the IAF. According to Arkin, the claim of having destroyed 90 per cent of the Hezbollah launching installations for the long-range missiles cannot be substantiated by the facts and mission reports.\textsuperscript{72} Most analysts, however, praise the Israeli intelligence service for being instrumental in the reduction of that threat to about 20 per cent in the course of the first two days. Most medium and long-range missiles were of Iranian or Syrian stock. It is not known why the systems that had not been destroyed
by the IAF were not employed. Uzi Rubin presents three possible explanations for not firing the Iranian long-range missiles. The first is that there were no Iranian missiles in Lebanon, an explanation he deems highly unlikely in view of the statements made by Iranian sources, which claimed publicly that Hezbollah was in possession of the Zelzal-2 missile. A second explanation is that the missiles and their launching installations had all been destroyed in the Israeli attack on 13 July, an assumption that is contradicted by later data. In an IAF air raid on a target close to Beirut on 17 July a missile was accidentally fired and launched. Analysts have determined by means of photos and films that this must have been a Zelzal-2 missile. The third explanation, finally, is that the Iranian authorities had not given permission to use these weapons. Rubin is convinced this is the most likely one and it is also corroborated by Iranian statements to that effect.

In spite of all the efforts of the IAF to destroy Hezbollah’s missile launching capability, the organisation managed to fire a large number of Katyusha missiles from the border area into Israel on a daily basis. Of the approximately 4,000 missiles that were fired on Israel during the war, 90 per cent are assumed to have been Katyusha missiles. Hezbollah, however, claims that it had fired many more missiles. According to the Human Rights Watch report, this discrepancy can be explained by the fact that Israel only counted the missiles fired on civilian targets, the missiles directed at and possibly landed on or in the proximity of military targets not being incorporated into the total. In a speech on 9 August 2006 on Al Manar television Hezbollah leader Nasrallah claimed that, “we assert to you that these rockets were guided by God and are directed technically and are not fired indiscriminately”. Many of the missiles attacks, according to Hezbollah, were directed against the IDF, although, from 13 July onwards, the organisation also threatened to consider civilian targets as legitimate objectives if Israel continued targeting the Lebanese population in its attacks.

The above implies that on average 115 missiles were fired per day. More detailed reports reveal a varying intensity with an increase in the number of launches in the later half of the conflict, with a peak of 240 missiles on 3 August.

An additional reason for the considerable inaccuracy in the estimates of the size of the Hezbollah arsenal can be found in the fact that in the years leading up to this war the General Security Services (GSS) of Israel focused more on the Gaza strip, a situation that was in part caused by budgetary restrictions. In its turn, Hezbollah was very much aware of the capability of the GSS and managed to keep strict secrecy by hiding information and the transfer thereof in a sophisticated manner. The GSS did its utmost to penetrate Hezbollah’s communication system, which appeared to be a great challenge.
Thanks to a good secrecy by Hezbollah on the arms supplies and shipments, Israel was only able to make a rough conjecture of the types and quantities of weapons. Apart from this, the role of UNIFIL is not quite clear in all this. These UN troops were mandated to monitor the withdrawal of the IDF and assist the Lebanese government in restoring its authority over the border area with Israel. In spite of the presence of UNIFIL, Hezbollah was able for years to fortify the border area with Israel and build and supply a substantial number of weapon storage sites.

One of the biggest problems for the IDF in dealing with the missiles threat was that Hezbollah used the Lebanese population and its infrastructure as a shield. Thus, many launching installations were spotted near hospitals, schools and mosques, and there were even missiles launching sites on top of apartment buildings. These methods undoubtedly contributed to the IDF being portrayed as incompetent in its attempts at stopping the missile launches, but also as showing no respect for the population of Lebanon in its efforts to tackle the missile problem. To show that Hezbollah did not only use big, visible launching installations, the IAF put a number of images on the Internet. They are intended to demonstrate the frequent use of improvised launching installations in the direct proximity of houses, schools, hospitals and mosques. These actions did create some appreciation, but at the same time they prompted the question whether there was no other way of taking out the targets, taking into account intended or unintended collateral damage. During the conflict Israel continually claimed that it would spare the Lebanese civilian population as much as possible. Thus, in leaflets that were dropped the people were repeatedly called upon to remove themselves from the locations Hezbollah was operating from.

From a military respect, what the IAF achieved in its actions against the missile threat was impressive. Thus, on 11 July three medium-range missiles were fired at Haifa from the area of Tyrus in Lebanon. According to Ophir, the missile launching installations were destroyed within minutes after the first launches. In the actions secondary explosions were observed, which might indicate that not all missiles had been fired yet at the moment of the Israeli counter-attack. In the totality of the threat the detection and assault capability is only minuscule, but it is an indication of the advanced methods and technology used by the IAF and IDF to detect, identify and attack missile launching installations.

According to Ophir, it was striking that in the entire month that the conflict lasted the IAF showed itself to be capable of keeping large areas under surveillance and, where necessary, attack the identified launching installations; all the more so because part of
the IAF’s capacity was still available for supporting the ground forces and carrying out interdiction missions. At the same time, however, it was worrying that the threat of the short-range missiles remained undiminished and the actions of the IAF had little influence on the number of missiles Hezbollah fired during this war. IDF analyses show that it is assumed that only a small part of the Katyusha missiles were destroyed, but that the IDF succeeded in stemming the resupply from Syria and Iran during the war. Israel, however, does not claim to have been able to significantly limit the missile threat.

This does not mean that the air actions were ineffective. Thus, Ophir thinks the effective neutralising of the so-called “low observable time-sensitive targets” one of the most significant achievements of the IAF. In his analysis, Ophir goes so far as to state that the explanation of the success of the IAF in this area can be found in the combination of advanced methods of information gathering and the quick assault. He even claims that it is not entirely unthinkable that the relatively low number of missiles fired at Haifa was a direct consequence of the effectiveness of the IAF. As Hezbollah made frequent use of launching installations consisting of only one launching tube, reacting to all launches was like trying to find a needle in a haystack. Ophir concludes his analysis by remarking that the IAF cannot do it on its own.

He emphatically states that support from special units and artillery is necessary, in spite of the high costs involved. Only with an integral approach can an adequate defence be realised.

Giving a significant blow to Hezbollah’s military capabilities in order to end the terrorist threat from Lebanon

Hezbollah had not accommodated its command centres and other offices in military complexes remote from the civilian infrastructure, but in apartment buildings and houses. From the outside these facilities were not or hardly recognisable as something different than homes. Hunnerwadel remarks that an organisation like Hezbollah is affected only to a low extent by attacks on its infrastructure, better still, it profits from it. The inevitable collateral damage caused to the civilian population and infrastructure in any case enables Hezbollah to effectively manage the propaganda against Israel. Hezbollah has repeatedly indicated to be amazed at the ease with which IDF deals with the fact that in all combat actions there is an enormous amount of collateral damage and which is apparently accepted. In a number of cases Human Rights Watch accused Israel of committing war crimes by attacking civilian targets. This is remarkable in itself as Hezbollah, in its turn, can be accused of deliberately accommodating its fighters and munitions in the civilian infrastructure. Arkin established that many of the targets which had been described as destroyed by various organisations, such as the local Lebanese authorities,
Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, often only sustained damage that can be repaired relatively easily, and that there was no question of destruction yet.\textsuperscript{86}

A second objective intended by the neutralising of the operational infrastructure is to take away Hezbollah’s possibility of effectively commanding and controlling its fighters. This is in line with the methodology that perceives the opponent as a system in which the elements of command and control are of vital importance for the effective operation of the system. An analysis of organisations like Hezbollah, however, shows that they are rather built-up from a large number of semi-autonomous cells capable of acting without any clear command and control from a higher echelon. Because of this, attacks on the command facilities only have a limited effect, and partly because of this, Israel was criticised of showing few scruples with regard to attacks on civilian targets and causing civilian casualties.

One of the major challenges facing the IAF was attacking the Hezbollah command posts. These facilities were frequently located in apartment buildings and could not be destroyed without causing some extent of collateral damage. According to Cordesman, a large number of the attacks on the Hezbollah facilities had an opposite effect. As the IDF was unable to prove that in the attacked targets large quantities of ammunitions had been stored, Hezbollah effectively managed to show the world that Israel was not merely after Hezbollah, but that it felt no qualms in attacking the Lebanese population as well. Apart from that, the Hezbollah headquarters do not harbour facilities with much high-tech equipment, and by destroying them Israel created much more animosity against itself than tactical advantage.\textsuperscript{87}

In order to be able to operate effectively against the Hezbollah capability to sustain its command and control, it was important to take out the means of communication. According to Israel, Hezbollah made extensive use of the Lebanese Al Manar television station in Beirut for the dissemination of propaganda messages. The IAF failed to destroy Al Manar’s capability completely, although air raids did take place against Al Manar and the Hezbollah controlled Al-Nour radio station on 12 July and the days following, to which the international media reacted with indignation. Israel claimed they were used to glorify suicide attacks and that the networks functioned as Hezbollah C2 assets. After the war the UN inquiry commission questioned the targeting of Al Manar, in particular doubting the legitimacy of the attack. According to the commission, the only way to justify an attack would be if the stations were used to call upon their audience to commit war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.\textsuperscript{88} The commission does, however, make a distinction in its judgment by acknowledging that Al Manar was
used for disseminating propaganda and that this cannot be ascertained for the other stations that came under attack.

In its fight against Israel Hezbollah made use of two important elements, viz. Stand-off Firepower and attrition tactics to exhaust the IDF.\(^89\) The missiles used by Hezbollah had different ranges and were fired from different areas. Obviously, the short-range missiles (especially *Katyusha* missiles) were stationed in the southern part of Lebanon, those with a larger range (*Fajr-3* and *Fajr-5* medium range) were mainly fired from the Tyrus area and north of the Litani River. There were also attempts to launch from more northerly positions still. The major objectives for the missile attacks were civilian, and their firing was well-coordinated. The impression of coordinated actions was not challenged during the war, an indication of a very robust Hezbollah command and control system.

Apart from the use of stand-off firepower, attrition of the IDF was an important principle, of which the abundant use of anti-tank missiles, mortars and obstacles, mines and booby traps are clear indications. Hezbollah was hardly active in defending its territory, but was only trying to make things as tough as possible for the IDF, preferably by attacking materiel with a high media value, such as tanks, other armoured vehicles and, if given the chance, helicopters. In planning its actions, Hezbollah made thorough use of its familiarity with the terrain and the study of the expected routes of advance of the IDF.

From the beginning of the conflict, the IAF tried to damage the organisational and operational infrastructure of Hezbollah. This was mainly realised by attacking control centres, communication systems and buildings in the Dahiya residential area of Beirut of which it was known that they were used as Hezbollah headquarters. An analysis afterwards has shown that, as was indicated above, in particular the organisational infrastructure was attacked effectively and that great damage was inflicted.

Because of the fact that the battle strength and deployment of Hezbollah was not significantly impaired, it can be cautiously stated that the operational infrastructure was not effectively targeted or that Hezbollah was resilient enough to sustain its operational command and control.

*Military deterrence towards Hezbollah and the surrounding countries*

Whether Israel was able to realise the above-mentioned objective can only be ascertained after some time. Nevertheless, there are indications that point at a longer-term effect that had been achieved. Thus, shortly after the outbreak of hostilities Nasrallah claimed that if he had known that Israel would react the way it eventually did, he might
have chosen a different course. This is somewhat surprising, as Hezbollah must have had a fairly good idea of Israel’s reaction after its intention of abducting Israeli soldiers. Several weeks before the conflict in southern Lebanon Hamas had abducted an IDF soldier and killed two others in the border area with Gaza. In response the IDF carried out operation *Summer Rains* on 28 June 2006, mobilising thousands of troops to suppress the missile attacks from the Gaza strip and to achieve the release of the abducted soldier. On top of that, the IAF flew a number of selective bombing sorties and the IDF deployed ground troops over the entire Gaza strip. Nasrallah’s reaction, therefore, must be viewed with some scepticism.

The neighbouring countries and sponsors of Hezbollah were less definite during the conflict and also kept a low public profile. The possibility that Iran may even have prevented the use of long-range missiles can be seen as an attempt to stop Hezbollah from escalating the conflict further, which might provoke the IDF into extending its action beyond just Lebanon. Efraim Halevy, the former director of the Israeli Mossad intelligence service, too, indicates that Iran and Syria made almost daily appeals for a cease-fire.

Furthermore, the support for Hezbollah in Lebanon is considerably less than in the period prior to the conflict. Several sources confirm that the support for Hezbollah in the Arab states in the period after the war has declined considerably. What must be remarked here is that the support in the Arab countries had been divided in the first place. Iran supported Hezbollah unconditionally, with Syria and Jemen in its wake, while the Arab League adopted a clearly more negative stance towards Hezbollah and the war it had provoked. In doing so, the relation with Iran was emphatically mentioned. “You have Hezbollah, a Shiite minority, controlled by Iran, and the Iranians are embarrassing the hell out of the Arab governments”, stated Riad Kahwaji, director of the Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis in Dubai. The Egyptian Foreign Affairs minister, Ahmed Abul Gheit, accused Hezbollah of having started the war against Israel in order to avoid being disarmed by the Lebanese government. Gheit stated that Nasrallah had undertaken an ill-conceived action, which made some people feel proud or even cry out victory, but which had brought the country (Lebanon) enormous damage. Shortly after the outbreak of the conflict the official Saudi-Arabia press agency, SPA, disseminated a press release in which it stated that a distinction should be made between legitimate resistance and uncalculated adventures by elements (inside Lebanon) and those who support these elements, without taking into account the legitimate authorities. At the same time, the press agency held Hezbollah accountable for the escalation and appealed to it to bring the crisis to an end.
Forcing the Lebanese government to interfere and dismantle Hezbollah as a state within a state

Attacking the infrastructural facilities in Lebanon was one of the ways in which Israel tried to point out its responsibilities to the Lebanese government. At the beginning of the conflict the Israeli government had put a restriction on attacking Lebanese infrastructure. Later in the conflict, especially during the last hours before the cease-fire came into effect on 14 August 2006, the IAF attacked a number of petrol stations in southern Lebanon and also a number of roads and bridges in northern Lebanon and in the Bekaa valley. The idea behind this, according to several analysts, was that this would delay and possibly undermine the regeneration of Hezbollah after the start of the cease-fire. Besides, there was some speculation of the cease-fire possibly being violated by Hezbollah, in which case the IDF would benefit from a seriously disrupted, damaged or partly destroyed infrastructure. In the aftermath of the conflict various organisations made inquiries into the damage that was done and the legitimacy of the targets that had been attacked. Arkin reports that, amongst others, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch determined that the IDF had attacked targets that had no relation with any Hezbollah activity whatsoever, which suggested that Israel had mostly been after the systematic destruction of Lebanese civilian infrastructure.96 In spite of the pressure that this put on the Lebanese government to take its responsibility in the conflict, this government never tried convincingly to make its authority felt and to curb Hezbollah's power.

Creating circumstances leading to the release of the two abducted Israeli servicemen

This objective was not reached during the weeks the conflict lasted. As the release or exchange of prisoners was a long way in coming about, the IDF cherished little hope anymore that the two men would still be alive. Finally, the bodies of the two abducted soldiers were transferred as part of a prisoner exchange on 16 July 2008.97

Ensuring that Syria does not become involved in the realisation of the above-mentioned objectives

Syria made it clear that the Israeli troops had to stay clear of the Syrian border. Apart from that, the establishment of an international peacekeeping force in Lebanon would be considered a force of occupation, and this would legitimise resistance by resistance movements.98 As it never went beyond the uttering of threats, a cautious conclusion may be drawn that this objective was reached, although it is impossible to attribute this success to a particular Service.
Conclusion

It is clear that the IDF was unable to remove Hezbollah from the border areas with Israel or to destroy it, and the movement is still functioning as a social-political and military organisation inside Lebanon. What can be said, however, is that the support for Hezbollah has considerably decreased. Through the IDF actions Israel has demonstrated (once more) to other countries in the region that it is prepared to go to great lengths when its security and existence as a state are at stake. In part as a result of great international pressure, a situation has emerged in which the Lebanese army and the UN troops in southern Lebanon must ensure that in the coming years Hezbollah will not be able again to form a serious threat to Israel. This is a tall order for the Lebanese army as well as the UN. The release of the abducted servicemen was not achieved, and it was not until 2008 that an exchange of prisoners and the mortal remains took place.

The role of the IAF has been criticised by many as it failed to produce the clinical victory independently. Nevertheless, it can be said that the role of the IAF has been a decisive one in the course of the conflict. Precision bombings and actions against the missile launching installations within an extremely short period of time have shown the IAF’s worth. The perception that an air force can win a conflict with an (irregular) opponent on its own has been changed, but at the same time the necessity of an air force has been proven by the way in which the ground forces were supported in their actions and the ability to carry out actions in the rear area with targets of tactical and strategic value for the direct opponent in his capacity to fight the battle as well as for the state player (Lebanon) to take its responsibility.

In short, air power did not fail, it lived up to expectations. However, many held expectations that were not realistic, and they have had to adjust their ideas.

Notes

1. Lieutenant-Colonel A. (Guus) de Koster is an airpower lecturer at the Military Operational Arts and Sciences section of the Netherlands Defence Academy. He is a former F-16 pilot of the Royal Netherlands Air Force.

5. For an elaborate discussion on Hezbollah and its methods of operations see; Biddle and Friedman (2008), *The 2006 Lebanon campaign and the future of Warfare: Implications for army and defence policy*, Carlisle.


7. Hezbollah has acquired the Iranian Zelzal rocket, various models exist with a maximum range of 210 km.


9. *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, ‘Israeli general says ‘this is war’’. See also Blanford et al., ‘How Israel was pulled back into the peril of Lebanon’, *Times*, 13 July 2006, p. 4.


13. Ibid.


15. Ibid., p. 174.


17. Arkin, op. cit, p. 175.


22. Arkin, op. cit, p. 182.

27. Ibid, p. 185.
32. Ibid.
37. Arkin, op. cit, p. 196.


41. Ibid.

42. See <www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism+Obstacle+to+Peace/Terrorism+from+Lebanon+Hizbullah/Summary%20of%20IDF%20operations%20against%20Hizbullah%20in%20Lebanon%2026-Jul-2006>, visited 11 December 2008.

43. Ibid.


46. Ibid., p. 207.

47. Ibid., p. 209.


51. Arkin, op. cit, p. 212.


58. Arkin, op. cit, p. 224.

59. Ibid., p. 227.


62. Ibid., p. 234.

63. Ibid., p. 236.

64. Ibid., p. 239.

65. Ibid., p. 239.

67. Arkin, op. cit, p. 239.
70. Ibid.
71. Arkin, op. cit, p. 128.
72. Ibid.
73. Uzi Rubin (2007), The Rocket Campaign against Israel during the 2006 Lebanon War, Bar Ilan University (Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies), Ramat Gan, p. 6.
80. See Nasrallah’s speech of 23 May 2006 on Hezbollah’s website, <www.hizbollah.tv>: ‘Israelis use codes and closed circuits in communicating among themselves. We have no need for those. If our neighbourhood and village people hold conversations, no machine and no electronics wizard can decipher the hints and symbols used by our people. This is the popular essence of our warriors’. Visited 22
December 2008.


82. For an elaborate discussion of the used tactics see: Dr Reuven Erlich (2006), *Hezbollah's use of Lebanese civilians as human shields*, Intelligence and Terrorism Information Centre at the Centre for Special Studies, Ramat Hasharon.


86. Arkin, op. cit, p. 77.

87. Cordesman, op. cit, p. 7.


89. Gabriel Siboni, op. cit, p. 63-64.


91. John Pike, op. cit.


96. Arkin, op. cit, pp. 75-83.


Optimal routing against ambushes: a first approach

Roy Lindelauf

NL-ARMS, 2009, 179-196

Introduction

The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) encountered numerous problems during the invasion of southern Lebanon in 2006. Division 162, for instance, experienced serious difficulties while approaching the village of Ghandouriyeh. Even though multiple axes of approach were available the IDF took the route along Wadi Saluki (other possibilities were to approach either from the south or north). Hezbollah launched a successful ambush resulting in the death of several IDF soldiers. This action stands as an example of IDF’s failure to obtain accurate tactical ground intelligence during this conflict. Ambushes, raids and IED attacks have been, and still are, tactics most often employed by irregular fighters. Counter-measures consist of physical protection of men and materiel, and methods to detect, predict and neutralise possible attacks. Game theory, the mathematical analysis of the strategic interaction between actors, offers a coherent analytical framework that can be used to systematically analyse problems related to counter-insurgency. In addition, it offers a framework that helps understand the influence of assumptions on outcomes of an analytical process. Game theory has been used extensively in modeling military operations as well as in modeling problems of a more strategic nature. We argue that game theory can also be useful in predicting and preventing attacks with improvised explosive devices by reducing the predictability of traffic patterns.

The goal of this chapter is to present an analytical framework that can be used to optimise routing schemes, knowing that the enemy employs ambushes and IED attacks. This will be done by considering the possible strategies each player in this ‘ambush game’ can employ. Simply put, one player has to choose among the possible routes between a source and destination, and the other player has to choose the location of an attack. Game theory is perfectly equipped to analyse such strategic interactions.

Clearly, mathematical modeling always comes at the cost of making simplifying assumptions. We recognise that other considerations also play a role in deciding what route to take (such as geography, available time, etc.). However, a game-theoretical approach can certainly aid in maximizing the unpredictability of routing schemes, consequently minimizing the expected loss to allied forces.
The layout of this chapter is as follows. A game-theoretical model that captures the strategic interaction between the player that conducts the ambush and the player that moves from source to destination on risk-homogeneous networks will be introduced first. Next, a discussion on approximating the risk of an attack on edges in the network will be presented. Finally, optimal routing on heterogeneous networks will be presented in the last section.

**Optimal routing on risk-homogeneous networks**

In the remainder of this chapter the player that conducts the ambush will be called ‘Red’, and the other player will be called ‘Blue’. The following restrictions can be made to simplify the analysis:

1. Red conducts exactly one ambush each iteration.
2. Red conducts exactly $k$ ambushes each iteration.
3. Red knows the source and destination of the Blue forces.
4. Red knows the probability distribution of Blue’s source and destination.
5. The edges in the network are risk-homogeneous.
6. The edges in the network are risk-heterogeneous.
7. Blue does not have data on possible ambush locations.
8. Blue has several sources and destinations in the network.

Multiple extensions of the above-mentioned restrictions are possible. In this chapter we will present an analysis of the case that Red conducts one ambush and is aware of Blue’s source and destination in the network. Next, we will extend the analysis by giving Red the option to conduct several ambushes. This section will be concerned with networks in which the edges are considered to be homogenous with respect to risk. The heterogeneous case will be dealt with in later sections. More complex situations are subject of future research.

A homogeneous network is a network in which the risk of an attack at an edge in the network is equal over all edges. We assume that during each iteration Blue will move from source to destination and that Red conducts an ambush. Consider the following example.

*Example 1*

Suppose Blue has to move regularly from source $S$ to destination $T$, see figure 1.
To do this Blue has two options at his disposal, route A and route B. How should Blue assign his routing scheme?

**Case 1**

Assume that both edges in the network are homogeneous with respect to the risk of an ambush. We will show that the choice of either route A or B according to the flip of a coin minimises the maximum number of expected encounters with IED’s. To do this, assume without loss of generality that Blue chooses route A with probability $p$ and hence route B with probability $1-p$. Also note that Blue is not aware of the location of Red’s ambush (IED). If Red plans the ambush at route A and Blue chooses to use route A, it follows that Red ‘wins’ 1 convoy. If Red plans to ambush at route B and Blue chooses route A, then Red ‘wins’ nothing. We model this strategic interaction as a two person zero-sum game, i.e., whatever Red’s gains equals Blue’s losses. The expected payoff of this game in case of an ambush at route A and Blue choosing a mixed strategy $(p, 1-p)$ equals $p \cdot 1 + (1-p) \cdot 0 = p$. In case of Red conducting an ambush at edge B the expected payoff to Blue equals $p \cdot 0 + (1-p) \cdot 1 = 1 - p$. Clearly, Blue will adopt that strategy (a value for $p$) such that the expected number of encountered ambushes will be minimised. Since Blue does not know the location of Red’s ambush it can be argued that adopting a strategy that minimises the maximum expected payoff is preferable. Hence, Blue will choose a value of $p$ such that $\max \{p, 1-p\}$ is minimal. Therefore, Blue will
choose $p = \frac{1}{2}$. This strategy corresponds to Blue tossing a fair coin each time he has to move from his source S to his destination T. In case of Heads he will move along route A and in case of tails he will move along route B.

Clearly the previous analysis consists of an oversimplified transportation network because Blue only had two options available in transporting from A to B. In reality this network can be more complex. Therefore, we generalise the previous example.

**Case 2**
Consider the following transportation network, see figure 2.

![Figure 2: A transportation network between S and T](image)

Assume Blue has to move from S to T regularly. We determine the payoff for each strategy combination of Red and Blue and present the resulting information in table 1.
Table 1 should be read as follows. Each row corresponds to the options available to Red (the location of a possible ambush) and the columns correspond with the options (routes) available to Blue. For instance, in case of Red planning an ambush at the edge indicated by ‘CT’, he will encounter Blue if he either chooses route ‘SCT’ or route ‘SACT’. Clearly, Red wants to maximise the possible number of encounters with Blue. On the other hand, Blue wants to minimise his number of encounters with Red.

We introduce the concept of domination to analyse this situation. A pure strategy ‘A’ is dominated by another pure strategy ‘B’ if and only if the payoff corresponding to option ‘B’ is always equal to or better than option ‘A’, irrespective of one’s opponent strategy. A pure strategy that is dominated will never be an option to a rational player, simply because he has a better strategy available, irrespective of his opponent’s choice. Looking at the payoffs in table 1 it can be seen that pure strategy ‘BT’ dominates pure strategy ‘AB’. In addition, it can be seen that option ‘BT’ also dominates ‘SB’. The game can therefore be simplified by removing these pure strategy options from the table, resulting in table 2. Note that intuitively this is also clear: if Blue transported over SB or AB he would have to choose BT next to end up in T. Locating the ambush at BT always ensures Red of encountering Blue in these cases.
In a similar fashion we analyse the options available to Blue. It can be seen that his pure strategy ‘SBT’ dominates ‘SABT’ and ‘SCABT’. Taking these considerations into account yields table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SBT</th>
<th>SCT</th>
<th>SACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

Due to the elimination of Blue’s dominated strategies it becomes possible to restrict the rational options to Red once more. Analysing table 3, it can be seen that option ‘CT’ dominates ‘SA’, ‘SC’ and ‘AC’, resulting in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SBT</th>
<th>SCT</th>
<th>SACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

Table 4 cannot be reduced any further using the concept of dominance. Assume that Blue adopts the strategy \((p, q, 1-p-q)\), i.e., Blue chooses route SBT with probability \(p\), route SCT with probability \(q\) and hence route SACT with probability \(1-p-q\). This yields an expected payoff of \(p\) against Red’s first option, and a payoff of \(q+1-p-q=1-p\) against Red’s second option. Hence, Blue’s optimal strategy consists of choosing either route SBT or routes SCT and SACT according to the flip of a coin, where it does not matter how he chooses between SCT and SACT (his choice of \(q\) does not affect the outcomes against either of Red’s strategies). In addition, Red will decide to ambush BT or CT according to the flip of a coin.

The previous situations consisted of Red being able to conduct exactly one ambush (IED attack). We will extend this analysis by allowing Red to be able to conduct more than one ambush attack.
Example 2:
Assume that Blue’s transportation network can be simplified as shown in figure 3.

![Figure 3: A simple transportation network between source S and destination T](image)

In addition, assume that Red can conduct two ambushes. We present all possible combinations of strategy in table 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A:2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B:2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C:2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A:1, B:1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A:1, C:1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B:1, C:1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A:2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

Table 5 presents the number of encounters between Blue and Red for each possible strategy combination. For instance, if Red conducts two ambushes along edge A (and
consequently zero at B and C), and Blue chooses to use route A, it follows that there will be two encounters. A similar analysis as done in the previous section (using software package MAPLE) yields the following optimal (maximin) strategies:

1. Red chooses uniformly over options A:2, B:2, C:2.
2. Blue chooses uniformly over his three options.

Thus, it can be seen that the game-theoretical analysis can easily be extended to cases of multiple possible ambushes by use of software packages.

**Estimating risk-heterogeneity**

It can be argued that the assumption of network homogeneity with respect to risk is too restrictive. After all, some edges in the network are 'more dangerous' than others. The probability of attack at some locations may be assumed to be higher than at others. A network is called risk-heterogeneous if the likelihood of an attack is not distributed uniformly over its edges. The first step in determining an optimal routing strategy along such a heterogeneous network is the estimation of the risk of attack at each edge. Risk is clearly an abstract concept and the critic will argue that it is difficult to quantify. However, when choosing a routing scheme, in practice one already intuitively uses the concept of risk: after all, there is a tendency to choose that route that minimises the probability of attack. Instinctively, one avoids routes along which attacks often take place, or are 'likely' to occur.

An extremely simple method of attributing risk to edges is by setting the likelihood of an attack to occur at a certain edge equal to the fraction of successful attacks on that edge. Intuitively, this is a good initial approach and the complexity of this method is nil.

Of course it is also possible to develop more elaborate analyses. Amongst others, this can be done with the help of expert data, statistical analyses and graph-theoretical analyses. When there are no historical data with regard to attacks it is possible to attribute risks to edges based on centrality principles commonly used in mathematical network analysis. If there is data available on previous attacks, it will be possible to attribute risks by use of point pattern analysis. Here, we will give an initial illustrative discussion of several graph-theoretical methods useful in attributing risk to edges.
Centrality

If no data concerning previous attacks is available, other methods must be developed in order to attribute risks to edges in the network. Intuitively, edges in the network that are near major traffic junctions pose a higher risk, simply because these are assumed to be Red’s most likely locations for locating roadside bombs (red assessing the probabilities of a transport passing there the highest).

It suffices to say that there are many ways of determining central nodes in a network. With regard to transport over a network the ‘betweenness-centrality’ is an important centrality measure, as it attributes a value to a node which reflects its importance with regard to the exchange of information (transport) in the network. Calculating the centrality index of each node in the network and attributing a risk value to an edge by taking the sum of the values of its end nodes, seems to be a good starting point. Let \( g = (V, E) \) indicate the network, with source \( s \in V \) and destination \( t \in V \). The amount of ‘s-t betweenness’ of node \( i \in V \) equals the fraction of shortest paths between s and t that node \( i \) occupies. We present an educative example:

![Figure 4: Example of 'betweenness centrality' (Left) and attribution of risks (Right)
Consider the network given in figure 4, with source S and destination T. Clearly, it can be seen that there are two shortest paths between S and T (SBCDET, SBCDFT). The nodes B, C and D are elements in both paths and hence score a betweenness centrality value of 1, i.e., $c_B = c_C = c_D = 1$. Node A does not occupy any shortest S-T path, hence $c_A = 0$. Similarly we obtain $c_E = c_F = \frac{1}{2}$. Since the source of the transport equals ‘S’ and the destination ‘T’ we let $c_S = c_T = 1$. Next, we attribute risk to each edge in the network by taking the sum of the centrality measures adjacent to the respective edge. The resulting network, including risk attributed to the edges is given in figure 4 Right. It can be seen that the results correspond to intuition: the highest risk is attributed to edges BC and CD and lowest to edge AS. This method can easily be implemented in standard software and hence complement standard network analysis in optimizing routing schemes.

‘Chokepoints’

Another method to assign risk to edges is to determine those edges in the network that are critical in the connectivity of the network. For instance, Blue, in transporting from a source to a destination, will have certain edges in the network that he cannot avoid. Locating an ambush at such an edge seems profitable to Red. To determine such chokepoints in transporting between source S and destination T can easily be done by the graph theoretical concept of connectivity. This boils down to determining the minimum number of edges in the network, when omitted, disconnects source S from destination T. Such a cut is also called an S-T cut. We attribute a value to an edge by determining the minimum capacity of all S-T cuts that this respective edge occupies. The higher this value, the more alternatives are available in the S-T path with respect to this edge. Hence, the value of risk attributed to this edge equals 1 over this minimum capacity (the more alternatives available the lower the risk). We illustrate such a chokepoint analysis by an example.
In Figure 5 two S-T cuts are presented: cut SB and cut SABC. Consider edge BT. Clearly this edge is a member of both S-T cut sets SB and SABC. All possible cut sets corresponding to S-T cuts containing BT are: SB(4), SAB(2), SABC(2) and SBC(6). The minimum number of edges that have to be cut (including BT) to isolate S from T equals 2. Hence, the corresponding risk attributed to edge BT equals $\frac{1}{2}$. A similar analysis in case of edge SA shows that its risk equals $\frac{1}{3}$, as expected lower than that of BT.

**Optimal routing on risk-heterogeneous networks**

The preceding sections have shown that with the help of game theory it is possible to optimise routing schemes on risk homogenous networks. In addition, two methods of assigning risks to edges have been briefly discussed. Below, an analysis will be presented of optimal route allocation in case of such risk heterogeneous networks. This is done by using an example in which it is assumed that data on previous attacks is available.
Example:

Consider the simple network as presented in the first section, example 1. Assume that blue has the following data:

1. On route A 100 transports have taken place, against which 5 attacks have been committed.
2. On route B 200 transports have taken place, against which 2 attacks have been committed.

The risk of a successful attack on route A is therefore estimated at 5% (5/100) and the risk of a successful attack on route B at 1% (2/200). A naive routing scheme for blue would consist of always taking that route that has the lowest risk of attack, in this case route B. However, Red, aware of this reasoning, will always ambush route B. If Blue extends his reasoning by taking Red’s deliberations into account, he will always pick route A. A game-theoretic analysis can easily break this kind of circular reasoning. Such a simple two-person zero-sum game is solved again in terms of minimax and maximin strategies. It is customary to define a pay-off matrix, in which the rows correspond to the pure strategies of player I (Red, who wants to maximise the number of ‘hits’) and the columns with the pure strategies of player II (Blue, who wants to minimise), as we have already demonstrated using tables in the previous sections. The ensuing pay-off matrix is as follows,

\[
H = \begin{bmatrix} 5 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}
\]

Consider the payoff in the first row and first column: 5. This equals the number of expected ‘hits’ if the ambush is located on route A (first row) and the transport goes along route A (first column), i.e., 100*0.05 = 5. Therefore, it can be argued that the risk on this edge in the network equals 5, bearing in mind that there are more ways of determining such a risk. In a similar way, if the ambush is placed on route A and the transport goes along route B, the transport will reach its target safely. Given this matrix, the optimal strategy for blue can be determined similarly to that in the previous sections. Blue’s optimal strategy consists of transporting over route A with probability 1/6 and over B with probability 5/6. The expected number of losses equals 5/6. If blue were to take another strategy, for instance, according to the flip of a coin, it can be seen that the
expected number of losses could be even lower (a half if Red chooses to ambush B) but also higher: 2.5 if red chooses A. Since blue does not know red’s choice of strategy he best opts for the 1/6 probability A strategy, this guarantees a maximum number of losses of 5/6, irrespective of red’s strategy! It is also easy to show that Red’s optimal strategy equals: with probability $\frac{1}{6}$ ambush route A and with probability $\frac{5}{6}$ ambush route B.

We assumed that Blue will choose a routing scheme taking historical data on attacks into account, and consequently that Red will take this also into account. Red cannot predict the route Blue will pick, but he can assume that Blue will allocate his routes based on historic trends. Therefore, Red’s goal is to attain a payoff as high as possible against Blue. The strength of the optimal strategy based on minimax principles is that a deviation of Red from his optimal strategy will only benefit Blue.

In reality optimal route allocation is not as easy as the above example suggests. After all, the transport takes place along a network of roads and the number of possible routes will increase drastically with the number of routes in the network. As was shown above, the method employed can be generalised fairly easily. Determining the optimal strategy in a two-person zero-sum game setting does not depend on the number of (finite) strategies. In practice, however, one resorts to computer simulation as computations become cumbersome. In addition, it must be remarked that the method can be made more user-friendly by implementing it in software. In principle, the analyst only needs to make the choice of network to analyse and attribute risks to edges (this could be done for instance by attributing a scale of 1 to 10 for risk to each side of by automating some of the above-mentioned methods).

Therefore, in general, consider a route map as given. In other words, blue has a network and he knows what the source and destination of the transport are. Such a network can easily be converted into a mathematical graph, see figure 6 for an illustration. A mathematical graph is nothing more than a set of dots and lines: a dot corresponds to a node in reality and a line to an edge between the respective junctions. Such a graph is presented as $g = (V,E)$, where $V$ is the set of nodes and $E$ the set of edges.
In addition, there is information with regard to the risk of attacks corresponding to each edge in the network. Such information might be available from a point pattern analysis, a centrality analysis, expert information or a combination of all three. This information is modelled using a function that attributes weights to the edges. For instance, denote this function by \( w : E \rightarrow (1, \infty) \). Hence \( w_{ij} > w_{kl} \), \( ij, kl \in E \) implies that the risk of a successful attack on edge \( ij \) is greater than on edge \( kl \). This risk depends on geographic circumstances, the condition of the roads, et cetera, as discussed above. Given this network with weights assigned to the edges, the question remains how to rationally determine unpredictable routing schemes. A first approach to the answer to this question has been given in the previous sections.

In principle, there is an infinite number of possible routes from source to target. Therefore, the restriction is imposed that each route must be a path in the network (not a single edge may occur more than once in a route).

A routing scheme consists of multiple edges risk weights \( w_{ij} \), attributed to each edge. Blue’s pure strategies consist of paths (from source to target) and red’s pure strategies correspond to edges where ambushes will take place.
Next we extend our example even more, see figure 7. Assume blue has the following route network for movement from location S to location T.

![Routing network between source (S) and destination (T).](image)

Clearly, there are four possible paths between source S and destination T, i.e., SACT, SACBT, SBT and SBCT. Notice, for instance, that SACBSACT is not a path because several edges (AC) occur more than once. In addition, assume that Blue has data available on previous transportations and attacks see table 6. We assign risk values to each edge corresponding to the fraction of attacks that occurred on the respective edge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edge</th>
<th>Nr. of times passed</th>
<th>Nr. of attacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6

Compare edge AS and edge AC. The risk attributed to edge AS is set equal to $\frac{1}{16}$, this because of all 160 times this edge was traversed 10 attacks occurred. The risk attributed
to edge AC equals \(\frac{5}{16}\), i.e., of all 32 passages there have been 10 attacks. Assigning risks to all edges in a similar way, and normalising, we end up with risks as shown in figure 8.

![Figure 8: Network with risks attributed to the edges.](image)

Red’s mixed strategy consists of choosing a probability distribution over all edges where ambushes can be placed. Blue’s mixed strategy consists of a probability distribution over all possible routes. We present all possible strategy combinations in table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SACT</th>
<th>SACBT</th>
<th>SBCT</th>
<th>SBT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>SB</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>CT</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7.*
We analyse this game using two person zero-sum game theory using the software tool MAPLE to solve this linear optimisation problem. It follows that red’s optimal strategy equals \((p_{SA}, p_{SB}, p_{AC}, p_{BC}, p_{CT}, p_{BT} = (0, 5/8, 3/8, 0, 0, 0).\) The expected payoff equals \(\frac{15}{128}\). Thus red ambushes SB with probability \(5/8\) and AC with probability \(3/8\). Another interpretation can be that red distributes his capacity optimally with \(5/8\) over SB and \(3/8\) over AC. Blue’s optimal strategy equals \((p_{SACT}, p_{SACBT}, p_{SBCT}, p_{SBT} = (5/8, 0, 5/32, 12/32).\) Again we use the minimax principle: blue opts for that strategy that minimises the maximum expected loss.

Concluding remarks

Inspired by tactical problems that Israel experienced during the incursion into southern Lebanon in 2006, we presented an initial analysis of the optimal allocation of routes against ambush attacks. The methodology thus developed provides an analytical contribution to the prevention and prediction phase in dealing with the IED threat.

The strategic interaction between ‘bomb layer’ and ‘transporter’ was modelled as a two-person zero-sum game. The pure strategies for the bomb layer consist of choosing the edges in the network corresponding to ambush locations. The pure strategies available to the transporter consist of all possible routes between source and target. The situation in case of a single ambush was solved for a single source and target. It was also shown that the ‘multiple ambush’ situation can be easily analysed with similar methods. Future research will focus on the multiple sources and targets case, although it must be remarked that the situation seems to be equivalent to multiple transports with one source and target.

In addition risk-heterogeneity of attacks on certain edges in the network was considered. Several methods to estimate these risks were presented. For instance, the probability of an attack on edge was approximated by the fraction of the convoys that encountered an attack. Besides, it was shown that it is possible to develop more complex methods based on graph theory (centrality and ‘chokepoint’).

Even though the importance of ‘unpredictability’ is stressed in the military operational literature, the idea of allocating routing schemes according to game-theoretical principles has not received widespread attention in the military community. The analysis in this chapter must therefore be considered as a first step towards the goal of minimizing the expected number of encounters with ambushes. The methods presented in this chapter are standard ‘tools’ in game theory. Since their implementation in software is
straightforward, the operational analyst confronted with allocating routing schemes could greatly benefit from such software.

Notes

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12. Luce and Raiffa, op. cit.
The Israeli actions during the Second Lebanon War: a case study into strategic culture

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NL-ARMS, 2009, 197-223

Introduction

In July and August 2006 the Second Lebanon War raged between Israel and Hezbollah. After an action by Hezbollah on 12 July, during which two Israeli servicemen were abducted, Israel responded with air raids against the Shiite organisation in Lebanon. The conflict escalated when Hezbollah began firing missiles on the north of Israel. In an attempt to end these missile launches, Israel intensified the air raids, but failed to prevent them. Almost a month into this vicious circle Israel eventually decided to carry out a land operation against the Hezbollah fighters in order to stop the missile fire before a cease-fire would come into effect. The land operation, however, was conducted unsatisfactorily and brought to light quite a number of defects in the Israeli security political structures and armed forces. Eventually, the war came to an end through international efforts. An extended UNIFIL, in cooperation with 15,000 Lebanese government troops, was to see to the stability in southern Lebanon.

Disappointment and frustration in Israel were great and the government and military leadership were targeted. The Israeli actions met with widespread criticism, nationally as well as internationally. How could this “poor performance” be explained? Surely, it could not be true that one of the world’s most impressive and experienced armed forces had failed to protect their citizens against missiles fired by a guerrilla movement? This contribution investigates how the Israeli actions in the summer of 2006 can be placed in the context of Israel’s political-military strategic development, the history of Israel and the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). This essay can be interpreted as a case study into strategic culture. It poses the question on the extent to which the Israeli actions in the Second Lebanon War can be explained from the Israeli strategic cultural development. Strategic culture is seen here as, “the persisting (though not eternal) socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, habits of mind, and preferred methods of operation that are more or less specific to a particular geographically based security community that has had a necessarily unique historical experience”.
Strategic culture is a “contested concept”; defining it is subject of discussion, and opinions on the explanatory force of the concept differ. Nevertheless, it is widely accepted that in the explanation of strategic behaviour of an actor, his strategic culture plays a major role. Research into strategic culture contributes to finding answers to questions on “whether, why and how, people, polities and would-be polities, fight”.

In the first section a number of explanations for the poor Israeli performance are presented, followed by a survey of the development of the Israeli strategic culture. The third section, subsequently, positions the Israeli actions in the summer of 2006 in the context of this development. The essay is rounded off with a conclusion.

Explanations offered for the disappointing Israeli performance in 2006

In response to the question on the poor performance, several factors are given in explanation. This contribution assesses a number of them by means of the analysis of Avi Kober and the report of the inquiry commission that the Israeli government installed under pressure of broadly shared criticism.

Kober states that the IDF failed to reach a “battlefield decision”, meaning that the IDF did not succeed in preventing the enemy from continuing the battle. In Kober’s analysis Israel allowed a reprisal action to go beyond its culmination point, after which the required response was not undertaken, resulting in an unsatisfactory conclusion. The Katyusha attacks on northern Israel could only be stopped by occupying the areas from which the missiles were launched. This had to be done by means of a land operation, which in the end was not carried out in the surprising, fast and decisive manner befitting the “sophisticated tradition” of the IDF.

The first reason for the mediocre performance of the IDF, according to Kober, is a belated realisation that this was a war. The Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Dan Halutz, initially considered the operation to be a reprisal attack. He decided that the General Staff was not to refer to it as ‘war’. Vice-Prime Minister Shimon Peres stood alone in the cabinet with his urge for clarity on whether this was a war. The matter hampered the preparations for any possible follow-up operations, causing delays in the mobilisation of reserve units. Moreover, it affected the command and control of the ongoing operation and it limited the staging of prepared operations. Finally, it restricted the dissemination of intelligence, which had an adverse effect on the decision making.
The second reason Kober sees in Israel's clinging to what Luttwak has called “post-heroic warfare,” the desire to avoid casualties, on one's own side, but also among the civilian population of the opponent. This mentality is a reflection of the “casualty aversion” of the Israeli society. On 31 July, day 20 of the war, Minister Mofaz, former Chief of Staff (1998-2002) and Minister of Defence (2002-May 2006) announced, “we have achieved much, and we do not wish to put that at risk by exposing 40,000 troops to the ‘reality of southern Lebanon’. As, however, the missile attacks continued, they saw no other option than to launch a ground operation. Nevertheless, the debates on alternatives went on until at least 9 August.

The third explanation for the indifferent performance of the IDF Kober sees in the impact of the two Intifadas, with which Israel is still struggling. In line with what Van Creveld already found in 1998, he points at the eroding effect of the operations in the occupied territories on the armed forces. Moreover, the last war had been fought over 25 years ago, which meant that there was hardly any war experience left in the organisation. In the occupied territories the opposition is weak and small-scale, the environment is familiar and the supply of intelligence and support are of high quality. In the operation against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon in 2006 it was just the other way round. Commanders had no experience in manoeuvring with large (mechanised) units, which had not been trained for such operations (sometimes not trained at all, due to their deployment in the occupied territories), while the logistic support was “rather ineffective”. Furthermore, being deployed in the occupied territories had its repercussions on the mindset with which the IDF entered the 2006 war. It caused restraint.

A fourth explanation Kober seeks in the application of RMA-inspired concepts. Under the influence of, and impressed by, technological developments and the ensuing American ideology of the revolution in military affairs school, Israel adopted a number of “false assumptions and beliefs”. Among them Kober identifies “the cult of technology”, the reliance on airpower and small high-value units, and the notion of “controlling”, instead of occupying ground. The reliance on technology at the expense of traditional military capability and skills goes hand in hand with the post-heroic warfare concept.

Kober finds a fifth cause for the performance below par in “poor” professionalism in the officer corps. He states that the IDF has deviated from the core of military thinking. He sees a “superficial intellectualisation” and an uncritical pursuance of a fashionable American post-modernist ideology, such as the effects based operations (EBO) concept. The ensuing obscurantist rhetoric overshadows the professional know-how and notions that should be central. Kober reproaches the IDF for a “weakened commitment” with
regard to the crucial concept of “battlefield decision”, in particular, in low-intensity conflicts.

The sixth cause of the disappointing performance of the IDF Kober attributes to the wavering and inexperienced political leadership. In combination with the dominant position of the military in the decision making process this turned out for the worse in this case. It is a well-known fact that the political and military leadership in Israel are intertwined, and this is not surprising in view of the importance of the armed forces in a country that has fought real existential wars and is still facing threats to its very existence. In Kober’s view, however, it is regrettable that in 2006 the political leadership, embodied in Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Minister of Defence Amir Peretz did not have any military experience, and, unlike their predecessors Levi Eshkol, Golda Meir or Menachim Begin, could not rely on an experienced Chief of Staff. General Halutz was the first commander of the Israeli air force to become Chief of Staff. He had little experience in managing joint operations, according to Kober, who sees the general as an exponent of the post-heroic, air power-heavy, technocentric, post-modernist thinking on warfare, in short, someone the situation certainly did not require. Olmert’s and Peretz’ inexperience gave room for Halutz’ approach, who received ‘the strongest backing and greatest freedom of action possible’ during the war.

The Winograd Commission, which investigated the conduct of the war for the Israeli government, concluded the government had started the war without having contemplated what exactly should be done: a punitive action, or a course of action in which the situation on the ground in southern Lebanon would be controlled by Israel. The war started without a choice for either one of the options, and without an exit strategy. The indecision in this respect, which continued right to the end of the operation “did hurt Israel”. The result was that preparations for a ground operation were begun late in the conflict; so late even that the political and diplomatic circumstances made a completion impossible.

Winograd concluded that Prime Minister Olmert had decided hastily, without any existing detailed plan, something he did not ask for, either. The complexity of the situation had been fathomed insufficiently. No systematic inquiry had been carried out in the broader sense, or outside of the armed forces. More reserved opinions were not related to the own views and considered. The objectives were not identified clearly and their relation to the military means was not specified adequately. The commission lays personal blame on the Prime Minister for objectives which were over-ambitious and unattainable. It saw “serious failure in exercising judgment, responsibility and prudence”. Minister Peretz was inexperienced and relied too much on the military top, not having
any knowledge of the basic principles of the use of military means in order to attain strategic objectives. Nevertheless, he did “not systematically” consult experts; objections were not given enough weight.27 The most important player in all this, the Chief of Staff, was aware that he had to deal with this inexperience, which increased his responsibility. Winograd is of the opinion that he did not live up to this. He gave the wrong impression that the IDF was sufficiently prepared and that the plans were applicable to the situation. He should have made clear that the chance of missile attacks by Hezbollah was great after Israeli air raids and that they could only be prevented with large-scale ground operations.28 Halutz, according to the commission “failed in his duties as commander in chief of the army and as a critical part of the political-military leadership”.29

Winograd adds a number of comments. After 25 years without war, there came another one, of a “different kind”, and the IDF was not ready for it. Many an Israeli thought that Israel was “beyond the era of wars”. In this view the most important concern for the land forces is low-intensity conflict,30 and the security policy does not provide an adequate response anymore to all challenges. In these “few final comments” lies the crux of Winograd’s take of the matter. The way in which Israel was exposed during the Second Lebanon War (a title which the government only attributed to the conflict in March 2007, Winograd reminds us) prompted a number of “critical questions”. Does Israel still have its strategic priorities in the right order? After all, this is about “questions that stand at the centre of our existence here as a Jewish and democratic state”.31

A survey of the development of the Israeli strategic culture

In order to be able to answer the question about the extent to which the Israeli action during the Second Lebanon War can be explained from the development of the Israeli strategic culture, a survey of that development will be given below.

*The geostrategic circumstances*

Due to geostrategic circumstances Israel was forced to develop a security policy which would enable it to hold its own in a hostile environment. Geographically and numerically at a disadvantage, Israel is focused on the defence of its existence and freedom. So, primarily, the country has a defensive strategy, with a reactive objective, directed at undoing/negating the objectives of its opponents.32

Israel’s geographical position in a hostile environment is precarious. Apart from that, in the course of the various wars, beginning with the war of independence in 1948 and 1949, many Palestinians have fled outside the borders of Israel. A considerable number
of them came back under Israeli control with the occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in 1967. Both the inhabitants of these occupied territories and those in the neighbouring Arab countries form a reservoir for organisations that are prepared to fight Israel. Thus, Israel is facing up to a broad range of threats, coming from several directions and of varying nature, from ballistic missiles from Iran to suicide terrorists from the areas under its own control. The range of tasks of the IDF to deal with this has grown in complexity accordingly. On top of that, Israel is smaller from a demographic and economic perspective than the neighbouring countries combined. Israel knows it cannot solve the conflict with military means.

The Israeli territory has no strategic depth, with the whole country lying within range of present ground-to-ground missiles, the most vital parts coming within artillery range, and its air space lying within reach of ground based air defence assets. Although the greatest vulnerability was alleviated somewhat by the capturing of the Sinai desert, the West Bank and the Golan Heights in 1967, the tendency of “not yielding an inch” which has set in the mean time, is a strong determining factor of Israeli strategy. This strategy, furthermore, is determined by offensiveness on the tactical and operational level. If deterrence could not prevent an attack on the country, or if the threat became too big, the IDF would have to act. The quality of the Israeli intelligence gathering cannot offer a guarantee, so the motto becomes: “pre-empt when in doubt”. In case of war, the overriding principle is to move the fighting to the territory of the opponent as quickly as possible. Although ‘undeep’ from a strategic perspective, Israel’s central position has one advantage: it offers the possibility of using so-called interior lines. It can move troops from one front to the other, as the situation requires. From a geographical point of view the situation at the moment is more favourable than ever before. The buffer of the Sinai has been replaced by a peace treaty with Egypt, with ensuing guarantees, such as, in particular, American presence in the desert, while at the same time the disadvantages of a surplus of territory have disappeared. In short, Israel can concentrate on the remaining borders, in particular those with Syria and Lebanon.

**Psychological factors**

Besides geo-political ones, Handel points at psychological factors playing a major role in the Israeli strategic situation. The history of the Jewish people increases the feeling of insecurity and in a sense Zionism can be considered as a quest for security. Two millennia of living in Diaspora, with the genocide on the Jewish people in WWII as its nadir, has made dispersion and destruction of state and people realistic threats. Having to fend for itself in more or less hostile environments has created a “distrustful self-reliance” inside the Jewish psyche, which has its effects on the state of Israel. Handel states that this is one of the reasons why Israel often exhibits a kind of ghetto mental-
ity in international politics, not conducive to the political and diplomatic aspects of the strategic process. The Arab stance towards Israel confirmed the fears of the Israelis. Even several generations on, in a strong state of Israel, the “psychology of insecurity” persists. Handel argues that in general Israelis prefer security over taking risks for peace. In the absence of a buffer like the Sinai, reaching an understanding with Syria, Jordan and the Palestinian authorities is difficult. On top of that, the group of Israeli colonists in the occupied territories, which has been growing since 1967, constitutes a powerful political movement.

Quality versus quantity

Demographically, Israel is clearly smaller than its opponents and the relative negative trend is continuing. Since the occupation of the territories captured in 1967 Israel has even had to deal with a growing group of potential opponents within its own borders. The size of the population determines the size of the IDF. In spite of a high degree of military participation, this means clear limitations for the armed forces. The size of the Israeli Air Force (IAF), for instance, is not determined by the number of aircraft, but by the number of people that can be trained to fly them. The degree of military participation has a great influence on the Israeli strategy. Thus, large-scale mobilisation has immediate economic consequences and cannot be sustained for long. Numerical considerations have been instrumental in the Israeli choice for assault power rather than staying power. Wars must be decided quickly and wars of attrition must be avoided.

In order to compensate for the quantitative disadvantage Israel has always emphasised qualitative aspects of its armed forces. Prior to 1967 the quality was founded in particular on the personal characteristics of its soldiers. Since that time, Israel has come to rely more and more on technological superiority, which according to many, came at the expense of the quality of the Israeli soldier, and consequently, the IDF. Israel conducts “capital-intensive warfare”, with major roles for information technology, technological surprise, heavy and precise fire power, such as area munitions and stand-off weapons. The ambition to compensate for the quantitative disadvantage in this manner, goes hand in hand with the necessity to take into account the decreasing preparedness to accept casualties and great material losses, in particular in wars of choice.

Shaping strategy

With respect to shaping and executing strategy, Israel has a unique history. Considerations of secrecy limit the number of executive functionaries next to the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister and the Chief of Staff to a handful of people. Israel does not have a formalised structure for national security issues. In the absence of other institutions in this area, the influence of the military on the political-military strategic
process is disproportionately great in Israel. The successes in the confrontation with
the neighbouring countries, culminating in the Six-Day War of 1967, always pushed the
weaknesses of this system to the background. Also the near-catastrophe of 1973 and the
far-from-satisfactory conclusion of the 1982 war in Lebanon and the dragging on of the
Intifada, have so far not led to any significant change in this. Handel gives the example
of the Six-Day War. The astounding success of the IDF on the operational level concealed
the confused ad hoc decision making and the lack of strategic planning prior to the war.
Only at the very last moment did Defence Minister Dayan decide on an all-out pre-em-
tive strike. The decisions on the operations against Jordan and Syria, in that order, were
only taken during the course of the war. On top of that, Dayan had given instructions
not to actually advance as far as the eastern bank of the Suez Canal. It was to lead to the
War of Attrition (1969-1970), the outcome of which was disadvantageous for Israel. It
had made Egypt stronger and brought modern air defence systems of Soviet stock on the
west bank of the Suez Canal. Handel points out not only the military leadership are to
be blamed for this. The Golda Meir government allowed things to happen and de facto
delegated the responsibility to Dayan and the IDF.

The clearest example of the negative consequences of the concentration of political-
military issues in a small circle, according to Handel, is Israel’s involvement in Lebanon.
After having been driven out of Jordan in 1970, the Palestinian Liberation Organisa-
tion (PLO) established itself in Lebanon. When the civil war in Lebanon broke out in 1975
Israel began to support Christian factions in an attempt to shift the balance of power to
its advantage. Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, subsequently, wanted to solve the problem
of the PLO once and for all by means of a military operation. The Israeli government,
with Sharon in front, believed that “military power and swift action could solve any prob-
lem; they were confident of Israel’s military superiority, and not in the habit of making
rational, long-range calculations”. Sharon and Chief of staff Eitan asked the govern-
ment for permission for an invasion, 40 kilometres in depth, into Lebanon in order to
create a safety zone, while they had plans for an invasion of their northern neighbour of
a much larger scale. In these plans the advance would go as far as the capital Beirut, its
objectives being to neutralise the PLO as a player in Lebanon, and attack the position of
Syria in the country, which had been militarily active in Lebanon since the summer of
1967, initially on the invitation of the then Lebanese government. Although Israel had
not objected to this in the first instance, provided Syria remained at sufficient distance,
the Syrian presence was a thorn in the side of many, and particularly Sharon, as the
build-up of ground-based air defence systems in the Bekaa valley limited Israel’s free-
dom of movement in the air.
An operation in Lebanon could kill two birds with one stone: remove the PLO and neutralise the Syrian threat. In the process a Christian government, with which Israel could come to an understanding, would be given a leg up. Sharon talked to Christian leaders in Lebanon and tried to get the support of the American government for a possible intervention. During the operation Sharon planned to present the government with accomplished facts in order to get permission in phases for the entire set-up. And so it happened. Sharon’s military leaders knew of his intentions and had made plans for them, and so did the Maronite Christian leadership in Lebanon, while his Cabinet colleagues were unaware of them. The war began with the government thinking it had given permission for a limited operation that would last 24 to 48 hours, and in which Syria would not be involved. It was the first time Israel had begun an exclusively offensive war, and its strategic objectives were unattainable. In the end, it became an expensive failure in all respects, while before the war the PLO had only been a “minor irritant”.

The decision-making process leading up to war was not evaluated and the government continued working in the same manner. Handel attributes this to the fragmented, unstable political reality in Israel, where small groups have a disproportionately great influence. They have nothing to gain from an adequately functioning security council (already advised on by the Agranat commission in 1974 in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War), which might make painful (politically unacceptable) recommendations, such as negotiating with the Palestinians or giving up the occupied territories. This political landscape ensures the political-military strategic practice which has established itself over the years, will remain ad hoc, unbalanced and rather unstructured, and seldom reaching beyond short-term thinking. In the absence of a long-term strategy of one’s own, the initiative will automatically come to lie with one’s opponent.

The ‘seventh war’: Israel and ‘low-intensity conflict’

Also in the ‘seventh war’ Israel is facing this problem. The ‘seventh war’ is Handel’s term for the low-intensity conflicts and counter-terrorism operations in which Israel has been involved since 1948. The picture this series of operations presents is consistent with the usual approach in wars against conventional opponents: a strong offensive orientation and military on all strategic levels. From 1948 until around 1970 the main threat consisted of infiltrations by Palestinians, whether or not driven from their country during the war of independence, from the territories of neighbouring countries. (Apart from that, between 1956 and 1967 differences of opinion about water and the exact border evolved into armed clashes with Syria.) Israel responded to these attacks with reprisals, by way of incursions into the neighbouring countries. Initially, these raids were directed against civilians, resulting in mounting numbers of casualties. After the raid on Kibiya
in Jordan in 1953, during which 69 civilians were killed, Israel shifted its attention to military and infrastructural objectives of the neighbouring country involved.\textsuperscript{53} The operations steadily increased, growing out of proportion with the actions to which they were a response. The risk of escalation rose accordingly, and so did the losses. The perpetrators of the anti-Israeli actions often proved to be elusive, which caused the operations to be directed against the environment of the opponents. The inhabitants of the villages from which it was thought the actions had been undertaken, were in fact on the receiving end of the reprisal actions. Pressure on the environment would eventually, via the government of the countries involved, or via sponsoring countries of the guerrilla movement involved, bring pressure on the opponents. This was later called “circular pressure”, and it is still a principle with which Israel tries to gain control over opponents, like Hezbollah today. Usually, however, it is questionable whether the environment is in a position to do anything against the fighters. Often, circular pressure operations have an adverse effect, when Israeli fire power prompts firing on Israeli citizens. Besides, “returning fire to the source of fire” often causes innocent victims in view of the way in which the opponent often operates, which then fuels the hostility. So, circular pressure has not brought a solution, and an alternative does not seem to present itself for the time being.\textsuperscript{54}

Such operations were deemed to be useful in training and stimulating the morale of the IDF.\textsuperscript{55} They have played a large role in the formation of the IDF culture. It finds its origins in those days of guerrilla-like execution of reprisal raids, characterised by a swift action, initiative, and the will to maximise the number if casualties (in the absence of any other measure of success). It was attempted to achieve this by escalation within the action. The raid was seen as the ultimate goal, whereby the IDF is attributed with a certain degree of ‘myopia’ with regard to the higher strategic levels.\textsuperscript{56} An additional phenomenon was the stretching of orders in order to be able to increase the effect of an action. Restrictions were reluctantly accepted, and it was tried to confront the politicians with accomplished facts afterwards. Vardi finds in the 1950s a “spread of ‘self-authorisation’ as a \textit{deliberate} army policy”,\textsuperscript{57} resulting in ‘military activism not subject to effective political control’.\textsuperscript{58} Although Kober points out that instances of military disobedience are rare, and that ultimately the IDF always made its missions and objectives subordinate to the objectives determined by politics,\textsuperscript{59} Van Creveld states that in the years leading up to the war of 1956 the IDF was “not a tame instrument in the government’s hands”.\textsuperscript{60} Instructions were systematically violated, and the damage inflicted was always higher than the Defence Minister deemed acceptable, and what he had been told in advance.

Since the Yom Kippur War in 1973 Egypt, Jordan and Syria no longer had anything to gain by allowing actions against Israel to take place from their territories. Israel was being confronted with actions from Lebanon, a politically fragmented state whose gov-
ernment was unable to prevent them. In the years Israel occupied parts of Lebanon, after the *Peace for Galilee* operation in 1982, up to 2000, there were continuous mutual actions, twice on a larger scale: Operations *Accountability* in 1993 and *Grapes of Wrath* in 1996. Military actions in an attempt to exert pressure on Hezbollah and Amal, directly or indirectly via the population of the Lebanese government, could not subdue the organisations.\(^{61}\) In spite of its impressive show of military-technological might, *Grapes of Wrath* could not prevent Israel from being hit by *Kayushas*.\(^{62}\) In the long run, the occupation cost Israel more than it benefited from it. Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 has been qualified as “a clear admission of defeat”.\(^{63}\) Within its own border the first Intifada from 1987 until 1993 brought Israel new challenges that were even surpassed during the second or Al Aqsa Intifada from 2000 onwards. Israel responded with a diversity of counter-actions, among which were assassinations and a range of collective punishments, such as deportation, demolition of houses and curfews. Also in the occupied territories, Israel’s counter-measures were increasingly characterised by the use of technology in order to limit own losses as much as possible.

The results of the “doctrine of retaliatory action” in low-intensity conflicts are generally qualified as negative. States opposing Israel acknowledge its military superiority. Deterrence (not least because of its possession of nuclear arms) works in the sphere of international relation, and the neighbouring countries (for the time being, in any case) have resigned themselves to the existence of the state of Israel. On its non-state opponents, however, Israel has no grip with comparable means and concepts.\(^{64}\)

*Re-orientation required*

Cohen sees the invasion of Lebanon in 1982 as a watershed in the history of the IDF. The period preceding that event can be considered as an era of certainties. Since the mid-1980s, however, an increasing confusion has become manifest.\(^{65}\) The certainties were directly bound up with the clear existential threat emanating from the neighbouring countries with their conventional armed forces, and the military efforts this demanded of Israel. The period of confusion began with the bogging down of the operation in Lebanon; deeper causes were shifts in the international context, amongst which the emergence of the Iranian and the disappearance of the Egyptian threat, but also the transition towards a multi-polar world as a result of the end of the Cold War.

Apart from the conventional threat, Israel also has to deal with increasing sub-conventional and supra-conventional threats, according to the Meridor report, which appeared in 2006 by order of the Israeli government. From a geographical perspective the outlook had to be changed to erstwhile over-the-horizon threats (Iran with its ballistic missiles and nuclear arms ambition), on the one hand, and to the threat from within its own
borders, on the other. Basic security tasks, fending off conventional threats, had to yield terrain to current security work: guarding the stability in the occupied territories with accompanying counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism tasks.

Cohen points at the difficulties Israel is experiencing in the process of re-orientation in the complex, shifting strategic reality. Thus, Israel’s offensive manner of operating, which had always stood the country in good stead in its confrontations with its neighbouring countries, bogged down in the Lebanese morass. From 1987 onwards, the IDF had to deal with the first Intifada, which also could not be solved with brief use of overwhelming force. When the second Intifida erupted, politicians and the military alike warned the population that it would not be solved quickly. “Victory will be won on points and not by a knock out blow”, Chief of Staff Yaalon announced in 2002. It took a long time before all this was processed conceptually and doctrinally by the IDF after 1982. Low-intensity conflict continued to be considered as a deviation from the armed forces’ true profession. In view of what Israel might have to deal with in the future with regard to security problems, the operations in Lebanon offered the IDF little to learn. Yitzak Rabin, in his capacity as Minister of Defence, told the parliament in 1986. It was to last up to the late 1990s before the current security operations received more (intellectual) attention, in line with daily practice. Subsequently, the pendulum swung on, resulting in large sections of the armed forces insufficiently mastering the military craft. The concentration on current security unsettled the balance in training. At the same time, combat experience was seeping away, with fewer and fewer officers having any experience in fighting in larger units.

Cohen sees a divide in the IDF, which has emerged in the past few years. There are elite units, specialist and technology-heavy, such as the defence against ballistic missiles with its signals intelligence, parts of the Navy, the Air Force (nowadays ‘air and space force’) and the various special forces units, “justifiably famous” of old. Then, there is the rest: the overwhelming majority of the land forces, which find themselves in a demoralising vicious circle of too little to do and too little training. Cohen observes in the abduction of the two servicemen on 12 July 2006 the symptoms of the state in which the IDF finds itself. So far, it has still been unable to find its position in the fluid security situation which demands answers to a multitude of questions. The war that followed showed the development on a larger scale.

Cohen states that it is not self-evident that the necessary changes are actually going to take place. In his view the most important reason for this is the Israeli political-military culture. This container concept remains intangible, but the mindset that comes with it has a strong influence on the peculiarities of Israel’s strategic decision making process,
which is characterised by what has been called “Israel’s decision making ‘pathologies’”: short-term thinking, extremely politicised, chronically unstructured and dominated by the defence establishment. He defines three areas in which Israel will have to develop itself: government, doctrine and the structure of the armed forces. As for the government, Cohen finds that today there is a “broad degree of consensus” on what constitutes the problem: “trivialisation” of the strategic process by ad hoc improvised action, exclusively on the basis of military advice, in a fragmented political landscape. The solution would have to come from a permanent advisory body, a primarily civilian national security council. Nevertheless, he foresees a protracted process of change (if it is going to happen at all). The same holds for the doctrinal area, although by now there is a “broad measure of agreement” that a new era has come. In the area of the armed forces structure a debate has been going on for years now. On rational grounds it could be said that an adjustment of the IDF in the direction of professional armed forces is necessary. Precisely this problem, however, is in essence a matter of culture.

The Second Lebanon War in Israel’s strategic culture

This contribution investigates to what extent the Israeli actions in the Second Lebanon War can be explained from the development of Israeli strategic culture. In doing so, it follows once more Kober’s analysis and places the actions in the perspective of this development. Besides, several observations are made on the account of the war as it has come down to us.

‘Deterrence mindset’

According to Kober, a first explanation for the meagre Israeli achievement in 2006 is a belated realisation that this was a war. How can this be explained? Winograd states that prior to the war, no choice was made for either a retaliatory strike or a large-scale operation against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. The Israeli course of action, however, most definitely does show a choice: the Israeli air force carried out a reprisal raid. Kober very aptly typifies the war: it was a “reprisal raid turned war.” Chief of Staff Halutz, for instance, told Winograd’s commission of inquiry that he had not thought it would last so long. Since the beginnings of the state of Israel raids like these have been considered by the IDF (and its precursors) as a tested means. The pre-planned, well-prepared action, however, provoked Hezbollah’s reaction. Up to 2006 the organisation had honoured an understanding with Israel, reached in 1996, that in mutual conflicts only military targets would be attacked. After the severe blow from Israel in response to the abduction of the two servicemen, Hezbollah abandoned this restriction. Now, Israel had to deal with the problem of the missile barrages. In short, the “built-in escalatory spiral” of the reprisal
had taken on once again. The objective of a retaliatory attack is the restoration of deterrence. When the escalation throws doubts on the deterrence, one has to go on. As Vardi states in relation to a research into Israeli retaliatory actions in the 1950s and 1960s, the restoration of deterrence is an “elusive aim”. Winograd reproaches the government and the military leadership for not having foreseen Hezbollah’s reaction. The war of 2006 underlines the problems with regard to the doctrine of retaliation. The self-imposed objectives were not attained and there were many casualties and damage, grist to the mill for the opponent: “the war, which according to our leaders was supposed to restore Israel’s deterrence posture, has within once month succeeded in destroying it”.

As for the coercion and deterrence, despite Israeli frustrations about the course of the war, some comments are in order on the predominant impression of failure. Nasrallah may have cried victory, but there is no doubt that the war caused Hezbollah damage. The restoration of deterrence has been partially achieved, as is borne out by Nasrallah’s remark that Hezbollah would not have carried out the abduction if it had known that this would bring about such serious Israeli reactions. Furthermore, Achcar and Warschawski, who describe the war from a non-Israeli or western perspective, state that,

(i)n order to facilitate an agreement leading to a cease fire that became more and more urgent for humanitarian reasons, Hezbollah softened its position, accepting deployment of 15,000 Lebanese troops south of the Litani river and the despatch of more international troops to the same area in the framework of UNIFIL.

Judging from this, the conclusion must be that Hezbollah did move under the pressure, amongst others, coming from the military operation. Somewhat further in their book, the authors state, “Hezbollah in fact had to make concessions under duress to facilitate the ending of the war”. “(I)ntransigence” would have had quite a few consequences for the organisation. They mention “terrible humanitarian consequences”, on top of the already inflicted damage, stemming from Israel’s taking Lebanon hostage. The damage, however, would not only be limited to the humanitarian aspect; the war also had political and military consequences for Hezbollah in Lebanon. Achcar and Warschawski point out that in his announcement about the acceptance of the conditions Nasrallah does not brag about a victory, and that, in view of the circumstances, he chose for the proposals in UNSCR 1701. Hezbollah knows that in practice such a UN operation is slow in getting into its stride and hard to keep up, all of which is far to be preferred over continued military action by Israel. Hezbollah can do its arithmetic and seems to have made a better assessment with regard to the attainability of strategic objectives.
“Nasrallah wins the war”, was the headline in *The Economist*. But hurt it did. Nasrallah “leads a broken and battered force”.87

Deterrence remains a corner stone in Israel’s strategy. Winograd concluded that Israel cannot exist without credible deterrence on the basis of good leadership, military might and “social robustness”. Continued seeking for peace and the ensuing necessary compromises must take place from a “position of social, political and military strength”.88

*‘Post heroic casualty aversion’*

The second explanation for the disappointing achievement of the IDF Kober sees in the adherence to post-heroic warfare under circumstances, which, in his view, required a different approach. Although Kober states that Luttwak “has never concealed his hostility to this form of conducting war”, the latter was not negative about it in the article in which he launched the term.89 In fact, he stands up for this form of warfare, which, in his view, may offer a badly needed answer to the diffuse threats of the post-Cold War period. By holding on to Clausewitzian-Napoleonic thinking about war, in which one can only go to war for big issues, with massive armies, and broad support of the home front, too many situations are left unattended which call for taking responsibility. If armed forces were geared somewhat more to aversion of casualties instead of gaining quick and decisive victories in battles with like opponents, they would become useful in situations which, in view of the political and demographic reality of the western societies, remain unanswered. Present times require “unheroic realism”, Luttwark argues.90

Western casualty aversion is sometimes seen as a self-imposed restriction in the execution of military operations, needlessly standing in the way of military achievement. According to Kober, this was the case in 2006. Casualty aversion, however, is not a new phenomenon. In Israel it is a theme with a history. The Israeli population is relatively small and sensitive to the killing of its soldiers. In the context of the general balance of power, it is one of the reasons for the emphasis on assault power – combat strength directed at forcing a quick victory, rather than staying power - military capability directed at lengthy confrontations. Yigal Allon described the task of the IDF as making the enemy refrain from starting a war by deterrence, and in case a war should break out “to ensure a victory for Israel with the utmost speed and efficiency and a minimum of casualties”.91 Targeting this sensitivity formed one of the elements in the Egyptian plan of action for the War of Attrition (1969-1970).92 It is, however, possible to distinguish a gradual development with regard to casualty aversion. Expanding technological possibilities allow the reduction of casualties. In the western political and societal context the availability of technological possibilities to reduce casualties demands the casualty rate actually declines.
The reluctance to expose people to the reality of the situation on the ground in Lebanon is inspired by experiences from the past. The willingness to accept casualties is there, when the threat demands it. Kober tries to get Luttwark on board his view, whereas the latter states that in view of the small number of Israeli casualties, it was politically unfeasible to suffer too many losses in the fight against Hezbollah, which ultimately cannot be neutralised as a political movement by military means. After the war Winograd arrived at the conclusion that it should have been clear in advance to the government and the military leadership that for this reason no broad support was to be expected for a ground operation in Lebanon. This underlines the suggestion that the consequences of carrying out a reprisal attack had not been foreseen. It also explains the long hesitation before launching a ground attack after all. The disappointing outcome in the end proves the correctness of the proposition that Hezbollah cannot be defeated by military means (alone), in spite of frustration-based counterfactual alternatives that some would have liked to see otherwise.

‘Fighting standards’

Kober’s third point of criticism concerns the erosion of the IDF’s “fighting standards” as a consequence of the operations in the occupied territories since 1987. On this point Kober’s analysis convinces most. Many point out the eroding effect the exertions in the occupied territories have. Van Creveld has considered this for quite some time as a dangerously slippery slope for the IDF. Somewhat more detached, Cohen, too, shows that this aspect of the “changing operational landscape” has a great impact on the IDF. It is an area which of necessity demands much attention, while at the same time it encompasses only a small part of the entire threat spectrum. During the past few years the IDF has found itself ‘doing the splits’ trying to live up to all its obligations. Cohen places the resulting problems in a broader context of an ongoing process of re-orientation. One of the ways of dealing with these diversified challenges is sought, in line with IDF tradition, in the application of technological developments.

Trying to utilise the technological possibilities to a maximum finds its origin in the balance of power in the Middle-East, or in the Israeli perception thereof. The answer for a quantitative disadvantage in regard to its environment has always been sought in quality. Science and technology in this context are seen as areas which have to give Israel an edge. There are, however, problems attached to this striving for qualitative superiority, such as a tendency to become over-reliant on technology, also in situations that do not lend themselves to it. Cohen points at the divide within the IDF between the technology-heavy units of the armed forces and the rest. The Israeli Air Force – of old Israel’s first line of defence – performed on an undiminished high level in 2006, whereas the land forces were experiencing quite some difficulties. This is evidence of an unbalance,
which formed a stumbling block for Israel when it was faced by the challenges of the Second Lebanon War.

‘RMA beliefs, ‘poor’ professionalism’
Kober’s next point is connected with this. He sees the use of incorrect, Revolution in military affairs (RMA)-school inspired concepts (“false assumptions and beliefs”) as a reason for the “poor performance” of 2006. Kober’s next point, “poor professionalism” in the officer corps is in line with this. The Second Lebanon War unearthed a debate with regard to the direction in which solutions must be sought in the process of re-orientation Cohen points at. Within the framework of this process diagnoses have been made in many fields, but the necessary changes are still in progress, or, as a result of their being embedded in Israeli cultural and societal circumstances, hard to initiate. The changes that had been decided upon under pressure of the changing operational environment, proved to have a complicating effect in 2006.

In an attempt to make the IDF more efficient and to ensure its link with the operational circumstances, the organisation has been in a state of flux since 1990. As yet, however, the organisational changes have only resulted in the leadership of the IDF becoming top-heavy, and processes taking prevalence over content. The military craft, such as command and control and logistics, have been pushed aside. Critics, Kober among them, mention day dreaming about network centric warfare (NCW) and a confusing use of EBO terminology as underlying causes. Some months before the outbreak of the war in the summer of 2006 a new doctrine had been introduced in the IDF, in which the concept of EBO played a prominent role. When the war broke out, it had not yet been internalised by the entire organisation. The disappointing results are in part attributed to the confusion brought about by using the new terminology in the realm of command and control.

Furthermore, Kober finds fault with the higher officer echelons for having a “weakened commitment” with regard to the Israeli tradition of striving for a “battlefield decision”. It is doubtful whether this criticism is justified, or whether the officers were aware of the limitations of military means in the context of low-intensity conflicts. Kober himself earlier called “battlefield decision” an “almost irrelevant notion” with respect to guerrillas, terrorists and “civil resistance”.

Leadership
In Kober’s analysis, wavering and inexperienced political leadership in combination with the dominance of the armed forces in decision making on security policy issues forms one of the causes for the disappointing achievement in the war in 2006. As for its
management by the political and military leadership, its course showed a characteristic Israeli scene. The military leadership played a major role, with the political leadership leaning heavily on it, in this case, extremely so, as the Minister of Defence had no military background. After the action of Hezbollah on 12 July 2006, this military-political leadership collectively decided on an “immediate, intensive” military response, in short, a reprisal attack. Winograd states that this did not happen on the basis of an accurate study of the complex situation in Lebanon. If this had been the case, the conclusion would have been that such an action could not yield much international political gain, and that Hezbollah would respond with missile barrages that could not be stopped, except after a large-scale ground operation, for which no broad support was to be expected. These points were not discussed with the politicians and the government did not study all the available options, a sign of poor strategic thinking, according to Winograd. The Cabinet agreed to a decision of which the consequences were unclear or unattainable. The impression Winograd gives, in short, is in line with the Israeli practice, described above. The choice was for a primary military reaction, without having a clear idea of the consequences, resulting in unintended escalation, which in the long run caused more harm than good.

Although Israel wanted to attain a maximum of strategic effect during the war within the constraints given (according to Israeli insights, an objective aimed at inflicting maximum damage on an opponent as long as the opportunity presents itself, in order to achieve a temporary lowering of the threat, and to have the damage benefit the deterrence), the approach does not show any well-considered long-term objective. When all was over, nothing in the status quo situation had essentially changed.

Israel’s strategic cultural development has spawned its own view on security policy priorities. The country is sometimes criticised for not being able to make political success follow military achievement. In this context Yigal Allon made an enlightening statement two years after the Six-Day War, at a moment when the gap between Israel and its opponent seemed wider than ever. In Khartoum the Arab world had voiced the “three no’s”: no recognition of, no negotiations and no peace with Israel. For Israel, its existence remained at stake, undiminished. Though Israel might have friends, according to Allon, it would have to fight its wars on its own.

Accordingly, if she is faced with the choice between withdrawal to the old armistice lines for the sake of short term political gains and the establishment, even unilaterally, of new and secure borders even at the cost of political complications, the second alternative should be preferred. The political difficulties (one may hope) will ultimately pass away, but only the capacity for self defence will ensure Israel’s survival.
In Israel, during the past decades, short-term, military-strategic and operational requirements, and long-term, political, or alternatively, grand strategy considerations have come to stand in a different light than usual. The prioritisation that is expressed in Allon’s words is still dominant in Israel’s security policy.

The war in Lebanon in 2006 can be viewed as one in a series with the Litani, Peace for Galilee, Accountability, Grapes of Wrath operations and the occupation from 1982 to 2000. Each time there is talk of a war of choice, and an attempt is made to enforce a solution through the threat or actual use of military means, each time there is an irregular opponent, against whom Israel tries to exploit the technological asymmetry, and put pressure on the organisation by targeting the environment in which it operates. In the years between 1982 and 2000 Israel has learned that it is disadvantageous to venture into Lebanon on the ground. This is what was avoided as much as possible in 2006. Circular pressure on its own side led to a ground offensive, with all its negative consequences, while the missiles still could not be stopped.

Another similarity is the internal political considerations on the Israeli side. Keeping up credibility towards an opponent in order to maximise the deterrence has its pendant in maintaining credibility towards the home front. Shortly before the abduction of 12 July an IDF soldier had been kidnapped in Gaza, something the government could not ignore. In the ensuing play of words the government brought trouble on itself by formulating unattainable objectives and creating expectations it could not meet.

Conclusion

The course and result of the Israeli actions during the Second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006 are generally considered to have been disappointing. This contribution did not seek an answer to the question of ‘why the poor performance’ by following, for instance, Avi Kober, whose analysis meaningfully clusters the broad criticism of the Israeli actions, or the Winograd commission. It investigated, rather, to what extent the Israeli actions in the Second Lebanon War can be explained from the development of the Israeli strategic culture.

In the first instance, Israel wanted to carry out a retaliatory attack, and was not out for war. Hezbollah, however, reacted to the large-scale air raids with missile barrages against northern Israel. When Israel did not succeed in stopping these attacks with continued air raids, eroding the credibility and deterrence, it was forced to launch a ground attack.
This did not go smoothly, in part because preparations for it had been started at a late moment – it had not been planned and the consequences of the reprisal attack had not been foreseen – and also because of various deeper causes, and ongoing developments.

Kober’s analysis seems in part to have been inspired by frustration, in keeping with the broadly experienced sense of dissatisfaction in Israel after the war. In part, his analysis can also be considered as a contribution to the debate that is being held in Israel against the background of the process of re-orientation on the security policy, at which Cohen points. Since 1982, Cohen finds, uncertainty has increasingly pushed aside the certainties of the period before. The spectrum of threats Israel has to deal with nowadays ranges from sub-conventional to supra-conventional. Similar to how Israel in the past tried to compensate for a quantitative disadvantage with quality, it seeks to address this by making use of technological developments. The debate is about the balance within the IDF. Kober sees too much attention for airpower, small units, a mushrooming of NCW and ensuing EBO theories, at the expense of land forces, which have to be able to force a battlefield decision. Furthermore, the unbalance was to be found not least in the emphasis on the work in the occupied territories, which went at the expense of training for other tasks and even training anyhow. The war in 2006 enlarged the state of affairs with regard to the re-orientation process. The elaborate self-examination that followed it will have its repercussions for the debate.

Kober observes that in 2006 Israel lacked the ambition to force the decision on the battlefield, and he attributes this to the reluctance to risk casualties, the post-heroic inclination that has taken root within the IDF. On this point, Kober’s analysis is problematic. He himself has stated elsewhere that it is difficult to realise a battlefield decision in a conflict with an organisation like Hezbollah. It seems the Israeli political and military leadership held the same view. The casualty aversion, subsequently, with which in Kober’s analysis Israel is hampering itself, is a given in Israeli history, and is a gradual rather than principled difference compared to previous years. Taking casualties must be proportionate to the threat and what can be achieved with it. In spite of the frustrating inability to make Hezbollah stop its barrages, the actions of the Shiite organisation did not constitute an existential threat. With the bad experiences of the years of Lebanese occupation still fresh in memory, no solution was expected from a large-scale land operation in Lebanon.

The final element in Kober’s explanation for the disappointing performance is the wavering and inexperienced political leadership, in combination with the dominance of the armed forces in the decision making on security policy matters. The Second Lebanon War presented a characteristic picture with regard to the political and military leader-
ship, in line with Israel's strategic development and culture. Geo-strategic vulnerability, demographic proportions, a deep-rooted sense of insecurity with fear of extinction as a real possibility, international political isolation, and an internal political fragmentation are elements which focus Israel's security policy on survival as much as ever. Military operational considerations dominate strategic thinking, which is increased by the large share of (former) service personnel in the debate. Prior to 1967 Israel necessarily depended on military aspects of security in order to survive. After 1967, in spite of much more favourable conditions, this did not change. “Military strength has become the solution”. 109

Kober’s analysis does not take Israel's traumatic Lebanon experience much into account. Maoz calls the withdrawal in 2000 a “clear admission of defeat”.110 It is, however, also possible to view it as an attempt to break out of the vicious circle. The government at the time realised it was a dead-end street, which had to be left behind, away from the “unnecessary self-inflicted disaster”.111 The conflict with Hezbollah cannot be solved with military means, and Israel did not intend to do so in 2006. It allowed itself to be provoked, first into a fierce retaliation attack, later into the course of events leading to a ground offensive, which eventually turned out to become the most problematic episode of the war. This round, too, ended with a UN resolution. A favourable compromise is a good result in such a situation.112 However, when objectives are set too high prior to or during an operation, frustration is guaranteed.

In a general sense Handel’s conclusion still holds sway. With survival of the state as its objective, Israel has come to depend on military solutions for its strategic problems, at the expense of longer-term planning and diplomatic options. As a result, the development of the strategy of one of the world’s “foremost military performers” is often characterised by “confusion, indecision and a lack of vision”.113 The manner of operating during The Second Lebanon War fits this picture.

Notes

1. Major P.M. (Marcel) de Goede, MA (Royal Netherlands Air Force) is an airpower lecturer and PhD-candidate at the Military Operational Art and Science section of the Netherlands Defence Academy.
3. Colin S. Gray (1999), ‘Strategic culture as context: the first generation of theory


8. Ibid., pp. 5-6.

9. Ibid., p. 6.

10. Ibid., p. 9.


17. Ibid., pp. 16-17.

18. Ibid., pp. 31-33.

19. Ibid., pp. 34-37.

20. Ibid., p. 36.


23. Ibid., point 15.

24. Ibid., point 17.


26. Ibid., point 12e.

27. Ibid., point 13.

28. Ibid., point 14.
29. Ibid., point 14e.
30. Ibid., point 19.
31. Ibid., point 21.
40. Ibid., p. 547.
47. Ibid., pp. 559-560.
51. Ibid., pp. 562 and 570.
52. Ibid., p. 564.
58. Ibid., note 88, p. 316.
66. Ibid., p. 46.
72. Partly because the IDF is too large, on account of ‘panic-stricken’ force planning after Yom Kippur. Since the late eighties, the IDF aims at getting ‘smaller and smarter’. Cohen (2008), pp. 93 and 83.
74. Ibid., p. 166.
75. Ibid., p. 167.
76. Ibid., p. 174.
79. Maoz (2007), p. 329. See also Kober (2008), p. 9: ‘Even when one opts for violence out of a rational choice, believing it could be tamed, controlled and directed to one’s
purposes, once the violence starts it gains its own momentum and dynamic.’


84. Ibid., p. 67; Compare ‘Divided Lebanon’, The Economist, August 19, 2006, Hezbollah ‘gratefully accepted’ UNSC 1701.


86. ‘Nasrallah wins the war’, The Economist, August 19, 2006.


90. Ibid., p. 122.


98. Tal (2000), pp. 61-62 additionally mentions human quality (motivation, preparedness to contribute) and an economic and industrial base.


112. Winograd chalks up the resolution as a diplomatic success for Israel. ‘English summary of the Winograd report’, point 24.
The Afghan intervention in a security perspective

Allard Wagemaker

NL-ARMS, 2009, 223-250

Introduction

After more than three decades of war and conflict, Afghanistan is back on track towards becoming a functioning state again. Although security and stability have not taken root yet, the first results of peace are tangible. The quality of governance, the judicial system and the development of a durable economy demand much attention. Reconstruction is a process that requires stamina, certainly after all that has taken place in the country. Over the past ten years the Afghans have had to deal with two revolutions and an occupation. Apart from a state that has to be built up, a peace must be established, and this requires economic progress and a perspective of prosperity.

Afghanistan has potential, but it can only be mobilised with external support and the cooperation of the region. Peace in Afghanistan is closely bound up with security in the region and the exploitation of the natural resources, in particular, the oil and gas reserves in the Caspian Sea basin and in Kazakhstan. In order to export these raw materials, stability in Afghanistan is essential. Relief of the humanitarian need and democratisation of the country are instrumental in this. Establishing and maintaining peace through the operations Enduring Freedom (OEF) and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) are the consequence. The two operations can be characterised as enforcing ‘order’ (by OEF), and creating the preconditions for the transition to a just society (by ISAF). This contribution discusses the role of the military instrument, the geo-political dimension of the conflict and the importance of stability for the intervening actors.

The problem

The history of Afghanistan is a turbulent one. The country has a long history of heavy fighting, resistance against invaders and foreign rule. The influence of outsiders is great and often inspired by self-interest. The result is a chaotic situation that is becoming increasingly structural. At this moment in time, the country is rife with corruption, war lords and illegal militias, who have little to gain by a legal order and stability.
After three decades of war the damage is enormous. In 2002 the World Bank estimated the costs of the material reconstruction at $25 billion, not taking into account a drastic overhaul of an economy that is buoyed up by drugs. Countless families are dependent on the narco-economy, while for many also the illegal weapons trade and other contraband is a major source of income. The social development is lagging behind due to a lack of education and prospects.

A functioning government is a prerequisite for a durable society and that makes it the most important objective of the reconstruction. Almost all public services have dissolved and reconstruction in Afghanistan begins at level zero. To illustrate this: there has been no postal system since the departure of the Russians. Bombed to smithereens, forbidden by the Taliban, burned or disbanded, the postal network simply did not exist anymore. And this is only one of the many services taken for granted in most places on the globe. Afghanistan lacked many basic services: the central bank did not exist anymore, just like the water works, roads, factories, the police force – the Afghans are used to not having them. The good news, though, is that in the mean time the foundations for most of these facilities have returned.

In order to build up the public services there has to be a functioning (formal) economy and a governmental levying of taxes to be able to finance these communal facilities. Breaking the spiral of the narco-economy is essential; the manner in which this is to be done is the subject of serious discussions as a consequence of the many dilemmas attached to it. Agriculture might be able to offer an economic alternative, but the irrigation systems of the fields in this extremely arid country have to be repaired or expanded, in order to make agriculture economically viable to some extent. The situation with regard to the industries is little better in a country that is facing a chronic shortage or even absence of infrastructure or electricity. On top of that, the lack of stability creates an unfavourable investment climate, which makes it hard to get reconstruction, and, with that, the trust in the authorities on the way.

Building up a functioning state is a challenge. In the views of many Afghans, democratisation is at odds with modernisation; it is seen as a source of polarisation. For the West the opposite is the case: through democratisation citizens become emancipated, which is essential for the stability of the country. All parties, however, agree that the state should function with a maximum participation for the citizens.
Complexity of peace

There was a time when peace missions seemed ‘simple’. The warring factions, war weary, would conclude an agreement; the international community would hasten to help with troops – often blue helmets with a classic peacekeeping mandate – to monitor the compliance with the agreement to which the parties had committed themselves. This relatively safe environment would attract several aid organisations to get the reconstruction off the ground and fairly soon the afflicted countries would be able to fend for themselves again, making the presence of foreign military superfluous. Present-day practice, however, is more recalcitrant. Thus, violence was needed in Bosnia to force the parties to the negotiation table, and ten to fifteen years after the conclusion of the Dayton Agreement foreign troops are still necessary. The use of military force has its limitations. Winning wars is easy; it is winning the peace that is difficult.

Generally speaking, gaining military superiority is not the greatest problem for the western high-tech armies, but that does not mean that the war is won. Development, peace and security are interdependent. Building up a local and provincial government is not a traditional military task, nor, for that matter, is making an economy work. Prioritising security, stability and continuity of the reconstruction mission causes a dilemma. Moreover, if there is no security and reconstruction, there is no chance of stability. Immediately after the cessation of hostilities the focus lies on the stabilisation role of the armed forces. Soldiers, however, are not development workers, although it is true that the more reconstruction becomes tangible, the sooner people are inclined to really lay down arms, and the building of a durable stability can begin. After all, they will have something to lose if they take up arms again.

According to Rupert Smith, present-day warfare is not about winning battles anymore, but it has the character of a “war amongst the people”. It is “a continuous criss-crossing between confrontation and conflict, regardless of whether a state is facing another state or a non-state actor. Rather than war and peace, there is no predefined sequence, nor is peace necessarily either starting point or end point: conflicts are resolved, but not necessarily confrontations”.

Conflicts must be managed, not necessarily resolved, as creating stability takes more than success on the battlefield. The concept may look simple; practice, however, is different. Even if the parties see such an approach as the best alternative, it is still a treacherous road full of pitfalls. After a war, certainly in the beginning, the distrust between the parties is great, with every party deeming it necessary to keep up a protection against the other, and, if need be, defend itself. This spiral must be broken.
Intervening at the ‘right’ or ‘ripe’ moment with the help of an independent ‘third party’ is the approach many interventions take, with the creation of stability, the maintaining and embedding as key concepts. Stability means that, “changes occur only within known limits. In other words, the misfortune of individual actors or relations does not trigger damaging chain reactions that threaten the system as a whole. ‘Known limits’ can be interpreted as socially acceptable or calculated risks”. Peace is more than making the weapons go silent, it is about creating a lasting peace, which is directly related to the foundation of a durable, stable society.

Johan Galtung has drawn up a comprehensive peace concept which has brought more insight into the spectrum of war and peace. Peace encompasses various stages and components, in which conflict handling takes the centre stage. A conflict or an unresolved contrariety is a situation in which two or more parties use methods, strive for goals or adhere to values, which, actually or perceived by the parties, are irreconcilable, making them come into conflict with each other. With his “conflict triangle”, Galtung provides an insight into the complexity of a conflict, introducing the operative concepts conflict, behaviour and attitude.

Galtung’s peace concept contains eight components, in which power in four guises (military, economic, political and cultural) is linked to the two forms of peace. Negative peace is characterised by the absence of violence - a self-supporting peace – while positive peace “is characterised by the presence of activities to bring relief for past or present violence and to prevent future violence”. The four components and their relation with positive and negative peace are summarised in the table presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survival: absence of direct violence cause by military power</th>
<th>Negative peace</th>
<th>Positive peace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absence of direct violence: cease-fires, disarmament, prevention of terrorism and state terrorism, non-violence</td>
<td>Life-enhancing cooperation and prevention of direct violence: peace-building, conflict transformation, reconciliation and reconstruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Development: absence of structural violence I cause by economic power | Humanitarian aid, food aid, alleviation of poverty and misery | Building a life-sustaining economy at the local, national and global level in which everyone’s basic needs are met |

| Freedom: absence of structural violence II caused by political power | Liberation from oppression, occupation, dictatorship | Good governance and participation, self-determination, human rights |

| Peace culture (identity): absence of cultural violence cause by cultural power | Overcoming prejudice based on nationality, race language, gender, age, class, religion, etc.; elimination of the glorification of war and violence in the media, literature, films, monuments, etc | Promotion of a culture of peace and mutual learning; global communication and dialogues; development of peaceful deep cultures and deep structures; peace education; peace journalism |

The left-hand column contains the “human needs”: survival, economic well-being, freedom and identity (their opposites being death, misery, oppression and alienation) which are threatened by four forms of violence: direct violence (hurting and killing people with weapons), structural violence I (the slow death from hunger, preventable diseases and other suffering caused by unjust structures of society), structural violence II (deprivation from freedom of choice and from participation in decisions that affect people’s own lives), and cultural violence (the justification of direct and structural violence through nationalism, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination and prejudice). These four forms of violence correspond with roughly the four forms of power: military, economic, political and cultural power.

Military power dominates survival; development workers are the main actors in development, but, in contrast to the military, they have no role in survival. Creating and maintaining a negative peace as a precondition to creating a positive peace, therefore, is a typically military matter. In other words, the soldier is at the basis of the peace process and the stabilisation of the situation. He lays the foundation on which diplomats and development workers can build. For this reason, the presence of diplomats and development workers right from the planning and execution phases of the interventions is essential. After all, they have to build from the foundation. Incidentally, it must be remarked that the military do not only enforce a negative peace, but they also make a start with the process towards the positive peace. Apart from enforcing the negative peace, the military should also ensure that the population have trust in the good intentions of the intervening parties; a trust that is only too easily betrayed by an overuse – or tolerance – of violence and abuse of “lootable resources”, such as diamonds, wood, opium, oil, coal and other natural resources/minerals and metals.22

**Peace process**

In the first stages of the peace process the trust in good intentions needs to be consolidated. A start must be made with making the state function and closing the “sovereignty gap”. According to Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart this is a “glaring gap (that) exists between the de jure sovereignty that the international system affords such states and their de facto capabilities to serve their populations and act as responsible members of the international community”.23 The extent to which this happens can be measured with the “sovereignty index”,24 with which the ten functions25 of the state can be assessed.26

In pre-modern states, such as Afghanistan, governmental chaos and corruption are rife.27 Openness and transparency of the administrative machinery are the most impor-
tant remedies against corruption, but that is hypothetical in such states. A stabilisation strategy directed at restoring law and order and the introduction of a market mechanism will work as a catalyst and tool. A negative peace can be (temporarily) enforced and maintained by the intervening parties, but the process from negative to positive peace can only be supported with foreign aid. Whether this happens or not is not a matter of idealism alone; geo-political interests form a prerequisite, all the more so, because of the enormous costs involved in an intervention and reconstruction. In practice a government has to determine whether the economic and idealist interests of the intervening state are sufficient to enforce a peace and to establish a durable stability. Incidentally, there has been no conflict in the 21st century that can be considered purely intra-state: the regional dimension has always been very present.

The Afghan geo-political plaything

Afghanistan is a typical example of a pre-modern state. This is a result of the protracted war, the bad accessibility of the country and the poor infrastructure, along with the great diversity in population, languages and cultures. Whether Afghanistan is a unified state, is a matter for discussion for many. There are quite a few myths about the coming into existence of the Afghan nation. Among the Pashtun, for instance, the father of the fatherland is Ahmad Shah Durrani, a (Pashtun) Popelzai, who reigned from 1747 to 1773, but he does not enjoy that reputation among non-Pashtun. Especially among the Tajik and the present-day National Front, Ahmad Shad Massoud plays a uniting role, something the Pashtun find somewhat exaggerated.

Afghanistan is not so much founded on a constellation of common ideas expressed in writings and institutions as is normal in western nation states, but on geostrategical invention. It is a stumbling block between large empires, whereby the peoples in the area of the present-day Afghanistan share an unwillingness to bind themselves to any of these large states. It is a state founded on a smooth and subtle interaction between collective structures combined with a strongly developed sense of freedom and a strong aversion to subjection.

The state borders of the Asian states were delineated in the nineteenth and twentieth century by European colonial states. While Great Britain expanded and strengthened its hold on India in the nineteenth century, its policy towards India’s northern neighbour, Afghanistan, was whimsical, with repeated drastic changes of course. The British were looking after their own interests; those of the local population were not even subordinate, leaving them no option but to rebel against foreign rule. Geo-political division
was dominant at the beginning of the twentieth century in this area, and it determined what was acceptable behaviour of the colonisers in the pursuit of their own interests.37

For the British the most important threat was a Russian expansion,38 the conservative Tories considering this threat an ‘attack’ on their crown colony, India, and they reacted in an alarmist and warlike fashion. The best way to keep the Russians away from India was to create a buffer zone, or a forward defence, and in this view it was necessary to advance in northerly direction and to occupy Afghanistan, wholly or partially. In practice, this British ‘forward policy’ led to one of its most crushing military defeats.

The British Liberal Party, on the other hand, took the Russian threat more lightly and proposed a political solution: stay in India, befriend an acceptable Afghan leader and have him and his fervently independent people, act as the gate keeper of the sub-continent. This course, also copied by the Americans up to the nineteen-seventies, proved to be successful in fending off the Russian military advance into Afghanistan up to 1979. Although it may seem simple on paper, such an approach works out differently in practice. The first blunder the British made was their interference in the old rivalry between the Popolzai and the Barakzai, the same Pasthun tribes that had been locked in a power struggle since the founding jirgah.39 But did the British have a choice if they wanted to control a puppet emir? The British blunder does not stand on its own; also the Soviets and the Americans would be faced with the same dilemma.

By the end of the nineteenth century the British had hopes of solving the problems by delineating the borders between the Indian and Afghan kingdoms. In 1901 Sir Thomas Holdich40 wrote: “We have contributed much to give a national unity to that nebulous community we which call Afghanistan...by drawing a boundary all around it and elevating it to the position of a buffer state between England and Russia”.41 Holdich was referring to the borders as they were agreed upon by the Foreign Secretary of British India, Sir H. Mortimer Durand, and the Afghan king Abdul Rahman Khan.42 The British intention was, on the one hand, to divide the Pasthun over Afghanistan and British India (the area of the present Pakistan) and the Tajiks, Uzbeks and Turkmenians over Afghanistan and several central-Asian republics, on the other. Abdul Rahman Khan did not like having the Treaty of Gandamak forced through his throat, but had no other option than to sign this treaty so humiliating for the Afghans.43 Many Afghan tribes revoked the ratification of the treaty and the subjection to the British, swearing allegiance to the Barakzai dynasty. Great Britain had no way of controlling the country in such circumstances without a massive invasion to colonise it. The Afghans drove the British out, just like they would do a century later with the Soviets: by melting away and employing guerrilla-like tactics and low-intensity conflicts, for which the country is perfectly suited. The poor
infrastructure and the inaccessibility make it difficult for intervening powers, also today, to concentrate their troops locally in order to control and subjugate. This put the Abdul Rahman Khan dynasty in jeopardy. It was threatened directly by its rival Ayub Khan, who advanced from his base in Herat on Kandahar a few weeks prior to Abdul Rahman Khan’s inauguration, destroying half of the British force opposing him. The British debacle was to the advantage of the newly-inaugurated Abdul Rahman Khan, who had the ambition to unite Afghanistan. The affair had the effect of boosting the Liberal posture in London: the British decided to withdraw their troops. It took the new king ten years of fierce, brutal fighting and forced migrations – ethnic cleansings – to force his stuborn compatriots into submission to him. When the job was done, it was, in his view, “paramount that first a border line were drawn around all of Afghanistan”.

The largest ethnic group, the Pashtun gained power in Afghanistan, incidentally, without ever forming the majority. As long as the British interests in the region were secure, or rather, not threatened, the Pashtun leaders could basically do whatever they liked. But that did not make the country or the region stable. The great ethnic and cultural diversity made it virtually impossible for a single ethnic group to stabilise and rule the country. On top of that, the Afghan government, to begin with Abdul Rahman Khan, never recognised the border with British India and later Pakistan, the Durand line. It is still a bone of contention today, also as the discussion is linked to the founding of Pashtunistan, i.e. the reunification of the Pashtun people on both sides of the border. In 1947 India became independent of British rule and the Muslim areas in the north were violently and painfully cut off in order to form the new state of Pakistan. Thus, Pakistan inherited the decades-old tensions regarding the border, which was unpopular with the Afghan as well as the Pakistani Pashtun. Afghanistan is a geo-political plaything for the empires in its region, on which it is dependent for its own security and prosperity.

**Buffer and insulator states**

Afghanistan is an *insulator state*, “A state or mini-complex standing between regional security complexes and defining a location where larger regional security dynamics stand back to back”. In Barry Buzan and Ole Waever’s regional security complex theory this is essentially different from a *buffer state*, “a state or mini-complex within a security complex and standing at the centre of a strong pattern of securitisation, whose role is to separate rival powers”. As an insulator, Afghanistan lies between the Asian Super Complex, the Middle Eastern Regional Security Complex and the post-Soviet Regional Security Complex, and as a result, it is directly influenced by all three. The consequence of this is that, “political turbulence and instability in Afghanistan will be a durable fea-
ture, sometime muted by a weak government, sometimes not. The divisions within the country run deep, and its warrior culture makes internal conflict frequent and easy to instigate. The various factions all have outside supporters in neighbouring territories, where kin and substantial refugee populations are to be found. In Descent into Chaos Ahmed Rashid in fact arrives at a similar conclusion. The consequence of the insulator status is that the country is influenced by the three neighbouring Regional Security Complexes (RSCs). This is the recurrent theme in the history of the region. Time and again, Afghanistan has fallen prey to the whims of clashing empires and their interests. It is directly influenced by its environment, with all the ensuing consequences for the state and the nation.

The characterisation of Afghanistan as an insulator is striking. Since World War II and the departure of the British as colonisers Afghanistan has become increasingly dependent on foreign support, which is a source of frequent instability. One example is the Kanjaki dam complex in the Helmand province, the Helmand-Arghandab Valley Authority (HAVA). The dams were built in the nineteen-fifties, with American aid, in particular, in order to win the ‘hearts and minds’ in the Soviet backyard. HAVA was a means to extend the power and prestige of the Daoud government and to foster Afghanistan as a Pashtun-dominated nation. This was only a partial success; the area that was flooded was traditional Pashtun nomad country. In part they left for areas where Tajiks and Hazaras lived, an opportunity for the government to use the nomads as “a death squad to crush the uprising of the non-Pashtun people”. Another part went to the Northwest Frontier Province and Balochistan in Pakistan, where many were accustomed to spending part of the year. Pakistan considers this area a ‘buffer’ between Pakistan and Afghanistan, so their arrival was seen as a security risk. Pakistan’s fear of a renewed ambition for a Pashtunistan flared up again, all the more so, as Daoud began to concentrate troops on the Afghan side of the border. In 1963 Daoud was dismissed as Prime Minister, and king Zahir Shah immediately tightened relations with Pakistan, which defused the situation somewhat for the time being, but did not put an end to the clashes of Afghan peoples and cultures supported by their brethren on the other side of the border. Another project the king embarked upon was the modernisation of the state and the democratisation of the administration. The Afghans pursued an independent course with their king, who in any case enjoyed the broad support from all ethnic groups, and, thus, could count on the support of both the Soviets and the Americans. In hindsight this appears to have been an exceptional period in the history of Afghanistan.

Geo-political puppet regimes are the rule rather than the exception in Afghanistan as a client state. What Shah Shuha (1839-1942) was for the British, and Mohammad Najibullah for the Soviets, Hamid Karzai (2000-present) is for the Americans: a Pashtun
with strong ties with his foreign patrons. They were de facto installed by decree after their predecessors had been deposed and are kept in the saddle by a relatively large and powerful force of occupation. However, so far the intervening countries have failed with the country.

For a decade the Soviets conducted a deadly battle during which countless cruelties and reprisal actions were committed by all parties, and repeated decimating of civilians and their possessions were the order of the day. When the Soviet debacle was over, the support from the US, USSR, Saudi-Arabia and others continued, while at the same time these countries incited the neighbouring countries and the rivalling factions against each other. In the obsessive context of the Cold War the probable consequences of the radicalisation were ignored by countries that supported the Mudjahidin: Pakistan and the US. In particular the most important ally, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar - the most radical fundamentalist among the rebel leaders – was even considered as a reason for taking up arms against the atheist communists. Such a strategy against Afghanistan, incidentally, is strikingly consistent in Pakistan: the use of religious fanatics to gain control over the country, or at least, create instability.

Karzai is an example of an American puppet. His name appears almost from nowhere in October 2001. That Karzai was a surprise for outsiders is not so strange: up to the summer of 2001 his name did not appear once in the prominent American media. After the American bombardments Karzai is the ‘influential Pashtun Chief’, which is certainly an exaggeration. Better still, Karzai is tolerated precisely because of the fact that he is not so influential and in fact has no power base in Afghanistan, nor blood on his hands. In the nineteen-eighties he closely cooperated with the Americans, in 1992-1993 he was Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs for a year in the Mudjahidin government in the virtually out-of-control, anarchistic country. In 1994-1995 he joined the Taliban, but renounced them in 1997. In the period that followed he worked from Pakistan, with American help, to topple the Taliban regime. In November 2001 the Taliban were chased from power, not beaten, with considerable, crucial American help, by the Mudjahidin of the Northern Alliance, whose leader, Ahmad Shah Massood, had been murdered only days before.

The Bonn Treaty

On 5 December 2001, during the conference in the German city of Bonn the Bonn Treaty was concluded on the instigation of the Special Representative of the United Nations, Algerian Lakhdar Brahimi. The goal of the conference was to give substance
to “the agenda for Afghanistan’s future”, with no place at the negotiations for the Taliban. At the conference the international community pledged support and resources. The challenge was the foundation of an Afghan nation which would be supported by the many dozens of ethnic and religious groups, but who had been waging a terrible war with each other over the past decade.

Afghanistan was to get a “broad based, gender sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative” government. During the conference an interim president was chosen. At first the most support seemed to go to Professor Abdul Sattar Sirat, an Uzbek from the camp of the former king, Zahir Shah, who lives in exile in Rome, and Minister of Justice in the king’s last government. Within the Northern Alliance there was much discord about the insignificant and unknown Karzai, who was pushed by the American envoy Khalilzad, at the expense of former Northern Alliance politicians, such as Abdullah Abdullah, Yunus Qanooni and Burhanuddin Rabbani, the former president of the Mujahidin government (1992-1996). The latter soon fell from grace when it appeared that he had held secret talks with the director of the Pakistani intelligence service (ISI), Lieutenant General Ehsan-ul Haq in the United Arab Emirates. Bit by bit Karzai gained not only the trust of the Northern Alliance – also because of their internal division – but also of Iran, Pakistan and Russia. In spite of the king’s popularity, Sirat was not acceptable to the Northern Alliance and he would therefore constitute a threat to the peace process. Pressured by the UN, Sirat withdrew his candidacy, which opened up the way for the American candidate, Karzai. According to the New York Times, “all the delegates understood that the Americans wanted Mr Karzai … so on Dec. 5, they finally chose him”.

Although Karzai is in power, he is troubled by the powerful war lords, who also actively challenge his presidency and cannot just be laid off, if only because their power base among the population is too strong. Gul Agha Shirzai, Ismael Khan – arguably the most powerful of all, and openly supported by Iran -, the opportunistic general Abdul Rashid Dostum – who during the ‘nights of the Mujahidin’ built up a reputation of brutality, just like Hasar Mohammed Mohaqeq and Tajik Mohammad Ata. Throwing these powerbrokers out, would mean a blood bath; keeping them on, was the other side of the dilemma, as their own interests profited by instability. The reconstruction of a modern administration, a task assigned to the UN in the Bonn Treaty, therefore, became a de facto impossibility, unless the war lords were side-tracked or assumed co-responsibility in governing the country. Whether UNAMA and ISAF could ever call them to account in this respect is a different matter and is in fact the crux in the first stage of the peace process.
UNAMA

The United Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), “supports and assists the Afghan government as an independent monitor of the implementation of the Bonn process; a fund-raiser; a coordinator of massive humanitarian aid, relief and reconstruction efforts; and a standard-bearer and enforcer for human rights and gender issues.”

It is remarkable that the Security Council laid down the provision that the support of the UN was dependent on “where local authorities contribute to the maintenance of a secure environment and demonstrate respect for human rights”. In other words, there are conditions attached to the modernisation process of the Islamic state, which traditionally does not have a separation of the powers of the state. It is obvious that a form of administration ensuing from this differs from that of a western democracy, if only because religion is often used (abused, according to some) by the social – often conservative – top layer as a means to maintain its position. The introduction of administrative innovations must come across as logical and rational and be presented with the help of and reference to the Koran. UNAMA acts as the coordinator for the UN and other aid organisations and facilitates aid programmes especially directed at embedding human rights in the society and reconstructing the economy.

Subversive activities are interfering with the functioning of the state, and division can be found up to the level of the government, which makes it impossible for government and parliament to govern, whereas the ambition should be to govern in unison and decide together on a future for which they all feel responsible. A possible reason for this is the absence of a multi-party system in combination with the non-transferable votes system of individually elected members of parliament.

ISAF

The adoption of Resolution 1386 on 20 December marks the beginning of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The mission was given a mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (peace enforcing) to maintain the conditional peace and, thus, enable reconstruction. ISAF is focused on restoring confidence in the state and that cannot be enforced with weapons, though it supports the disarming of militias, the training and professionalisation of the police and armed forces, the education and support of the local administrative machinery and organisation of elections. The sense of security must be provided by embedding stability: the parties should have something to lose by digging up the hatchet.

The intention is to maintain the negative peace and to make a start with the reconstruction, most certainly in areas where the security situation is fragile. Although this was quite a task, the necessary numbers of troops and materiel did not materialise, and
the room for manoeuvre was at first limited to Kabul, followed in 2004 by the northern and eastern regions, and since 2006 ISAF has covered the entire country.

The initial, multi-national ISAF mission was directed at increasing the security in and around the capital Kabul, under British, Turkish and German-Dutch command, consecutively. In August 2003 command was transferred to NATO, which conducted a phased expansion of the mission over Afghanistan. ISAF began to work with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) - on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 1510 (13 October 2003), 1563 (17 September 2004) and 1707 (12 September 2006) – in order to facilitate the execution of the mandate outside Kabul. The PRTs were a stop gap, as there were hardly any countries willing to send troops to Afghanistan. There were various reasons for this, ranging from a lack of confidence in the future of the country, to obligations elsewhere (Iraq), to lack of interests and interest in the country and the region. Incidentally, the questions remains, certainly in hindsight, whether ISAF was in need of substantially more troops anyway in the northern region; after all, the region was reasonably stable, by Afghan standards.

The PRTs were to be the backbone of the mission, which would only come to full bloom in a situation of negative peace. Northern Afghanistan is a fairly secure region with a reasonable economic growth, where infrastructure and administration are being built up successfully. The question, however, is how well the ethnic entities will be able to keep on cooperating. The activities of, for instance, Hekmatyar and Dostum in this region, in combination with the rule and power of Governor Mohammad Ata are not very encouraging. In the south and east the presence of a negative peace is by no means guaranteed, with a rebellious population, whether or not incited by the Taliban, everywhere. Furthermore, ISAF and OEF are locked in a struggle with the military exponents of the Taliban and al Qaeda-linked factions. Anyone who considers the Taliban an outsider in Afghanistan underestimates how deeply talibanism (corporal punishment, subordinate position of women, conservative interpretation of Islam) is embedded in the culture. The political movement of the Taliban, whose ideology comes very close to al Qaeda’s, however, is mainly fuelled by foreign powers, such as Pakistan and Saudi-Arabia. The traditional distance that has always been there between the Pashtun areas with their own norms and tribal regulations, and the central authority in Kabul, has increased since the Taliban were driven from Kabul.

There are two questions that present themselves. Does the modernisation of the traditional, Islamic society provoke resistance and where does this strong desire of the intervening countries to modernise and democratise this country come from?
Modernisation

In the traditional, rural Afghan society the drawing up of a constitution as a driving force for the modernisation process is a difficult but essential task in the process of democratisation. Attempts that were made in the past were both hopeful and disappointing. Whenever the modernisation seemed to take some hold, religion was used to set the clocks back. Afghanistan has a love-hate relationship with modernisation. One major problem is the paradox between the Sharia and the norms dictated by the human rights for the constitutional state, on the one hand, and the common law, the Islam and democratisation, on the other. There is no separation between mosque and state in Afghanistan, and attempts at separating them have always ended in debacle over the past century. The efforts made to create openings for modernisation and liberalisation through changes in the constitution, resulted in a temporary and local increase of liberties at best.

The modernisation of a traditional society, such as the Afghan one, requires a population that is itself aware of the necessity of these changes. This, in turn, presupposes the presence of strong, convincing administrators on all levels. Besides, an effective juridical system is indispensable to silence dissonance. In a centrally governed country, which Afghanistan still is, and in which more than eighty per cent of the civil servants still reside in Kabul, police officers are corrupt, judges barely trained, and governors avoid difficulties almost by definition, all the ingredients are in place for blocking any adjustments to the traditional life style.

Religion is always used in Afghanistan as a ‘weapon’ against innovation, but the roots of the rejection are vested in tradition. In the course of history resistance against innovation in the provinces has always assumed whimsical forms. Over the centuries the radicalisation of the traditionalists has developed from a religious-traditionalist mutiny of Tajik ‘bacha-e saqqaw’ to the most extremist clan-cultural Pashtun tyranny of the Taliban. In order to break through this, persuasiveness, mutual respect, time and patience are required. The reality is also that tradition and common law are necessities in an illiterate Afghan society, in which, moreover, offending someone’s honour is an extremely sensible issue. The Islam holds a prominent position in the present constitution, which makes it an obstacle to innovation. An interpretation in a more liberal-Islamic sense would offer possibilities for modernisation, where a stricter one, along the lines of the Sharia, would scarcely do that.

The prominent position of the clergy, in combination with the omnipresent illiteracy, low level of education of the population and the traditional tribal relations, also cause a
dominance of religion and common law in practice. For that reason the Afghans living outside the major cities are scarcely susceptible to changes in their traditional way of life, let alone a modernisation of fundamental values, such as the liberalisation of the position of women. Apparently, it is the task of the intervening countries to take away precisely this type of obstacle. The challenge in this area is immense, with the Taliban and the drugs barons, who are often also the war lords, finding each other united on this point. They benefit from insecurity and the failure of the national government, as they thrive best in a situation of lawlessness and anarchy. The trick for ISAF and UNAMA is to break through this downward spiral.

The weak provincial and local government organisation needs to be professionalised, and a strong administration requires a powerful middle-class, which at this moment is absent. The creation and education of this middle-class will probably take two generations. Whether this justifies an almost total absence of delegation of responsibilities from Kabul is quite doubtful. If the involvement of officials in the provinces remains low, there is no motivation to modernise and educate them, let alone lend integrity to a position of authority. In the mean time, the authority and administration vacuum that was traditionally filled by the clergy and tribal leaders, is now being filled by the war lords.

One chance the country has to increase the pace of modernisation is to improve its energy positions and to exploit its natural resources and minerals to the furthering of the living standards in one of the poorest countries in the world outside Africa. It is precisely on these points that the main intervening players have shared interests with the Afghan government.

Regional interests

The Central-Asiatic Caspian Sea Basin (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and parts of Russia and Iran) holds approximately one-fifth of the world’s oil reserves and one-eighth of the natural gas reserves. Afghanistan is an ‘energy bridge’ – a geographical link between central and southern Asia, mainly from the Turkmenistan Daulatébad gas field – which gives it a strategic importance in the exploitation of the oil and gas fields in the area and a major motivation for especially American activity there. In September 2007 Richard Boucher, US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, stated, “One of our goals is to stabilize Afghanistan, so it can become a conduit and a hub between South and Central Asia so energy can flow to the south...and so that the countries of Central Asia are no longer bottled up between two enormous
powers of China and Russia, but rather they have outlets to the south as well as to the north and the east and the west”.91

The energy bridge through Afghanistan is the TAPI pipe line, which in due course is to connect Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. This pipe line has played a major political role for some time now, whereby two consortiums have been vying for the rights: American Unocal and Argentine Bridas.92 The American government supports Unocal, which negotiated with the Taliban administration for the rights between 1997 and 2001.93 Initially, George W. Bush was convinced that the combination of regime and oil pipe line would lead to enough prosperity and stability, provided the Taliban formed a government of national unity. Bridas negotiated independently with the Taliban and their opponents, but disappeared from the Afghan stage after 2001. The American administration is still negotiating with the Afghans, and there are several reports that president Karzai entertained long-lasting and close ties with Unocal, just like the former American ambassador in Afghanistan (2003-2005), Zalmay Khalizad, who used to work as a liaison between the Taliban government and the American administration.

The TAPI project is coordinated by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in the Philippines, which carried out a technical feasibility study in 2003.94 This dug-in gas pipeline is going to measure some 1,700 kilometres in length, transporting an annual 33 billion cubic metres of gas. Annually, Afghanistan can purchase a maximum of 5 billion cubic metres, and India and Pakistan 14 billion cubic metres each. In 2008 the costs were estimated at $7.6 billion. The pipe line roughly follows the Afghan ring road from Dauletbad (Turkmenistan) to Herat, via Helmand and Kandahar to Pakistan. As it happens, this is also one of the most turbulent areas in Afghanistan, where Italian, British and Canadian ISAF units are stationed.

In 2006 a donor conference was held in New Dehli, India, where the TAPI project featured high on the agenda (New Dehli Declaration 2006).95 Representatives of 21 countries participated, among which the USA, Russia, Great Britain, Canada, Italy, France and Germany and the regional super powers, India, Pakistan and Iran. Afghanistan also took part, just like the ADB, the IMF, the EU and the World Bank. The interest of the TAPI pipe line for the region was reiterated and concerns were voiced with regard to the bad security situation in eastern and southern Afghanistan.

The importance of the TAPI project is recognised in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy 2008-2013.96 The transfer of gas alone will yield $160 million, i.e. half of the Afghan national budget.97 This makes it essential for the development of the economy and employment, and, consequently, for the stability of the country. The
region profits as well, all the more so, as TAPI will lead to more stability between the two arch-rivals India and Pakistan. However, in spite of the obvious advantages of the project for the stability of the region, the costs are fairly high and the chance of success relatively slight as a consequence of the instability and insecurity. Besides, there is an alternative, the Iran-Pakistan-India pipe line, which exports natural gas along a relatively safe route. The costs of the IPI-pipe line are estimated at some $7.5 billion, as expensive as TAPI.

With its length of 2,775 kilometres, the IPI pipe line can transport 5.5 billion cubic metres of gas and will take four years to complete. The building is carried out and financed by the three countries, while TAPI is a ‘corporate venture’. It is an open question whether the IPI line will actually be built, with the US being vehemently opposed, due to the role Iran will be playing in the region and as a result of interests that the British BP and Russian Gazprom have in the Pakistani part, and on which the American can exert little influence. Besides, participation of India in the project is still unclear, all the more so, as the United States is exerting strong pressure on both India and Pakistan to withdraw from the project and to fully focus on the TAPI project, which, according to US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher, also testifies to the “fundamental strategic interest in Afghanistan” as well as the importance of stability in the region. By the end of May 2008 a declaration of intent was signed to begin the construction of the TAPI pipe line, aiming for operational use in 2014. The big question is in how far the current rising tensions between India and Pakistan, also as a result of the assault in Mumbai (November 2008), are going to influence the process.

Petro-politics

The world energy reserves do not look good, according to the data published by the International Energy Agency in its Medium-Term Oil Market Report in November 2008. The present oil and gas wells are yielding seven per cent less oil and gas every year. According to the IEA, it would take a quantity four times the present production of Saudi-Arabia, to counter the effect of the depleting oil fields, with a demand staying constant. That extra production is not going to happen. Temporary price drops and large set backs for the oil companies in combination with the credit crunch, cause the IEA to predict a structural shortage of oil on the short to medium term. This has major consequences on a global scale: stronger authoritarian states, an increasing interference of large countries in oil rich regions and a rising risk of wars fought over raw materials.

As energy plays a central role in global economy, the imminent oil shortage has created new strategic priorities in the western countries and a number of emerging econo-
emies: energy security. The bulk of the oil may be traded on the ‘world market’, but no one strong or wealthy enough to make matters go their way are relying on that. In this respect, the history of the Middle East gives little reason for confidence, as the region has been the focal point of foreign interference, with staged coups, arms deals and manipulation, since oil was first discovered there.

The tussle over the Middle East has subsided somewhat. It is unclear how large the Saudi reserves really are and how long the marriage of reason between Riyadh and Washington will last. The scenarios for the future of the Iraqi oil fields are uncertain as a consequence of the insecurity and political instability in the country. The competition goes between Iran and the US. The matter is complex, as a number of issues are intertwined, such as the Iranian support to factions like Hezbollah, the Iranian nuclear programme and the large energy reserves in Iran. India, Pakistan and China are eager for Iranian natural gas; Tehran is wavering, Washington is resisting. It has become a matter of intense and open geo-political manoeuvring between European countries, Russia, the US and China, to mention a few. It is remarkable that Washington requested the support of Beijing to isolate Iran's economy further because of its nuclear programme. The Chinese, however, concluded a gas and oil deal with Iran, worth $100 billion. This, incidentally, should surprise no one, with 43 per cent of the new oil demands coming from China - the biggest energy consumer in 2015, according to the IEA. American and Chinese interests are at odds in this respect.

Exploiting the oil and gas fields in Africa and around the Caspian Sea is of vital importance. The Baku-Tbilisi-Cey (BTC) oil pipe line, initially ran through the mountainous and insecure area of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey, while Azerbaijan could as easily export via Iran. This is an illustration of how stringent the situation is, but also of the geo-political struggle that is involved with it. The BTC pipe line made it possible to export oil without interference from Russia or Iran, but it is merely an example of The New Great Game in Central Asia. In connection with this, Afghanistan, as an insulator state, is once more a hub in the geo-political tussle over natural resources in the region.

In this respect the Americans have drastically changed their strategic priorities. They need the Europeans badly to secure their energy interests, if need be to fight for them. After all, these are vital interests that also change the power structures in the international arena. The power of new energy exporters, such as Russia, Iran and Venezuela, is steadily increasing. The situation, however, is fragile. Thus, the Iranian state budget is mainly founded on the oil export.
The high oil price also makes oil producing countries more powerful, their exorbitant profits rendering them less dependent on western oil companies. These profits allow them to hire companies like Halliburton, which can deliver complete oil extraction installations, including the drilling rigs, and protect them. The future of the once so omnipotent oil giants, such as Shell, BP, Exxon, Unocal, has become a tenuous one. But things can be a lot worse; in the current credit crunch western economies have to be rescued by state funds, in which many oil producing countries deposited the enormous money surpluses of the past few years. It has given them strategic importance, as they are buying up the stocks of the decaying western business world. On the one hand, the desire for oil will have to be pushed back, while, on the other, vital regions will have to be controlled firmly. Central Asia offers opportunities, but at the same time it is an enormous challenge to make the area secure and stable. The western countries have vital interests in the region and in the stabilisation of the Afghan energy bridge.

Conclusion

The western intervention in Afghanistan is driven by a mutually dependent combination of idealism and vital economic interests. After all, if there is no secure and stable environment in Afghanistan, the Central-Asian natural resources are difficult to export. In connection with this, it must be considered a blunder that the Taliban were only driven from the country, and were allowed to regroup in Pakistan. The exploitation of the natural resources, the primary objective of the intervention, next to apprehending Osama bin Laden and rounding up al Qa’ida, has come under pressure as a result. The fact that ISAF was slowly deployed over the entire country did not do the stabilisation process much good. For too long, the American troops were engaged in ‘the hunt for bin Laden’, ignoring that creating a negative peace was at least as important a condition for the peace process.

Military successes do not count if a durable peace is not gained. Peace is not ‘won’ by defeating an enemy on the battle field, to disarm and demobilise him, but precisely by stimulating reconstruction, restoring infrastructure, facilitating good education and health care, promoting good governance, training the police and the legal system, getting the economy going and by taking away mutual feelings of hatred. A reconstruction mission, therefore, is crucial in an area where there has been much intra-state conflict and civil strife. Here, the battle does not take place between the standing armies, but between a governmental armed force or a militia and one or more groups of insurgents. This type of conflict is characterised by an intense, deeply rooted hatred, which makes crisis control operations fundamental in trying to stem the tide. Creating a negative
peace is the starting point, and it is a precondition for the reconstruction of state and society. The process towards a durable, positive peace is a long one, because none of the ethnic groups may be favoured over the others, the improvements must benefit all. The intervening parties should act as principal mediators with indirect interests in the peace process.

Reconstruction missions have an integrated military, political and reconstruction approach. During their execution there is a close cooperation in many western countries between the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Overseas Development. This is known as the DDD-triangle - Diplomacy, Defence and Development. Diplomacy aims at the improvement of the local, regional and national governance; Defence relates to maintaining the negative peace, with a view to enabling the positive peace; and Development is directed at durable development. Stability is of the essence, with a functioning civilian authority being indispensable, respect between the parties and a prospect for the future. It can be said that the more hostility, measured in casualties and refugees, and the more limited the local capacities, measured in lagging development and restricted diversity of the economy, the more the need for (international) support in order to achieve a positive peace.

In Afghanistan all the ingredients for stability are in place, albeit at present with foreign help. The same is true, however, for all ingredients for a renewed flaring up of the war, which also takes foreign support. The ISAF concept, in combination with the activities of UNAMA, has an added value, as it contributes to the restoration of an administrative infrastructure on a provincial, district and municipal level. Stimulating large infrastructural projects is of paramount importance to get the economy going, and along with it, the democratisation process. The crux of the reconstruction process and the success of the ISAF mission is getting the narco-economy under control and the corruption that comes with it. In spite of all the efforts made so far, the Afghan economy still floats on the poppy cultivation and opium production, which keeps war lords and power brokers, such as the Taliban and al Qa’ida in the saddle. They benefit from a weak government. The reality, however, is that the narco-sector generates the bulk of the real national income, which suggests that the power in the country does not lie with the central government.

Creating a real economy, whereby the TAPI project will offer a solution, is a precondition for the eventual success of the intervention of November 2001. The fate of the Afghans lies in foreign hands; all they can do is take the opportunities that are presented by their environment. Western countries with idealistic goals and vital interests in the region also owe it to the Afghans to offer them prosperity. The Europeans must join in
the creation of stability in Afghanistan and the region, but should also reap the fruits, which the Americans seem to be claiming only for themselves. Only in this way can the long march towards a stable Afghanistan be sustained and will the country not sink back into the fate that the course of history had bestowed upon it.

Notes

1. Lieutenant-Colonel (Royal Netherlands Marines) A. (Allard) J.E. Wagemaker MA is a researcher and PhD-candidate at the International Security Studies section of the Netherlands Defence Academy.
Stabilisation operations are a military concern, directed at creating security once the traditional war is over, but when there is no stable peace yet. Reconstruction operations and the creation of a durable peace is the domain of the reconstruction worker. His work is directed at societal reconstruction, with an emphasis on building up the governance and the economy. Both operations converge at a certain point, reinforcing each other and having a peace maintaining effect. A long-term approach – working on stability, state building and nation building – is a requirement for durable peace.


Smith (2005), p. 17.


The integrated totality of the ten functions is characteristic for the modern, functional state, in which security goes beyond mere physical safety and also relates to economic and political security. The functions are: legitimate monopoly on the control over the means of violence and use of force; administrative control; management of public finances; investment in human capital; delineation of citizenship rights and duties; provision of infrastructure services; formation of the market; management of the state’s assets (including the environment, natural resources, and cultural assets); international relations (including entering into international
contracts and public borrowing); and rule of law.

41. Colonel Sir Thomas Hungerford Holdich, KCMG, KCIE, CB (1843-1929) was a British geographer and president of the Geographical Society. He mainly owes his fame as Superintendent of Frontier Surveys in British India and as the author of many books, among which The Gates of India, The countries of the King’s Award and Political Frontiers and Boundary Making.

47. Roberts (2003).


52. Buzan and Waever (2003), pp. 41 and 489.


There is one exception to what is stated here: on 27 April the name of Karzai
appeared in the New York Times in the article ‘For Afghans, a Major Goal is Credibility’.


72. These intentions are also known as the Petersberg Agreement, see: http://www.ag-afghanistan.de/files/petersberg.htm


75. This was confirmed in a personal interview with General Fahim, who underlined that the Americans were in the driver seat, and pointed out to the Northern Alliance how crucial their military and financial aid was and is. Apart from that there was no doubt as to the consequences of non-cooperation and that the super power could also turn against them. Moreover, a number of the main players were ‘bribed’. Fahim acknowledged that he was in fact one of those who received a generous American offer.

76. UN Security Council Resolution 1401 (28 March 2002)


78. I base this on several interviews that I held in Kabul in April 2007 and May 2008 with various Members of Parliament of the Meso and Loya Djergah and with Afghan (political) commentators. This point of view was further confirmed in an interview with Malaja Joya (the exiled Parliamentarian) in the Netherlands in May 2008 and with Farah Karimi in Kabul in April 2007, who was attached to the Afghan Parliament as a special UN adviser. Farah’s remarks were more cynical and negative in comparison with what she states in her 2006 book *Slagveld Afghanistan* (Battlefield Afghanistan), Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam Uitgevers.


81. I base this on my own observations during two field surveys in the Northern region, see also Wagemaker, Allard and Shakila Azizzada (2007), ‘Baghlan een jaar na dato: Effecten van twee jaar een Nederlandse PRT’, *Marineblad*, July 2007, pp. 18-22. In the province of Baghlan, it appeared, the economy has more than doubled over the past two years. The local Chamber of Commerce characterises the situation as reasonably stable and ready for larger investments. These observations are shared by ISAF Commander Regional Command North, German Brigadier Dieter Dammjacob, who sees a similar trend in the northern region, but who also states that although the situation is stable at the moment, it is also fragile. There is not yet any real confidence among the population with regard to the future and large investments, which might lead to situation in which the economic growth might come to a standstill. However, the arrival of electricity from Uzbekistan (the so-called North-East Power System or NEPS), the implementation of the German Renewable Energy Supply for Rural Areas (RESRA) project, and investments in durable economy are initiatives that shore up the confidence in the future.


86. Mukarji (2007).


Introduction

On 2 February 2006, after earlier Dutch contributions in Afghanistan, a large parliamentary majority approved the Cabinet decision to deploy a mission to Uruzgan. On 3 February 2006 the decision was confirmed in the meeting of the Cabinet. This brought to a close the political decision making process which had lasted for more than a year and had been fraught with difficulty. It had put great pressure on the relations between the coalition partners CDA, VVD and D66 in the Balkenende II Cabinet, it had led to the departure of D66 chairman of the parliamentary party Boris Dittrich and it signified the beginning of one of the most perilous Dutch missions since WWII.

Why does a decision making process take so much time and why is it so difficult? The purpose of this contribution is to reconstruct the decision making process prior to the mission to Uruzgan. From the first sounding up to the parliamentary debate it is described as completely as possible. The reconstruction is based on a survey of open sources, such as media and parliamentary letters and interviews with persons involved. The article is rounded off with an observation on the reconstruction, followed by conclusions.

Extension of operations and rapprochement by Canada

On 13 October 2003 the UN Security Council voted for an extension of the mandate of the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) to the rest of Afghanistan. This enabled ISAF, which up to that moment had only been present in Kabul, to expand the operational area to the whole of Afghanistan in four stages. In stage 1 the expansion was to the north, in stage 2 to the west, in stage 3 to the south and, finally, stage 4 to the east.

By the end of 2004 the Netherlands had good experiences with its Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in the north of Afghanistan and was considering to establish a second one. Canada, in its turn, was thinking of establishing a PRT in the southern
province of Kandahar. This Canadian idea was brought up on 10 January 2005 in the *Stuurgroep Militaire Operaties* - Steering Group Military Operations (SMO). The Dutch and Canadian considerations seemed to be in line with each other and on 20 January 2005 it could be reported to the SMO that the first contacts between the Netherlands and Canada had taken place. Over the next few weeks these contacts were intensified, while there were also simultaneous contacts with the United Kingdom. On 10 February the Director of Operation of the Defence Staff reported to the SMO that a meeting had taken place with the United Kingdom and Canada with regard to ISAF stage 3 in southern Afghanistan. The three countries were in the process of investigating the possibility to deploy a combined mission in that part of Afghanistan.

**Motives for the mission**

Both the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs were not against the idea to prepare a mission in southern Afghanistan, although the latter was sceptical at first. The reason for this was that in the spring of 2005 it had been decided that the Netherlands was not going to extend its mission in Iraq. What would the reactions be if the government were to announce it was considering a new mission to southern Afghanistan after the present one? What would the political support be and how would the Dutch population react? Besides, it is worth noting that Foreign Affairs did not wish to commit itself too quickly to the mission; more information was needed for that. Also, Foreign Affairs officials asked themselves what the consequences of ‘not going’ would be for the Dutch relations with the USA, the United Kingdom and NATO and for the position of the NATO Secretary-General, De Hoop Scheffer.

Within the Ministry of Defence opinions differed on the possible mission. Thus, the *Hoofddirectie Algemene Beleidszaken* - Directorate General Policies (DAB) was on the whole rather reluctant, having doubts about the feasibility and the political consequences of the mission. The Defence Staff, on the other hand, saw the opportunities of the mission for the future of the organisation.

Apart from that, there were different motives for the mission within the organisation. First among them were the possible cuts. The Stabilisation Force Iraq (SFIR) was to end in the spring of 2005, and it was feared that the absence of a new mission would lead to new rounds of cuts for the Defence organisation once the elections were over. Then, there was the multilateral cadre. Afghanistan had become a test case for NATO, and a failure in that country might have negative consequences for NATO as an organisation and for transatlantic relations, two aspects of which the Netherlands had always been
strong proponents. What is more, the war against international terrorism and the support of the Afghan population were in line with the foreign policy of the Balkenende II Cabinet.9 Fourth, the Defence organisation was convinced of the leverage the Dutch contribution might have in the international arena.10 Taking part in the mission in southern Afghanistan would enhance Dutch influence on the international level. Finally, there was the experience for the armed forces. After the end of the Cold War the ministry had been subjected to a great many cuts and re-organisations, in the course of which the military machine had been transformed from a force destined for the North-German plain into expeditionary armed forces. The Services had already gained experience in the 1990s and the beginning of the present century in various missions in the former Yugoslavia and Iraq, but the mission in southern Afghanistan was to be the “toughest mission since Korea”. Not only would the Netherlands become responsible for one of the southern provinces, it would also take turns in commanding the entire operation in southern Afghanistan. Surely, this would be a good experience for the armed forces.

For the then Minister of Defence, Kamp, the elections did not play a role, which set him somewhat apart from a number of other functionaries within the Ministry. After the 9/11 attacks not only the Taliban rule must be toppled and Al Qaida hounded out, but also the Afghan population must be given a good alternative. For him, these had been the reasons why the Netherlands had contributed to earlier missions in Afghanistan, and Kamp’s reason for taking part in the southern Afghanistan mission lay in the fact that his country had committed itself to the necessity of the reconstruction of Afghanistan. This would be a difficult job to achieve in southern Afghanistan, but the Netherlands had an expeditionary force which was top of the bill. The country had the ability to take part, and in view of earlier statements, had committed itself to. Any electoral motives were rejected by Kamp.11 Foreign Affairs was not impressed by the ‘experience argument’ of Defence as a motive for taking part in such a mission. Apart from that, it had a number of similar but also different reasons.

First of all, there were geo-political reasons. The mission in Iraq, especially in southern Iraq, was going rather well in the spring of 2005. Foreign Affairs was of the opinion that if by a multinational effort two democratic poles (Iraq and Afghanistan) could be created, this would have a positive impact on the neighbouring countries and the entire region (Iran, Pakistan). The second reason (the war against international terrorism) and the third (leverage) Foreign Affairs shared with Defence.

The same seems to have been the case with the fourth motive, the multinational character, but only for a different reason. For Defence NATO was a prime reason, for Foreign Affairs it was mainly important that the mission was carried out with countries such as
the United Kingdom and Canada, countries of great international stature. It would give
the Netherlands an opportunity to create a profile for itself internationally, project the
country into the ‘major league of countries’, to improve its international position and
increase its influence. All this would enhance the above-mentioned leverage.

Finally, Foreign Affairs shared a number of motives with Minister Kamp, in that it,
too, saw the mission in southern Afghanistan as a logical consequence of earlier efforts
in other parts of the country. Besides, the Netherlands had the ability to carry out the
mission and therefore could suit the action to the word.

The start of the political decision making

On 3 May 2005 Prime Minister Balkenende, Minister Kamp and Minister Bot meet
at the Ministry of Defence in order to be briefed on the state of affairs, after which the
involved ministries could continue their preparations for the time being.

On 24 May 2005 there was another meeting of the involved ministers and civil
servants on the possibility of a mission to southern Afghanistan. The outcome of the
consultation was not clear, no unequivocal yes, nor a cancellation. Again, the ministries
involved could continue making their preparations. At the same time, it was decided that
Minister Bot will sound out the D66 and PvdA with regard to their possible support for a
mission to southern Afghanistan. It was decided to do this as a result of the experiences
with a mission of 250 personnel, mainly special forces of the Korps Commando Troepen
and Korps Mariniers – Commando Corps and Marine Corps, to Afghanistan within
the framework of Operation Enduring Freedom. On 25 February 2005 Minister Bot and
Minister Kamp had sent a notification about that mission to Second Chamber and on 10
March 2005 a debate had taken place on the matter. Although the mission had been sup-
ported by a large majority in the Second Chamber, it had been somewhat painful that the
PvdA had been against it.12 The ministers involved wanted to prevent such an experience
with the upcoming mission and that is why the two opposition parties were sounded out.
To the surprise of various policy officials both D66 and PvdA agreed with the plan.13

With so much support from Prime Minister Balkenende and the Ministers Bot and
Kamp the mission was given a provisional ‘green light’ during a meeting on 8 June,
which meant that the preparations could continue. On 14 June 2005 a team of Defence
and Foreign Affairs officials left for a Fact Finding Mission (FFM) to Afghanistan, led by
the J5 (planning) of the Directie Operatiën - Operations Directorate of the Defence staff.
One of the objectives of this FFM was to determine in which province the Netherlands
wanted and would be able to make an effort. In the first instance, the preference of the Netherlands was for the province of Kandahar, which had a good airfield and a base to operate from. Besides, the Netherlands began to be familiar with the province due to the presence of its special forces there. However, Kandahar was in Canadian hands by now and Canada wanted to continue its efforts in this province. It soon became clear that the United Kingdom had a strong preference for Helmand, and on top of that, the Netherlands saw that this province was a bit too much for its level of ambition. The province of Day Khundi was only accessible in summer and if Uruzgan was not occupied by a coalition partner, there would remain a ‘gap’ between the provinces of Helmand and Kandahar and Day Khundi, which was an undesirable option. The Netherlands considered for a long time to make an offer for Nimroz, the province west of Helmand, which offered good opportunities for reconstruction projects. However, the need in Uruzgan was direst (from a reconstruction as well as a counter-insurgency perspective), which finally tipped the balance for Uruzgan. Incidentally, an eye witness on a visit to the ISAF headquarters in Kabul noticed that a Dutch flag had been placed in Uruzgan on the map of Afghanistan. It is not clear whether this was wishful thinking or prescience.

On 16 June, two days after the departure of the FFM, Minister Kamp sent a letter to Parliament on the NATO-defence ministers’ meeting of 9 and 10 June 2005 in Brussels. In broad lines the letter described what had been discussed at that meeting. At the same time the following text had been incorporated, also on behalf of Minister Bot, “in response to a request of the NATO Secretary General (I) have announced that the Netherlands is going to investigate a contribution, in cooperation with the United Kingdom and Canada, and possibly other partners, to the extension of ISAF to the south of Afghanistan (stage 3)”. With this notification the Second Chamber was informed for the first time about the plans for a mission to southern Afghanistan. Afterwards there was criticism about the way of informing, with MPs complaining that the notification had been smuggled away in a letter on a NATO meeting.

The mission is becoming uncertain

At the NATO meeting of 9 and 10 June in Brussels, mentioned above, Canada, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands brought forward their plans for southern Afghanistan. At the same time the Netherlands indicated there that it needed a partner for this effort. This partner was found in Australia, which had been persuaded into cooperating with the Netherlands through mediation of the USA and the United Kingdom. This had and has several advantages for the Netherlands. First of all, Australia was already active in Uruzgan with special forces within the OEF framework, which meant
it had the knowledge that the Netherlands lacked. Apart from that, Australia has modern armed forces, which is important for interoperability.

Altogether the preparations for the mission went relatively well and by the end of September or early October 2005 Prime Minister Balkenende and the Ministers Bot and Kamp made a decision in principle. The Netherlands was to take part in the ISAF mission in Uruzgan, on condition of parliamentary approval, a decision which was announced to NATO Secretary General De Hoop Scheffer.

However, in spite of this decision in principle, the mission seemed to have become increasingly uncertain in the course of the autumn of 2005, due to a number of mutually reinforcing developments. Thus, on 19 October the Militaire Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst – Military Intelligence and Security Service (MIVD), released a very critical report, portraying a sombre picture of the province of Uruzgan. It stated that reconstruction activities would be severely hampered by the presence of Opposing Militant Forces (OMF), and, on top of that, it was to be expected that there would be Dutch casualties.

Besides, from 18 until 20 October the Plaatvervangend Commandant der Strijdkrachten - Deputy Armed Forces Commander (PCDS), the Directeur-Generaal Politieke Zaken – Director General Political Affairs (DGPZ) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and civil servants of both ministries made a visit to Afghanistan. The visit went well, but ended in doubts, when the Australians kept on saying that, however well intended the mission was, or however well the hearts and minds campaign would go, the population of Uruzgan would never choose the side of the coalition troops.

Moreover, on 27 October 2005 the Commandant der Strijdkrachten – the Armed Forces Commander (CDS) presented his military advice to the Minister of Defence. He described the mission as challenging, but feasible and sound, an assessment that seemed to be at odds with the critical MIVD report. Finally, there were (and are) proponents and opponents of the mission within Defence, the latter having reservations with regard to the feasibility of the mission, or fearing the Netherlands might have bitten off more than it could chew.

In the media the impression began to emerge that there were serious doubts about whether the mission would go on, with Foreign Affairs allegedly being reluctant, Minister Kamp being in two minds about pushing the mission through or not, and Prime Minister Balkenende also being hesitant. A quote from De Volkskrant of 29 December 2005 is a good illustration of the media coverage in this period:
Armed with the information from his servicemen, Kamp decided, shortly before a working visit to Afghanistan, to report to the Council of Ministers on 28 October. His CDA colleague Bot saw the storm coming. For months, his diplomats, just like Kamp’s soldiers, had been meeting NATO allies and other countries on the Afghanistan mission, but there were so many uncertainties according to Bot that the subject was not yet ripe for discussion in the Cabinet. The fact that Kamp, at first a strong proponent of the mission, was hesitating, might force the Cabinet into making a premature negative decision. In that case Bot would have some explaining to do abroad. Confusion was rife, also with Balkenende, who asked both ministers for an explanation. MPs had the impression that Kamp wanted to force a positive decision, and they reproved him for “marching in front of his troops”. He was also blamed for losing sight of the fact that Bot would be the first person responsible for sending out troops. Kamp found this criticism hard to stomach. When a few weeks later he saw his colleague Bot at a EU meeting, he slipped, “There’s my boss”. It would be as late as December before both ministers presented a unanimous proposal to the Council of Ministers.

On 28 October 2005 it did not come to a forced decision in the Council of Ministers, but the differences of opinion between Kamp and Bot found their way to the media. An example of this is the discussion on the ‘ironmonger’s’. De Volkskrant of 30 October 2005 published an article entitled Bot doet het beleid, Kamp de ijzerwinkel (Bot takes care of policy, Kamp watches over the ironmonger’s), in which it was stated that Kamp moved too much on the policy domain of Foreign Affairs not only because of his stance in the Uruzgan mission, but also because of his preference for the acquisition of Tomahawk missiles for the Royal Netherlands Navy. Minister Kamp reacted on 31 October 2005 at a meeting of his party, stating that he found it “revolting” that the armed forces were dubbed “the ironmonger’s” at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. GroenLinks MP Karimi asked parliamentary questions “on the reports in the media to the effect that there are differences of opinion with regard to a new military mission in Afghanistan”. Bot and Kamp felt obliged to send a parliamentary letter in which they stated that “there is no question of any difference of opinion between us”.

There are various versions with regard to the doubts, each with is own perspective on the ‘truth’. Thus, former minister Kamp acknowledges that he had certain doubts about the mission, but he indicates that this is understandable. Certain aspects required further clarification and a number of conditions still needed to be met. In contrast to his usual habit, Kamp drew up a list of requirements that the mission had to meet and had it circulated in his ministry. Incidentally, he denies that there was a big competition between the various factions within his ministry. In his view, not everyone was a proponent in equal measure of the mission and there were legitimate doubts about its
feasibility, but due to a transparent decision making process in various phases, everyone saw the possibilities of the mission.\textsuperscript{28}

At the Ministry of General Affairs there were also different currents of proponents and opponents, each exerting its influence on Prime Minister Balkenende. Opponents feared a ‘headache mission’, while proponents, on the other hand, saw the chances such a mission would bring along. Prime Minister Balkenende, in the mean time, had begun to have serious doubts about the mission, in particular because of the lack of support in the Second Chamber, but also because of the risks attached to it.\textsuperscript{29}

At Foreign Affairs, too, the doubts were seen from different angles. For some the doubts meant possible ‘showstoppers’ for the mission, while for others they stemmed from problems that had not been solved yet. If those problems disappeared, the doubts would be taken away, too. For them, the decision in principle was clear, the mission would go on, and problems were merely obstacles that needed to be taken away and not reasons for reconsidering the mission.

From 31 October until 2 November 2005 Minister Kamp paid a visit to Afghanistan and also the special forces in Kandahar, during which he was given a briefing on Uruzgan by the Americans. On his return, the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence formulated a list, based on Kamp’s list of requirements mentioned above, of 16 points for improvement with regard to the mission that needed to be dealt with in order to get approval.\textsuperscript{30} In drawing up the list, the question was asked which points of criticism on the mission would come from the Second Chamber and which would come from the media. This criticism, subsequently, had to be prevented by ‘fixing’ it.

One of the points for improvement was how to deal with the special forces under the OEF mandate and the Task Force under the ISAF mandate. How were these two missions to be related and tuned with each other? The answer was found in the transfer of the special forces to the ISAF Task Force, which took away one of the points for improvement at an early stage and reduced the list to 15.

The mood becoming more positive

Together, Foreign Affairs and Defence tried to take away the remaining 15 ‘obstacles’, with little result at first. Thus, the American Secretary of State Rice did not want to make many concessions in a telephone conversation with her colleague Bot.\textsuperscript{31}
Gradually, things began to improve, albeit erratically. On 14 November Bot had a meeting with President Karzai in Vienna, during which Karzai made a number of concessions with regard to the strengthening of the structure of authority, the local police forces, the presence of the Afghan army in Uruzgan and a proper treatment of prisoners. A week later the mood was becoming negative again when VVD foreign affairs parliamentary spokesman Van Baalen in a debate on the budget of Foreign Affairs on 23 and 24 November 2005 voiced criticism with regard to the respecting of the international rule of law within the framework of the human rights violations in Afghanistan. He stated, “The VVD party (...), too, holds that international law should be the measure of things for the Second Chamber. If in certain missions international law is not respected, the VVD party will certainly not give its automatic support to them.” In order to lend his words more weight, Van Baalen proposed a motion, requesting the government, in case of extensions of current operations or considering new ones, to investigate expressly whether it was possible to act in conformity with international law and to inform Parliament about this, thereby taking into account the mission/operation in its entirety, and not just the Dutch share in it. From an unexpected corner the Parliamentary support seemed to become even smaller.

In a reaction Minister Bot stated that he was negotiating with Afghanistan on Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) about the prisoners and the death penalty. These negotiations were a direct consequence of the meeting Minister Bot had with Karzai in Vienna on 14 November 2005.

In spite of the earlier agreement in principle on the mission of the ministers involved and the attempts at taking away the obstacles to that mission, there seemed to be doubt throughout. Prime Minister Balkenende hesitated because of the lack of support from the Second Chamber. The Reformatorisch Dagblad reported on 29 November 2005, “The PvdA, GroenLinks and SP are against the mission. But also CDA and D66 have major reservations. The time may not be right just yet for a mission of the international ISAF force in Uruzgan”, says D66 MP Bakker. “Perhaps it would be wise if the Cabinet postponed the decision for a few months”. Of the coalition parties perhaps the VVD seemed to be most in favour of the operation, which was to start in June the next year. VVD MP Van Baalen made it known on Tuesday (29 November 2005) that in principle his party was for sending our troops to the area, “on condition that the security risks are acceptable and that there are clear agreements of prisoners. For us it is not ‘no, unless, but yes, if’”.

Minister Kamp’s doubt had not been taken away yet and Minister Bot still had a number of questions. Thus, the latter wanted security guarantees for the troops from
the United States, a demand that was at first rejected (the US did not want to keep troops in reserve to be able to come to the assistance of the Dutch). Besides, Bot wanted some explanations on alleged CIA prisons and the humanitarian law of armed conflict. In short, the media reported of a Cabinet that was leaning towards a ‘no’ for the Afghanistan mission, although none of the ministers involved had made any public statements against the mission.36

In the mean time, the pressure on the Netherlands to agree to the mission began to increase. Members of Parliament took offence at the appeal of the NATO Secretary General De Hoop Scheffer, urging the Netherlands to make haste with its decision to send troops to southern Afghanistan.37

On 30 November 2005 the American Under Secretaries Florey (Defense) and Fried (State) visited the Netherlands to discuss the mission. According to an eyewitness of Foreign Affairs, the mood at the beginning of the day was pessimistic at the Ministry; the mission had little chance of success. Due to the talks with the Under Secretaries the mood began to shift towards a more optimistic one in the course of the day, and confidence was growing. In the first instance, there had been no plans for a meeting of Minister Bot and the two under secretaries, but as a result of the positive developments a meeting took place after all in the evening of 30 November 2005.38 The CDS was not present during this meeting, as he had left for Brussels to discuss the day’s results with NATO Commander-in-Chief, General Jones.39

The combined approach of Foreign Affairs and Defence seemed to be successful, and point by point the 15-point list was tackled. On 8 December 2005 Minister Bot, on his return from a NATO meeting in Brussels, was convinced of the mission. He was satisfied with the statements of the American Secretary of State Rice on the treatment of persons suspected of terrorism. He also got sufficient guarantees for support from allies in case Dutch troops might be endangered. “I feel comfortable, both with regard to the protection of Dutch troops and the treatment of Afghan prisoners, in defending a defence mission within the Dutch government”.40 Finally, for all 15 remaining points an adequate settlement was agreed on, with the exception of the American troops in Zabul. Instead of a complete battle group, the USA were to stay there with a company.41

In the mean time, the mission had come up for discussion in the Council of Ministers of 2 December 2005 and was put on the agenda for the Council of Ministers of 9 December. On that day the CDS presented the mission, supported by ministers Kamp and Bot. Because of the discussion on the rocketing energy prices (compensation for minimum wage earners for the risen energy prices) and the criticism of, in particular
Minister Pechtold, on the tardy information about the mission, there was no decision that day. In a press meeting after the Council of Minister meeting Prime Minister Balkenende stated that “carefulness outweighs haste”. On 19 December 2005 the mission would be up for discussion again.

In the same period the political parties were briefed at the Ministry of Defence on the mission to Uruzgan. On 16 December 2005 the D66 party was briefed by the CDS and the Hoofdirecteur Algemene Beleidszaken – Head Director General Policies of the Ministry of Defence, drs. L. Casteleijn. Already prior to his visit to Defence for the briefing D66 party leader Dittrich had made an appointment with RTL-4 television channel. Immediately after the briefing he made a statement for the channel that D66 was against the mission.

The political reaction was somewhat late in coming, for as it happened precisely on this day all MPs were at a reception at the occasion of the silver jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Beatrix at Paleis Noordeinde. In the palace there were provisions which make the use of cell-phones impossible. Only after the reception did the MPs find out what Dittrich had said in his statement. It was a bomb shell.

The rejection brought the D66 ministers in the Cabinet, Pechtold and Brinkhorst, and with them the Cabinet, in an awkward position. Precisely at the moment the Netherlands had got concessions from Afghanistan and other allies, and the doubt of the ministers involved had dissipated, Dittrich caused a lot of commotion even before a Cabinet decision on the mission. If the D66 ministers voted in line with the party against the mission, the Netherlands would have some explaining to do internationally and this might have consequences for the Cabinet, which might well find itself projected into a crisis. At the same time, if Pechtold and Brinkhorst voted for the mission, this would mean a rupture in the party.

PvdA party leader Wouter Bos was surprised and expected the Cabinet not to make a proposal to Parliament. In response to a question of a NOS reporter if now the conclusion was justified that the mission was off the table, Bos said, “That seems to me to be the only correct conclusion”. At Foreign Affairs, too, the policy officials were convinced the mission is over. Prime Minister Balkenende made it known through his spokesperson, that, “On Monday (19 December 2005) the Cabinet will make up the balance. Then it will weigh up the facts and arguments”. NATO Secretary General expressed the hope that the Cabinet would take a positive decision after all on 19 December and, in doing so, increased the pressure.
22 December 2005, a Cabinet intention reached

On 19 December, too, the Cabinet did not take a decision, as Minister Brinkhorst had not returned yet from a working visit to Hong Kong. The following day there were frantic attempts at finding a solution. On 21 December Ministers Kamp, Bot, Pechtold and Brinkhorst meet in the office of the latter. The mission was again on the agenda for 22 December. It is customary that on the evening prior to a Council of Ministers the so-called Bewindspersonenoverleg (BPO) – Policymakers’ meeting\(^51\) takes place, and so it was this evening. Bot tried to massage the D66 ministers into agreeing to the mission. He understood the position they were in and made the suggestion to change the word ‘decision’ in the article 100-letter to ‘intention’. The D66 ministers agreed and the article 100-letter was changed accordingly on the spot.\(^52\)

This meant that the D66 ministers took up a position which was diametrically opposed to their own party, which, even after the BPO did not intend to change its position. Minister Pechtold said about this situation: “This is the point of view of the party and tomorrow the Cabinet will take a decision on the matter”. After the meeting D66 MP Bakker stated that the Cabinet “has its own responsibility. It may well be that in the coming weeks and months there will be plenty of debate, also in the Chamber, and I have no problem with that whatsoever”.\(^53\)

With that the sky seemed to have cleared, and on 22 December after the Council of Ministers, Parliamentary Document 27 925, no. 194 was sent to the Second Chamber. In it the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence and Overseas Development stated that, “As per attached letter (Parliamentary Document 27 925, no. 193) the Government informs you with regard to its intended contribution the ISAF in southern Afghanistan. In doing so, the Government is acting in conformity with article 100 of the Constitution and is line with the points of attention of the Toetsingskader 2001\(^54\)\(^55\) In the letter the political desirability and military feasibility of the mission was formulated in conformity with the ‘Toetsingskader 2001’.\(^56\)

Although the ‘intention’ proved to be a good idea to keep the D66 ministers on board, it met with much criticism from the Second Chamber. Van Baalen (VVD) demanded an explanation from the Cabinet: “Is this is decision or an intention? The Cabinet is ambivalent on this.”\(^57\) MP Koenders (PvdA) in a first reaction took an advance on the stalemate that was going to develop between Parliament and government, “there is no such thing as an intention to a decision in our book. The Chamber cannot debate about a decision that does not exist”.\(^58\)
The Parliamentary questions on ‘intention’ or ‘decision’ forced the ministers involved to send another letter to the Chamber in which they tried to explain that the Cabinet had taken a decision without using that word: “By sending this article 100-letter the government makes clear that it has the intention of taking part in this operation”. The Second Chamber did not accept this, and in particular VVD, PvdA, SP and D66 refused to discuss the content of the article 100-letter before the Cabinet had taken a decision.

This was not the only political problem the Cabinet had to deal with. On the recommendation of MP Ormel the CDA party attached a condition to the mission: the support of a two-thirds majority, a move which in fact made the whole project dependent on the approval of the PvdA party.

Finally, there were the problems with D66. Although the ‘intention’ had made an article 100-letter possible, the division within the party had not been resolved yet. In fact, it was further sharpened by an interview with MP Bakker in Elsevier, in which he stated loud and clear that D66 was and remained against a third mission in Afghanistan: “Either the Cabinet reconsiders and decides not to go, or the Cabinet cannot find a solution and the whole blows up in its face”. Party leader Dittrich did not want to use the crisis word and also D66 minister Brinkhorst thought it “nonsense” to speak of the fall of the Cabinet: “This Cabinet has to go on, this is the year to harvest”.

On 13 January the ministers involved sent a Parliamentary letter, in which the Cabinet again tried to explain that it had taken a decision on the sending out of troops to southern Afghanistan, once again without mentioning the word ‘decision’: “the willingness to take part in ISAF in southern Afghanistan, which was decided on before”. In the view of the Second Chamber the Cabinet still had not taken a decision, but it was conscious of the time pressure for the mission and it decided to discuss the letter. “We have to. The matter is too important. The Chamber now takes the matter into its own hands”, said MP Koenders after the debate on 13 January 2006.

There was, however, one passage in the letter that was new. “With the letter of 22 December last and the letter of 27 December last the government has indicated that after the formation of judgement by your Chamber on the intended deployment, it will consider what the consequences will be of that parliamentary judgement”. It seemed that with this the decision lay with the Parliament instead of the government; in any case, that was the way this was interpreted by PvdA and VVD.

In the procedural meeting of 17 January 2006 the way in which the mission would be discussed was established. In the period between 22 December 2005 and 17 January
2006 the parties in the Chamber voiced their wishes with regard to that procedure. In any case there was to be a round of written questions, a hearing and a confidential briefing before an Algemeen Overleg – General Consultation could be held. Apart from that, a visit to Afghanistan and even Uruzgan was an option. The parties also voiced their preferences for who should be heard at the hearing. In the procedural meeting it was eventually decided that there would be a round of written questions first, followed by the hearing on 30 January. The General Consultation was to take place on 2 February, during which the Vaste Commissies - Permanent Commissions for Foreign Affairs and Defence would debate in two terms with the ministers, followed by a plenary meeting in the third term.

Earlier that day Minister Kamp had let it be known in a Parliamentary letter that he was not prepared to grant leave to inspect the MIVD report, though he offered to have the MPs briefed by the CDS and the MIVD Director. The Permanent Commissions did not accept this and in the procedural meeting they reiterated their request to be allowed to inspect the MIVD report and the advice of the CDS. Finally, on 25 January 2006 Minister Kamp relented and he had the MIVD report sent to the Chamber. At the same time, he gave permission to the party spokespersons to inspect them. Parts of the report had been blacked out. On 26 January the CDS and the MIVD Director gave a confidential briefing to the Foreign Affairs Permanent Commission in the presence of Minister Kamp. On 30 January the slides of the presentation were sent for perusal to the Second Chamber and inspection by the party spokespersons.

Not only the procedure of the decision making is subject of discussion, but also the content of the decision, the mission to Uruzgan itself is brought into the limelight. In the article 100-letter of 22 December 2005 the ministers involved try to portray a balanced picture of the mission, giving attention to reconstruction, but also to the importance of security and the risks attached to the mission. The objective of the mission is the support and strengthening of the Afghan authorities, enabling them to guarantee security and stability in their own country in due course. “In line with the ISAF mandate the Dutch detachment will focus on enhancing stability and security by increasing the support of the local population for the Afghan authorities, and decreasing the support for the Taliban and associated groups. Fostering good governance, efficient police and armed forces, enhancing the constitutional state, the execution of CIMIC and reconstruction activities, and the stimulation of reconstruction activities by others are important elements of this approach”. It is also stressed that it is a mission with “real military risks”, in which “spectacular results will not really be very visible from the beginning, but will take some time”. In spite of the intended balanced picture in the article 100-letter, the aspect that most catches the imagination after the conclusion of the decision making
process on 3 February 2006 is the reconstruction, not least because of the importance
and expected success the Second Chamber attributes to reconstruction and the way this
is expressed in the media (by the media, the MPs as well as the ministers).74 This leads
to recurrent criticism of the mission during its actual execution, in particular during
intensive periods in which there is much fighting. Is this a reconstruction mission or a
fighting mission?

In the mean time, the developments in the Netherlands were followed closely. On 9
January 2006 Paul Bremer III (American former administrator in Iraq and US ambas-
sador in the Netherlands from 1983-1986) stated in De Volkskrant that a Dutch pull-out
would not be without consequences. These tough words were quickly contradicted by the
American top diplomat Kurt Volker,75 when he declared that Washington did “not exert
any pressure”, and that the Netherlands would not be punished for a possible ‘no’. “If
the Netherlands does not join in the mission, NATO will have to find another partner
willing to take up the burden’, Volker says on 17 January. He also indicated that Bremer
III did not speak any longer on behalf of the American government.76 On 10 January
the American Under Secretary of State, Daniel Fried, expressed his surprise at what he
called “the overheated debate in the Netherlands on the intended sending of troops to
Afghanistan”.77

Media abroad, too, reported on the decision making. The Dutch hesitations met with
criticism from the USA. Vance Serchuk of the American Enterprise Institute derided the
Netherlands for its indecision, “The Netherlands’ skittishness makes for an important
cautions tale not only about the near-farcical indecision of a European ally in the war
on terror, but more important, the risks inherent in outsourcing ever-greater respon-
sibility for Afghanistan to NATO”.78 The Financial Times made a connection with the
future of NATO: “NATO’s future credibility is now in Dutch hands”.79 William Pfaff of
The International Herald Tribune was also of the opinion that the future of NATO was at
stake. “Whether the Dutch realize it or not, the future of both NATO and Afghanistan
may be what their Parliament really will be debating”.80 Constanze Stelzenmuller, NATO
expert of the German Marshall Fund of the United States understood the criticism: “It is
all about credibility of western interventions in general. The Dutch have a reputation of
being pragmatic, good soldiers and friends of the United States. When the Dutch pull
out now, this will create a feeling that something is wrong - not only with NATO but also
with the political alliance of which NATO is the military arm”.81

On 30 January 2006 the public hearing took place. From 08:30 hrs until 22:00 hrs
the MPs could question experts.82 The hearing was organised by the ministers involved,
but in the preparation phase the Second Chamber had had the opportunity of propos-
ing experts for the hearing. The ministers involved believed that the hearing was a good opportunity of changing PvdA’s thoughts for the better and of increasing the support for the mission in society. In spite of the fact that the Second Chamber had had the possibility to influence the programme, there was criticism afterwards on the hearing, which was felt to have been too one-sided and uncritical. The choice of speakers was supposed to have influenced the setting, and with it the outcome of the hearing.

On the same day UN Secretary General Kofi Annan paid a visit to the Netherlands, and after his meeting with Prime Minister Balkenende the SG used the opportunity to publicly express his hope that, “the Dutch Parliament will take the right decision on the sending of troops to Afghanistan”. Besides, the Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, announced on this day that Australia is considering sending a reconstruction force. Australia is the country that was mentioned in the article 100-letter: “the Netherlands will cooperate with a solid, military relevant partner in Uruzgan”.

On 31 January 2006, the day after the hearing, PvdA party leader Wouter Bos stated that, “it is clear that the Cabinet is moving in the right direction with regard to a number of demands that we (PvdA) have made”, pointing at the separation of ISAF and OEF. He stated the information given during the CDS and MIVD Director’s briefing and the hearing “(has made) it easier for us to make a judgement on whether the objectives of the mission can be realised”. Although Bos still remarked that the final judgement would be made on 2 February 2006, the support for the mission in the Parliament seemed to be growing considerably.

On 1 February 2006 the Permanent Commissions for Foreign Affairs and Defence was given a confidential briefing on the Rules of Engagement (RoE) of the Dutch troops. They were also promised they would be granted perusal of the Aide Memoire and the violence instruction card (translations of the RoE to the commander level and soldier level, respectively). Apart from that the commissions requested perusal of the Rules of Engagement specified by NATO for ISAF III. Finally, on 8 February 2006 the commissions had a confidential perusal of the information in the specified documents.

On 2 February the Permanent Commissions for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Overseas Development met in two terms in the General Consultation. In the first term it emerged that CDA supported the mission because of the necessary reconstruction. PvdA indicated it would approve the mission provided a number of conditions were met, the most important of which was the separation of ISAF and OEF. The VVD stated that the military operation in Uruzgan was a feasible one: “The military conditions for the successful execution of this mission are met, as far as my party is concerned”,
party spokesman Van Baalen. The earlier criticism concerning the human rights and
the international rule of law (voiced during the budgetary debate of Foreign Affairs on
23 and 24 November 2005) had been taken away during the CDS and MIVD Director’s
briefing. The SP indicated that the party could not support this mission, consistent with
its refusal to support the earlier mission in Afghanistan and Iraq. Although GroenLinks
had supported the previous missions in Afghanistan, it would not do so with this mis-
sion, as the security situation in Uruzgan would prevent the Dutch mission from real-
ising the desired reconstruction. Incidentally, the party announced that on the closure
of Guantánamo Bay the mission would get the support of GroenLinks.92 For the LPF
the nature and size of the mission was not consistent with the size of the Dutch armed
forces, and that is why the party was for the mission, provided that it was limited to one
year, with an option of one more year. D66 had no other option than sticking to its ear-
lier standpoint. Finally, the smaller parties, such as Christen Unie, SGP, Groep Wilders,
and Groep Nawijn announced they would support the mission. In the first term the
ministers reacted to questions and remarks of the parties. In a short second term there
was another exchange of ideas, after which the positions seemed definite, except for the
PvdA’s.93

Between the General Consultation and the plenary debate, which was to take place
on the same day, the PvdA had an extra party meeting. Most parties had already held
such a meeting to determine the party standpoint on 31 January. During the meeting on
2 February party leader Bos and party spokesman Koenders persuaded the MPs to agree
to the mission.94

During the plenary debate in the third term there was no vote, the parties only sta-
ing whether they gave their approval or not. As expected CDA, VVD, and LPF agreed
to the mission, where LPF dropped its demand of the mission only being limited to one
year and agreed to a two-year mission. To the relief of the Cabinet the same held for the
PvdA, which created so much support in the Second Chamber that the opposition of
SP, GroenLinks and of course D66 had become irrelevant. The Marijnissen, Halsema
and Dittrich motion of party leaders of SP, GroenLinks and D66, respectively95 got little
support.96

Observations

What is remarkable about this reconstruction? First, it can be said that the decision
making process took a long time, with the first talks having begun in January 2005
between Canada and the Netherlands, and the final decision reached on 3 February
2006. The Tijdelijke Commissie Buitenlandse Uitzendingen – Temporary Committee Missions Abroad (TCBU) studied the decision making of the Dutch missions between 1991 and 1999. The duration of the decision making processes of the 18 missions under investigation usually varies between several weeks to nine months, the majority taking three to four months. The decision making for Uruzgan, taking more than a year, seems to be an exception, but what does this say about the decision making? Missions, and the decision making leading up to them, cannot easily be compared. A decision making process lasts as long as it needs. On the one hand, it can be explained as the period a government needs for preparations and the negotiations that come with a decision making, while, on the other hand, it can be seen as the period a decision making is allowed to last. A humanitarian disaster requires quicker action and therefore quicker decision making than, for instance, intervention in Iraq. Incidentally, the situation in Sudan, for instance, shows that this is only relative.

Second, the respondents indicate that the process went relatively well in their eyes. The position of Foreign Affairs as opposed to Defence, and, vice versa, was described as ‘tough but fair’. In general, the cooperation went well, according to the respondents, and in the light of the Dutch 3D approach this is an important point.

Third, in spite of the decision in principle of the involved ministers, it was not at all certain all along that the mission would go on, and it is justified to speak of ups and downs in the process. Incidentally, the downs were considered showstoppers by some, while for others they were merely obstacles that needed to be taken. The first moment that there were some doubts about the mission came with the publication of the MIVD report on 19 October 2005, which caused hesitations with Minister Kamp and indirectly with Prime Minister Balkenende, resulting in the drawing up of the 16-point list. By working away this list, the doubts dissipated. With the visit of the American Under Secretaries Florey and Fried to the Netherlands on 30 November 2005, the visit of CDS General Berlijn to NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General Jones that same day, and the visit of Minister Bot to the NATO meeting on 8 December 2005 the mission seemed to be on. On 9 December it was discussed in the Council of Ministers, but a decision was not reached and ‘passed on’ to 19 December. However, on 16 December D66, party leader Dittrich seemed to blow up the mission. Thanks to Minister Bot’s efforts and idea (‘intention’ instead of ‘decision’) the government could come to a compromise on 22 December 2005. After the article 100-letter of 22 December it took until 13 January 2006 before the Second Chamber was prepared to discuss the mission, a situation caused by the discussion on the terms ‘intention’ and ‘discussion’.
Fourth, there is the position of D66. As a result of the findings of the TCBU in 2001 the Second Chamber must be informed about the government's intention to take part in a foreign mission, but the former must be “reserved in giving a judgement on the mission”.98 Some reserve is obvious, as, after all, Parliament does not know the Cabinet's plans before having received an article 100-letter, and thus, can only run ahead of things. D66's announcement on 16 December 2006 that it could not agree to the mission (so prior to having received the government's article 100-letter) is highly peculiar, all the more so, as the party subsequently threatened with bringing the Cabinet down. The background to this situation is that the party was involved in a struggle for the party leadership between Minister Pechtold, party leader Dittrich and MP Van der Laan. Because of the earlier hesitations among the ministers and a lack of support in the Second Chamber Dittrich expected the mission to be off, and by stating that D66 was against the mission, a pull out of the mission by the Cabinet would reflect positively on Dittrich. This success would make him the unchallenged leader of the party, he was convinced. This way of acting was strongly criticised later in the third term on 2 February 2006, especially by Marijnissen (SP), and Halsema (GroenLinks), forcing Dittrich take his losses and accept “political reality”.99

Fifth, there is the question regarding the nature of the mission: reconstruction or fighting. As was indicated above, the mission in Uruzgan was initially given the mark of ‘reconstruction mission’ and this has been a cause for later criticism. Respondents understand this criticism. For one respondent it is explained by the attention reconstruction got in the period between 22 December 2005 and 2 February 2006, as a necessity to create political and public support. The ‘media offensive’ of Defence and Foreign Affairs and the choice of experts for the hearing on 30 January 2006 put the emphasis on reconstruction, according to this official. Others deny a premeditated set up for a media offensive, as big (media) attention is an inherent element of the period after a decision has been taken. For them it was clear that the Netherlands wanted an explanation of this decision and that ministers should be available to give it. This was an explanation for the frequent presence of Kamp and Bot in current affairs programmes in that period. Another official is conscious of the emphasis on reconstruction, but he was sincerely convinced of that. OEF was to make a sweep action in Uruzgan prior to the arrival of the Dutch, taking out the Taliban there or chasing them from the province, creating the right starting point for reconstruction. Former CDS, General Berlijn, cannot share this criticism. “I was surprised at that word: reconstruction mission. I remember saying, we have never used that word in this sense. In the Parliamentary letter (article 100-letter) it only said that we were there to enable reconstruction, but it also quite explicitly stated that we would have to fight and take losses into account”.100
Apart from the ideas and intentions in the early weeks of 2006, it can be said that the mission was called a reconstruction mission from 3 February onwards, and this term has created false expectations. When it appeared that the Dutch troops had to fight and the expected reconstruction did not materialise, the mission met with criticism of both politicians and soldiers. The latter felt misunderstood, when they were fighting every day, while everyone was talking of reconstruction. Did the Netherlands really understand what its soldiers were doing there?101 The criticism of the politicians, especially the opposition parties GroenLinks and SP, was mainly directed at the fighting. If so much fighting is necessary, can there be any reconstruction? Had the mission not been presented in too rosy a light? At the same time, the majority of the Dutch population was against the mission.102

The Dutch government could have prevented this situation by giving more attention to clarifying and speaking about the objectives of the operation, by better explaining why it sent troops to Uruzgan, not only before, but also during the mission. In doing so, it could have avoided most of the present discussion on fighting or reconstruction.103

Finally, could the Netherlands still say ‘no’? In this reconstruction it was mentioned already that an official of Defence saw that the Dutch flag had been put on the map of Uruzgan during a visit in May 2005. This is in line with a remark of PvdA MP Koenders about his visit to Afghanistan in the summer of 2005: “There everyone told us, even in the NATO headquarters, that our boys would go to Afghanistan, and we were already told several weeks ago that there was a Cabinet decision”.104 Apart from that, Ministers Kamp and Bot and Prime Minister Balkenende had taken a decision and announced it to the NATO Secretary General. Eventually, through negotiations with the Afghan authorities, coalition countries and NATO more and more conditions of the 16-point list were met. So, the question is justified whether the Netherlands, in spite of its own promises and those of other parties, could still say ‘no’. A negative decision would not only have damaged its credibility, but it would also have seriously endangered the planning of the ISAF mission in southern Afghanistan.

All respondents were aware of the damage and problems a Dutch ‘no’ would bring about. In spite of this pressure, the interviewees state that in all phases of the decision making process it was clear that the eventual decision of the government depended on the position of the Parliament; the mission needed clear parliamentary support. This is how this was presented to the coalition partners, the Afghan authorities and NATO. In the eyes of the interviewees the Netherlands could say ‘no’ at any time, something the other parties were aware of.
On the one hand, this underlines the material right of approval of the Parliament; the opinion of the parliament is an important factor in the totality of the decision making, perhaps even the determining factor. On the other hand, it also reveals a vulnerable part of the decision making procedure, as in the preparation phase there can only be negotiations ‘on provision’. The question remains how hard the concessions of the partners actually are in such a situation.

Conclusion

The above observations rounded off the reconstruction of the political decision making with regard to the ISAF mission. Apart from the irritation about the ‘ironmonger’s’ the cooperation between the officials involved was qualified as good, which creates confidence with regard to future missions. However, the decision making itself went with ups and downs, and at some moments it was uncertain if the mission could go on. Up to an extent the government and the ministries were instrumental in this. Thus, the leaked MIVD report undermined the confidence of a number of ministers, and an open conflict within the government gave rise to tensions within the coalition. On the other hand, it was thanks to political dexterity that the mission could go on. ‘Fixing’ the 16-point list and the idea of the ‘intention’ allowed the stalemate to be broken and a decision to be taken on 3 February 2006.

The discussion on ‘fighting or reconstruction’ is as understandable as it is pointless. The expectations about reconstructions are not met and the soldiers feel they are not understood, which results in a dialogue of the deaf. Unfortunately, the one seems to impossible without the other, fighting and reconstruction go hand in hand. Up to an extent, the discussion is fuelled by a lack of a strategic narrative; why is the Netherlands active in Afghanistan? By articulating a clear objective the government could have controlled the discussion better. To another extent, the discussion about fighting or reconstruction is fuelled by oppositions with regard to the perceptions on the nature of the problem and the solution for the current situation in southern Afghanistan. It would be more sensible to move the discussion to the question of whether the adopted strategy is the correct one. An open debate on the nature of the problem and the possible solutions may yield more insights than the discussion on ‘fighting or reconstruction’. This would be an improvement of the way in which the situation in Uruzgan is dealt with.
Notes

1. Major L. (Lenny) J. Hazelbag MA is a lecturer and PhD-candidate at the Military Operational Arts and Sciences section of the Netherlands Defence Academy.

2. Coalition party D66 and opposition parties GroenLinks and SP and PvdA MP Van Heteren voted against, all the other MPs (127 out of 150) voted in favour of the mission. Kamerstukken II, Handelingen 2005-2006, 45-3035.

3. Because of the classification of certain sources it was not possible to research all relevant sources.

4. Because of privacy reasons the names of the interviewees will not be mentioned.

5. <www.nimh.nl/korea_tot_kabul/index.html>


8. Eyewitness Ministry of Foreign Affairs.


12. Minister Kamp called it ‘painful’ that the mission did not get support of the PvdA. <www.elsevier.nl/nieuws/politiek/artikel/asp/artnr/32958/index.html>


17. Eyewitness Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

18. The interviewee did not remember the exact moment.


29. Eyewitness Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
30. The list of 16 points for improvement consists of the retention of a US contingent in the northern part of Uruzgan at the bases Anaconda in Kaz Uruzgan and Cobra in Shahidi Hassas; the retention of a US military contingent of at least battle group size and one PRT in Zabul (province southeast of Uruzgan); financing of Kandahar Airfield by NATO instead of the participating countries; enough budget to finance reconstruction projects; back up of NATO forces if the Netherlands needs more troops in Uruzgan; the continuing involvement of the US in the reconstruction of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) in Uruzgan; good governance of the Afghan government and a functioning ANP from the beginning of the mission for the Dutch mission to build on; provisions by Afghan government which allow a responsible transfer of prisoners to Afghanistan and the matter of the special forces in Kandahar.
31. Eyewitness Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
32. The remarks on the violation of human rights and respecting the international rule of law must be seen in the context of the (alleged) secret CIA-flights on Schiphol, (alleged) secret detention centres in (amongst others) Poland and Romania and the situation regarding Guantánomo Bay.
38. Eyewitness Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
39. The US general Jones was NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander Europe and Commander in Chief.
40. <headlines.nos.nl/forum.php/list_messages/853>.
41. A battlegroup consists in general of three or four companies of 150 to 200 men each.
43. Eyewitness Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
During a bewindspersonenoverleg (Policymakers’ meeting) the Prime Minister and his vice-Prime Ministers, each on their own Ministries, call together on Thursday nights all important party functionaries (all ministers, junior ministers, the party leadership and chair and the main advisers and spokespersons). The subject of conversation is a number of items on next day’s agenda for the Ministers’ Council. Officially secret, this agenda is known already early on in the week at the Ministries, the party leadership in the Second Chamber and among well-informed members of the press. So, sensitive political issues are discussed by Cabinet members with their fellow-party members outside the Cabinet, prior to the Cabinet taking a decision on them on Friday.

On 28 June 1995 the then Minster of Defence Voorhoeve and Minister of Foreign Affairs Van Mierlo sent the Toetsingskader voor uitzending van militaire eenheden ten behoeve van internationale operaties (Assessment framework for sending out military units in international operations), which was thoroughly revised in 2001. The updated Assessment Framework consists of three parts. The first part relates to the intention and scope of the Assessment Framework: the sending out of military units (so, no sending out of individual service personnel) and only concern voluntary sending out (so, no mission in the context of NATO or WEU obligations). The sending out of military personnel within the Kingdom of the Netherlands is excluded, too, from the Assessment Framework. The second part relates to the provision of information of the government to Parliament. If the Government starts an investigation whether a Dutch contribution to a peace operation is desirable and feasible, the Second Chamber must be informed. The third part of the Assessment Framework addresses a number of points of attention of a political (for instance, the reasons for participating and the mandate of an operation), military (for instance, feasibility and risks of an operation), or organisational/financial (for instance, the duration of a participation) nature. This makes the Assessment Framework an instrument in the decision making process for a military mission.
57. <www.nos.nl/nosjournaal/artikelen/2005/12/22/reactiesafghanistan.html>
60. NRC Handelsblad, 28 December 2005.
64. NRC Handelsblad, 14 January 2006.
66. NRC Handelsblad, 14 January 2006.
67. In the end the visit was cancelled, as it could not be planned due to logistic problems at such short notice.
69. Eyewitness Ministry of Defence.
70. <www.mindef.nl/actueel/nieuws/2006/01/20060125_mivdrapporten.aspx>
75. Kurt Volker served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs from July 2005 until June 2008 and was the deputy of the above-mentioned Daniel Fried. Source: <www.nato.usmission.gov/Bio/Ambassador_Volker.htm>
78. <www.aei.org/publications/filter.all,pubID.23651/pub_detail.asp>
81. <www.nrc.nl/krant/article200758.ece>
83. Eyewitness Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
84. Eyewitness Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
85. <www.nos.nl/nosjournaal/artikelen/2006/1/30/300106_afghanistan_kamer.html>
86. <www.mindef.nl/actueel/nieuws/2006/01/20060130_bezoekaustralie.aspx>
88. <www.nos.nl/nosjournaal/artikelen/2006/1/31/index.html>
90. Eyewitness Ministry of Defence.
94. Former CDA MP Dr. Th.B.F.M. Brinkel.
100. General Berlijn in his last interview as the Commander of the Netherlands armed forces. *NRC Handelsblad*, 12 April 2008.
101. A survey among members of the military trade unions ACOM, VBM/NOV, NVO and KVMO shows that 73% of the military think that the politicians do not have a good idea of the situation in Afghanistan. <www.synovate.nl/nieuws/20080605013/news.aspx#>
102. A survey of the Ministry of Defence shows that the support of the Dutch population to the mission was never larger than 50%. *Monitor Steun en Draagvlak*, Ministry of Defence, 2008.
Between vigilance and reconstruction: Dutch military operations in Afghanistan

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NL-ARMS, 2009, 277-296

Introduction

Dutch armed forces personnel are carrying out a difficult and complex task in tough circumstances in Afghanistan. In doing so, they have to find a balance between security for the population, on the one hand, and the development of governance and economy of the country, on the other; in other words, between vigilance and reconstruction.2

When these armed forces are deployed, they must be guaranteed effective, and therefore it is necessary that they are extremely well trained, well led, equipped with modern materiel and sufficiently financed. Although this seems obvious, it is not always the case, certainly not in a bureaucratic organisation such as the armed forces.

Therefore, the important question presents itself whether the Dutch units that have been deployed in Afghanistan are effective and efficient. In order to answer this question the reader should first have an insight into the manner in which the Netherlands carries out its military operations in Uruzgan. In this respect I will study the factors of influence, with special attention for doctrinal aspects, command and control, means, personnel and organisation.

The present chapter analyses and considers the Dutch operations in Uruzgan in order to assess their effectiveness and any possible consequences for the allocation of the resources. To do this, the following topics will be addressed: first of all, the current doctrine, secondly, the planning with the factors of influence,3 thirdly, the execution, illustrated by the battle for Chora, with specific attention to command and control and leadership in a high-threat environment. Then, some observations and reflections will be made on these aspects. Finally, conclusions will be drawn and recommendations made for the organisation of the armed forces. In this contribution the deployment of the land forces will be discussed primarily, but, wherever expedient, there will also be attention for the cooperation with the air forces.
Doctrine

Doctrine is the formal expression of military thought. The Royal Netherlands Army (KL) has issued a number of doctrine publications, such as the Army Doctrine Publication (LDP) IIC, which deals with combat operations against an irregular opponent and which consequently also gives guidance to the Dutch Land operation in Afghanistan, within the framework of providing stability and reconstruction.4

In a conceptual model the LDP IIC distinguishes five groups of actions in the principles of the operations against warring factions.5 The first group is directed against the warring factions themselves: ‘find, fix and strike’. The second group provides the physical protection of the population against the influence of the factions. The third group focuses on preventing, restricting or cutting off external help to the factions; the fourth group focuses on the mental state of the population: the famed hearts and minds operations, directed at increasing the legitimacy, creating support for the own operation, and undermining the support for the factions. The fifth group, finally, focuses on providing security for own personnel, in order to maintain or establish freedom of action. Needless to say, these groups of actions will always be inter-related and will sometimes even converge.6

Compared to regular combat operations, the factors time and space are relatively less important in the operational framework for combat operations against factions than the means. What has to be achieved is more important than where and when. As for means, they are different to the strictly military ones, while, on the other hand, the military resources are also committed in a different way during the operations. With regard to the factor time, deep operations are mainly directed at creating the conditions for the long term (diplomatic and information operations; finding and fixing), while close and rear operations mainly take place in the present (strike, humanitarian ((emergency)) aid and maintaining freedom of action: protection, gaining and retaining political and public support).

From an analytical perspective four phases can be distinguished: securing an operating base; securing forward operating bases; securing the adjacent areas and, finally, consolidating the secured area.7

Once the operating base has been established, it must be determined with the help of the operational decision making process how the forward operating bases can be secured. In principle, the LDP IIC distinguishes two so-called forms of manoeuvre: the eccentric and the concentric method. In the former a relatively small area is captured in
the centre which expands from there to the outer edge of the area. This form of manoeuvre comes closest to what is often called in popular parlance ‘ink stain strategy’. In the concentric method, however, first an outer ring is laid around the area to be secured, after which a central point is approached sector by sector by means of so-called blocking and reconnaissance operations. In both forms of manoeuvre the outer ring is established as a defence perimeter. In the concentric method this is done by establishing inward as well as outward facing strong points; in the eccentric method the defence is organised from less deep blocking positions. The choice between the two forms of manoeuvre depends on the factors of influence, but is mainly determined by the available means in relation to the area to be occupied. The (logistic) vulnerability, which is often the bane of the eccentric method, is a second criterion. Needless to say, also a combination of the two is imaginable. Subsequently, from the forward operating bases the adjacent areas are secured through offensive actions against the factions. Although there is a great need for reconnaissance and intelligence capacity throughout the entire operation, for these offensive actions, in particular, reconnaissance capacity next to infantry (whether or not reinforced with armour) is essential.

When an area is secured, authority is transferred as soon as possible to the civilian authorities in the consolidation phase, with support from the armed forces present in the area. Subsequently, the operation is continued on the tactical level as an area security. In doing so, there is specific attention for stability enhancing aspects, such as route and object security by means of observation posts and patrols, maintaining a ready reserve, fighting factions, curbing crime, maintaining law and order, reconstructing and supporting public governance, giving humanitarian (emergency) help, restoring essential infrastructure, et cetera. The impression of this kind of operation is that of area security. In this situation the commander should not only be warned of various threats, so that he can adjust his plan accordingly, but the threats will actually have to be dealt with and removed. This requires flexible and ready units with sufficient protection and escalation dominance.

Planning and decision making

The objective and the desired end state of the operation in Afghanistan are determined at the political-strategic level. On this basis the higher commander draws up an integrated (combined-joint) operations plan, emphatically taking into account the local population in the area and representatives of other national and international authorities and organisations. When the Afghan Transitional Authority was installed in Kabul in late 2001 and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) mandated NATO to support
the Afghan government through the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), a deliberate choice was made for a small-scale operation around the relatively secure capital, involving some 4,500 troops. This was inspired mainly by concerns in Washington and the UN not to make the same mistakes the Soviet Union had made. In the meantime, this international force has grown to almost 50,000 troops, deployed all over Afghanistan, in an ISAF framework under command of NATO.

As was said above, in a counter-insurgency (COIN) campaign it is not only about the use of violence. The military capability should be part and parcel of a more comprehensive approach, which also encompasses political/managerial, diplomatic, economic and sociological factors. As the area of operations is rather unsafe, the number of persons that possess the necessary know-how on the non-military components is limited. However, the commander of Task Force Uruzgan (C-TFU) is expected to make a plan which incorporates all these factors of influence. This normally leads to a plan in which at least three lines of operations can be distinguished: Defence (security), Diplomacy (governance) and Development (economic and social development), also known as ‘3D’. In accordance with good military practice, these lines of operations are made concrete in a number of Decisive Points to be attained and their effects.

Soldaat and Broks describe the consequences of working with effects for the organisation of the higher staffs, such as Regional Command South (RC-(S)).

‘A feature of, in particular, civilian oriented effects, after all, is that it takes longer to attain them. Only by intermediate assessments is it possible to determine whether the intended effects have indeed been reached and whether the entire campaign is on track. This can best be done by a special cell inside a staff, whose sole task is to plan and guard the entire operation on a higher and more durable level. At RC-(S) this has led to a so-called ‘effects cell’, which incorporates planners and evaluators (Operational Analysts). They identify the effects and make suggestions for concrete actions, which are then executed by an operations section, which has a small planning capacity to re-adjust the current actions (a J-35), an element that coordinates the actual execution (a J-33) and a ‘targeting cell’, which does the traditional kinetic target acquisition. It is highly advisable to incorporate the perspectives of various civilian disciplines into the effects planning, in particular anthropologists, CIMIC personnel (civil-military cooperation), a political adviser, a development adviser, cultural adviser, possibly a former mayor and/or chief of police. In any case, they should be people who can fathom how the local society functions. (…) On top of that, incorporating a ‘red cell’, preferably manned by Afghans, is recommended. They play the role of the opponent as well as the population and through a ‘perception check’ can give advice as to whether the intended action will be seen as positive by the local population.”
This has consequences for the decision making and for the organisation and design of command posts, which is a subject under consideration.\textsuperscript{13}

**Assignment and sub-tasks**

ISAF has a clear and sufficiently robust mandate. The starting points and main objectives for policy making are directed at security, good governance, rule of law and human rights, economic and social development and, finally, fighting the narco-trade.\textsuperscript{14} ISAF’s task is to support the Afghan authorities in bringing about a secure and stable environment, conducive to state building and peace building. ISAF does this by contributing to the development of a credible Afghan security structure. The military strategic end state is that after the Security Sector Reform (SSR) Afghanistan has operational and therefore effective armed units capable of controlling any remaining threats to security. The operations go along the following lines: formation, training and education of Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, disarmament and disbandment of illegal factions, counter-narcotics and juridical reforms. To achieve this (as yet foreign) combat units are necessary, on the one hand, and ‘reconstruction and development capacity’, called Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), on the other. From Kabul these PRTs were deployed consecutively in three phases: phase 1 to the north, in phase 2 to the west and in phase 3 to the south. The Netherlands offered to become lead nation with over 1,600 troops in Uruzgan in RC-(S), working together with Great Britain (about 7,800 troops), Australia (about 1,100 troops) and Canada (about 2,500 troops). In phase 4 PRTs will also be deployed in the east of Afghanistan.

A number of objectives is primarily relevant for the provincial level, such as the disbandment of all illegal factions,\textsuperscript{15} transparent, merit-based appointments, a functioning security and juridical system in all provinces and, finally, rural development for the benefit of 38,000 villages.\textsuperscript{16} The actions of the PRTs are directed at creating a secure environment and strengthening the authority of the central government. By taking away the deeper causes for regional and local instability, circumstances can be created in which reconstruction activities may have a chance.\textsuperscript{17} A starting point and pre-condition in this is the existence of a permissive environment. On this basis and in view of its tasking, a PRT is only lightly armed and therefore needs constant protection from infantry and other units in the Battle Group (BG), which of course are more heavily armed and better protected. CIMIC officials and mission teams perform several activities in support of the TFU tasks. Besides, it has been investigated how an initiative of reservists coming from the world of business, the International Development of Entrepreneurial Activities (IDEA), can support entrepreneurs in Uruzgan with know-how and advice.
The Netherlands also makes available a number of Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) to train and monitor the Afghan armed forces.

COIN is a substantial part of stability and reconstruction operations in Afghanistan. In COIN the opinion of the population is the centre of gravity, and information plays a crucial role in it. That is why Information Operations, with which COMISAF wants to influence the population and gain more support for the operation from more interest groups, is of such importance. Among the ‘target groups’ that can be distinguished, the opinion makers, who determine and shape the perception of the population the most, come first. In Afghanistan they are often the clan chiefs, religious leaders, relatives, teachers and physicians. The second group is the (inter)national and local media, followed by the (inter)national visitors, such as politicians, higher commanders and staff functionaries, members of international organisations and officials. Finally, there is the group of coalition partners with their own interests and way of operating, for which there should be some measure of understanding.

Time and space

Afghanistan, 6,000 kilometres away from the Netherlands, forms the land-locked strategic triangle with routes of approach between Persia/Iran in the west, Central Asia in the north and Pakistan and India in the east. The border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which is identical to the historic ‘Durand Line’, is 2,400 kilometres long and cuts right through Pashtun territory. Measuring 1,800 by 850 kilometres, Afghanistan is 15 times bigger than the Netherlands and has between 27 and 29 million, mostly Islamic inhabitants. It has an arid, dusty continental climate with deserts and mountains up to more than 7,000 metres. The compartmentalisation is as follows: the northern plains with rich farming land and natural gas reserves, the central plateau with its narrow gorges, high mountain ridges and scattered farming land, and, finally, the south-western plateaus with several major rivers and salt water swamps. The rugged terrain in combination with a poor system of roads and infrastructure interfere with mechanised operations and cause movements over land to be slow and vulnerable to actions of factions, or in NATO terms, Opposing Militant Forces (OMF). Aerial movement, therefore, is recommendable, although it is sometimes hampered by a lack of ‘lift’ caused by the mountainous terrain and difficult orientation. For this reason, movements are more often indicated in time rather than in distance.
Groups

ISAF, and consequently the Netherlands, is conducting a COIN operation in Afghanistan. Part of the population supports the Afghan government and the international community in Afghanistan, and it is pro-ISAF. The majority of the population is neutral and reserved, and it needs to be won over to ISAF through a hearts and minds campaign. But which enemy or Opposing Militant Forces (OMF) can be distinguished?

Soldaat and Broks identify two types of enemy: “hard-core fighters” and “day-fighters”\(^\text{19}\). The resistance of the former, among whom must be reckoned the Taliban, the Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin and Al Qaída, against the current government and its allies is seated in a deep conviction.\(^\text{20}\) They are welcoming the reinforcement by foreign factions. The day fighters are coerced or persuaded, by money, revenge or whatever reason, to join the hard-core fighters for a limited period of time. They are hangers-on, facilitating the hard core, and they can still, under certain conditions, be persuaded to lay down arms and to reintegrate. Those conditions can be tangible, such as money, work, and social security, but also other benefits, such as security, justice, power, apologies, the process of democratisation and the ideological conviction that UN and NATO are doing ‘a good job’. Soldaat and Broks put it that by winning over the population, the category of day-fighters will decrease, and that this is one of the reasons why the environment in which the hard-core fighters move becomes useless to them. This will separate these factions from the population and they can be attacked in various ways, not necessarily ‘kinetically’. Over the past few months relevant actors have been talking repeatedly about negotiating with the leaders of the (moderate) factions.

The OMF will also try to win the population over to them, and where this does not work, force the people to cooperate with them in their struggle against the ‘occupying force’. In doing so, they will resort to well-known guerrilla tactics, such as ambushes on logistic convoys, attacks with improvised explosive devices (IED), missile and mortar bombardments, suicide attacks, hostage taking of local officials, et cetera. The insurgents are hoping that ISAF will be tempted into using excessive violence, reprisals with collateral damage in which also innocent third parties will be hit. This will further alienate the population, and the group of day-fighters will grow. Moreover, this will also lower the support for the operation in Afghanistan from political parties and the population in the Netherlands.

As the factions need finances, but cannot dispose of them legally, there are strong ties between the insurgents and the world of crime, in Afghanistan mostly the narcotics industry, with which the Taliban is associated. According to Soldaat and Broks, it is
clear by now that opium is being smuggled out of the country via Pakistan, northern Tajikistan and Iran. This ensures a useful support from abroad, which will have to be cut off by the international community with the help of NATO.

**Own means**

At the moment of writing this article the Netherlands has sent out a total of 1,946 personnel in several missions, 1,677 of whom in the ISAF framework. The entire NATO mission is led from the Joint Forces Command Brunssum (JFCBS), which controls ISAF Headquarters (HQ) at Kabul. This, in turn, steers the Air Task Force and a number of Regional Commands, such as RC-(S) on Kandahar Airfield, which comprises 23,000 troops from 16 nationalities. RC-(S) consists of four Task Forces (TFs): the British-Danish Task Force Helmand (TFH), the Canadian Task Force Kandahar (TFK), the American-Rumanian Task Force Zabul (TFZ) and the Dutch-Australian Task Force Uruzgan (TFU). TFU encompasses a staff, a BG, a PRT and an Australian Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force (MRTF).

Staff-TFU comprises approximately 90 personnel and cooperates closely with a so-called Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT). Apart from the BG, C-TFU also commands an engineer company, a psy-ops unit of 15 persons, a PRT of 114 troops, Base Command of around 180 people and, finally, the MRTF of about 440 people. According to Davids, et al., the support of the TFs is a national responsibility, while the support of the RC-(S) is a joint responsibility of the participating countries. The Joint Support Detachment (100 persons) and the Logistic Support Detachment (LSD) (190 persons) provide in the national support.

The BG has a small staff, a reconnaissance platoon (Fennek) reinforced with Intelligence, Surveillance, Target acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR)-personnel and a total of three companies: an air-mobile, a motorised (Bushmaster and Patria) and a mechanised infantry company (Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle (AIFV)-25mm). The BG does not have tanks; fire support is provided by three Panzer howitzers (155 mm).

In conformity with the article-100 letter the F-16s give air support to ISAF ground troops (and in emergencies to OEF ground troops). The Apache attack helicopters and the transport helicopters have been put in a multinational brigade pool for the south. The F-16s as well as the Apache attack helicopters, therefore, are not exclusively earmarked for deployment in Uruzgan.
The plan of operations

The Netherlands wants to carry out an intensively integrated operation: military action, reconstruction and dialogue, with the adage ‘reconstruction where possible, military action where necessary.’ To this end, as was said above, the Netherlands operates along three lines of operation (‘the 3 Ds’): one line of operation directed at stabilisation and security (Defence), another directed at governance (Diplomacy), and finally a line focused on (re)construction (Development). A hybrid model of governance and security, with tribal as well as ‘modern’ elements, seems to be the most effective model for progress in Uruzgan for the medium term (15 years).

The Parliamentary letter of 1 September 2006 states that the ISAF commander (COMISAF), after consultation with the Afghan government has drawn up a fine-tuning of the operations concept on the basis of the security situation which is in line with the ‘oil stain approach’ (also known as the ‘ink stain approach’, or Clear, Hold and Expand already adopted by the Netherlands. In this concept the Afghan army, supported by ISAF troops in the south, will create areas within which security and stability can be maintained on a durable basis. Inside these areas, called Afghan Development Zones (ADZ), the emphasis will come to lie on strengthening the authority of the local and national government and support activities for the benefit of the population. By concentrating the efforts geographically and gradually expanding them, too large a spreading of resources is prevented and tangible improvements in governance and living circumstances for the population can be realised. Success will have a positive influence on the remoter areas.

Initially, operations in Uruzgan will take place in and around Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawod, which, incidentally, has been the Dutch intention from the start. Outside that zone, ISAF will occasionally, if necessary, act offensively against direct threats against the security and stability in the secure areas, as it did in Chora. Taliban operations in the outer areas must be harassed. Where possible, contacts must be established with the local authorities and projects started for the benefit of the local population (‘hearts and minds’). The Parliamentary letter also mentions explicitly that the “initiative will not be handed over to the Taliban”. For the smaller projects which are to create the conditions for reconstruction in the long run (so-called Quick and Visible Projects), the Minister for Overseas Development has made funds available.

In the remoter areas ISAF and OEF can carry out reconnaissance and security operations, complementary and mutually reinforcing, against the insurgents, where possible together with the Afghan armed forces. The condition attached to this is that all OEF operations must be coordinated, deconflicted and tested against the ISAF operation and
its objectives by the regional ISAF commander in Kandahar. Support of or from OEF units in security operations against insurgents will only take place in case of an emergency. The province of Uruzgan is the area of operations of the TFU and the security of Uruzgan has the highest priority. On request of the regional commander and after having received permission from the MoD, support can be given on an incidental basis in the other southern provinces. This characterises the close cooperation between the partners in the south.31

**Execution**

COIN is all about the minimum use of violence, which does not mean that in some cases the ‘soft’ way of operating has lost its effect, and that – needless to say, within the constraints of the Rules of Engagement (ROE) – a transition must be made to the use of violence in order to neutralise factions or to coerce them into cooperation. The BG has to create and maintain the secure environment within which the PRT can do its reconstruction work and support the Afghan authorities. If violence is needed, it must be used in a professional manner: finding, fixing and striking the opponent within (inter)nationally accepted doctrines, rules, values and norms. The defence of the village of Chora in April 2007 can serve as an example of a case involving substantial application of force. By means of the Chora case the execution of combat operations in Uruzgan will be described, analysed and considered to see if and what lessons can be learned from it. Let us go back to the situation of 2007.

Chora is a green strip with a number of small villages in the 5-kilometre wide Baluchi valley in Uruzgan at a distance of some 40 kilometres from the Dutch camp in Tarin Kowt, 40 degrees Centigrade in the shade, almost 70 in the sun. Near Chora a number of important east-west thoroughfares cross the north-south roads along which, among others, weapons, money and drugs are transported. Therefore, this area is of major importance for the Taliban.32 Although Chora is one of the five provincial district centres, it was the only one without any permanent ISAF military presence. Once every two weeks the PRT visited Chora for its projects in the environment (a bridge across the Komisan Rud River, a road to the bazaar and a telephone network). Since the beginning of the Uruzgan mission Chora has been a support point for the Dutch, who want the population to view them in a favourable light. As security, the PRT was escorted by elements of the BG. Whenever they visited, they would stay in the whitewashed governmental building of the district chief, called the White Compound by the ISAF personnel. We follow the account of Lieutenant-Colonel Rob Querido, commander of the BG.33
During a patrol on 24 April 2007 the Dutch troops find that a large number of police officers are leaving their posts and that the civilian population, too, is on the point of fleeing. On investigation, it appears that OMF are threatening to attack the small town of Chora and that the police have too few weapons and ammunition. Although the Dutch quickly re-supply, the OMF attack the police posts of Kala Kala and Niazi in the west of the valley on 26 April, brutally killing a number of police officers. Niazi barely manages to hold out. The BG sends an airmobile infantry company (ACoy) as reinforcement and on 29 April the police station is recaptured by the Afghan National Police (ANP), supported by the Dutch troops. After this incident the Dutch decide to secure Chora against the OMF until the Afghan authorities are able to do this on their own. From that moment onwards the BG keeps a permanent presence there, with a command post in the White Compound. There are combat contacts on a daily basis and as a result the number of Dutch troops rises. At the time an average day has the following pattern. The morning starts with a hostile mortar shelling from the Baluchi valley, followed by an attack on foot. During the hot afternoon hours there is a ‘break’ and from 18:00 hrs onwards until sunset the attacks are resumed. This situation lasts until 15 June, and the Dutch and Afghan troops can handle it.

On 16 June the mortar fire on Kala Kala and Niazi in the west is fiercer than before, and the infantry company takes up positions facing to the west. It then appears that the OMF are also attacking the police posts around Sarab from the north-east, and subsequently continue the attack with infantry in the direction of Chora. One platoon concentrates on this approach, while Afghan National Army (ANA) troops, together with the Dutch OMLT secure the town centre. During the day the pressure is mounting on Chora and Lieutenant-Colonel Querido decides to have a platoon keep the supply lines open south of the district centre. In the west the OMF enter the valley with 500 men; in the east some 300 fighters are active and from the north 300 men are approaching. So, a total of 1,100 OMF fighters are attacking Chora from three directions. Refugees tell of the reprisals of the OMF against the relatives of the police officers and the coercion of eligible men to fight along with the OMF against the Dutch and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Refusal to do so means death. The commander of the infantry company asks for further directions: “How valuable is Chora to us, do we make a stand or do we withdraw?”

In Tarin Kowt this is the moment that the decision making process by C-BG and C-TFU, Colonel Hans van Griensven, begins. Soon it is decided to hold on to (defend) Chora and to attack the OMF. Collateral damage must be limited to a minimum, and the civilian population is advised in all possible ways to leave the combat zone. Air actions and artillery support are prepared. Task Force Viper (special forces) together with a
platoon of the BG carries out a secondary attack from the south in order to fix as many
OMF fighters as possible. C-BG forms a reserve, amongst others, with his own recon-
naissance platoon in order to lead them to Chora as soon as possible as a reinforcement
of the infantry company there. The reserve takes to the road at 03:00 hrs and is directed
against the easterly threat from Sarab. They meet with heavy resistance, but with the
help of air support they manage to make slow progress east and eventually neutralise a
large part of the OMF in the vicinity of Sarab. As they cannot reach the police posts and
the cohesion with the western part of the BG is even more important at night than dur-
ing the day, they withdraw to the west again when darkness comes. The threat from the
west near Kala Kala and Niazi is neutralised by the infantry, supported from the air. The
OMF are seen to establish reinforced positions in the green zone.

In Tarin Kowt that night (18 on 19 June) the battalion staff has worked out plans to
recapture the police posts. On approval, Querido reorganises his units south of Chora.
From Dehra Wod a mechanised platoon (AIFV, with 25-mm gun) moves through the
Murchai pass in the direction of Tarin Kowt, while also the Quick Reaction Force (QRF)
of Camp Holland is made available. Also, the platoon that has cooperated with TF Viper,
moves to Chora, bringing the total assault force up to 11 platoons, reinforced with a
reconnaissance platoon and TF Viper. A Coy will attack along the northerly axis, while
ANA and OMLT will operate in the centre through the green zone. B Coy will attack
along the southerly route, and the reconnaissance unit, finally, will secure in easterly
direction, while the militias led by the local powerbroker Rosi Kahn will relieve the police
posts near Sarab. The rest of the night is used for decision making and rest. The situ-
ation makes a great demand on the professionalism and decisiveness of commanders
on all levels.

At 10:00 hrs on 19 June the attack commences, preceded by loudspeaker vehicles of
the Tactical Psyops Team urging OMF fighters to lay down their arms, and calling upon
the local population to flee or seek shelter. Both Dutch companies mainly carry out their
attack mounted, supported by ‘snipers’ and Forward Air Controllers for air support.
Wherever necessary – for instance, in case of resistance from the qualas – the men oper-
ate dismounted, supported with the guns mounted on the vehicles. The most tenacious
pockets of resistance are destroyed with the help of air support. The ANA operates dis-
mounted in the green zone, as they are particularly adept at discovering and detecting
OMF fighters who do not want to fight (any more), or try to abscond from the fighting.
The execution of Lieutenant-Colonel Querido’s plan of operations is successful: after
about 8 hours the western part of the Baluchi valley is back in their hands and the ANA
can recapture the police posts in Niazi and Kala Kala. Also in the east the reconnais-
sance platoon and Rosi Kahn’s militia have the police posts around Sarab in their hands.
After consolidation the situation is only ‘unquiet’. The population blame the violence on the OMF and are very grateful to the Dutch troops. That week the Dutch contingent lost Private Smeehuijzen in a suicide attack in another location, and Sergeant-Major Leunissenn in the battle around Chora.36

Observations, reflections and some conclusions

What can be said about the way in which the Netherlands carried out its military operations in Uruzgan?

The first observation concerns doctrine. With its motto, ‘reconstruction where possible, fighting where necessary’, the Netherlands has chosen for an emphasis on reconstruction operations, which, however, can only be carried out adequately in a secure and stable environment. The PRT mainly contributes to the reconstruction operations, while the BG is more concerned with security, and, together, they create more stability. The TFU has apparently chosen for the eccentric method, often called the ‘ink (or oil) stain method’37 From Tarin Kowt and Dah Rewod it is attempted to gain control over a steadily increasing area. The extent to which this is successful is a matter for debate. Thus, only recently the ‘(non)-embedded’ journalist Peter ter Velde announced on radio and television that, “the population in Uruzgan does not feel safer”.38 Others, however, admit that the ‘ink stains’ on which the Netherlands has concentrated have certainly become safer; as examples may serve not only villages and small towns in general, and Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawood in particular, but also several rural areas, such as the Baluchi valley. Chora has been put on the map after the battle of the BG, although in all this it must be realised that both reconstruction and the fight against the insurgents is often a matter of tenacity Add to this the fact that the international community contributes in very diverse ways to an integral approach of the problems in Afghanistan, and it will be clear that also the challenges in Uruzgan will not necessarily be brought to an even better end within the planned duration of the Dutch mission.

According to a questionnaire of the German Marshall fund, two-thirds of the Europeans (64 per cent) support the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, and not more that one-third (30 per cent) are proponents of combat actions of their troops.39 Etzioni writes in NRC Handelsblad that the economist Easterley has systematically disproved the idea that higher financial support can lower poverty, or modernise states that have run aground, pointing at the key role that bad governance and corruption plays in these kinds of debacles.40 He remarks furthermore, “that a recent study of the The Economist showed that the development of Afghanistan goes so badly, especially as a result of
the widespread corruption, the nepotism and the tribal relations, the lack of a sense of responsibility and gross mismanagement”.

The answer to all this seems to be the emergence of a social middle class and the establishment of a good educational system. This is what the Dutch PRT concentrates on. How hard this is may be illustrated by the fact that many European countries, among them the Netherlands, find it very difficult to reform their own educational systems. This kind of cultures has come about after a centuries-long formation, they are deeply rooted and therefore can only be changed slowly and from within. Lending a helping hand in this process as an outsider requires a cautious tenacity over a longer period of time.’ It also needs the ‘carrot and stick’ approach, carefully coordinated between C-PRT, C-BG, C-MRTF and C-TFU. What matters in this, is the influencing of tribal areas of tension, for which much good and expert information is necessary. Specific expertise, for instance from cultural advisers, from the Criminele Recherche Informatiedienst – Criminal Research Information Service of the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee (KMar), or from the Korps Landelijke Politie Diensten - National Police Services Corps (KLPD) is extremely welcome. Intelligence is an important factor in all this, allowing the C-PRT room to manoeuvre. Apart from that, five Police Mentoring Teams (PMTs) will be set up, manned by KMar and armed forces personnel, which will work together with the local police forces and support and train them in the daily routine. This happens alongside the OMLTs, which support the ANA during the daily execution of its task. In RC-(S) 205 ANA Corps is being established at the moment with one brigade per province. In the Dutch Area of Responsibility (AOR) some 700 ANA troops became operational and with success.

Nevertheless, it is to be expected that the reconstruction of Uruzgan will be slow and quite demanding for the people involved. Quick Visibility Projects may help to influence the hearts and minds of people, but they do not make a structural contribution to the reconstruction of Uruzgan. Still, these short-term results must be given priority over long-term effects. It is better to finish a small number of projects than start a large number. However, there will be a structural unbalance between needed and available means. In any case – also according to Enzioni – security prevails over democracy and reconstruction.41 This is first and foremost a responsibility of the Afghan authorities, supported by the international community. The Netherlands perhaps contributes to this in more than a modest way.

The second brief observation relates to command and control (decision making, command and leadership). Although for reasons of security it is not possible here to go into the operations plan in great depth and detail, it is certainly justified to say that, in
general, there is a clear and sufficiently robust mandate and task which lie at the basis of the above-mentioned lines of operations, constituting the integrated or comprehensive approach. The military way in which the combined-joint decision making at all levels led to adequate operations plans, can be called sound at least and leads to reasonable effects on the ground and in the air. A major problem, however, remains the interoperability of various (national) command and control systems. Especially in international headquarters such as RC-(S) this means much improvisation with USB sticks or the swivel chair, which makes it possible to use other national command and control systems (the so-called “swivel chair-interfaces”). The way in which the Dutch military personnel function can be called good and professional, and also the young and relatively inexperienced leaders function more than adequately in this complex and sometimes/often dangerous environment. The necessity for ad-hoc compositions of units to carry out a diversity of tasks, makes high demands on professionalism, creativity, stamina and the leadership qualities of commanders on all levels.

In particular, the increased requirement for and necessity of more ad-hoc horizontal and vertical coordination, however, is problematic. After all, an organic infantry platoon under command of a lieutenant, with an experienced NCO as his deputy, consists of four vehicles, with an almost standard reinforcement in Uruzgan of a tactical reconnaissance capacity, IED reconnaissance capacity, forward air controllers (FAC), helicopters, medical capacity, liaison officers, a mission team of the PRT, various specialists (cultural, developmental and/or political advisers) and interpreters. That this demands far more of young officers and NCOs, needs no arguing. After all, they have to (re) act in a drill-like fashion one moment, then quickly make well-considered choices in complex situations at the next, with danger to their own lives and that of others. Composing (non-organic) units, and educating, exercising and training personnel as early as possible can make a difference here. It is essential to also exercise on the level of joint arms and service, so, at the level of the team, battalion and brigade, as there is a real joint and combined element only on these levels. Besides, the training, education and forming of thinking officers who can handle the mission command in such a complex environment can make an essential contribution to this. For this a scientific education - at least for a considerable part of the officer corps - is not an extravagant luxury.

Third, there are the means assigned to execute the military contribution to the integrated effect. The BG units can be called ‘light’ in military terms: airmobile and motorised infantry and an armoured infantry company equipped with AIFV and 25-mm guns for its heaviest armament. Heavier weapon systems for direct fire do not make up part of this, while at the same time the (inter) national tendency of increasingly lighter armed units seems to be waning slowly but assuredly. After all, apart from its many advantages,
‘light’ harbours the characteristics of small tactical mobility and great vulnerability. The inherent protection against the effect of small-calibre arms and resilience against IEDs and man-portable anti-tank weapons, the great tactical mobility, the lower physical burden for the personnel, the accurate and potent sensors, the great fire power of heavy, armoured units – in short, escalation dominance and the ability to sustain an operation for a longer time – have demonstrated the existence of almost forgotten possibilities, even in peace operations. With this the deployed Dutch ISAF units will regain a round-the-clock (24/7) capability to relieve own combined troops, control an area, and act as a quick reaction force or transform from a peace keeping to a peace enforcing or combat operation. Our allies already have such capabilities, and on top of that, the psychological effect of heavy units with tanks on the opponent must not be underestimated. For Uruzgan this means that if heavier weapons systems than the 25-mm gun of the AIFV are necessary, the support of the air forces or fire support from the 155-mm pantzer howitzer has to be called in immediately, and this might lead to more collateral damage than otherwise would be necessary.

A deployment of heavier units, such as tanks with excellent sensors and direct fire precision weapons for the long distance, should, in my view be considered seriously in peace support operations, and should not a priori be discarded as ‘old thinking’ or ‘too provocative’. After all, for good reasons the Canadians have reconsidered their decision to disband their tank units and have deployed tanks in Kandahar in support of their infantry. Due to their ability to operate around the clock in all weather conditions, their excellent sensors and the small numbers of men necessary to operate them, the deployment of this type of units may even be more efficient than the light, personnel heavy units supported by helicopters. At the same time having heavy means makes a force less dependent on other scarce resources, such as (combat) helicopters and fighter jets. An added advantage is that simultaneously the necessity for coordination between and within various levels is drastically reduced, which simplifies command and control considerably.

Fourth, a few words on the ANA, 58,000 men strong, 39,500 of whom are land forces, with 33,000 ready troops. According to the Minister of Defence, the readiness of the 4th ANA Brigade of the 205th ANA Army Corps in Uruzgan is steadily increasing. The various elements of the Brigade, Brigade Headquarters in Tarin Kowt, the two infantry battalions, the combat support battalion and the logistics battalion, are monitored by the Dutch OMLTs. The 1st Infantry battalion is operational and is located in the western part of Uruzgan, whereas the 2nd Infantry battalion, located in eastern Uruzgan, is partially operational because of a lack of the operational use of vehicles. In general, the quality
of ANA troops can be called good, which cannot always be said of police units of the Afghan National Police (ANP) or the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP).

Fifth, military operations require personnel that have been educated well so as to be able to carry out their tasks also in non-routine situations. That is why it is necessary that the Netherlands continues to rely on officers - and, of course, NCOs – who do not ‘only’ apply the skills and drills, but who keep thinking. To this end, a significant number of officers must be educated at a higher, even scientific, level. On top of that, the personnel in leadership positions must be trained continuously in the framework of mission command on the level of combined arms, so the team, battalion as well as brigade, and preferably as often as possible in international context. On deployment, commanders must have the means necessary to operate in a broad violence spectrum, without having to depend a priori on others.

Six, in COIN the opinion of the population is the centre of gravity, and information plays a major role in this, which makes Information Operations an essential element of these operations. The target groups are the opinion makers, the (inter)national and local press, (inter)national visitors and, finally, coalition partners, with their own interests and related ways of operating. This must be appreciated, which is mainly achieved by giving good information and underlining this information by doing good deeds. Talks with the Taliban should not be rejected a priori, and at the same time negotiations must be entered from a position of strength. This means that escalation dominance and force protection will be required for a long time; after all, according to Jones, the average COIN campaign lasts 14 years.46

Seven, as in any major organisation, in the armed forces concepts such as effectiveness and efficiency play a large role. After all, the armed forces have to fulfil an important mission and have to do this with the means provided by the political leadership in a manner as efficient as possible. The uniqueness of the armed forces lies in the monopoly on the threat of or actual application of large-scale violence. When they are deployed, the armed forces must be guaranteed effective and be able to sustain this for a longer period of time. This requires a broad range of means, and in the Netherlands, at any given moment, more means should be made available than would, strictly speaking, be necessary at that moment, in order to be able to live up to the ever-changing demands of an expeditionary mission. This makes the armed forces an inefficient organisation by definition, as it is only in this way that they are enabled to fulfil their tasks at the expense of acceptable losses of valuable personnel and materiel. Over the past few years the balance between guaranteed effectiveness and efficiency seems to have been disturbed somewhat and shifted unnoticed into the direction of efficiency. Signs of this are, for
example, the strong emphasis on the peace management and the ensuing far-from-critical and too simple comparison between Defence and the world of business, the large-scale reorganisations, civilian-oriented shared service centres and automated control systems and procedures. But also trendy concepts, such as Network Centric Warfare and Effect Based Approach to Operations give the impression that it can all still be more efficient, ‘surgical’ with less collateral damage and with fewer military and civilian casualties. The daily practice of deployed military units during recent ‘peace’ operations in Bosnia after Srebrenica, Kosovo, Iraq, the Congo, but certainly also Afghanistan seem to prove this to be a mistaken notion.

Finally, it can be concluded that Dutch units in Uruzgan are most of the time effective and carry out their task in an efficient manner. The way in which Dutch and Australian troops of the successive task forces, battle groups, et cetera, have executed such operations in Uruzgan shows professionalism in difficult circumstances and thus deserves respect for this fact alone. The fights around Chora, but also elsewhere in the daily patrols and the execution of the other tasks, demonstrate that Dutch servicemen and women, should the occasion arise, are prepared to fight in order to fulfil their mission.

Notes

1. Colonel P. (Peter) J.E.J. van den Aker MSc is an associate professor and PhD-candidate at the Military Operational Arts and Sciences section of the Netherlands Defence Academy.
2. In writing this chapter I mainly used open sources. Where not, the safety of own forces, allies and others in current operations have been most important and therefore have prevailed above academic or other forms of freedom.
3. Amongst others, decision making, mission, terrain, time and space, own forces, grouping and operation plan.
5. LDP IIC, pp. 528-529.
6. LDP IIC, p. 529.
7. LDP IIC, p. 596.
9. Intelligence Surveillance Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR).
11. Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) is a US national-led operation which is aimed at searching and destroying Al Qaida and Taliban. This has not been authorised by UNSC.


15. Disbandment of Illegally Armed Groups (DIAG).


18. After the war of 1893 the British-Indian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, and the Afghan ruler of Afghanistan, Abdur Rahman, agreed upon the border between Afghanistan and India.


25. Kamerstuk 27925, nr. 194.


35. According to well informed sources, there was a need of 16 platoons, but Querido did not get them.


37. Also: Soldaat and Broks (2009), pp. 265-266.

38. Peter ter Velde, Radio 1 Journaal, Saturday 18 October and NOS Journaal on Sunday 19 October 2008.


Experiences as Deputy Commander Air

Freek Meulman

NL-ARMS, 2009, 297-306

Introduction

In the period January 2007-February 2008 I was sent out to Afghanistan as Deputy Commander Air/Director Air Coordination Element. I worked at the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) X Headquarters in Kabul. ISAF is a United Nations (UN) mandated mission led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The objective of the mission is to assist the Afghan government in realising and maintaining stability and security in Afghanistan in order to extend the authority of the Afghan government and to create circumstances conducive to reconstruction, development and good governance.

In this article, I would like to share with the reader my experiences in Afghanistan, especially in the area of the deployment of the air forces. Besides, towards the end of my article I will go into the rebuilding of the Afghan civilian aviation sector. My tour in Afghanistan was a more than fascinating period, during which I was able to familiarise myself with all facets of multinational operations and the many challenges and complexities of Afghanistan.

Headquarters

The ISAF X Headquarters in Kabul was a composite headquarters, consisting of over 2,000 representatives from more than 40 countries, mainly service personnel with a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. This implied that much time and effort had to be put into team building and output optimisation, with language sometimes forming a barrier. The sum total of the strongly varying level of experience of the individual players and their mastery of the language meant that the Headquarters did not always function effectively and efficiently. The ambience, however, was good and the will to reach results together was almost tangible everywhere.

Dependent on the contribution to ISAF, the 17 general functions and underlying posts had been distributed over the contributing countries. ISAF X Commander was an
American general, who was assisted by three Deputy Commanders, an American Major General for Security, a British Major General for Stability and a Dutch Major General for Air. A German Major General fulfilled the function of Chief of Staff.

In my function as Deputy Commander Air (DCOM Air)/Director Air Coordination Element (Dir ACE) I had four main tasks. First, I was the ISAF Commander’s substitute in his absence. Second, I advised the ISAF Commander in the area of air operations and civilian aviation. Thirdly, I was responsible for controlling ISAF air operations, which incidentally took place in close cooperation and coordination with the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) in Qatar. Finally, as DCOM Air, I was the functionary in the Headquarters responsible for the reconstruction and development of Afghan civilian aviation.

Apart from my function, the Netherlands also held a number of other posts in ISAF X. In the early days of ISAF X a Major General held the post of Deputy Chief of Staff Security. Later this became the function of Director Afghan National Army Training, Equipping and Standardisation. On top of that, the Netherlands fulfilled the positions of Director of Staff (colonel), Info Operations (colonel), CJ8 (colonel) and a considerable number of staff functions throughout the entire Headquarters. My experience was that the Dutch servicemen and servicewomen, not hindered by any language barrier, proved themselves perfectly capable of working effectively in the ISAF X Headquarters, and as such also enjoyed the respect of others.

In anticipation of ISAF XI, the staff of ISAF X conducted an evaluation of the organisation in mid-2007, which resulted in a change in the main structure. It came down to the following. Under the ISAF Commander (American) came a Deputy Commander (British) and a Chief of Staff (German). Besides, there were three functions of Deputy Chief of staff, viz. Security (American), Stability (Italian) and Air Coordination (Dutch).

**Command and control**

One of the most complex aspects of the work as DCOM was the Command and Control structure that had been adopted. The American view and the NATO principles with regard to the area of Command and Control diverge. With the Americans the Commander 9th Air Force was simultaneously the Combined Joint Force Air Component Commander (CFACC) within Central Command. This means that he was responsible for the planning, tasking and deployment of the American air forces in the Horn of Africa, Iraq as well as Afghanistan. On top of that, the principle governing the
American doctrinal thinking was ‘unity of command’, which made the CFACC integrally responsible for all air operations and on all levels.

Within NATO DCOM Air acted as CFACC of the ISAF air forces, with DCOM Air being responsible for drafting the Air Estimate (what do we need to successfully carry out the assigned tasks) and for the ISAF part of the Joint Air Operations Plan. Moreover, DCOM Air, on behalf of COMISAF, was responsible for the monthly direction of the air operations, which took the form of an Air Operations Directive. Besides, the ISAF Headquarters provided a daily prioritised input for the Air Task Order (ATO), in which all requests for air support approved by the Headquarters were passed on to the CAOC.

This construction was a cumbersome one, and the reasons for it lay in the fact that the American CFACC found it hard to conform to the tasks, responsibilities and authorities of ISAF’s DCOM Air. One of the reasons for this, as explained above, was that with the Americans the Commander CFACC also held integral responsibility for Afghanistan within Central Command, and he was used to operating on the basis of this principle. A result of this was that initially he hardly made use of the direction and guidance from the ISAF Headquarters. On top of that, as CFACC, he demanded integral responsibility for issuing the Air Operations Plan, all this primarily from the perspective that the Americans provided the bulk of the air forces.

On the basis of the experiences of Operation Medusa in the province of Kandahar in fall of 2006 and the fact that as of October 2006 ISAF became integrally responsible for the mission in Afghanistan, it was decided to launch a quality initiative for the direction of operations. For the air force component at the ISAF Headquarters in Kabul this entailed a considerable extension of the material and personnel capacities in the Combined Joint Operations Center (CJOC). At the same time, the Americans made available a national Air Operations Control Center (AOCC) for the CJOC, while simultaneously minimising that capacity on Bagram Airfield.

In cooperation with the AOCC, the Regional Air Operations Control Centers took care of the daily input for the Air Task Order for the CAOC in Qatar. Among its other tasks were also the monitoring and, if necessary, the adjusting of the daily Air Task Order. The latter happened in the form of a so-called dynamic retasking. Besides, during the execution of the air operations the AOCC maintained contact with the Regional Air Operations Centers, Air Liaison Officers and Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTACs). Moreover, there was constant coordination with the CAOC in Qatar, which bore the actual responsibility for the execution of the air operations.
In order to facilitate the conduct of air operations from the CAOC in Qatar, a double-hatted construction was decided upon for the Deputy Combined Joint Force Air Component Commander (DCFACC), who was present on a daily basis in the CAOC as a representative of the American CFACC. Not only was the DCFACC responsible for the execution of ISAF air operations, but also for those in Iraq, Afghanistan and other parts of their CENTCOM area of responsibility. DCFACC was the functionary who considered all requests for the deployment of air forces in order to come to an optimal assignment of available resources. Frequently, national American resources were assigned to ISAF for the execution of tasks (tankers, Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) and air and ground operations). Only in this manner did it become possible to support all requests with the right priorities.

Within the air force organisation at the ISAF Headquarters the Deputy Director Operations was responsible, on behalf of the DCOM Air, for the monitoring of the execution of the ISAF air operations. However, he was also directly accountable to the DCFACC for the execution of the mission. All in all, this was not a very easy construction, but first and foremost one that required workable solutions.

Those solutions were found in working agreements between DCOM Air and DCFACC, clear and transparent arrangements that allowed both to take their responsibilities and to give substance to their roles. There were also agreements on the role and position of the Deputy Director ACE, in order to avoid him exclusively operating as an exponent of the CAOC. Those agreements led to an effective organisation of the planning and tasking process for the deployment of air forces. It ensured an adequate procedure for the necessary air support and, in the end, that is what it is all about.

The air force component at HQ ISAF further consisted of a Deputy Director of Plans and Projects with his own organisation for operational planning (integrated in the J5, J3/5 and J3 organisation). This ensured the necessary air-ground integration, in any case at HQ level. Finally, ‘projects’ was involved in complex issues, such as the take-over by NATO of the American-led Kandahar Airfield, the NATO infrastructural rehabilitation on Kabul International Airport, but also matters such as air basing, air space management, et cetera, et cetera.

Resources

In order to carry out the various air force tasks, a range of resources had been made available. This involved not only fixed-wing, but also helicopters and unmanned aerial
vehicles (UAVs), the latter being used in ISR as well as combat (support) roles. The resources were divided on a task/effect basis. Thus, for air-ground operations the British Harrier GR 7/9s, French Mirages 2000, F1s and Rafales, Dutch F-16s, American F-15s and A-10s were available. For armed helicopters the British, Americans and Dutch used the Apache AH-64-D and the Italians the A-129. Other ‘in-theatre’ transport helicopters were the CH-53 (German), the Lynx (British), the Chinook-CH-47 (British, Italian, American and Dutch), and the Cougar (Spanish, French and Dutch). Finally, the Americans as well as the Turks flew the UH-Blackhawk and the Americans the HH-60G for medevac.

For transport purposes ISAF had the disposal of the so-called Intra Theatre Air Transport (ITAS), in actual fact national resources that were offered to ISAF by the countries on the basis of a specified number of contract hours, in particular, the Transall C-160 (German and French) and the C-130 (British, Canadian, Dutch American, and Italian). Finally, ISAF could resort to ISR resources, such as Predators MQ1, Luna and Sperwer UAVs.

Apart from ISAF ‘dedicated’ resources, in particular the Americans, and to a lesser extent the British, had considerable numbers of aircraft, which were mainly stationed in the Middle East (amongst others, B-1Bs, tankers and ISR). On top of that, American aircraft carriers, with, F-18s, amongst others, were available on a regular basis. These resources were deployed by CAOC on a day-to-day basis to support ISAF or own coalition operations, as the case might be - Close Air Support, ISR, refuelling and air transport taskings. Also, resources in space were made available to ISAF, such as communication, weather and navigation support.

The main airports used by ISAF were Kandahar, in the south, Herat, in the west, Masar-e-Shariff, Termez and Dusjanbe in the north, and Kabul and Bagram in the east of Afghanistan.

Observations

What, then are the most important observations and lessons learned to be derived from the period 2007-2008? In the first place it can be concluded that the deployment of the air forces was effective, with some 14,000 sorties flown in 2007 and almost 2,500 requests by ‘troops in contact’ for air support, most of which were granted, with an average reaction time of 15 minutes. For an adequate support the Joint Terminal Attack Controllers played a crucial role (identification, coordination and deconfliction).
Incidentally, the air-ground support was not always kinetic, in other words, not on every occasion weapons were used. The range of deployment options also included the so-called show of presence, show of force and the strafing of ground targets.

Medical evacuation, too, with helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, proved to be of great value for the various units. Almost 900 medevac missions were flown in a combat support mode, and they were not only flown to give succour to ISAF troops. The Afghan National Security Forces and the civilian population benefited from the help and the golden hour principle was truly practised: the guarantee that a casualty would be picked up within the hour to be taken to a hospital (role 2 or 3).

Freight and personnel were transported large-scale with ISAF Intra Theatre Air Transport (ITAS), and this involved thousands of flying hours, and more than 80,000 persons/troops and tons of freight. Apart from ITAS, many missions were flown for logistic support. Especially the many ‘platoon bases, company outposts and forward operating bases’ in Afghanistan received logistic support from the air. What was remarkable, was the increase in 2007 of the use of Containerised Delivery Systems - pallets with logistic supplies, sometimes satellite-guided, which were air dropped accurately. Thus, in an environment with a difficult landscape and infrastructure as Afghanistan the deployment of air forces was indispensable.

The second observation relates to what may be termed the a-typical air campaign in Afghanistan. Traditional air campaigns begin with the battle for air superiority, followed by an offensive counter-air campaign, an interdiction and strategic campaign, et cetera. In Afghanistan, however, four sub-campaigns were staged simultaneously: air transport, close air support, ISR and space. The first two were mainly carried out by and with ISAF resources, while the latter mainly by American resources, made available to ISAF on a temporary basis. Where in former times the emphasis had lain on air-air operations, ISAF mainly focussed on air-ground operations and air transport.

Thirdly, there was the military use of air space. Because of the difficult geographical and topographical situation (high mountains, such as the Hindu Kush) most of the air space was not controlled by air traffic control. Positive control only took place around the airfields and Control and Reporting Centers. In all other areas procedural measures were in place, which means that in most of Afghanistan the principle was ‘see and avoid’. In particular during concentrated operations, with much military traffic in a relatively small space and simultaneous indirect fire from the ground crossing through the air space, coordination and deconfliction were of great importance. In so-called high-density air space control zones the principle of ‘vertical spacing’ of resources was applied.
and within those air columns, in their turn, deconfliction. Also the deconfliction with existing air routes was important, and sometimes civilian air routes had to be temporarily closed for military operations. A continued stationing of radar stations and the use of Airborne Early Warning Control and Surveillance was, and is, paramount for a safe use of the air space over Afghanistan.

The fourth observation concerns the air-ground synchronisation and integration. An important aspect in this is the doctrinal approach of land and air force units. Land-bound units decentralised this planning and execution, while air force personnel embraced the adage ‘centralised planning, decentralised execution’. The latter applied to the daily ATO process, which involved the matching of scarce resources with a multitude of requests, but it did not apply to the timely planning and fine-tuning of operations, which in 2007 were still two separate processes.

The idea had also taken hold that at any time there were enough air forces available to lend support in any situation. Certainly during the summer and fall of 2007 this assumption was not always justified. In spite of the fact that ‘Troops in Contact’ (TIC) were almost always supported from the air, it meant that the requested and planned deployment of air forces in support of ground commanders was regularly non-existent. Nevertheless, in the area of air-ground synchronisation and integration much progress was made in 2007, to such an extent even that by the end of the year it had become standard use for timely combined-joint planning meetings to be held in preparation of upcoming operations. Even so, further optimisation of synchronised and integrated combined-joint thinking in the area of planning, fine-tuning and execution of operations remained of vital importance.

The fifth aspect to play a major role was the caveats: regulations for the deployment of own troops, which were specified nationally to NATO and which the commanders had to take into account. Virtually every country had its own caveats and restrictions, sometimes limited, sometimes far-reaching. The caveats were mainly of a geographical (deployment was limited to certain areas) and operational nature. An example of the latter was the restriction of some countries that certain airfields must not be used at night. The caveats were a point of concern for the commander, but at the same time a political reality. Nevertheless, limiting the effect of the caveats as far as possible and bringing down their numbers to a minimum, remained an issue that demanded constant attention.

Sixth, there was the subject of ‘collateral damage’, which ISAF did all it could to prevent. Precise ‘Rules of Engagement’, a stringent ‘Collateral Damage Estimate’ process,
the requirement of positive identification and correct information on the local population's ways of life and the right choice of weapons emphatically determined the use of resources. Regrettably, in spite of all precautions, it can never be fully possible to prevent any civilians from getting killed. What must be remarked here, is that in some cases the opposing forces deliberately position civilians in those dangerous circumstances in order to so discredit the foreign troops in Afghanistan and to be able to conduct strategic information campaigns. Another challenge is the paradox of the timeliness and accuracy of information. In more than one instance ‘Opposing Militant Forces’ (OMF) claimed large numbers of civilian casualties, with the national Afghan and international media almost always reacting immediately and ready to find fault with. A careful appreciation of the situation on the side of ISAF usually cost more time, which, by definition meant that the time needed for careful scrutiny caused a strategic backlog in countering the often incorrect information coming from the opponent, who did not discriminate between a deployment of ISAF resources and that of the Coalition/Operation Enduring Freedom.

Lessons

In spite of the positive role the air forces have played in the Afghan theatre of operations, it is also possible to draw a number of lessons in the area of air-ground synchronisation and integrations and air space management.

Thus, it appears that a more result-oriented approach - also known as effects-based approach - with regard to planning and execution must be adopted. Units should not specifically ask for an F-15 or F-16, but clearly state what effect they are seeking. The experts, in this case air force personnel, can then make an assessment of what the best resource is to achieve the desired effect. Furthermore, there is room for improvement with regard to planning. Especially in periods when the operational pace goes up, a better planning is of the essence in order to be able to anticipate with regard to the desired resources and numbers.

Air transport was used effectively, but not always effectively enough. A better planning system, improved coordination and a reduction of caveats can lead to a greater efficiency in the air transport.

Finally, lessons can be learned with regard to the right deployment options of air forces. Air deployment is still too often viewed as ‘flying artillery’. Air forces, however, can be deployed in a much wider range of operations. Thus, they can create a broad
spectrum of kinetic and non-kinetic effects. A good understanding of those possibilities gives a ground commander more options for requesting the right support and to further optimise his own effort.

Reconstruction and development of the Afghan civilian aviation

To end, a brief reflection of the reconstruction and development of the Afghan civilian aviation is in order here. Airfields in an environment such as Afghanistan were and are of strategic importance. They form the gateways into the country and they provide civilians and government officials in Afghanistan with the means to cover large distances in relatively short periods of time and to make the peripheral areas accessible.

In the Afghan Compact it had been laid down clearly what should be aimed for. It came down to the building up of Kabul International Airport (KAIA) and Herat as international, ICAO–compliant airfields. Furthermore, Kandahar, Masar-e-sharif and Jalabad were to be built up as regional airfields and nine other airfields were to be developed as domestic capacities (amongst which was Tarin Kowt). Apart from these 14 airfields Afghanistan had some 40 locations that could qualify more or less as airfields and that also required further development.

From the Regional Airports Task Force, established for the purpose, in which DCOM Air together with the deputy Minister of Transport and Aviation acted as chair, much attention was given to the rehabilitation of the international and regional airfields in Afghanistan. Great progress was made here, not only with respect to infrastructure, but also airport functions, such as training of specialists (meteorology, fire fighting, air traffic control, et cetera). Much time was also invested in improving management and control on the ministerial and airport level. In this way Afghans are enabled to define, initiate and realise their own material needs better.

With the opening of the rehabilitated airport terminal at KAIA and with the planned completion of a new terminal, as well as the many infrastructural facilities, a further opening up of KAIA seemed logical. The limiting factor, however, was the safety aspect. Only with the establishment of a credible airport security in 2008 do further steps in the direction of the development of the airport seem feasible. All the same, the Afghans have shown that during the Hadj season (pilgrimage to Mecca) they have made great progress with regard to the planning, effort and handling of great numbers of passengers. In 2007 the three large airfields, Kabul, Kandahar and Herat, were better equipped for their tasks than ever before. This is a hopeful development, indeed.
Conclusion

As an individual soldier sent out and as DCOM Air/Dir ACE at the Kabul Headquarters, 2007 was a fascinating year for me. ISAF was intensely involved in supporting the Afghan government and the development of the country. The many thousands of servicemen, the international community and the Afghans themselves have worked hard to create better circumstances. It has been a slow, but continuing progress.

In 2007 the air forces played an important role in the execution of the ISAF mission. Without the availability and deployment of a large range of resources the mission would have been seriously curtailed in a large number of situations. Besides, in many instances the air forces made for the asymmetric advantage for our troops against the OMF at exactly the right time. Without the strong involvement and effort of the many thousands of men and women, along with the support from their home front, the execution of this ISAF mission would not have been possible. A word of thanks and, in particular, respect is in order here.

I look back with great pleasure on my tour in Afghanistan. The involvement of the various players within ISAF, the Afghan government, the international community, and many others, and the results achieved have strengthened my conviction that Afghanistan will make further steps ahead. In that sense this tough mission was more than worthwhile.

Notes

1. Lieutenant General F. (Freek) H. Meulman is Deputy Chief of Defence of the Netherlands Armed Forces.
Police reform

Hans Hovens

NL-ARMS, 2009, 307-332

Introduction

Almost continually Afghanistan has had a national police force which, centrally controlled, served the interests of the government in a repressive manner. Dependent on the signature of the regime, the role and realisation of its task differed. Where in the nineteen-sixties and seventies the emphasis lay mainly on the continuation of the established power, in the subsequent period it was broadened to also realise the communist ambitions. In the Taliban period the communist ambitions were replaced by a striving to realise the conservative reading of the Shari‘a.

The armed police organisation along military lines, however, has never shown itself to be strong or effective. Corruption, abuse of power and lack of trust from the population increased the problem of ensuring law and order from Kabul even to the remotest corners of the country.

In predominantly tribal areas the Arbakee proved to be an effective instrument. This tribal police stood close to the population, but did not play a role in many western eyes, as they did not have a permanent character and used methods of coercion for which there were no (legal) regulations.

This contribution aims to provide an answer to the question what efforts the international community, including the Netherlands, is making in the realisation of an adequate level of security and police reform in the present-day Afghanistan. In doing so, the article investigates the extent to which activities of these international organisations are consistent and contribute to the result intended.

It begins with a description of the activities that have been carried out since 2002, in which these efforts and the international actors involved in them are considered in context. Also, the vision on the Afghan police and the organisation the Afghan government deems necessary will be discussed. Besides, the plans for the construction and reform of the police force will be addressed, after which a first balance will be drawn up of six years of police reform. The article is concluded with a number of observations.
The start

After the US-led coalition had put an end to the Taliban regime, all Afghan political parties (except the Taliban) agreed to the terms of the Bonn Agreement, and on 5 December 2001 an interim government under Hamid Karzai was elected. The subsequent adoption of Security Council Resolution 1386 on 20 December 2001 opened the way for ISAF, one of whose tasks was to support the interim government in the construction and reform of the Afghan security sector. Police reform was one element in the programme for the Security Sector Reform (SSR).

At the end of 2001 and the beginning of 2002 the situation in the Afghan police force was far from positive. While in early 2002 there were still 50,000 to 70,000 police officers, the long civil war had demanded its toll. The often under-staffed police stations in the provinces and districts came under the influence of the faction leaders and their militias. The influence of the factions within the Northern Alliance was increased during the first year of the interim government by the then minister of the Interior, with former militia members being appointed in senior positions within the force. Most of these fighters had not had any police training or experience, whereas some had been trained in the communist period. The police force lacked discipline, formal policies and regulations, salary, facilities, materiel, uniforms, and (most of all) trust from the public. The ethnic composition of the largely illiterate police force was unbalanced at the start of the reconstruction, with many senior police functions being in the hands of Tajiks.

The situation in the Afghan police force was further exacerbated in the early period by a wide-spread corruption inside the force as well as at the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), and the strong ties between the police and world of crime. The interim government of Afghanistan inherited a police force which needed to be built up entirely from scratch.

The foreign actors involved

Shortly after the installation of the Afghan interim government a first international donor conference was held in Tokyo. Apart from the Afghan interim government, also Japan, the United States, the EU and Saudi-Arabia took part in the talks. In the closing statement the importance of security was acknowledged.

In the spring of 2002 two donor conferences specifically devoted to the reconstruction of the security sector were held in Geneva under the auspices of the G8. In the conference in April the donor countries reached an agreement on the build-up of the security sector in Afghanistan. The countries chose a ‘five-pillar’ approach, in which each
of the pillars would be the responsibility of one country. Thus, the US took the lead in the build-up of the Afghan National Army (ANA), Japan in the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme, the UK in the anti-drugs campaign, Italy in the reform of the juridical system, and Germany in the build-up of the Afghan National Police (ANP).  

Shortly after the signing of the Bonn Agreement, Germany sent a fact-finding mission, the results of which were presented in a first donor conference in February 2002 in Berlin. Germany announced it was prepared to rehabilitate the Kabul police academy and police stations for 10 million euros, to provide vehicles, train the trainers, help with the reorganisation of the police and realise the coordination of the donor activities related to police reform. During a second donor conference in March Germany presented its plans. In the same month the ministers of the MOI and the Federal Republic of Germany signed an agreement, in which the tasks of the Projektgruppe Polizeiaufbau Afghanistan – German Police Project Office (GPPO) were laid down. These tasks were the following:

- advising in the building up of an Afghan police force committed to the rule of law and the protection of human rights;
- assisting with the training and education of police recruits;
- assisting with the setting up of a police academy;
- implementing bilateral aid in the build-up of police funds;
- coordinating the international support in the build-up of the Afghan police force.  

Together with the MOI the objectives for the new police organisations were established. The plans for the new ANP encompassed a build-up in three phases, the first of which would be the creation of a deployable police force in the capital. In the second phase the police was to expand to the provinces. In this way a regularly paid, ethnically balanced and professionally trained and deployable police force would be formed, under Afghan responsibility. During the last phase Germany’s role was to gradually become less prominent. In the middle of March 2002 the first team of German police officers arrived in Kabul to begin work.

On the request of the Interim government and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) a Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOFTA) was established in order to enable the police to return to operation in the entire country. LOFTA covers the police-related expenditure of the government and the costs of project activities undertaken in cooperation with the MOI, with the following prioritisation:
1. allowances and salaries of police officers;
2. purchase, operation and maintenance of non-lethal police equipment;
3. repair, rehabilitation, operation and maintenance of police department premises;
4. gender mainstreaming; and
5. institutional development.12

On 24 September 2002 the Police Academy in Kabul could open its gates again and a three-year police officer course and a one-year training programme for NCOs was begun.13 In August 2005 the first 251 police officers graduated, and with that the first step of the plan to begin training the backbone of a new, national ANP committed to constitutional principles was realised.14

The US assumes a more prominent position

In early 2003 it became clear that the training of police officers had not had enough attention up to that moment. This lack of attention for the training of police officers and the pace at which the German programme was executed prompted the US to become increasingly involved in the police build-up and reform in Afghanistan. The Americans wanted to have a sufficient presence of the ANP before the presidential elections of 2004. They made available $24 million for the establishment of a Central Training Centre (CTC) in Kabul, in order to train police officers fast, and in May 2003 the CTC could begin its training. Initially, the programme was controlled from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) at the US Embassy. For the realisation of the programme, which had been designed in cooperation with the Afghan government and Germany, the US mainly depended on third parties, and the private company DynCorp was hired. Fairly soon after this company had started training in Kabul seven Regional Training Centres were set up, and the training of police officers all over the country was begun. In the course of 2004 the White House and the Department of Defense voiced their increasing concern about the failing effort of the American State Department. Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense, indicated he was worried that the efforts undertaken by the US and NATO with regard to counter-insurgency were undermined by the police reform.15 A combined decision of the American State Department and the Department of Defense finally caused the training programme to reside with the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A).

Although the US is not the leading country in the police reform, the Americans invested $2.1 billion in financial aid and personnel in the build-up of the ANP between 2002 and 2006.16 In comparison, the GPPO spent $70 million on police reform in Afghanistan in the same period. By the end of 2008 CSTC-A had about 2,500 people involved in the police reform and some 550 DynCorp staff had been hired by INL.17
Since June 2007 the GPPO has been incorporated in the EU police mission (EUPOL-AFGHANISTAN), which by now counts 228 specialists, most of whom are police officers, mainly stationed at the Kabul Headquarters.18

The volume of the contribution of the UN to Afghanistan has been limited so far, a small group of police officers advising on the police reform to the Special Representative in Kabul. The influence of this advisory group has mainly been restricted to lending support during the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2004 and 2005. Thus, the UN did the training, and assisted in the operational planning, and the purchasing of vehicles, fire arms and other materiel, so that the ANP was able to meet its responsibility for the security surrounding the elections.

Apart from the international actors, some twenty countries are involved in the police reforms, with small-scale police projects, in which civilian and military police are active in their Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) capacity.

Reform coordination and an incident in Kabul

During the conference of 1 February 2006 in London the Afghan government together with the international community made new agreements on reconstruction in the ‘Afghanistan Compact’. This agreement is a reflection of the blueprint that the Karzai government presented in the interim Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) at the London conference.19 In both documents the reconstruction in three pillars is sketched: security, good governance and human rights, and economic and social development. The targets for security are a national stabilisation, an increase in the maintenance of the law and improvement of the individual security of every Afghan. The Compact provides the framework for the efforts of the international community for the period up to 2011. In order to guarantee compliance with the agreement, the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), in which the Netherlands also participates, was established. In the mean time, the Board has also incorporated the International Police Coordination Board (IPCB).20 This commission is a German and US initiative, which came about during a meeting of police advisers in Dubai in April 2006. Events later that year ensured that all ‘stakeholders’ in the police reform in Afghanistan joined the initiative during a second meeting in Dubai in October 2006. The objective of IPCB is to improve the coordination of the efforts with regard to the police domain and to bring about a synergy between the different (national) programmes within the police reform.

The growing awareness that the efforts in the area of police reforms had not borne much fruit yet, turned into the realisation that they had actually failed after an inci-
dent on 29 May 2006. During the morning rush hour in a road accident involving an American convoy, in which five Afghan civilians had been killed, serious riots broke out in Kabul. Several hundreds of protesters marched on the administrative centre of the city and directed their anger at the buildings of the international organisations, guest houses, restaurants and government buildings. Some twenty people were killed, almost two hundred were wounded and the damage was considerable, the ANP not being able to stop the demonstrators. Several police officers took off their uniforms and joined the protestors, while their manner of operating clearly showed that they were neither trained for this kind of situations, nor that they had water cannon, tear gas and stand-by equipment at their disposal. Having no other option, the police officers used fire arms to disperse the crowd. This led to an escalation of the violence in many cases. The demonstration showed the frustration among certain sections of the population with the lack of progress in the police reform, on the one hand, and the inability of the ANP to control the demonstrations, on the other. The demonstrators held the government and the foreigners responsible for it.

Focused District Development programme

The disappointing results did not remain unnoticed. In spite of the efforts in the area of training, the US, Germany, other coalition partners and the Afghan government, found that building up and developing an effective, efficient and self-sustaining police force costs time and that the ANP can be an answer to the need for internal security. The joint report of the American State Department and the Department of Defense, which was published at the end of 2006, even stated that the level of the ANP is “far from adequate”. In the report it was emphasised that the mentor programme, following the training, must be extended and that the management of the various programmes within the police reform needed an overhaul.

Together with the Afghan government and other international actors the CSTC-A took the initiative in 2007 for the Focused District Development (FDD) programme, which is aimed at training the ANP per district, reorganising it and mentoring it. The programme mainly focuses on the uniformed police, which have to gain the trust of the population and at the same time see after the national interests. Through the ISAF Regional Commands the resources and the training and subsequent mentorship are concentrated and organised on the district level. This is done by using the various programmes the RTC provides and by employing the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). The FDD programme starts with an assessment of the police district by the District Assessment and Reform Team, which consists of a Provincial Mentor team, representatives of the MOI and other ministries, and - in some cases - other international actors. The assessment leads to a physical examination and selection of new leaders, the drawing up of
the materiel lists and facilities, mapping the relation between the police and local leaders, and the professionalism. At the end of 2007 a start was made with the first seven districts.24

The ‘blueprint’ for the ANP

After the above description of the development of the international support for the police reform over the years, the manner in which the ANP must be shaped will be addressed. This is done by means of a description of the positioning and the long-term objectives for the ANP, the police organisation and the strength, the composition and the various training programmes.

Role and position of the ANP

The basis for the ANP was laid down in the Afghan Police law of 2005. Article 2 of this law places the ANP under the responsibility of the MOI, and charges it with the maintenance of public order and security,25 where public security is explained as a situation in which the legal system, freedom, human dignity and the physical and materiel safety are guaranteed. The law, which mainly concerns the tasks and authorities of the police, does not provide clarity with regard to the positioning of the ANP, a vision on the future ANP, the policing method to be employed and the core values for the police.

The ANDS, published in 2006, indicates that Afghanistan is striving towards the creation of an affordable, professional, national police which operates within the constraints of internationally accepted legal standards, with respect for human rights. The ANDS further states that the police must be able to protect the local population from terrorists and illegal armed resistance and must be able to enforce the rule of law in the entire country. The ANP falls under the direction and control of the MOI, while at the same time it will remain responsive to the needs of the local communities.26 In 2008 the ICPB phrased the vision for the ANP in a background paper as follows:27

ensures security and prevents crime and disorder, including terrorism and armed anti-Government activity, by enforcing the law to protect the rights, values and humanity of all people, in a professional, non-discriminatory, accountable and trustworthy manner. The ANP improves security together with the community.

The paper further gives direction to the development and attitude of the police. Thus, taking into account the law, it has to respect the principles of Islam and ethnic and gender values. The document concludes by mentioning a number of core values for the ANP: professional and disciplined; honest and brave; objective and impartial, loyal to the profession and the constitution; accountable; transparent; efficient, and close to
the population. Although there is no actual Afghan vision on the police, a picture is beginning to emerge of a centrally controlled police force which has to strengthen the authority from Kabul in the country, keep order and peace and maintain the law. This ANP must be in contact with the local population and gain their trust and, moreover, live up to the basic principles of a democratic police (wherever possible).

**Organisation and strength**

The organisation of the ANP has a departmental part and a nationally organised, executive part. Within the MOI the deputy ministers for Security and Police and Counter-Narcotics are responsible for the political management of all police activity. The deputy minister for Security and Police has a national command centre in his staff and controls six departments. Article 3 of the Police Law stipulates that the actual police work is carried out in contingents and units in the capital, the provinces and the districts. In order to better coordinate the security measures by means of a parallel structure (with the ANA) and to decrease the span of control for the ministry, the region was introduced as a new level in 2006. The Afghan government does not have a comparable level, with the exception of the ANA.

The ANP is built up of several types of police units, the largest of which is the Afghan uniformed police (AUP), responsible for the execution of the daily tasks of the police in districts and provinces. Another police unit is the Afghan border police (ABP), which sees to the security along the borders and on the international airports. The responsibility of the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) is the maintenance of public order in the large cities and it serves as a quick-reaction force for the AUP. From 2006-autumn 2008 the Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP) existed. This unit, which has since then been incorporated into the AUP, was mainly intended as a ‘quick-fix’ in order to deal with the Taliban attacks. Finally, the ANP also encompasses the Afghan Highway Police (AHP) and the counter-narcotics police of Afghanistan (CNPA). The AHP, which is responsible for the security on the main highways, was formally disbanded in mid-2006 because of the corruption inside the force and its ineffectiveness. The personnel, 3,400 men, were reorganised over the AUP and the ABP. In early 2009 some elements of the AHP still appear to be active and to function adequately. The Stand-by Police and the Customs Police were also disbanded. The CNAP, with its 2,264 personnel, comes directly under the Deputy Minister for Counter-Narcotics Affairs and is responsible for investigation and maintenance of the narcotics legislation. It incorporates, amongst others, a unit that takes care of the destruction of narcotics or the raw materials.

A final point in this context concerns the strength of the ANP. On the basis of earlier calculations by the GPPO, the personnel ceiling (tashkeel) for the ANP was set at
62,000 by the Afghan government in November 2005.\textsuperscript{32} This ceiling was to reflect a balance between the security need of the county and the ability to bear the costs on a sustained basis. In April 2007 the JCMB decided on a temporary increase of the \textit{tashkeel} to 82,000.\textsuperscript{33}

\section*{Composition}

A proportionate representation of the various ethnic entities and an active gender policy form the two spearheads in the further development of Afghanistan,\textsuperscript{34} and for that reason they are also relevant for the ANP. One of the challenges within the police reforms is the lack of women in the ANP. According to the UN, in the autumn of 2008 there were approximately 483 female police officers working inside the force and a number were being trained.\textsuperscript{35} The importance of participation of women in the ANP is both a practical and an ideological one. Thus, a larger number of women officers within the ANP will be able to foster or facilitate the contact between Afghan women and the police, and as a result, issues such as forced marriages and rape can be discovered more easily and dealt with in criminal proceedings. Apart from that a larger number of police women is in line with the Afghan ambition of creating a greater or more proportionate representation of women on the labour market.

A larger participation of women within the ANP seems to flounder for four reasons. Thus, Murray indicates that, first of all, the means are lacking to implement the gender policy and that the political will or power is absent to bring about those changes.\textsuperscript{36} The deteriorating security situation and the increase in attacks of insurgents on police women, such as the fatal attack on lieutenant colonel Malalai Kakar in September 2008, and resistance from the Afghan society and ANP, too, form a barrier for women to apply for a job within the police force.\textsuperscript{37}

\section*{Education and training}

The ANP is composed of police patrolmen, NCOs and officers, a composition which is historically determined and it is unclear whether these categories – each with their own required school background, education and training – will be continued.\textsuperscript{38} For the level of patrolman, there is no formal school background requirement. They follow a basic training programme of eight weeks in the CTC in Kabul or in one of the regional RTCs. An important part of the training is devoted to skills and drills, firearms and shooting training (pistol and rifle), physical training and tactics. Less than half of the training time is spent on matters such as values and norms, the constitution, penal law and law of criminal procedure, human rights, the use of force, and practical things such as traffic and police techniques.\textsuperscript{19} It is not clear whether the use of force and firearms is also dealt with during shooting training. In the mean time, the basic course has
been extended with a second eight-week course. While the firearms training and the police station defence take two to eight weeks, most of the classes are concerned with expanding the professionalism of the ANP. The four-months training for ANCOP, a gendarmerie-like force, is applauded in Afghanistan as well as by the international community. The force – which is well equipped and salaried – is intended to react quickly to situations of unrest, riots and national emergencies and is taking over places at the AUP on a temporary basis.

The aspirant NCO must have nine years of education under his belt prior to the start of his education at the Police Academy in Kabul. The education which lasted one year until recently, was brought back to four and a half months in 2008. In order to qualify as an aspirant officer a candidate must have followed education for twelve years. Once he has been admitted, he has to go through a three-year course.

Dutch contribution to the police reform

While the Dutch contribution to the stabilisation and further reconstruction of Afghanistan already dated as far back as 2002, the direct involvement in the reform of the ANP did not begin until the period in which a contribution was made through the PRT Baghlan. This contribution got a further impulse within the PRT Uruzgan and was expanded with the deployment of the EUPOL mission in mid-2007, when a number of Royal Netherlands Marechaussee (KMar) officers working within the staff of Regional Command- South (RC-(S)) were assigned to carry out activities related to the reform of ANP. Below, the PRT Baghlan, the PRT Uruzgan and EUPOL periods will be described.

PRT Baghlan

After the Dutch government had decided at the end of June 2004 to become the lead nation of a PRT in the northern province of Baghlan, a base camp was set up in Pol-e Khomri on 1 October of the same year. The Dutch PRT was active, among other things, in the areas of stability and security and the security sector reform. The KMar also made up part of the mission, which was to last until 1 October 2006.

The ANP in this province consisted of about 1,000 AUP and 300 AHP officers. They were mostly built around former militias, had a military attitude and had a strict single-headed leadership. Both forces had a strong military culture, a high degree of illiteracy and, in view of the KMar functionaries, little know-how of police work. The ANP had an extremely weak infrastructure and the local police units lacked resources, such as vehicles, radios, walkie-talkies, uniforms and specific police means. Initially, the KMar contribution was limited to making available one police liaison officer, whose task it
was to advise the PRT on police matters and maintain contact with the AUP and AHP commanders in the province, the district chiefs and fellow liaison officers.\textsuperscript{45} From the third rotation the KMar contribution was expanded with four trainers, who over a period of two years took some 300 patrolmen through basic training, teaching them, amongst others, approaching techniques, suspects’ rights, traffic and investigative techniques in two-week basic courses.\textsuperscript{46} As the training was hampered by the trainees’ illiteracy, they also received language courses along with the training in police skills. At the same time local trainers were educated and lesson plans translated into Dahri and Pashtun. On top of that, the PRT built a police post and installed several radios and relay stations, enabling the local police commanders to communicate with their posts.\textsuperscript{47}

The KMar officers maintained contact with their international colleagues and representatives of DynCorps, who were responsible for paying the salaries to the ANP personnel. Sollie’s survey shows that the activities falling within the police reform were very fragmented.\textsuperscript{48} Instructors of the several PRTs met in Kabul once every three months, during which presentations were given on the progress. KMar trainers in the mission indicated that the differences between the various PRTs were great and that there was hardly any direction, with every region operating on its own initiative. On 1 October 2006 Hungary took over the task in Baghlan.

\textbf{PRT Uruzgan}

Even before the tasks of the PRT Baghlan were taken over, Task Force Uruzgan (TFU) became operational,\textsuperscript{49} a task force consisting of approximately 1,300 personnel, working from the provincial capital of Tarin Kowt (‘Camp Holland’) and in Deh Rawod (‘Camp Hadrian’). The core of the TFU is made up of the PRT, and its tasks are roughly comparable to the ones of the PRT Baghlan. The mandate of the mission was extended with two years until 1 August 2010.

The TFU is one of the forces falling under command of RC-(S), whose area of operation encompasses the southern provinces of Helmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan and Zabul. Just like any other region, RC-(S) has an Afghanistan Regional Security Integration Command (ARSIC), which consists of a Regional Police Advisory Command (RPAC) and a Regional Corps Advisory Command (RCAC).\textsuperscript{50} The RPAC is responsible for the implementation of the FDD plan and organises the training, mentoring and monitoring of all ANP units, the RCAC being its counterpart for the ANA. The RPAC, which comes under final responsibility of the CSTC-A in Kabul, has at its disposal one RTC, trainers and a number of Police Mentoring Teams (PMTs) or Police Operational Mentoring Liaison Teams (POMLTs).\textsuperscript{51} Within RC-(S) there are several PMTs active.\textsuperscript{52}
One of the spearheads for the PRT is the build-up and reform of the ANP, and to that end the KMar is cooperating with its colleagues of the US (CSTC-A, DynCorps), EUPOL, Australia and Afghanistan. The most important element of the work is giving advice to the local police and giving practical training. Apart from that, the PRT also provides the equipment for the police officers, and a number of police stations and posts have been built. Moreover, an OCCP, a provincial operational coordination centre, has been established in order to facilitate the coordinated deployment of the various services and, by doing so, increase the security in the province. Finally, although originally a training was planned in the RTC Kandahar, in March 2009, a provincial training centre (PTC) opened its doors in Camp Holland, the bad security situation in Uruzgan, but also the entrance requirements being the cause of the poor recruitment results in Kandahar.

Although the task of the approximately ten-man strong KMar detachment initially came down to reforming the police that was already present (AUP and AHP) into one AUP, the bulk of the work since mid-2007 has been the training of the ANAP. While the province has six districts, the AUP activities were mainly concentrated in Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawod, with ANAP personnel occupying checkpoints in villages and important thoroughfares.

Since October 2008 Uruzgan has also been part of the FDD. The first intake of 267 officers went to the RTC in Kandahar for a two-month training period and after successfully completing it returned to Uruzgan in December, where they were monitored by the first Dutch PMTs, consisting of KMar and infantry personnel. They should be able to lift the professionalism of the ANP. To that end, the KMar personnel will mainly focus on the execution of police tasks, while the infantry specialists will take care of security and the teaching of self-defence tactics. In April 2009 the number of teams was expanded to two.

The activities bound up with the police reforms in Uruzgan were initially hampered by the fact that it was virtually impossible to make agreements with the district chief of police, Mohammed Quasum.

Apart from the problem of corruption, illiteracy and the security situation formed barriers to a quick reform of the ANP. The many courses that had to be taught and the security situation made it difficult to coach and monitor the ANP, as there was not enough time and room to do so on location, with KMar personnel only being allowed to leave the camp with force protection. In Chora follow-up and refresher courses were given to ANP personnel for some time. Finally, the Netherlands contributes financially to the further build-up of the CNPA in Uruzgan.
EUPOL mission

In June 2007 the European Union Police Mission Afghanistan (EUPOL) was launched. As was said above, this mission builds on the GPPO and its task is to assist the Afghan government in creating a sustainable and efficient police force. In the execution of this task EUPOL focuses on monitoring, mentoring, advising and training of personnel working at the strategic level. Due to the lack of adequate security measures and means the support of the operational levels is virtually impossible.

Making available some twenty EUPOL functionaries at the IPCB, EUPOL contributes to the strategic policy development for the ANP. The bulk of the policemen sent out there is assigned to the five RPCAs, RTCs and the PRTs led by the European member states.

In the mean time, EUPOL has also become active within the RC-(S) AOR, and, moreover, at the end of 2008 coordination between RPAC and EUPOL was set up in Kandahar. Thus, the UK ‘sponsors’ three EUPOL functionaries who are to be accommodated at the RC-(S) headquarters. It is the intention that Canada and the Netherlands will also contribute one functionary each.

The Netherlands has decided to contribute nine functionaries to EUPOL. They are seven KMar personnel, four of whom are stationed in Kandahar and three in Uruzgan, and two civilian experts in the field of gender and finances, who are to be posted at the EUPOL headquarters in Kabul. The task of the KMar functionaries is to mentor and advise the local ANP leadership. They spend much time on training, working in the OCCP, and providing computer lessons by the CID advisor. There were also five ANP officers educated to become trainers, so that they could take the training into their own hands after taking the PTC into use. Monitoring and coaching ‘patrolmen’, however, is not possible, as EUPOL functionaries are only allowed to work in secure work locations and have to be moved in armoured vehicles.

Six years later

After six years of police reform and two more years to go for attaining the objectives laid down in the Compact, it is time to make up a provisional balance. Below, the security situation in Afghanistan, the vision on the future ANP, the coherence between police reform and other reforms in the context of the rule of law, the own (financial) sustainability of the Afghan government for the planned ANP, the education and training of the ANP, the coherence of the efforts of the international community to build up and reform the ANP, and the Dutch efforts will be discussed.
Security situation

As was indicated above, guaranteeing a secure environment is a necessary condition for the further development of Afghanistan. In several studies it is shown that this security is not all it should be by far or is even deteriorating, compared to the situation prior to the US intervention. The Taliban and other insurgents seem to have gained ground, the narco-trade remains a serious problem and the corruption within the Afghan government is difficult to root out. Especially in the southern part of Afghanistan and around the capital Kabul the security situation seems to have worsened. It is obvious that this situation is bad for publicity.

Nevertheless, one study shows that, although it has decreased over the past year, the trust in the ANP is, generally speaking, high with nearly 80 per cent of the respondents indicating they had trust in the police. It is also shown that the trust in the country is lower than in the urban areas and that it is significantly lower in the south. The respondents assess the professionalism and extent of training of the ANP to be so low that they think foreign assistance is necessary. At the same time, fear of crime and actual experiences with criminal activities in the southern provinces have increased considerably. Among the incidents mentioned are violent offences, threats of violence (30 per cent), bribe/extortion (15 per cent), and abduction (8 per cent) crimes of property, such as theft preceded by forcible entry/plundering (15 per cent), theft of livestock (13 per cent).

Also the poppy cultivation and the production are still a source of concern. While they were booming in the first five years, they have fallen over the past year, a decrease which is the result of the pressure exerted by the governors, shuras and village elders to limit to poppy cultivation. More important causes, however, were the effects of the market: the surplus of opium, on the one hand, and the high prices of food (as a result of a drought), on the other, made it more attractive to grow other produce. The study of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reveals that the poppy cultivation and opium production are concentrated in a limited part of Afghanistan and that the southern provinces play a major role in the narco-trade. Insurgent groups have great influence in the south and organised crime can profit from the protection they receive from the insurgents. In many instances there is also police involvement in these criminal activities.

Shared vision?

A common vision on the role of the ANP and a strategy for attaining it are of major importance for the success of the police reform in Afghanistan. In this respect, Wilder, and others with him, point at the necessity to review, together with the Afghan government, the German approach of a civilian law and order enforcing police and the
American approach, in which the police plays an important counter-insurgency role as a security force.73

Murray indicates that two different approaches had come into being, each with their own advantages, but conflicting in their philosophies. The German approach seems mainly directed at the long-term objectives of the reform, for which durable improvements of providing security and justice need to be realised. It would require a cautious and rational build-up from whatever foundation already present, in which the organisation was to be a mixture of the continental police model, within which the police is legitimised and controlled by a central government, and (aspects of) community policing. Although Germany underlined the temporary establishment of the ANAP for the vulnerable provinces, it remained steadfast in its view that the separation between the army and the police should not become blurred. The ANP was not to degenerate into a paramilitary force. The underlying values for the execution of the police function in the German vision are: professionalism, reliability, accountability (supervision and transparency), responsiveness, justice and integrity.74

The US approach is mainly directed at achieving security on the short term: activities must be mostly focused on the immediate, measurable improvement (effective counter-insurgency operations), the shoring up of the legitimate government authority by providing resources and training and police reform. The underlying values in this approach mainly come down to effectiveness, central control, courage, skillfulness and loyalty. The attention for the training of ‘skills and drills’, tactics and equipment derive from them. As Sherman states, these long-term and short-term approaches are at loggerheads with each other, and competing strategic objectives for the improvement of the management and increasing of security must have caused confusions with regard to the final goal of the ANP reform.75

Marenin links these differences of approach to what he calls the attention gap, referring to the failure of the SSR to distinguish the police from the armed forces and other actors.76 Transferring the responsibility for the activities in the framework of the police reform to the US Department of Defense and the CSTC-A in 2005, is viewed by Murray as a further blurring of the difference between the roles of the police and armed forces in Afghanistan.77

While the establishment of the IPCB was intended to make the police reform more consistent and while it was acknowledged that a common vision on the ANP would be required, the efforts made so far have not led to such a shared vision. The set-up and execution of the FDD can be seen as a compromise solution between the German (long-
term) approach and the original approach of the USA. It remains to be seen whether this helps to clear up the confusion about the final goal of the ANP reform.

Coherence with other reforms

The police reform cannot be viewed in isolation from the rule of law mission. Without adequate legislation and regulation, sufficient and well-trained public prosecutors and judges and a functioning prison system, any police reform is ultimately doomed to fail. In spite of this realisation, the aspects of the rule of law, individually or in their coherence, have not received the desired attention. There are several causes for this. In this respect, Wilder points at the clinging to the various pillars within the SSR, which admittedly has led to successes within the pillars, but may well have been in the way of an integral approach of the reforms within the juridical and police organisations.

The rule of law mission is proceeding less successfully and only little progress is made. There are six causes for this. First of all, the juridical system is administratively complex and strongly influenced by the various factions. It is striking that the MOI has not, or only sparingly, been involved in the changes of the juridical system. This is particularly so for the transfer of the responsibility for the investigation of criminal facts on the basis of the new constitution (article 134), which now has come to lie with the Public Prosecutor, who, however, does not have the capacity needed for it. In the second place, a comprehensive rule of law strategy is absent, which has given specialists from various countries the opportunity to make laws and regulations on an ad hoc basis, often based on their own references rather than what Afghanistan needs. Thirdly, it also proved to be the case that Italy had trouble coordinating the international help. In the fourth place, there appeared to be few suitable and trained judges and public prosecutors, and, fifthly, in many provinces the necessary infrastructure and resources were absent. Finally, the security of the personnel involved could not be guaranteed sufficiently.

Over the past few years a lot has been invested in the formal juridical system, many laws and regulations have been made and the education of (new) judges, public prosecutors and prison staff has been taken up, and a lot of work has gone into ensuring salaries and the availability of an adequate infrastructure and resources.

More and more the attention is coming to lie on the question how to make the formal and (relatively informal) systems exist alongside each other, and a solution is sought in the direction of a sort of hybrid system of law that does justice to the Afghan juridical context, in which culture, the Islam and common laws have a place.
In conclusion, it can be said that the coherence within the rule of law and between the rule of law and the police reform still needs improvement.

Sustainability
One of the important points for the set-up of the ANP was the Afghan government having or being able to create sufficient financial leeway to sustain the police system. While on the basis of GPPO calculations the *tashkeel* at the end of 2005 for the ANP had been established at 62,000, it was decided in early 2007 to increase the personnel ceiling to 82,000 in response to the deteriorating security situation. Where the *tashkeel* in 2005 had been partially based on financial feasibility, it is an open question, bearing in mind the security situation and the scale of corruption and bribery, whether the Afghan government will be able to finance the ANP when the international financial support via the LOFTA is terminated.

Education and training ANP
The education and training of the ANP and the ABP was started in 2003. Several studies show a focus on training large numbers of (prospective) police officers. Thus, the American State Department indicates that the INL has trained more than 97,000 police officers since 2003 via the CSTC-A, including 2,700 functionaries trained via the FDD programme. The Department concludes that with reaching a 78,000-strong police force, the *tashkeel* for 2010 is approaching. The focus on tangible measurable training results is rather in contrast with the progress of the reforms. The situation in which a considerable number of trained policemen quickly leaves the force, also applies to Afghanistan according to Wilder and others.

With the exception of the officer and NCO courses, the education and training are short. Moreover, in the various courses the focus is very much on skills and drills, and the police trainees are mostly trained on the AK 47, and shooting training on heavier weapons, such as rocket launchers, is not an exception. It has been concluded that in Afghanistan, too, people need longer training and the new police officers should be monitored and coached in practice.

Training is only one of the examples of the knowledge gap described by Marenin, and this also holds good for Afghanistan: training courses are often designed by (former) police officers based on their practical experience. They are people whose professionalism is beyond question, but who often are inexperienced educators. Transfer of knowledge, development of competences, but also transfer of values are hardly done justice, amongst others, due to far-from-effective teaching methods. The differences in the various (national) police practices also form an obstacle in the absence of an international
police doctrine; a fact which is even exacerbated by an abundance of courses offered by international organisations, bilateral programmes and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). With several national PRTs and a number of bilateral programmes this situation is no different in Afghanistan, and in the absence of a shared vision on the future ANP this draws heavily on the coordinating role of the IPCB.

In summary, it can be said that the numbers of trained police functionaries are gradually increasing, but that improvements can still be made. More than at present, education and training should be geared to the long-term objectives for the ANP and ABP. Next to transfer of knowledge and development of competence, there should be more room and time to come to a transfer and development of underlying values of the future ANP and ABP. More police expertise in combination with teaching competences are a requirement for this.

**Dutch contribution**

Below, the further concretisation of the Dutch contribution will be presented. It is partially based on the data that have come available through Sollie’s study, the questionnaires and the ensuing correspondence with respondents.

The Dutch contribution to the police reforms up to now has mainly concerned advising the own commander, training police functionaries and mentoring and coaching these local officials. Moreover, a lot of work has gone into the provision of a new infrastructure and resources. The respondents frequently indicate they have been on the road to discuss the progress of the SSR with PRT or TFU commanders, political advisers, and other international representatives within the police reform. A specialist of their own for the rule of law was lacking and was added to the organisation at the beginning of 2007. Although the specialist has undertaken several activities, the extension is not an unqualified success.

With the training of 1,000 ANAP police officers the KMar made a significant training effort in Uruzgan. What is remarkable is that a considerable number of KMar personnel had little or no teaching experience. A look into the composition of the PMTs shows that a number of mentors has no police experience, and it might well be that the employment of the Dutch PMTs could lead to a widening of the attention gap observed by Marenin. Incidentally, all respondents indicate that the impression the ANP gives is one of a (para)military police, characterised by a strong hierarchy, within which decisions are taken at the central level, with no discretionary freedom for the police personnel. The activities were mostly directed at protection, security and repressive action, with frequent use of violence and firearms. Such a police force can indeed be typified as a paramilitary
police or a police along the lines of a continental police model. The respondents state that independence, justice, self-sufficiency, integrity, reliability, transparency, humanity and professionalism belong to the core values on which the future ANP should be built. Conversely, they portray a picture of the ANP in which only a few of these core values are given attention to. According to them, this is caused by the local culture, tribal influences and conflicting interests. One respondent observes that the ANP members also viewed these core values as imposed by the Afghan government or the international community. Again the attention gap emerges, prompting the question with regard to the extent to which the Dutch training and education activities have created a deeper and lasting effect. Incidentally, most respondents indicate that the Netherlands only gets little leeway for its own interpretation and that “the line is that of the US, UK, Canada, and Australia”.

With regard to the importance of the local context for the future ANP opinions concur: of course, there should be as much tie-up with the local customs and needs as possible. They differ, however, over the role and significance of the Shari’a, the common law and the alternative forms of settlement of disputes. It would be wise to take notice of the Afghan desire to come to a hybrid juridical system, in which the formal legal system and the informal form of settlement of disputes exist alongside each other.

In summary, the focus on structure, education and provision of infrastructure and resources prevails also in the Dutch contribution. In that respect, the Netherlands is certainly not unique,97 but it should realise this, and on the basis of that realisation begin to give more attention to the formulation of a clear vision on the ANP and the strategy for attaining it. In this respect, the underlying values play a major role. Attention for the appointment and preparation of ‘reformers’ might contribute to a decrease of the confusion among the ANP personnel, and (connected with it) increase the durability of the reform activities.

**Conclusion**

The security situation in Afghanistan is not yet at the required level. At the same time, the police reform in Afghanistan is no exception in the framework of global police reform in that, here, too, more attention is needed for the local context within which police reform and reform of the legal system are taking place. In Afghanistan this comes down to more attention for the legal tradition of the country where Shari’a and Jirga play an important role.
It can be said that not all reform activities are consistent with each other and that a clear vision for the ANP is absent. It is precisely this which, under pressure of violent resistance of the Taliban, caused a situation in which two conflicting strategies exist alongside each other. For the time being, the development of a civilian police focused on the population and human rights being pushed into the background of a centrally controlled robust (para)military police, seems to continue. The violent actions of the insurgents have led to many fatalities within the ANP and evoke such a reaction. On top of that, the temptation is strong to justify non-observance of human rights by police officials by pointing at the violent confrontations.

Nevertheless, in line with Bayley’s observations, it must be said that observance of human rights can go together indeed with these unfavourable violent environments and will pay off in the end. For most post-conflict states the overall objective of police reform is “to move from a model of policing based on repression and social control to a model based on prevention and investigation”.

Effective crime control and fair trial are two leading principles for the police, which must be capable of creating a secure environment in such a way that the trust of the population is strengthened. Good (and paid) salaries, working conditions, appropriate equipment and infrastructure are absolutely necessary to meet these two principles. Besides, there is still much corruption, and although this problem is acknowledged in Afghanistan and a salary system for the police is slowly emerging, further measures are required.

It must be concluded that, in spite of a modest progress, the reform of the ANP can certainly not be called a success yet. It may also be clear that it will still be hard to attain the set objectives in time. If the reform is to be durable – apart from the problem of the financial sustainability of the police – more attention has to go to a clear vision on the role and function of the police geared to the Afghan context and a related strategy for the attainment of that situation. More consistency with the rule of law and less compartmentalisation within the SSR are needed for that.

The Dutch contribution is (has been) mainly directed at the training and provision of infrastructure and resources. If the Netherlands wants to improve its contribution to the police reform, it will have to be prepared to consider increasing its share, extending its mission and improving its selection and preparation of the personnel it sends out. More than in the past it must select personnel with the ability to think at the strategic level, with knowledge of and experience in the domain of police reform and teaching. It will also have to consider which future role it sees for the ANP and how to achieve it.
Notes

1. Colonel J.L. (Hans) Hovens (Royal Marechaussee) is an associate professor and PhD-candidate at the Military Operational Arts and Sciences section at the Netherlands Defence Academy.


5. Ibid., pp. 109-110.


8. Germany has been involved since the 1950s.


27. Background Paper for Police Vision Statement, received on 29 October 2008 from HM Embassy, Kabul.
29. Based on an interview, Wilder states that many members of the AHP refused to be transferred to the AUP or ABP and deserted taking their uniform and weapons with them. Wilder (2007), p. 13.
30. Correspondence with Captain KMar A.W. de Groot, 18 February 2009.
31. In their war against drugs the US concluded a contract with DynCorps for ten years ($2.1 billion) in the beginning of 2007. DynCorps is deployed in Afghanistan as well.
33. According to data from the ICG Asia Briefing (2008), No 85, December 2008, divided over Uniformed Police (44,319), Civil Order Police (5,365) and Border Police (19,970).

34. See for instance the (I)ANDS.

35. UNDP, Afghanistan Country Office, Statebuilding and Government Support Programme, Fact Sheet, August 2008, p.19. With a total strength of 82,000 the percentage of women does not exceed 0.5% for the time being.


38. ICG Asia Briefing (2008), No 85, pp. 4-5


41. Because the ANCOP does not have links with the local leaders, the population of some regions have asked the ANCOP to stay (ICG Asia Briefing No 85, p. 5).

42. ICG Asia Briefing (2008) No 85, p. 4.


45. Ibid., pp. 164-165. The province Baghlan has 15 districts.


51. The ABP is trained by the Blackwater private company, while DynCorps is mainly involved in training the ANP.

52. Correspondence with Major KMar H. Huisman, 17 November 2008.


55. Sollie (2008), pp. 164-165; Tweede Kamer, 2007-2008, 27925, nr. 287, 19 December 2007. Reported that approximately 1,000 ANAP officers were trained.


65. Sollie (2008), pp. 77-78.

66. The Compact states that by the end of 2010 the ANP and ABP must have reached a situation in which they have “a fully constituted, professional, functional and ethnically balanced Afghan National Police and Afghan Border Police with a combined force of up to 62,000” (in the meantime 82,000) are able “to meet the security needs of the country effectively’ and are ‘increasingly fiscally sustainable’.


68. ICG Asia Briefing (2008), No 85, p. 6.


70. UN Office on Drugs and Crime (2008), p.2.

71. Ibid., pp. 2-8.

72. ICG Asia Briefing (2008), No 85, p. 6.
75. Sherman (2009), p.5.
84. Wilder states that the Police Law (from the year 2005 or 1384) and the Interim Penal Proceedings Law (2004 or 1383) conflict with each other at several points and that certain provisions are not realistic considering the Afghan situation (Wilder (2007), p. 50).
86. Bonn Agreement, Part II. Legal framework and judicial system, article 2; Rome Conference on the Rule of Law in Afghanistan (July 2-3, 2007) Joint Recommendations; Afghan Center for Policy and Human Development (2007).
87. The Compact stated that the ANP should be ‘increasingly fiscally sustainable’. The ANDS also gives indication in this direction.
89. Ibid, p. 31; correspondence with Major KMar Huisman, 17 November 2008; Letter to Parliament of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence (‘Inzake de periodieke stand van zaken over Afghanistan’ (24 September 2007) stated that 40 percent of the trained police officers was not in active service any more.
91. Marenin (2005); Murray (2007).
92. Murray (2007), pp. 119-120. The quality of training and education (and later on monitoring and guiding in practice) comes under pressure when performed by soldiers. Due to shortages of international police CSTC-A was forced to engage soldiers in the training of ANP (Fair and Jones (2009), p. 11).
94. Huiberts-Van Dijk and Teftedarije examined security sector reform more in detail and conclude that this reform mainly focuses on the formal structures and fails to take into account the fact that institutional reform remains incomplete without a change of informal institutions. See: Huiberts-Van Dijk, S., and A. Teftedarija (2009), *Theorizing security sector reform: the institutional approach*, European Consortium for Political Research, paper for the 5th general conference, Potsdam, 2009 (forthcoming).
Partner in development. On the development of the Afghan administration

Michiel de Weger

NL-ARMS, 2009, 333-356

The Afghan government is the subject of this contribution, which investigates how it has developed over time, what the efforts of recent years to build it up have resulted in, and – its actual objective – what it means for foreign militaries, such as the Dutch in Uruzgan at present, to have a weak state as their partner. This is an important issue in the present international security situation. There are many more weak (or failing) states in the world and in many countries there are areas where the influence of the state’s administration is virtually non-existent. Apart from the fact that in the coming years the Dutch armed forces will be involved in Afghanistan in one way or another, it is likely that in the future they will also be committed in other areas with a weak administration. Therefore, being able to operate in an area with a poorly developed government has become an important ability for the Dutch armed forces - Uruzgan offers enough material to draw important lessons from.

In the first section the history of the Afghan government up to the American-led intervention in 2001 will be described, while the second section goes into what has happened since. This is followed by a description of the situation in Uruzgan since the Dutch began to play an active large-scale role there. The fourth section discusses the state of affairs with regard to the role of the Afghan government in the period before, during and after the ‘battle for Chora’ in June 2007, when the Dutch fought a large-scale battle against the Taliban. This makes clear what it in ultimo means for a foreign military to have a weak state as a partner. The final section presents conclusions and formulates several lessons learned, followed by a reflection on the future of Afghanistan and its government.

This chapter does not make use of any theories, models or specific research methods. On the basis of various types of public sources an attempt is made to describe what happened. There is enough literature available on the general history of Afghanistan and its government. Statistical and other quantitative data on the development of the Afghan state, in particular, can be found in the reports and studies of Afghan, foreign and international organisations. These have to be met with suspicion, just like media coverage, as they tend to be politically biased. For the developments in Uruzgan the reports for the Dutch Parliament form an important source, while most information on the clashes
The Afghan government up to the fall of the Taliban

Conditions in Afghanistan did not allow its leaders or people to develop an elaborate system of government. Vogelsang points at the fact that the country is extremely mountainous and rather arid, with few flat areas with enough precipitation to irrigate the fields. Artificial irrigation is a problem, too: there is much snow in winter, but there are hardly any rivers that have water the year round. The consequences are low food production and a low population density. On top of that come centuries of desertification, deforestation, overgrazing and degradation of habitat. Also the many conflicts, foreign influence, governmental neglect, opportunistic behaviour of leaders and a lack of willingness to compromise among the population have always been in the way of the development of the country and a strong government.

Founded and early development

How did the Afghan administration develop up to the fall of the Taliban in 2001? The state of Afghanistan was founded at the end of the nineteenth century as a buffer between the two greatest colonial powers in the region: Great Britain and Russia. Until then the territory had been little more than a loose collection of different peoples, without a common language culture or proud past. The name Afghanistan was coined by the British. The country held many large ethnic minorities, which by now have their own states: Turkmenians, Uzbekians and Tajiks. At present, more Pashtun live in neighbouring Pakistan than in Afghanistan itself.

In 1880 the British proclaimed Abdooer Rahman Khan the new emir of the country. With British guarantees for the external security, British financing and arms, and with the periodic use of violence he imposed his central authority on the various peoples of the territory. In a classic attempt of ‘divide and rule’ he deported many members of the Pashtun tribe in the south, where they were the dominant ethnic entity, to the east and north, where they became a minority. Invoking the Islam, he increased his hold on the traditional religious leaders, and claimed that a jihad was justified against anyone who did not support him and robbed the clergy of their estates and juridical privileges,
which from then on fell to state-trained and state-paid experts. His son, Habiboelah, continued the modernisation of the country from 1901 onwards, introducing hydro-electric plants, telephone lines, roads, the first school for secondary education in Kabul, a military school and a pedagogic training centre. The constitution, instigated by his successor, Amanoellah, provided all citizens with equal rights. The resistance of the traditional leaders made Amanoellah revise the text on a number of points. In spite of the rising opposition he was strong enough to crush a Pashtun rebellion along the border with Pakistan in 1925. After having travelled in Egypt, Italy, France, Germany and Great Britain, an experience which made an indelible impression on him, he decided to increase the pace of his reforms. He wanted a parliament to be elected by all adult males, general conscription and compulsory education for all boys and girls. Men in Kabul should wear western clothes, and women should lay down their veils. He had all citizens registered, established courts of justice, terminated the subsidies to the clan leaders, abolished slavery and forced labour, secularised education, reformed the tax system, founded a national bank and introduced a government budget and a national currency (the afghan). His proposals, however, went much too far for most Afghans, which resulted in riots and a forced abdication in 1929.  

Habidoellah Ghazi began to undo the reforms of his predecessor, but after a brief military campaign he was replaced in the same year by Nadir Sjah, who was a Pashtun, unlike the Tajik Ghazi. He restored order in the country and further reversed the reforms. All legislation was subjected to Islamic law. The importance of the national ‘Great Gathering’, the Loya Jirga, in which the representatives of the ethnic entities met, increased. Tribal leaders were given back their authority over the militias which they had had to yield to the Afghan army. Nadir Sjah did, however, establish freedom of the press and compulsory education. He had roads and communication networks constructed, expanded the banking system and the army. Nadir Sjah was murdered in 1933 by supporters of Amanoellah. From now on, it was not so much kings or emirs who ruled the country, but prime ministers and presidents. Until 1953 the government expanded its influence over the various segments of the Afghan society. A growing number of bureaucrats began to emerge in the cities, the army expanded, the schools and universities got more and more pupils and students and a national bank was re-instituted.

Foreign influence and increasing tensions

The modernisation further increased under prime minister Mohammed Daoed (1953-1963) – this time, however, with substantial foreign aid from the Soviet Union, but also the United States. Daoed tried to carry out land reforms around Kandahar, the Pashtun-dominated region, suppressing the riots that were the result with his army. After a crisis
with Pakistan about incorporating the Pakistani Pashtun area into Afghanistan, Daoed voluntarily stepped down.10

The new prime minister Mohammed Yoesoef took up the path of modernisation once more. A new constitution was introduced, providing the right to education, freedom of property, religion, gathering and press, and an independent legal system. All adults were allowed to vote. In 1965 the first general elections were organised, but the meetings in the National Assembly quickly got out of control. In the streets of Kabul the communists staged large-scale demonstrations, forcing Mohammed Yoesoef to resign. What was more important, though, was that the country began to fall prey to increasing oppositions. A large group of educated young people in the cities, originally coming from the rural areas, but estranged from their traditional backgrounds, could not find any suitable work, and became frustrated with the lack of change. The dominant role of the more conservative provincial representatives in the General Assembly also frustrated the middle classes of Kabul. This hotbed of the disillusioned spawned marxist as well as Islamic-fundamentalist factions, based on ideas from Egypt and Pakistan. In 1973 the two were more or less balanced, but in that year the former prime minister Mohammed Daoed seized power with the support of the marxists and the army. After a bloody military coup the military regime embarked on a series of drastic marxist reforms. The unrest in the country just increased. In 1979 Herat was the centre of a rebellion which was crushed with bombardments, but in other places riots broke out and it was not long before the government had lost all control of large parts of the country.11

Soviet invasion and the Taliban

What follows is much better known in the west. In 1979 the Soviet armies invaded Afghanistan in order to support the pro-Soviet government in Kabul. They were attacked with increasing success by the mujahideen groups, which received money and training from the USA, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and other countries to thwart the Soviet Union. With the retreat of the Soviets in 1989, the Afghan forces began to fight amongst each other and for several years a large group of warlords controlled parts of the country. From 1994 onwards one of the warring factions, the Taliban, began to gain more and more territory, taking Kabul in 1996 and occupying almost all of the country by 2000 (although it is doubtful whether the effectively controlled the North, where they met more opposition) This fundamentalist group imposed heavy restrictions on the population.12 Not much was left intact of the Afghan administration, but, however reprehensible the Taliban regime was, at least in comparison to the warlords period, it was successful in establishing and maintaining law and order.13
The Taliban were not only oppressors, but also had a degree of public support and did not control the whole country. It is often only pointed out that they are extremely religious. This is certainly the case, but the Taliban were also an ethnic entity: 26 of the 27 Taliban leaders were Pashtun. The movement originated from mainly puritan Pashtun students and later was most of all led by Pashtun, especially from the southern Helmand and Kandahar regions in the south of the country. Many of them were determined to subject the other ethnic groups in the country to the traditional conservative and rural Pashtun culture. They did not want a ‘western’ state and could rely, amongst others, on considerable support from the local leaders and part of the population.14 For many Afghans the taking over of power in their region by the Taliban was experienced as a true liberation from the widespread abuse of power and violence from the local warlords. Also because the Taliban announced their arrival and gave their opponents the chance to leave without a fight or merge back again into the population without any reprisals, they succeeded in taking power in the south of the country without resorting to violence. Only in Kabul and the north real violence was used and atrocities committed against the local leaders and population by the Taliban.15 Their hold on the country was never absolute; in some parts the Taliban cooperated with local leaders, while in some places and remoter areas they left the population to govern itself completely. The Taliban made compromises with the warring factions which had supported them in their bid in taking over the country and which now had interests of their own. Areas of government which, from their religious perspective, were of lesser interest were left alone.16

Reconstruction after the Taliban

The USA started its invasion in response to the ‘9-11’ attacks on the country by Al-Qaida, an international movement, which had also fought against the communist government and the Soviets and whose main bases, protected by the Taliban were in Afghanistan. Many Al-Qaida camps were destroyed and its battle groups were nearly all chased out of the country. With strategic air raids and in combined battles the USA supported an alliance of former mujihadeen groups coming from the north of the country. Their success enticed more and more warlords to join forces with them and the Taliban were swiftly driven from the northern part of the country. The mainly Pashtun areas in the south were not attacked as intensively, however. Here the Americans and other local leaders fought the Taliban. This conflict developed very differently, among others due to the considerable support the Taliban enjoyed among the population. The fall of the major city of Kandahar did not so much come about by acts of war than by negotiations - albeit with the threat of American military intervention looming. Given the American stance, the fall of the Taliban seemed unavoidable, but all Afghan parties wanted to pre-
vent bloodshed, “as it was realised full well that in the long run that would again lead to more tensions and victims”.¹⁸

In hindsight, the way this conflict was fought makes clear what would become the most important obstacle for the new government and the international coalition: the conservative population, factions and local leaders in the south.

With the fall of the Taliban the Afghan administration, or what was left of it, collapsed. By the end of 2001 the new government had only real control over Kabul and a small area around it. Beyond, most of all in rural areas, the power lay in the hands of local leaders, including warlords, who received considerable support from the US, which strengthened their position against ‘Kabul’. The central Afghan government proved unable to provide the most basic services to its population, its security organisations were too weak to establish and maintain law and order in the entire country and there were too few international police or military forces to fill the gap.¹⁹ Between 2003 and 2006, the Taliban were gaining more and more power in the south and east of the country.²⁰ As it moved into additional areas, NATO met an ever-increasing resistance during its operations.²¹ By 2006 there was an all-out, large-scale ‘insurgency’, most of all in the south, with 139 suicide attacks, 1,667 remote-controlled explosive devices and 4,542 armed attacks (which increased by another 27 per cent in 2007).²² Although the 2001 invasion stemmed from the determination to fight Al-Qaida, what developed was a growing coalition of opponents of a strong central government, its modern institutions and western influence in general – not to mention the interests of other countries.²³ The fight was also not only directed against the Taliban, but a fluid entity encompassing Al-Qaida, Taliban, local warlords, conservative local leaders, opium racketeers and anyone else who wanted or were forced to work with them.²⁴

Foreign assistance and political change

Since 2001, the government in Kabul received large-scale support from the ‘international community’ not only to establish its authority over the entire country, but also to improve the economy, to modernise the administration and to expand the public facilities for the population. In December 2001 at a conference in Bonn it was decided to send an international peace force (International Security Assistance Force, ISAF). Between August 2003 and March 2008 the number of ISAF troops rose from 5,581 to 47,332.²⁵ In 2003 ISAF got Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) to assist in the (re)construction. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) coordinated the humanitarian aid and reconstruction activities. In Bonn financial support to an amount of $4.5 billion for five years was pledged, only to be followed by another $8.2 billion in Berlin in 2004. In early 2006 London, with $10 billion for five years²⁶ and in June 2008 Paris
with 13.5 billion euros followed suit.\textsuperscript{27} Besides, the Netherlands (300 million euros) and other countries offered Afghanistan bilateral help.\textsuperscript{28} Incidentally, the costs of the Dutch mission in Uruzgan from August 2006 until August 2008 amounted to 680 million euros, and the extension up to and including 2010 will also end up between 600 and 700 million euros.\textsuperscript{29} For the period of 2009-2011 the Netherlands has pledged another 775 million euros for help.\textsuperscript{30}

In a political respect much seems to have improved. In Bonn the Afghan leaders and the representatives of the Afghan refugees agreed on the formation of a new, democratic state. Hamid Karzai was elected chairman of the Afghan Interim Authority. A Pashtun of the clan of the former kings of Afghanistan, the Durrani, he had been one of the most prominent leaders in the conflict in the south of the country. At the moment the Pashtun constitute a large part of the Afghan population,\textsuperscript{31} much more in the south, which might lead to the expectation that his administration would enjoy considerable support there. In 2002 local leaders from all over the country gathered in an emergency \textit{Loya Jirga} and elected Karzai again, this time as interim president. A similar gathering laid down a new constitution in 2003. In free elections in October of the following year Karzai was elected president and in September 2005 a national parliament followed. Women received the right to vote and were elected as Members of Parliament.\textsuperscript{32}

It remains to be seen, however, how much impact these political changes have made. Allan (2003) calls it a fantasy of the European social-democratic governments to suppose that it is possible to build an Afghan unitary state with powerful central control.\textsuperscript{33} Jalali (2007) concludes that the changes, positive as they may have been, have brought much less national unity, centralised authority and modernisation than was expected. Since Bonn the Afghan Interim authority had been dominated by the Northern Alliance, so it was not representative for the entire country. In spite of the political reform process regional leaders and warlords initially held on to their own armies, revenues, foreign contacts and administrative machinery. Also the \textit{Loya Jirga} proved to be a disappointment. In former times this had been an assembly which brought the country closer together, but now, in the absence of strong leadership in Kabul, it seemed to have lost its relevance. No major issues were dealt with, the local leaders and the warlords mainly served their own interest by means of political pressure, intimidation and money and the assembly did not result in a representative government, after all.\textsuperscript{34}

\textit{Social-economic development}

What is also an open question is whether the financial support has achieved much. The available socio-economic data described below, although rather superficial and possibly not (completely) reliable, present a partially positive picture. For the time being,
Afghanistan is flourishing economically. The gross domestic product in constant millions of 1990 American dollars was 2,618 in 2001. From then on it increased considerably ever year to the highest level on record: 8,202 in 2007. Other positive developments are an increased life expectancy of 1 or 2 per cent between 2001 and 2006, and a fourfold increase of the number of children attending primary education. The regular decrease of child mortality since 1980 (19.2 per cent) continued until 2005 (16.3 per cent). The same happened with child mortality under age 5, which fell from 28.6 per cent to 24.2 per cent. By 2008, 82 per cent of the population had access to first-line medical care (9 per cent in 2002). In other terrains, too, there was progress. In July 2005 there were 50,000 Afghans military and police officers; in early 2008 the numbers were 50,000 and 75,000, respectively. 90 per cent of the Afghans stated they thought the army was honest and fair. The National Directorate for Security, the Afghan intelligence service, seems to be functioning adequately at the moment and from 2001 to 2006 the political right and civil freedoms of the population increased (from 7 to 5).

There are, however, also less positive developments. In the Global Corruption Perception Index Afghanistan fell from a shared 34th to 42nd place in 2005 to 5th place in 2008. The number of hectares of land used for the opium production rose from less than 10,000 in the last year of Taliban rule (2001) to more than 160,000 in 2006. On the Failed States Index Afghanistan has steadily lost ground over the past few years: from 11th lowest in the world in 2005 to 10th in 2006, 8th in 2007 and 7th in 2008. On the five-point Political Terror Scale Afghanistan scores, just like in 2001, the maximum score, a 5, in 2006 (“terror has expanded to the whole population”).

Development of the administration

The World Bank makes calculations of various aspects of the quality of the administration, where quality is expressed in a percentile score, i.e. the percentage of countries in the world to which Afghanistan belongs from the bottom up: thus, a score of 1 means that it belongs to the worst 1 per cent. The table below does not only show that the Afghan state has among the lowest scores in the world, but also that since 2001 there have not only been positive developments. In any case from the graph it can be concluded that the situation is now better than it was in 2001, but after a sharp progress up to 2003/4, most indicators are in decline. The only exception seems to be effectiveness, participation and accountability, where considerably improvements have been realised.
There are more data available on the Afghan administration which illustrate that it is strongly underdeveloped. Thus, in 2006 only 11.6 per cent of all Afghan judges had completed a secular law study at a university. Of all judges 36 per cent indicated that they had no access to legislation and regulations, 54 per cent did not have legal literature and 82 per cent could not get access to rulings of the Afghan High Court. Almost all judges and 93 per cent of the Afghan police officers are Pashtun and Tajik – a composition which is far from representative in comparison with the population.\textsuperscript{47} In 2005 and 2006 the country scored 102 of a maximum of 120 points in the Conflict Assessment System Tool, which is a measure of internal conflict and the functioning of society. On a scale of 1 to 10, for instance, Afghanistan score 8.9 for delegitimisation of the state and 8.2 for discord among the elite.\textsuperscript{48}

Although the Afghan administration is \textit{de jure} one of the most centralised in the world, central management and control is \textit{de facto} extremely weak, due to the strength of the regional and local warlords, who levy their own taxes and have military might. The weakness of the Afghan government is also illustrated by the fact that a mere 1 per cent of the population are civil servants, the absolute number increasing slightly from 327,000 to 348,000 between 2004 and 2007.\textsuperscript{49} In 2005 the Afghan government’s revenue from taxation amounted to 4.5 per cent of the GDP; in Pakistan and Thailand this is 16-17 per cent.\textsuperscript{50} In 2006 USAID scored the capacities of the Afghan administration on a five-point scale: leadership and military services scored 2, police, civil service and
According to the American organisation the Afghan civil service was rife with bribery, corruption and ethnic discrimination.\footnote{51}

There was large-scale absence of military personnel (which is not so strange in a large and difficult to travel country as Afghanistan, MdW): 20 per cent in 2002, falling to 13 per cent in 2006.\footnote{52} The personnel turnover in the police force was 15-30 per cent a year, prisons are burdened with a chronic overload of inmates and in many cases ‘uninhabitable’, and a very high percentage of police officers were involved in the drugs trade.\footnote{53} Only in 2006 did the Afghan government introduce a national strategy to fight drugs.\footnote{54}

In order to lend a broader perspective to these data, it is good to indicate how underdeveloped Afghanistan and its government still are. The country ranks 20th from the bottom as regards per capita income, 17th for unemployment, 10th for life expectancy, 9th for morality rate, 5th for (birth) fertility and 3rd for migration and child mortality.\footnote{55} In the 2007 \textit{Human Development Index} Afghanistan ranks 5th from the bottom in the world, just a little worse than in 2004. 76.5 per cent of the adult population was illiterate, 68 per cent of the population did not have access to clean water and 50 per cent of the children below the age of 5 were underweight.\footnote{56} On the 2008 \textit{Global Peace Index}, which indicates internal security, Afghanistan ranked 4th from the bottom.\footnote{57}

The following macro data clearly illustrate the deplorable state of the Afghan central government even clearer. Revenues from opium amounted to 37 per cent, and foreign aid to 38.5 per cent of the GDP.\footnote{58} In 2007 there were still (far) too few Afghan and foreign military and police forces in the country to establish an effective authority of the central government. According to some, twice that number, 150,000 men/women, would be necessary.\footnote{59} In 2008 the \textit{Afghan Conflict Manager} concluded that 11 per cent of the country, 31 per cent of the central government and 58 per cent of the local parties are under control of the Taliban.\footnote{60}

It can be concluded that seven years of international help have undoubtedly brought progress for Afghanistan and its inhabitants, but the country and the central government are still unable to stand firmly on their own feet. No broad and modern state, controlled by the central government had been developed. Progress has been made, but it has been modest. In the south of the country central government has a weak position and Afghanistan is to a high degree financially dependent on opium-related income and foreign assistance. The Afghan state is not yet capable either of guaranteeing security; here, too, it is highly dependent on foreign support.
Government in Uruzgan

What has been the development of the Afghan government in the southern province of Uruzgan since the beginning of the more large-scale Dutch military presence in 2006? This development is not necessarily representative for the whole of Afghanistan, but can serve as an example for what it means for a foreign military force, in this case the Dutch, to have a weak state as a partner. In order to establish whether any progress has been made, it is necessary to first describe the starting point. This is done by the first commander of the Dutch battle group.

Except for Kabul, the influence of the national government is only in evidence in the provincial capitals, while the population outside the urban areas – and that is where most of the inhabitants of Uruzgan live – does not experience anything at all of whatever government. Where the provincial government has any influence at all, there is insufficient support due to the many instances of corruption on all levels and tribal favouritism.

Another picture was given in August 2006 by the Netherlands Embassy in Kabul. It wrote that the government in Uruzgan functioned inadequately due to a lack of qualified personnel, physical infrastructure, financial and logistic resources, monitoring and control mechanisms. The population viewed the government as inefficient, incapable of providing basic facilities, strongly partisan and unrepresentative. Fewer and fewer inhabitants openly chose the side of the government. The judiciary was understaffed, unprofessional and unrepresentative in tribal and ethnic composition. At the level of the district as a rule less than 20 per cent of the functions were filled. District governors and chiefs of police were inadequately educated and novices in government and in many cases alienated the local population. In Uruzgan a century-old conflict was going on between two confederations of Pashtun: the Ghilzai and the Zirak branch of the Durrani. After the fall of the Taliban the Durrani – to which also the Polfzai tribe of president Karzai belong - acquired much more power in Uruzgan. The position of the Ghilzai, traditional supporters of the Taliban, had been weakened. Tribal identity had become much more important since 2002 and ties with the government and the international troops were frowned upon.

The province of Uruzgan came third from the bottom as for general development, second for primary school attendance and third for mortality of children under five. Over the past few years many schools had been closed and the Afghan government had no programme to set up (new) schools. There were also no investments in the judiciary and the disarmament of local factions. Health care was not provided by the government, but mainly by NGOs and private clinics. The province received funds for eighteen physi-
cians, but employed only two. The rest had either left or only existed on paper. 30 to 50 per cent of the population of Uruzgan depended on food aid to some extent. The Taliban greatly disrupted commerce in the province. Most of the fertile arable land was used for opium production, which increased not only the debt burden of the farmers, but also drug addiction and crime. There were six big drugs traffickers active, who received high-level political backing from Kabul, where persons favourably disposed towards drugs traders were appointed in key positions. Probably the majority of the police leadership were involved in the protection of the drugs trade. Incidentally, the drugs traders also paid protection money to the Taliban,63 who were said to control 80 per cent of the province with 2,500 fighters, only 2 per cent of whom came from outside the province.64

How underdeveloped and conservative the province was, is illustrated by other data as well. In 2006 around 1 per cent of the population in Uruzgan (2,846) worked for the government, 1 per cent of whom were women. In 2005 8-9 per cent of the population had clean water and 8 per cent first had to travel for more than one hour to get to it. 21 per cent relieved themselves in an open hole, 47 per cent did not even do that. 8 per cent of the population had electricity, but only 1 per cent through a public facility. 61 per cent of all the roads could be used in all seasons: 5 per cent of the population could read, 0 per cent of the women. In 2006 there were 125 primary and secondary schools, attended by a total of 31,723 pupils, 93 per cent of whom were boys. There were 860 teachers, with the exception of 7, all males. In 2005 Uruzgan had 3 health centres and 3 hospitals, with a total of 98 beds, 12 doctors and 29 nurses. Since 2003 the number of doctors had doubled and that of nurses trebled. In 2005 there were 55 pharmacies in the province, all privately owned. Almost three-quarters of the population had to travel more than ten kilometres to find medical help.65 In 2005 the number of judges was clearly lower than the country’s average (1 per 59,400 vs. 1 per 21,317), and the situation in 2006 was not much better.66

Problems with administrators

What has changed in this sad situation since the arrival of the Dutch? The Netherlands has clearly made attempts to replace the ‘wrong’ administrators, which proved to be very difficult due to the sometimes obscure power struggles among the leaders and the fact (or suspicion) that all could be found fault with to a certain extent. In the century-old struggle between the Ghilzai and the Durrani also crime plays an important role. Thus, according to some media sources not only president Karzai’s own brother is a drugs baron, but also the brother-in-law of the former governor, Jan Mohammed Khan.67 In some districts in Uruzgan the local leaders supported by Karzai allegedly extorted the population so badly that the latter begged the Taliban to attack.68
game with the local leaders and groups in the end made many enemies, a situation that
the Taliban skilfully exploited.69

There was much ado about the governorship in Uruzgan. Thus, in March 2006
Karzai appointed Maulavi Abdul Hakim Munib governor of the province as successor to
Jan Mohammed Khan. This replacement was a condition of the Dutch government to
begin its military operation in Uruzgan. Jan Mohammed Khan was a warlord, but also
a personal friend and ally of Karzai, coming from the Pashtun tribe of the Populzai.
Jan Mohammed Khan always had the disposal of large sums of development money
to (also) make politics and he was feared by his opponents in the region as well as the
Taliban. After stepping down, Jan Mohammed Khan was appointed ‘vice-minister for
tribal affairs’ and this allowed him to travel freely to Uruzgan to look after his interests.
Munib’s position was eroded as Jan Mohammed Khan’s supporters, carefully minding
what their powerful leader had to say, had access to all functionaries around Munib. The
latter had held several ministerial positions in the nineties during the Taliban regime.
He was also a Pashtun, but a native of the province of Paktia, so he had no network and
power base in Uruzgan. As a result of the replacement of Jan Mohammed Khan the
Dutch now simultaneously had to fight the Taliban, try to create more support for Munib
and attempt to minimise the influence of Jan Mohammed Khan in the area.70

Munib was also fighting Colonel Matiullah, one of Jan Mohammed Khan’s ‘managers’,
but also the commander of the only effective police force in the province.71 Many people
asserted that Munib himself was also a criminal, had ties with the Taliban and mainly
resided in Kabul.72 On 12 September 2006 Karzai appointed Assadullah Hamdam gov-
ernor. The latter is a Pashtun from the Zabul province, an engineer and former muja-
hideen, who had emigrated to Great Britain, where his family still lives, incidentally. He,
too, is suspected by some of corruption,73 although it cannot be excluded that this is part
of a deliberate blackening by political adversaries.

Limited expansion of the state

As for the volume of public facilities, the Afghan government seems to have made
some progress. The medical facilities in Uruzgan have been expanded. In early 2008
there were one district hospital, five community health centres, one basic health centre
and 120 health stations (manned by 31 female and 140 male health workers). For most of
the population there was emergency obstetric help, paediatric help, medicines, pre-natal
and post-natal care, vaccination and TB treatment. For the first time in decades (two)
surgeons were working in the hospital at Tarin Kowt.74 In the spring of 2008 five new
schools had been opened in Uruzgan.75 By the end of 2008 43,000 children attended
primary school, around 250 of them girls. Seven thousand enjoyed secondary school and
higher education, including 250 girls. 145 irrigation systems had been constructed, 270 water wells, 110 village roads and a suspension bridge. 3,000 families had been given sowing seeds and fertilizer, and 100,000 fruit trees had been divided and three greeneries set up.\textsuperscript{76}

As for security organisations, over the past two years the central government has clearly strengthened its presence in Uruzgan. In March 2007 there were only 100 police officers in Uruzgan (Afghan National Police, ANP) and three hundred military (Afghan National Army, ANA). Abuse of power and corruption were rife. Illiteracy, too, estimated at 60-70 per cent, poor equipment and a lack of facilities contributed to a ‘limited’ confidence in the police force.\textsuperscript{77} Three months later there were 120 ANP, and an additional 850 auxiliary police officers (Afghan National Auxiliary Police, ANAP), locally recruited and less well trained.\textsuperscript{78} In September 2007 a total of 965 ANAP had been trained. The turnover among them, however, was said to be as high as 40 per cent, due to the meagre pay and low status of the work. It was reported that officers asked ‘toll money’ or sold their equipment to supplement their pay.\textsuperscript{79} In the summer of 2008 somewhere between 700 and 800 ANAP were actually present.\textsuperscript{80} By the end of 2008 there were 1,700 ANA present in Uruzgan, 1,400 of whom were active ‘in the field’. ANAP was disbanded, but 650 of them were trained into ‘real’ policemen.\textsuperscript{81} So, there are not many more Afghan armed forces and police in the province than the number of Dutch service personnel.

Nevertheless, for Uruzgan, too, it must be said that progress has been limited, indeed. Lieutenant-Colonel Rietdijk, the commander of the Dutch PRT in the spring of 2008, described the situation on his return as follows. (This is of course a subjective sketch, but the picture that emerges is all too familiar.) According to him, on all levels the government performed poorly. “This makes it easy for the Taliban to bribe government officials, to corrupt them or simply take over their posts.” There was a “flat, less than well functioning tribal clan structure, which caused an absence of sufficient binding forces to fend off external threats, among which those coming from the Taliban”. There was “poverty, few basic facilities and no perspectives. This economic situation encourages people to resort to criminal activities…the growth of the Taliban is strongest in the poorer areas in the south of Afghanistan. In part because of the bad security situation the Taliban and other criminal organisations find it very easy to grow, protect, harvest and process the poppy. The hundreds of millions of euros that are made in this way give subversive elements almost unlimited possibilities.” The police organisation was still “functioning badly”. This causes people to distrust the government even more.\textsuperscript{82} In more general terms the Dutch government indicated in 2008 that in Uruzgan crucial functions on the district level remained unfilled for lengthy periods of time. Those functionaries who had been appointed often lacked competence, integrity and tribal neutral-
ity. The strengthening and expansion of the provincial governmental organisation was losing momentum.\textsuperscript{83}

The status of police and army

ANA, but also the police force functioned below par in a number of areas. Jobs in the police or the army guarding posts were very popular in all the clans. There were many accusations that the armed men also escorted drugs transports and carried out robberies and the Afghan army and police were suspected of incriminating themselves. They can commit murder with impunity and will do so. They even kill when no gain is to be expected, just to scare people and to show they will get away with it, thus ensuring that no one has the courage to protest.\textsuperscript{84} Although the army was seen as less corrupt than the police, it had its problems, too. In 2008 the ANA commander for Uruzgan, Mohammed Sabir Dawer, was replaced on his own request. His successor, Hafizuldin, “tightened the reins considerably with regard to discipline”, which reduced the number of ANA personnel going AWOL. A number of subordinate commanders were replaced due to poor performance.\textsuperscript{85}

In the middle of 2008 ISAF, too, stated that in Uruzgan on a local level the police stations represented the only government presence. On a provincial level the government organisations were still “seriously underfunded, understaffed and underequipped”. It proved to be difficult to get qualified people in the central government to move to Uruzgan, while there was also the risk of many of the qualified personnel who were there going to work for international organisations and NGOs. In contrast to the administration controlled by Kabul, the informal, traditional control system of village chief and village elders functioned reasonably well.\textsuperscript{86} Some doubted the quality of the reconstruction projects executed or funded by the (Dutch) military.\textsuperscript{87} Only 113 hectares of poppy fields were destroyed in only 21 villages, amounting to 5 per cent of the total production.\textsuperscript{88} The anti-drugs units were fired upon, and four policemen were killed and two helicopters damaged.\textsuperscript{59} In 2007-2008 the poppy production in Uruzgan was still growing. No progress worth-mentioning was made in the judiciary sector. The number of engagements with the Taliban decreased and ISAF and the Afghan government had increased the area under their control, but the situation was “fragile” and the influence that the Taliban exerted on the local population had “not been structurally decreased”.\textsuperscript{90} In large sections of the north of the province the Taliban still ruled supreme.\textsuperscript{91} According to a Dutch newspaper a secret survey of ISAF was to show that 58 per cent of the Uruzgani were negative about ISAF and 60 per cent felt that the security situation was bad in the province, by far the highest percentage in the country.\textsuperscript{92}
The Afghan government in the battle for Chora

What it means for foreign troops, in this case the Dutch, to have a central government which is weak locally as an ally, may perhaps best be illustrated by means of extreme situations, such as the battle that was fought in the Uruzgan district of Chora in June 2007.

For months prior to the battle in June 2007 Taliban messages were intercepted from which it could be concluded that they were preparing a major attack on Chora. This information was also passed on to the Afghan Ministry of the Interior and the Wolesi Jirga, the Afghan Second Chamber. At the end April 2007 ISAF sent reinforcements to this area crucial for the Taliban for the transport of drugs, weapons and money. ISAF pressured the provincial and local authorities into taking security in and around Chora into their own hands. From 26 May onwards, when the Taliban stormed a police post on the edge of Chora, there were almost daily exchanges of fire and artillery bombardments. On 7 May the Afghan police in the village of Ali Shirzai in the Chora valley arrested a man, who probably was a senior Taliban leader.

In the end, the Afghan authorities were unable to direct many extra police and army to the area. According to the Dutch commander, he asked the governor of Uruzgan and the commander of police to send more ANA to Chora before the battle began. The requested reinforcement did not materialise, the police commander denying he had ever received such a request. The Ministry of the Interior did decide to send some Afghan Standby Police, who flatly refused to go to Chora. In the end, the only reinforcement consisted of 40 ANA. Civilians in Chora asked the Dutch for arms to defend themselves, but they did not get them. The Afghan police in Chora appeared to have too little ammunition and, according to their provincial commander, they were also poorly equipped. The district governor did have enough ammunition but stated he wanted that for himself. ISAF then bought ammunition on the local market for the local Afghan police force, so that ‘they could not come up with any eyewash’ when it came to fighting. While in the end some 500 Dutch soldiers were engaged in the fighting in Chora, there were 100 Afghan police officers. When the fighting had started 50 extra ANA were flown in, bringing their numbers up to 90.

Local informal leaders, their militias and groups of civilians wanting to protect their area, did play a major role in the defence of Chora (it is unknown how many local people were active on the Taliban side), but their contribution to the defence, incidentally, appears to have been rather tenuous prior to the battle. Thus, a group of some 150-200 local militiamen, failed to show up at first, after an earlier promise to help. Only when
the battle began did they take part after all.\textsuperscript{102} This was probably a group led by warlord Rosi Khan. The group received weapons from the district heads, but only after ISAF had uttered some “threatening language” towards them.\textsuperscript{103} It is also known that the inhabitants of the village of Qala-e-Ragh, led by their tribal leaders Mallim Abdul Sadiq Khan, resisted the attacking Taliban. Also a third group, the 48-strong ANAP, commanded by Tora Abdullah, was supported by local fighters (12) and several tribal leaders. In the end their combined effort enabled them to push the Taliban back. Somewhat earlier Tora Abdullah had been visited by Rosi Khan, who advised him to flee, as he himself could not help him.\textsuperscript{104}

The Afghan government itself could only play a modest role with regard to medical and other provisions to alleviate the consequences of the battle for the civilian population. There were supposed to have been between 30 and 88 civilian dead and 80 to 100 wounded. Clinics in Chora, Tarin Kowt and Kandahar (and those of the ISAF PRT) received the wounded.\textsuperscript{105}

Afghan administrators played a limited role during and after the battle. The Dutch leadership was in contact with the district governor and ISAF informed him by satellite telephone that the air raids were about to begin. A large part of the local population, however, had already fled the area by that time. The governor of Uruzgan as well as president Karzai telephoned ISAF urging them to also offer support to Tora Abdullah. The latter had called Karzai and governor after Rosi Khan’s visit to him, asking them how he was supposed to fight the Taliban without their support, upon which Karzai was supposed to have requested ISAF for help for Tora Abdullah. In the meantime a controversy has emerged with regard to the return of the civilians to their village of Qala-e-Ragh on 19 June. When it was announced via the loudspeakers of the local mosque that the village was safe again the inhabitants began to return. At the same time, however, the Taliban were firing at ISAF troops in the area. The latter requested and got air support from ISAF, during which three civilians were killed and five wounded. According to Sadiq Khan, the district governor, by order of ISAF, supposedly told the mosque to make the announcement. ISAF, however, denied having given the order and the district governor stated that had not been involved at all in the matter. What is clear is that the district governor had warned the population on 16 June about the impending ISAF air strikes.\textsuperscript{106}

Incidentally, the battle did not drive the Taliban from the area and several months later the situation was still tense around Chora. The Dutch presence had been built down and taken over by Afghan units. “The Taliban, however, remain particularly active in this region and in the past period there have been many combat contacts. ... Moreover, the Taliban offensive has intensified tribal differences.”\textsuperscript{107}
Conclusion

What conclusions can be drawn from the above and what lessons can be formulated for the future? It, first of all, shows that over the past few centuries Afghanistan has been a poor country with a weak state, the central government never having had much influence over the rest of the country. Local authorities and traditional, conservative powers resisted a modernisation of the country and an expansion of the state machinery. The conflicts that have been going on since the nineteen-seventies have caused the ruin of the governmental system - albeit that the Taliban in their own horrid way managed to create law and peace in the country. These ultra-conservative, anti-western and Pashtun dominated group initially enjoyed considerable support in the south of the country.

Secondly, the Afghan economy and government have developed somewhat since the US-led invasion in 2002, but in spite of comprehensive international support, the country is still very poor and underdeveloped, with a (very) weak administration. Facilities for the population, such as medical care and education, have been expanded somewhat, but in these areas Afghanistan still ranks among the least developed countries in the world. Despite a strong increase in the size of the Afghan army and police forces in the south, they are incapable, even in cooperation with the international police and armed forces, of marginalising the coalition of opponents - Taliban, Al Qaida, criminals and conservative powers. Afghanistan heavily depends on international financial backing, profits from the drugs trade and – too little - international military and police support.

Thirdly, since the Netherlands committed a large force there in 2006 the situation with regard to medical and educational facilities has improved somewhat. The greater numbers of Afghan military and police have also given the central government a stronger hold over the area. On the local level, however, the police force is often its sole representative. The Afghan government, including the authorities and the police, is still often very corrupt and enjoys little support among the local population. Opium crime is a major economic and political factor in the area. The authorities and the civil service are badly developed in numbers as well as quality, and are not representative in view of the composition of the population. In fact, traditional, informal parties, such as warlords, tribal chiefs and religious leaders, including the Taliban, hold a strong position in the area.

The final conclusion that can be drawn is that the ‘battle of Chora’ illustrates what it means to have a weak state as an ally in a conflict. The government was able to provide medical and other support to the population only on a modest scale, while during the battle itself the authorities played a minor role. Dutch soldiers were directed to the area.
on a large scale, while the Afghan government was only present with its armed forces on a limited scale, being able to send only few reinforcements there. During and after the battle local leaders, militias and civilians who were ready to protect themselves played a major role. The other, largely local, party, the Taliban, against which they fought, was also very much present and did not disappear from the area when the battle was over.

What are the lessons to be drawn from the involvement in Afghanistan of the past eight years, in particular with regard to Dutch and foreign military deployment? First of all, it goes without saying that from a policy and political perspective, it must be assumed that the development of such a country and its government is a difficult and lengthy process. Progress will be modest, leaving little room for high hopes and too much optimism.

Secondly, it would be wise, before embarking on military operations, to study carefully the history, functioning, interests, actors, society, traditions and position of a country. Rushing headlong into an involvement will all too often lead to unrealistic or undesirable deployments.

Thirdly, military and other international involvement should bear the local environment and de facto leaders in mind in as many aspects as possible. (Drugs) crime, sense of honour, and even personal relations among leaders may be of crucial importance.

The fourth lesson to be drawn is that the role of the local militias and groups of civilians who are willing to defend themselves should get more attention. Policy making and doctrine development on handling militias and volunteers should be considered. Finally, the establishment of a representative, non-corrupt and non-abusive government is crucial. This aspect needs more attention in procedures, doctrines, guidance and training in order that all military, leadership and cadre in particular, are able to recognise undesirable situations and developments and react adequately to them.

Notes

1. Dr. M. (Michiel) J. de Weger is a researcher at the Military Operational Arts and Sciences section of the Netherlands Defence Academy.
2. See, for instance, the list of 41 areas in Korteweg, R., and D. Ehrhardt (2005), *Terrorist black holes: a study into terrorist sanctuaries and governmental weakness*, Den Haag: Clingendael Centre for Strategic Studies. See also the *Failed States Index* on www.fundforpeace.org. This list is updated annually.
12. <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan#soviet_invasion_and_civil_war>, accessed February 20, 2009
14. Runjon (2007), p. 120 writes the Taliban originally was composed of 98% Pashtun; see also Allen (2003), p. 195.
17. See Rashid, A. (2008), Descent into chaos. How the war against Islamic extremism is being lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia, London: Allen Lane, for a more elaborate description of this period and the issues.
31. <En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan#2001.e2.80.93present_war_in_Afghanistan>, accessed 20 February 2009, mentions 39-42%, but this is being criticised and could be politically coloured information.
41. This is on a 7-point scale, with 7 being the lowest score. www.afghanistanmonitor.org/governance02, accessed 22 October 2008.
47. UNDP and Kabul University (2007).
51. USAID (2007).
53. Hodes and Sedra (2007), pp. 64, 66, and 81. Allegedly 80% of police personnel are involved in the drugs trade.
56. UNDP and Kabul University (2007).
59. Jones (2008a) compares Afghanistan with countries where successful foreign interventions did take place.
62. Remarkably enough, Giustozzi (2008), pp. 47-47, states that inside the Taliban leadership (not only in Uruzgan) the Durrani, not the Ghilzai, are also the best represented group.
64. Giustozzi (2008), pp. 36-37, 43 respectively.


96. Elsevier (2008),
97. UNAMA/AIHRC (2009).
100. USA Today, ‘Over 100 die in southern Afghan battle’, 18 June 2007. Among them16 or more than 35 are believed killed. It is supposed that this includes 48 ANAP.
104. UNAMA/AIHRC (2009).
Assessing the new Afghanistan and Pakistan strategy

Julian Lindley-French

NL-ARMS, 2009, 357-376

As President, my greatest responsibility is to protect the American people ... We are in Afghanistan to confront a common enemy that threatens the United States, our friends and allies, and the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan who have suffered the most at the hands of violent extremists. So I want the American people to understand that we have a clear and focused goal: to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent their return to either country in the future.”

President Barack Obama, 27 March 2009.

Introduction

This is a serious moment in the Afghanistan campaign. This is the hearts and minds moment. The next two years will be critical if those with responsibility at the strategic level are going to give those with responsibility at the field level, Afghans and partners, both the tools to do the job and the place in which to do it. If by the end of 2011 the coalition has not a) moved from the security phase into a clearly agreed strategy of Afghan and civilian state capacity and local governance building; and b) to that end forged a new partnership with a government in Kabul that is committed to achieving a level of governance and government similar to that in regional states such as Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, with a commensurate level of officially-sanctioned corruption, then the coalition will be unlikely to sustain the effort over the 2012-2017 period called for in current planning.

To do that, the contradiction at the heart of Western thinking about Afghanistan must be overcome. Whilst much of the rhetoric of renewed effort in fact masks the first step towards an exit from Afghanistan, the renewed focus on Pakistan makes it very clear that, like it or not, the need for engagement with the latter will mean an open-ended commitment to the wider region that cannot be avoided and which will persist. First, the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan represents a threat not only to southern Afghanistan, from which the Taliban and Al Qaeda launch attacks on Coalition forces, but through the Pakistani Taliban a threat to the Pakistani state itself. Second, the fact that Pakistan is a nuclear power means that under no circumstances can it be allowed to fall into the hands of violent Islamists or jihadists. At this critical juncture this
chapter explores and assesses the new US Comprehensive Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan (AFPAK) and places it in a broad political and operational context.

Evident in the 2009 strategy papers of both the US and UK is the recognition that far from drawing to a close in Afghanistan what was always intended to be a stabilisation and reconstruction mission, the struggle is in fact widening to include the broader central and southern Asian region as part of a strategic stabilisation mission. Indeed, it is only now that the truly strategic nature of the struggle is becoming apparent. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan are after all victims of a war between the state and the anti-state in the Middle East which is now spreading to central Asia and the Horn of Africa. This, of course, raises as yet unanswered questions about strategy and ambition. How far does the West go to meet this challenge and what does it need to do to contain it (victory or defeat in such struggles are existential states that rarely exist)? Notably, the UK strategy, whilst mirroring much of the Obama AFPAK Strategy, has a far lower level of ambition, whilst most of the other European allies have been conspicuous by their silence, which in this context means only one thing – they want out and they want out quick. Which means it is pretty much all down to the Americans. AFPAK probably marks the end of any meaningful European input into high-level planning and thus reveals Europe for what it is – a decidedly parochial, regional grouping of small and medium actors in a strategic backwater.

The new strategic paradigm

The US March 2009 Comprehensive Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, which emerged from a sixty-day inter-agency review, is a truly strategic document. It recognises that the defeat of Al Qaeda cannot be accomplished by a focus on Afghanistan alone. Indeed, implicit in the strategy is a much clearer assessment of the reason for the US presence in central southern Asia. First, denying a nexus to an enemy in which strategic terror, huge but illicit criminal capital flows, and ageing but massively destructive technology can potentially come together is a Western strategic interest of the first order. Thus, whilst the improved life quality of Afghans and Pakistanis is central to the approach, it is a means to that end, it is not an end in itself of US strategy therein. Second, the Americans are signalling with much greater clarity than any of their European partners that they have a strategic understanding of the effort in Afghanistan, why they are there are what needs to be done. As US National Security Advisor James Jones said on 27 March 2009, “our strategy now starts with a clear and concise and, we think, attainable goal which is to disrupt, dismantle, and prevent Al Qaeda from being able to operate in its safe havens”.
The US strategy has five main elements: establishing an attainable objective; a regional approach; building capacity and more training; using all elements of national power and bringing new international elements to the effort. The objective is to dismantle Al Qaeda and thus remove the threats to both Afghanistan and Pakistan posed by the foreign fighters. Notably, there seems to be a distinction with the home-grown Taliban which also reinforces the new political reconciliation strategy at the heart of the Obama strategy, which is to endeavour to divide the Taliban as much as destroy it.

Whilst significant elements of the new strategy resemble that of the Bush administration, it is the new Regional Approach that suggests a far higher importance will be accorded this struggle than hitherto by the Americans. This is reinforced by the appointment of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke as Special Envoy and General David Petraeus to CENTCOM. Essentially, the Americans will treat Afghanistan as two countries but one challenge, although a seasoned observer might suggest two countries, one nation (the Pashtun), one challenge. Afghanistan and Pakistan are to be engaged in a trilateral framework at the highest level and much higher profile to be given to key players across South Asia, most notably India. Indeed, India is not only crucial but is finally realising that far from being a regional-strategic competitor, Pakistan is a failing nuclear state on its northern border. This is an important shift in the perception of New Delhi. One immediate objective will be thus to decouple the conflict in Jammu-Kashmir from that in southern Afghanistan, which the Pakistani Army has traditionally seen as providing strategic depth in the event of a conflict with India. The April 2009 movement of six thousand Pakistani troops from the Green Line with India in preparation for the offensive against the Pakistani Taliban suggests early diplomatic progress by the Americans. Specifically, the Americans will seek to enhance intelligence sharing along the AFPAK border, as well as military co-operation and place relations in a wider economic context through trade, energy and economic development, which again suggest a much longer-term commitment to the region. This is also important, for with the appointment of counter-insurgency (COIN) expert General David McCrystal to command NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) a much more nuanced intelligence-led campaign will emerge, reinforced by the embedding of Coalition forces in rapidly deploying Afghan National Army units. This should help to ease the many tragic misunderstandings that have led to excessive civilian casualties in the last year.

The AFPAK Strategy also marks a big shift of emphasis from Iraq to Afghanistan. An additional seventeen thousand troops will be sent to Afghanistan to enhance security in and around the AFPAK border zone, whilst a further four thousand will be sent with a specific remit to accelerate the training of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) as part of a general enhancement to strengthen Afghan
National Security Forces (ANSF). To ensure Afghan forces can begin to ‘backfill’ for coalition forces rapidly, every American unit will be partnered with an Afghan unit, and the US is seeking additional trainers from NATO allies to ensure that every Afghan unit has a coalition partner. Interestingly, the Pentagon wanted thirty thousand additional troops sent.

Central to the AFPAK Strategy, however, is the enhanced support for civilian governance. Under the rubric of using all elements of national power, President Obama stated that, “a campaign against extremism will not succeed with bullets or bombs alone”. The White House has thus submitted a budget to Congress that includes a significant new package of aid and development (including support for a bipartisan bill calling for $1.5 billion of aid for the Pakistani people over five years) and calls for the creation of so-called Reconstruction Opportunity Zones in Afghanistan and border regions of Pakistan to develop the economy on both sides of the border in what is the Pashtun heartlands.

Finally, in a bid to internationalise (some would say de-westernise the identity of the mission) a stronger role is envisaged for the United Nations, particularly for UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan). Importantly, a new Contact Group for Afghanistan and Pakistan is being formed to include all those with a stake in regional security – NATO allies and partners, Central Asian states, the Gulf States, Iran, India, Russia and China.

**Balancing realism with ambition?**

Therefore, AFPAK is at one and the same time more realistic and more ambitious. It is within that context that one must consider the so-called doctrinal gap that emerges from the failed Comprehensive Approach and the inevitable high-level trade offs that the new partners will demand for their collaboration. ALL of Afghanistan's neighbours will want something in return for supporting the US-led surge (for want of a better term) if the identity of the effort is to be de-westernised and thus an all-important long-term Regional Strategy engineered worthy of the name that can at the very least de-conflict the conflicts in Jammu-Kashmir between India and Pakistan and the insurgency in south and east Afghanistan. Only then will the true space for reconstruction and capacity building be crafted. Iran will want a broad security dialogue with the west and is keen in any case to shift away from the one-track debate on the nuclear issue, even if that is to buy it some time to weaponise its nuclear technology. Russia will want some movement on missile defence. Thankfully, that is in any case coming as the famous ‘button’ is reset. India will want support to prevent terror attacks from Pakistan and
Pakistan will want support to stop the spread of Pakistani Taliban and terror attacks both within and without the country. China will want some assurance that it can access Afghan resources, whilst the other ‘Stans’ will want assurances over future treatment of non-Pashtun ethnic groups in Afghanistan and demand some form of payment. The recent Kyrgyz manoeuvring over the continued American use of Manas airport, Bishkek demonstrates the price which the Americans will need to pay for continued support. Equally, played right, the Obama administration could well find it easier to do deals with some members of the non-Coalition awkward squad than with the Coalition awkward squad who do not want to be there, are doing as little as possible whilst there and are very keen to get out.

On the question of level of ambition and unity of effort it is interesting to compare the British and American positions. The UK Policy for Afghanistan and Pakistan: The Way Forward is much longer on rhetoric and far less on substance than the American strategy. In reality it is merely a cobbling together of existing UK efforts in both countries under a title that mirrors the American paper, although the British are offering a further £665m of aid and development to Pakistan over the 2009-2013 period and £510m over the same period to Afghanistan. Crucially, having promised the Americans to send a further two to three thousand British troops in support of the strategy the British Government (notably on the advice of HM Treasury) reneged and in the event only sent seven hundred and only to cover the August 2009 Afghan elections. Ironically, the UK is paying by far the biggest price for unrest in both Afghanistan with Britain being the main European market for Afghan sourced heroin, which now accounts for some 90% of the supply. Having allowed so many poor Pakistanis to immigrate to the UK over the past twenty years, the link between radicalisation of Pakistan and its Diaspora is self-evident. Indeed, one of the great unspoken political mistakes of British government policy has been to pretend no link exists between British security policy and immigration policy thus complicating both.

The UK AFPAK strategy lays out eight guiding principles. These include an international approach, a regional approach, a joint civil-military approach, a better co-ordinated approach, a long-term approach with such meaningless and contradictory assertions as calling for the respect for sovereignty and local values with respect for international standards with the demand for a hard-headed approach. It is a mark of Britain’s descent into the strategic wilderness that such self-defeating political correctness is now the stuff of British strategy, be it towards Afghanistan, Pakistan or elsewhere. The fact is the British are not prepared to invest politically or financially at a higher level of effort at a crucial moment and will pay a political price with the Americans downstream. This is also an early example of the distorted influence minorities are likely to exert on the
foreign and security policies of western European governments fearful of the immigrant populations that have entered in such large numbers over recent years.

**Afghanistan’s complex reality**

Can AFPAK succeed? The Declaration of the International Conference in Support of Afghanistan of 12 June 2008 called upon the international community, the Afghan Government and the UN to support the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) thus recognising improvements in the life quality of Afghan people as critical to future stability. The Declaration also called for investment in infrastructure, growth of the private sector, improved delivery of government services, enhanced benefits from aid and development and enhanced regional co-operation. Importantly, it also called on the Afghan Government to combat corruption and to intensify counter-narcotics efforts as well as promoting respect for human rights. These are the basic elements of what will be in effect a new contract with the new Afghan Government, which will come to power with the August 2009 elections. Such a contract would provide the foundation for a much needed re-energised political and reconciliation track vital to stability in the country. Equally, it will challenge both the Coalition and the Afghan Government, as it remains questionable whether either party are able to deliver on promises made. This is the American dilemma because for all the optimism in the AFPAK Strategy America’s ability to achieve its own objectives is increasingly reliant upon the efforts of others who are at best recalcitrant and at worst downright obstructionist. Indeed, with the likes of China, Russia and, of course, Iran, on the new Contact Group the fate of both Afghanistan and Pakistan is increasingly linked to a wider strategic agenda that is itself complex and difficult.

Again, India in so many respects holds the key. Many in Pakistan’s national security establishment have bristled at the close Indian government’s relationship with Karzai’s government, India’s wide-ranging development projects in Afghanistan, including on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and of course the special status of New Delhi’s nuclear ambitions in Washington. However, Islamabad is now too distracted domestically to continue its struggle with India. There is thus a window of regional-strategic opportunity. If Pakistani anxiety about India could be reduced, it would enable the Pakistani government to direct greater attention and resources to combating the insurgents in the tribal areas along the Pakistani-Afghan border. This in turn would make it easier to combat the threat of insurgency in Afghanistan.10
And what of the European allies? Afghanistan still represents the most important immediate challenge for the west. Indeed, like it or not, the west's strategic standing in and credibility with the international community will to a significant extent rest upon the ability of the partners to fashion diplomatic, defence and development tools into something that can be defended as success. Since 2003, the situation in Afghanistan has progressively deteriorated. The initial success in overthrowing the Taliban regime has transitioned into a violent insurgency as the Taliban and other groups have stepped up their effort to overthrow the Afghan government. In the last year the Taliban has made major inroads both in Afghanistan and Pakistan and reported a number of important successes. As the insurgency has gained momentum, Coalition casualties have risen and a number of Coalition members have begun to consider pulling their troops out of Afghanistan. Notably, the Dutch will leave in July 2010 and the Canadians end 2011, which will leave the Americans and British (with some Australian support) battling to contain the difficult south and east of the country. Is it a sign of the new Anglosphere to come?

Clearly, it is time to talk to those elements of the Taliban who are seeking a return to Afghan life and that is indeed implied in AFPAK. Sufficient evidence exists that many Tier Two and Three Taliban are not happy with the foreign fighters and seek their rights and property restored seized by the regime. Moreover, the murder of some two hundred tribal elders by the foreign fighters suggests the famed pashtunwali code of hospitality to fellow Muslims may be being stretched. Equally, no sound western strategy can be based entirely on such a fragile hope because the Taliban leaderships in Quetta and Peshawar are sufficiently radical and firm in the belief that they are winning that no local is going to place their hope in the west, whilst evidence of sustained success on the part of the latter is so hard for them to see. Indeed, the Taliban are becoming increasingly bold and as a result are beginning to appear in parts of Afghanistan outside the traditional Pashtun Belt. Moreover, the Taliban leadership firmly believe that in time they will set up an alternative government to Kabul in Kandahar. It is hardly surprising the Afghan people are sitting on the fence. AFPAK must first roll back the Taliban if the wider political ambitions are to have any real chance of success.

Much will depend on the performance of the new Afghan Government. The growing insurgency has been accompanied by increasing corruption and an increase in drug production and trafficking, much of it with the collusion of local warlords and officials in the Karzai government. Afghanistan has become a virtual narco-state as a result. Indeed, the failure of the Coalition to wean farmers in the south off poppy represents a catastrophic failure of strategy and investment. With eighty-five percent of the population of the six provinces served by ISAF Regional Command South dependent on agriculture
for survival, without such a substitution strategy that works, it is hard to see any political reconciliation strategy working over the medium to long-term.\textsuperscript{11}

As a result, the US-led mission still faces a very real possibility of failing in time and it is NATO allies which could well get much of the blame from an America doubtlessly keen to shift responsibility. This would damage NATO’s collective security viability (even if talk of NATO’s demise is premature, as the Alliance will be needed for what is inevitably going to a big security century). However, failure in Afghanistan will certainly make it harder for NATO to remain central to American security, something European allies might wish to ponder. The sad fact for ISAF is that too many of the European allies went to Afghanistan with the wrong mindset, seeking only to do enough to keep America engaged in European security with the result that Europeans have by and large appeared far weaker than they are. The big loser from a disaster in Afghanistan will be Europe, as America goes its own way and the free-riding Europeans have enjoyed for decades is brought to a shuddering halt.

Indeed, the recent Coalition strategy has not worked. And, if the AFPAK Strategy is to gain traction, several other steps will need to be taken and supported by allies and partners both in the region and the Alliance. The main emphasis in Afghanistan now has to be improving the quality of life of the Afghan people rapidly and discernibly. The urgent political challenge is for Americans, Europeans and Afghans to finally agree on what success might look like. The establishment of a truly functioning, democratic state is not feasible, at least not yet. Rather the focus now must be on basic but robust instruments of government that reinforce traditional structures in pursuit of a) a reasonable level of stability; and b) the prevention of the return of terrorists.

A strategy of sorts at last

That said, those that despair of this mission are premature, as the application of any strategy – be it to Afghanistan and/or Pakistan is a surprisingly recent phenomenon and it would thus only be polite to see if one can work. Indeed, only at the 2008 NATO Bucharest summit were four strategic principles laid out – a long-term commitment to Afghanistan, Afghan leadership and civil primacy, a real comprehensive approach and the all important regional engagement.\textsuperscript{12} Moreover, the 2009 NATO Summit Declaration on Afghanistan did agree on some important specifics; the NATO training mission, the provision of more police trainers, support for ANSF in the run-up to the elections, expanding Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) for expanding the ANA to 134,000, the expansion of the role of the Afghan National Army Trust Fund,
enhanced co-operation between Afghan and Pakistani governments, strengthening of the Integrated Approach with the UN to better synchronise cross-country civil-military efforts as well support for the UN election fund. However, a very profound doctrine gap exists concerning how best to adapt the way of doing business so that the Coalition can beat the enemy to the critical ground – the Afghan people. Again, what is still needed by all on the ground is a clear concept of minimum ‘success’ towards which to work, a shared level of ambition amongst all the partners, a shared modus operandi that bestrides security, a coherent and cross-Afghanistan stabilisation and reconstruction effort and sufficient unity of political effort to make it stick. Indeed, it has been the absence of any meaningful political leadership at the strategic level that for so long allowed the Afghanistan mission to drift into a series of military-technical initiatives with no clear statement of political object or method to drive them. That is where AFPAK adds real strategic value.

On the military side, security and stability in Afghanistan has historically required a balance between top-down efforts to create a central government, and bottom-up efforts to secure local support. Since 2001, the U.S. and international community have focused predominantly on top-down security efforts, including the establishment of an Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army. But the deteriorating situation and local nature of the insurgency require a much more intensive effort to work with local tribes, sub-tribes, and clans to establish order and governance in rural parts of Afghanistan. Indeed, only with a proper sub-national effort will the grand strategic effort implied by the AFPAK Strategy have a reasonable chance of success.

In addition, successful counter-insurgency efforts hinge on the competence of local security forces, not international ones. More international forces in Afghanistan may be helpful, but only if they are used to build Afghan capacity. One critical need is to address the international partnering gap that has plagued efforts to improve Afghanistan’s police and army. There is currently a seventy percent shortfall in international mentors for the police and a fifty percent shortfall for the army. The AFPAK Strategy aims to ease this problem but is still reliant on partners willing to share the burden with the Americans and the immediate post-strategy announcements are not encouraging with the deafening sound of many Europeans shuffling their feet and, albeit eloquent and refined, making their excuses all too audible.
Partnering Pakistan: difficult at the best of times

What is truly different about AFPAK is recognition of a reality of the region that the British Raj knew only too well – there can be no stability in Afghanistan if Pakistan is failing. Indeed, the British created a strong administrative system in that part of the Raj in the nineteenth century partly to prevent the chaos to the north from infecting and affecting its rule. The AFPAK Strategy will thus only make sense if it generates a truly coherent, comprehensive and above all coherent strategy toward Pakistan. The insurgency in Afghanistan is fuelled by radical Islamic groups based across the border in Baluchistan Province, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and NWFP in Pakistan. Thus, any strategy that concentrates solely or primarily on Afghanistan is bound to fail. That is why the Regional Strategy recognises the important linkage between the insurgency in Afghanistan and its roots in what is nominally Pakistan.

That is also why the $1.5 billion of aid and development to be aimed directly at the Pakistani people will be so important as part of a coherent package of economic assistance. However, it will also need to help the Pakistani Government deal with challenges across the country, not just in the north-west and thus reflect a firm understanding of the effort that will be needed to reinforce Pakistani state institutions. Mass anger at rising food prices and electricity cuts has already led to widespread protests and undermined support for Pakistani President Asif Ali Zadari. Indeed, ongoing instability in the Punjab could wreck any hope of Pakistan continuing, let alone intensifying, its campaign against the insurgents in the largely ungoverned tribal areas that border Afghanistan because that will affect the one stable institution upon which the whole AFPAK Strategy relies – the Pakistani Army.

The April-May 2009 operations against the Pakistani Taliban saw the Pakistan Army in action less than eighty kilometres from Islamabad. Whilst the nature of the insurgents and the structure of Pakistan makes it unlikely that Islamabad will ever fall (and in any case Islamabad was put where it is in the 1960s precisely to mark Pakistani sovereignty across the whole of its territory), it is a mark of Pakistan’s instability that the insurgents were allowed to exploit agreements with a weak government to gain so much ground so rapidly.

Equally, unless the AFPAK Strategy begins adequately to address the development gap in Pakistan’s Pashtun areas, a root cause of extremism on both sides of the border and well beyond will continue to fester. Government institutions in the tribal areas are weak, and social and economic conditions are among the lowest in the world. Current international reconstruction and development assistance have too often been too focused
on the Afghan side of the border. That must change with AFPAK. Certainly, progress here will be vital as the US and NATO could win the hearts and minds of every Pashtun in Afghanistan, and still lose the war, since three-fifths of the Pashtun population lives in Pakistan.

Security progress would thus always be limited if tangible benefit to local, disaffected communities is not forthcoming. Without undermining the power of militant groups, however, it remains unclear who will benefit from development funds in the FATA and some sort of control will need to be exercised to prevent aid falling into the hands of the very people it is designed to help topple. At present, the most likely beneficiaries will be local religious leaders and militant leaders, as well as the military-run Frontier Works Organisation, none of which could be regarded as reliable partners for any such strategy. Political reform will in time also be critical if such an effort is to pay dividends and here AFPAK is less clear. This should include encouraging political developments, such as evaluating the Political Parties Act and the Frontier Crimes Regulation. Unfortunately, whilst the Pakistani government is keen to obtain funding for development, it has always been less willing to politically liberalise the tribal areas. Indeed, any discussions about expanding democratic rights in the FATA have always been limited by the scope of democracy throughout the rest of Pakistan.

The current military strategy must also be revised, not least because too often the Pakistani Army kills too many civilians when it embarks on offensives. A much greater effort should be invested in empowering local elements quietly and discreetly. It is thus vital that the institutions of state are reinforced in Pakistan and not undermined by action seen to be in support of AFPAK. To that end US military action in Pakistan will also need to be more discerning. Recent US ground incursions across the Pakistani border have generated widespread public opposition and run the risk of drastically undermining the Pakistani state and creating the very regional turmoil they are designed to prevent. A more tailored approach is thus needed to conduct effective counter-insurgency operations with the focus on generating effective police forces central to such a strategy in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. This will require better training of the Pakistani Army and the militias that pass for law and order in the FATA. It would also be useful to start working with the ISI to try and adapt it into a normal intelligence agency.

Making the strategy work

If the AFPAK Strategy is to work, at its heart a sound and agreed strategic campaign plan must be crafted to exploit new political alignments. The current concept of a three
strategic phase approach (security, governance and rule of law capacity building, and Afghan civil primacy) is sound so long as it is matched by political commitment in capitals, and a resource and governance effort that can be measured across the region in such a way that it is relevant to the critical ground for this strategy – the Afghan people (and their Pakistani counterparts). In a sense what the existing doctrine needs (which has tended to emerge from practice) is a strategy worthy of the name.

Early civilian ownership of AFPAK will thus be vital but civilian international organisations (IOs), such as the UN and EU, still remain dangerously resistant to the need for more intense co-operation. AFPAK should at the very least help to create the political context for civilian agencies to work more closely with their military counterparts. Moreover, the thinking behind PRTs (Provincial Reconstruction Teams) needs to be revised. The current application of the PRT model in Afghanistan is undermined by national differences on the ground at the expense of strategic effect. On top of that, it is unclear how PRTs will relate to the Reconstruction Opportunity Zones envisaged in AFPAK. It would certainly be useful to make virtue out of necessity by picking one PRT as the ‘model’ under the rubric of the AFPAK Strategy as a means to better harmonise the efforts of the various national actors. At the very least such a model would need to be reinforced with credible benchmarks that would also help to re-establish control.

Thankfully, the AFPAK Strategy (taken together with the Petraeus campaign plan) will likely see much closer synergy between the counter-terror, counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics efforts, but the Afghan Government will need to prove itself capable of being a worthy partner over the next two years, because, after all, beyond 2015 Afghan civil primacy is the rightful objective.

As ever, much will depend on whether the pledged commitments are met with real commitments and to what extent the western NATO-led identity of the mission can become a UN-led international community effort with the sub-contracting role of the US, NATO and the EU very much more apparent.

Unfortunately, the length of strategic phases in much of the planning still seems to be governed by western domestic electoral cycles, rather than Afghan reality and an over-optimistic belief in the capacity of UNAMA and other UN agencies to fill the capacity-building vacuum, particularly as it concerns the construction of a relatively sound judicial system and the economic well-being of rural Afghanistan in the short- to medium term with regards to poppy income substitution. A first vital step will be the removal of Narco-Khans as the go-betweens between the Afghan Government and many farmers locked into them by allegiance and debt.
There is also the wider issue concerning the extent to which western states suffering from the credit crunch and other financial and economic ailments will be willing to foot the bill of what will still be a major financial commitment, the success of which offers no guarantee that the counter-terrorism goal will actually be achieved.

Success will thus be defined by the following basic but robust pillars of state plus a narrative of success. Afghanistan is well-placed, has significant natural capital that needs to be exploited, enjoys significant financial capital held outside the country by individuals and institutions of state are emerging (ANA, National Solidarity Programme, National Telecoms Programme, the health sector, to name but a few).14

Assessing the new strategy

The AFPAK Strategy is an important new initiative, but, as indicated earlier, the next two years will be vital. The devil is in the detail and whilst the political and development demarches are to be welcomed, it is unlikely to succeed unless there is a firm grip of the fundamentals of successful stabilisation and reconstruction (S&R) at its core. This will involve a better understanding of realistic success, the fashioning of all the actors and institutions vital thereto into a plan of campaign of which all take ownership, all know their role, sequencing and prioritisation are understood and the metrics exist for the reasonable measurement of performance on the ground, rather than the ticking of boxes back in capitals. Unless AFPAK is founded on such fundamentals, it will be little more than rhetoric and the Afghan people and Coalition forces deserve better than that. These fundamentals can be thus summarised:15

1. **Design a proper strategic framework for all efforts.** This is an essential *sine qua non* for success. For S&R operations to succeed, they must better harmonise and reconcile differences of perspectives and approaches, planning and metrics determining where and when to co-operate on S&R operations;

2. **Agree a basic methodology for S&R operations.** The Coalition needs to better help both Afghanistan and Pakistan to enhance the performance of state functions at a national, regional/provincial or local level. As clear a conceptual understanding as possible is needed early between different efforts and their sequencing throughout the security continuum.

3. **Understand the constraints of S&R.** External intervention can never substitute for what host states do on themselves. S&R operations are not COIN, although the latter
support the former. Two constituencies are vital – local people, who are the critical
ground, and our own people, whose support is vital for what will always be a sus-
tained effort over time and distance. This is particularly important for AFPAK.

4. **Promote effective inter-institutional synergy.** Institutions both legitimise effort and focus
it, but in the end they are means to an end and in Afghanistan and Pakistan must
be seen as essential elements of an effective campaign plan. The UN remains pivotal
but needs its own capacity-building programme in this regard. For example, NATO
and the EU each have unique capabilities and both uniquely have much to contribute
to S&R operations. There needs to be a major effort to develop EU-NATO syner-
gies covering S&R operations because thus far the EU effort on police training has
been lamentable. Institutions are vital if the most effective balance can be achieved
between military, diplomatic, intelligence and development efforts. At the very least
the UN, EU and NATO jointly should promote a cadre of civil-military experts com-
mitted to promoting S&R interoperability to get trained civilians in at the begin-
ing of campaign planning.

5. **Establish a stronger and more direct EU-US relationship.** The US and EU should jointly
review the role of economic aid in the conflict zone as part of an effort to better tai-
lor donor efforts, promote the early expansion of rule of law efforts, (how) to better
enhance and support the role of the UN Special Representatives of the Secretary
General, capacity-building for the UN and regional institutions, possibly in conjunc-
tion with the G8. Better understanding of the role and functions of IOs and NGOs,
including better understanding of their core tasks and functions.

6. **Reconcile S&R operations with counter-terror and counter-insurgency.** A final and com-
mon understanding of the distinctions between S&R, counter-terror and counter-
insurgency is needed, together with a common doctrine, so that all agree what it is
it they are engaged upon. Second, there needs to be better understanding between
traditionally more-militarised America doctrine and its overly-civilianised European
counterpart.

7. **Reinvigorate the relationship with the UN.** Over time the S&R operation in AFPAK
will need to be de-westernised to better involve regional powers and institutions.
European states will henceforth almost certainly require that all such operations be
conducted under a UN Security Council mandate, with support from regional insti-
tutions.
8. **Launch and update a constant strategic narrative.** The choice of strategic narrative and the language therein needs to be better linked to progress in the AFPAK region, performance and publics both in country, in region and at home built on a compelling rationale for engagement. Moreover, a flourishing media should be a central aim of good governance. Above all, speak to the host nation with one voice.

9. **Give the Comprehensive Approach substance and meaning.** The entire AFPAK effort will be profoundly weakened if there is not a once and for all common definition of the Comprehensive Approach. A common definition of and a common approach to the Comprehensive Approach therein is desperately needed so that where possible it can be applied across the S&R effort. These are complex civilian-military and military-military undertakings that can as much complicate S&R as secure it. At the very least a common level of ambition and unity of command must be pursued from the outset. Such an approach would benefit from a cadre of elite civil-military planners who understand each other and can plan, direct and manage as part of a single framework for operations.

10. **Embed all S&R operations in a regional strategy.** All S&R operations will need to be owned by as many regional partners as is practicable.

11. **Place political reconciliation front and centre.** Talk to whoever, whenever. All S&R operations must have a political reconciliation strategy at their core. It is upon such a strategy that AFPAK will succeed or fail.

    In the words of President Obama, “To achieve our goals, we need a stronger, smarter and comprehensive strategy”.\(^{16}\) Amen to that!

**Notes**

1. J. (Julian) S. Lindley-French is professor of Military Operational Arts and Sciences at the Netherlands Defence Academy, professor of Strategic Studies at Leyden University and Senior Associate Fellow at the United Kingdom Defence Academy.


3. It is interesting, the speed at which the political class in the US and UK are rushing to support a regional strategy which belatedly they claim always to have believed in. Speaker Nancy Pelosi stated on 27 March, 2009: “This strategy (AFPAK) rec-
recognizes a point that I have emphasized for years, and one that I shared with the President following my visit last month to Afghanistan, which is that we must have a regional approach to countering terrorism’. ‘Pelosi: President’s Comprehensive Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan is Right…’, Reuters, 27 March, 2009 www.reuters.com/articleId=US155703.

4. It is surprising, the extent to which so many members of the Coalition seem to have entered Afghanistan without either a sense of strategy or history. Piers Brendon in his excellent book The Decline and Fall of the British Empire 1781-1997 writes of Afghanistan in the 1840s: ‘The First Afghan War had begun, its purpose being to keep the Russian Bear at bay and to intimidate the Himalayan tribes. ‘It was felt’, according to an article in the Asiatic Journal, ‘that the security of our Empire would be so irrevocably compromised whenever we were obliged, like the Empire of Rome in its decline, to buy off the barbarians on our frontier.’ See Brendon, Piers (2007), The Decline and Fall of the British Empire 1781-1997, London: Vintage, p. 95.


6. Much has been made of the appointment of Petraeus to CENTCOM because of the apparent success of the much-lauded surge in Iraq. However, Thomas Ricks puts the surge in context. ‘At the end of the surge, the fundamental political problems facing Iraq were the same ones as when it began...But it was almost certain that whenever it (fighting) did end, it wouldn’t be with the victory that the Bush administration continued to describe, of an Iraq that was both a stable democracy and an ally of the United States.’ Pace Afghanistan? Ricks, Thomas E. (2009), The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq 2006-2009, New York: Penguin, p. 9.

7. Interestingly, General Stanley McCrystal also ran the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and was this responsible for black operations, such as the US Army’s Delta Force.


9. See above report.

10. As Barnett Rubin points out, this will not be a quick fix. “Within Pakistan, integrating the Federally Administered Tribal Areas into what Pakistanis call the ‘mainstream’ is also not a quick fix. It will require a strategy that will take many years. There will be armed resistance by al-Qaeda and many other groups whose existence depends on the isolated nature of these areas. But gaining control of national territory in order to protect the rights of Pakistani citizens will certainly provide a more legitimate mission for the country’s security forces than assisting the United States in its ‘war on terror’.” Rubin, Barnett R. (2009), End the War on


12. The Bucharest Summit declaration of 3 April, 2008 stated, “Working with the Afghans, we have made significant progress, but we recognise that remaining challenges demand additional efforts. Neither we nor our Afghan partners will allow extremists and terrorists to regain control of Afghanistan or use it as a base for terror that threatens all of our people. With our ISAF partners, and with the engagement of President Karzai, we will issue a statement on Afghanistan. This statement sets out a clear vision guided by four principles: a firm and shared long-term commitment; support for enhanced Afghan leadership and responsibility; a comprehensive approach by the international community, bringing together civilian and military efforts; and increased cooperation and engagement with Afghanistan’s neighbours, especially Pakistan.” See http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-049e.html.

13. As ever, the devil is in the detail in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Pakistani Taliban, which made apparently spectacular gains early in 2009, is a case in point. The Economist states, “The Taliban are near Islamabad because the capital, a 1960s new town, was built close to the rugged border area where these Pushtun tribesmen live. But there is no chance of their seizing Islamabad. If, unthinkably, the disparate warlords who make up the Pakistani Taliban were to mass together for a frontal attack, Pakistan’s army which is 620,000 strong and well-drilled for conventional warfare could crush them. Indeed, many pundits reckon that an Islamist takeover in Pakistan would be possible only with the army’s support.” ‘A Real Offensive, or a Phoney War?’, The Economist, May 2nd, 2009, p. 23.


