

THE RICH CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF PAKISTAN & AFGHANISTAN (PAKAF)

A Strategic Multilayer Assessment Project

Helmand Deep Dive

Development and Governance Workshop

10-11 December 2009

KEY FINDINGS

The objective of Helmand Deep Dive Development and Governance Workshop was to examine academic works and newly generated data and models and to develop guidelines and recommendations for low-cost development project implementation. The Helmand Deep Dive effort focused on water, governance, reconstruction, and job creation.

Eleven independent teams assessed various aspects using a common data set.

- Cultural Geography Modeling (LTC Dave Hudak, TRAC)
- Helmand Causal Frameworks (Tom Mullen, PA Consulting)
- Complex Adaptive System Approach (Anne-Marie Grisogono and Paul Gaertner, Australia Department of Defence)
- SOCOM SOC-PAS Helmand Analysis (David Ellis)
- ONR Helmand Ethnography (Rebecca Goolsby, Tracy St. Benoit)
- USAF – MCIA -Rand Helmand Analysis (Lt Col Steve Lambert, Ben Connable)
- JIEDDO/MITRE (Ken Comer, Nina Berry, Brian Tivnan)
- Department of State (Gina Faranda)
- Gallup surveys including POLRAD and GLASS (Tom Rieger)
- Culturally-Attuned Governance and Rule of Law (Ellee Walker)
- Sentia Group, Senturion Model (Brian Efirid)
- PA Consulting, Causal Diagram (Tom Mullen)

Other presenters were invited to present important findings in their area of expertise including:

- John Wood (NDU)
- Tom Gouttierre (UNO)
- Abdul Raheem Yaseer (UNO)
- Abdul Assifi (UNO)
- Joseph Brinker (USAID)
- David Champagne (4th POG)
- Jean Palmer-Moloney (USACE-ERDC)
- Pete Chirico (USGS)
- Alex Dehgan (USACE-ERDC)
- Lin Wells (NDU)
- Captain Wayne Porter (JCS)
- Jeff Knowles (USDA)

The workshop addressed several key issues in development and governance including the economy, agriculture and irrigation, water security, Iran, security, and popular support for the Taliban. The workshop also reviewed the Civilian Conservation Corps and Distributed Essential Services-Afghanistan plans. The findings discussed below are compiled from many of the models and research efforts listed above. Page numbers from the workshop proceedings are listed where appropriate for easy reference.

Economy

Helmand used to be a stable and economically successful province. Part of its success stemmed from the Helmandis' willingness to engage with populations outside of their own community (pg. 9). This was especially true for the urban areas, particularly Lashkar Gah. Helmand's economy is dependent on opium cultivation and production estimated by the UN as \$3 billion/year (pg. 8). Nearly every household in Helmand is involved in the drug trade in some way. Taliban narratives effectively address prohibition of narcotics in Islam in addition to receiving millions from the cultivation. Licit or not, agriculture is the main source of income for more than two-thirds of households in Helmand. It is also seen as a key strategy to increase economic activity as a bulwark against the insurgency; however, this requires having sufficient water resources for expansion.

Agriculture/Irrigation

Current agricultural development has been hampered by the devastation of much of the Helmand Valley irrigation and farming infrastructure from 30 years of near-constant war, instability, and insecurity, which affects farmers' ability to plan, plant, and harvest (pg. 8). Without water for consumption and irrigation, the rural population becomes predisposed to work for Taliban as well as war and drug lords as a means of survival. As the population in the middle and lower Helmand River Basin grows, agricultural reconstruction and expansion and climate changes are likely to exacerbate rising domestic tensions over dams and other water control features on the river.

Water Security

Availability of water in the middle and lower Helmand River watershed and Hamun wetlands is a stability and security concern (pg. 37). Stability and reconstruction efforts (i.e., water development projects) up-stream on Helmand River impact down-stream water (and consequently food security) and also have economic and security implications. Ongoing drought and climate change conditions are likely to further exacerbate existing tension with Iran over dams and other water control features. Without water for consumption or irrigation (for food and economic security), the rural population has no means of support and becomes predisposed to recruitment by the insurgent--warlords, narco-traffickers, and the Taliban. In crisis, rural populations typically flee to urban areas where they hope to find support. Lashkar Gah and Kandahar are the main urban centers in the region that would absorb any rural to urban migration of population in Helmand Province. Currently there is no plan in place to determine overall impact of Helmand water projects (diversions and impounding of surface water, pumping of groundwater) on the watershed.

Iran

Iran sees current Afghan stabilization and reconstruction efforts--agricultural development and water withdrawal, diversion, and containment projects--in the middle and lower Helmand River, the Farah

River, and the Hari Rud watersheds of Afghanistan as undermining water security in eastern Iran, especially in the Sistan and Baluchestan provinces - the most desolate, most poor, and most instable of Iran's provinces (pg. 43). Science diplomacy provides one potential tool of engagement, appeals widely to the Iranian people, and promotes goals of transformational diplomacy and development while avoiding a loss of respect and the stigma of regime change (pg. 46).

Security

Overall stability in Helmand is generally low, influenced greatly by poor living conditions and safety concerns (pg. 24). Radicalism is quite high, especially among extreme radicals (type 1) in urban areas.¹ The population's perspective on security has changed rapidly in the last several years. In 2007, the population of Helmand generally thought the police to be helpful; however, by 2009 this perception changed and there appeared to be unhappiness with the police. Overall, there was a sense that there was no group providing security in the area but that improvements would come if there were more army rather than police in the area (pg. 9). Some civilian international community members expressed that they do not have adequate information regarding security to be able to properly plan which districts to implement programs (pg. 32). ISAF can increase civil-military cooperation to plan for the start-up of governance and rule of law programs in key districts.

Support for Taliban

According to Gallup, extreme radicals (type 1) cite ideology as a main reason why people join insurgent groups, while the primary reason mentioned by less extreme radicals (type 2) is jobs. Currently, Afghanistan is in a severe depression with unemployment that exceeds 70 percent (pg. 35). Therefore, providing jobs will help to improve morale and perhaps reduce the likelihood of less extreme radicals joining the Taliban for jobs.

Presidential Elections

The recent presidential elections in Helmand result in very low turnout. Approximately 38,000-50,000 actually voted and there were 134,804 declared votes out of 620,000 registered (pg. 28). Eighty-four percent of the votes were for Karzai. The elections were marred by violence as well as a number of what would be considered as irregularities, such as journalists banned in areas, campaigning up to 72 hours before the election, and lack of basic equipment (such as hole punchers to mark holes in voter cards). The Taliban blocked roads to polling stations, fired numerous rockets, cut off ink-stained fingers, and made those with voter registration cards eat them.

Overall, people in Helmand were not concerned with fraud. Only 24-43% of respondents were even aware of fraud allegations during the presidential election (pg. 24). Furthermore, only 23-50% said that fraud lowered their confidence in the government while 30-40% said it lowered confidence in ISAF. Voter fraud undermines the legitimacy of elected officials, and presently an enormous amount of resources are spent to issue voter registration cards (pg. 32). Supporting the creation of a unified voter registry system could help eliminate some fraudulent issuance of voter registration cards, lead to more legitimacy in elections, and reduce costs over the course of a few years.

¹ Type 1 Radicals as defined by Gallup: elitist/intolerant, mainstream, lack confidence in current government, may have experienced past hardship, and are concerned over safety

Justice/Rule of Law

The current state of the justice system in Helmand consists of 3 kinds of laws: statutory law, customary law, and Sharia (Islamic) law (pg. 29). Formal justice is almost non-existent while informal or traditional justice addresses around 95% of dispute resolution, whether it be resolution by jirgas, Taliban justice, or resolution by ANA/ANP or other security agencies or district officials. The formal justice system is of little relevance to Helmandis outside of Lashkar Gah and Gereshk.

Jirgas have been both praised and criticized by the international community (pg. 26). Praise of jirgas include that they are less expensive than a court, have a shorter process, provide greater access since it is in the local language and nearby, result in more restorative and enforceable decisions, promote peace and stability through resolving disputes among communities and neighbors, take into account knowledge of local customs in which community elders make decisions in accordance with customs and traditions of the community, and are comprised of respected, trusted decision-makers where elders are perceived as knowledgeable, leading to legitimacy and acceptance of decisions within the community. Criticism of jirgas include that most Afghans and internationals consider them to be inappropriate for the most serious cases (murder, terrorism, etc.), the role of elders has been undermined due to Taliban intimidation, enforcing decisions in Taliban-controlled areas is difficult, and jirgas' procedures potentially violate Afghan law and international human rights law (e.g., decisions may involve trading of sons and daughters and women usually have no voice). Additionally, little uniformity exists in jirgas' decisions due to a lack of codified procedure and lack of written decisions, and the community may perceive a lack of support and interference by Afghan Government officials.

Participants cautioned against supporting jirgas without first considering how they fit into the formal system (pg. 27). First, as the "least corruptible system" in Afghanistan, large amounts of foreign funding could introduce corruption. Therefore, participants recommended that ISAF only have a "light touch" on these traditional systems through any financial support. Second, linkages need to be made between the informal and formal justice system. Record keeping would be one way to link two. There are a few areas currently where the Provincial Governor will receive the jirgas' signed consensus from the disputing parties, so if there was a role of a "scribe" to tie the decisions to the governor, it would promote jirgas working with, or at minimum being more aware, of centralized government.

The lack of civil society organization makes it difficult for international donors to find implementing partners (pg. 32). Some have suggested vetting and supporting jirgas to implement and oversee programs, while building in accountability measures to reduce the potential for corruption, but this idea needs to be further explored. While many seem to nominally support jirgas at ISAF HQ and in the provinces, many people have little knowledge of how the function and what is involved in some of the remedies (such as trading of girls). Such a lack of knowledge undercuts ISAF's ability to effectively support jirgas and bring about further stabilization. ISAF could build off the November 27th Traditional Justice workshop held at ISAF HQ and take down such information to military commanders serving in Helmand.

Taliban justice includes permanent Taliban court centers in some districts, as well as numerous roaming Taliban "judges" who dispense justice (pg. 30). Reports indicate that the Taliban have a permanently constituted court of 4 judges, elected by the "people," who are regarded as well-qualified scholars and

take no money. When Taliban lose control of an area, Taliban courts do not persist. Yet there are a number of reasons why the population may choose Taliban justice including a lack of effective alternatives and intimidation, expectation of receiving a favorable result, and swifter and more effective enforcement of decisions and accessibility.

The most important and common issues in Helmand include land grabbing and water disputes, illegal drugs, and corruption (pg. 30). Land grabbing and water disputes lead to de-stabilization due to disputes across communities. Warlords are frequently involved in such disputes, which is complicated by the unusual extension of immunity to actions alleged to have been committed *before* members took office that in turn has led to a culture of impunity.

The lack of security and infrastructure prevents judges and prosecutors from working outside of capital (pg. 29). The lack of security also discourages jirgas from convening, leading to more Taliban justice. Thus, ISAF could concentrate more resources on providing greater security to jirgas.

Governance

As a rule of thumb, a “6 kilometer rule” exists where effective government control stops six kilometers from town centers (pg. 27). Widespread corruption and fraud have turned many Helmandis away from the central government and boosted the authority of the Taliban (pg. 28). Variance in districts presents a major challenge that necessitates not adopting a one-size fits all approach but rather maintaining flexibility when approaching local traditions (pg. 31). Pashtuns do not identify themselves by province, yet governance is often planned from the provincial level (pg. 28). District governors are installed in eight of Helmand’s 13 districts (Lashkar Gah, Nawa-y-Barakzai, Nad-e-Ali, Nahr-e-Saraj, Sangin, Musa Qala, Kajaki, Garmsir), which is up from 5 in 2006. In 2002, no district government offices existed in Helmand, and currently 5 offices in 5 districts support their District Governors and civil servants.

Communication

Understanding the population means communicating with them and understanding their primary sources of information. In Helmand, radio and informal sources are the primary bases of communication. Parents and spouses have a great deal of influence among females and children. Gallup found that in Helmand, the BBC is listened to by all groups. Television and newspapers do not play a significant role. Armam and Azadi radio are more likely to be listened to by those with more radicalized views (pg. 17). Less extreme (type 2)² radicals tend to rely on village elders more than do other groups (pg. 24). Interestingly, 85 percent of Afghans are within range of a cell phone tower (pg 48).

Review of Civilian Conservation Corps-like Effort

PA Consulting used its Afghanistan causal diagram to assess the positive and negative impacts of a Civilian Conservation Corps-like program in Helmand. There were many positive benefits including increased ANSF effectiveness (as well as confidence and morale), improved security, improved employment opportunities immediately, improved economy, improved ability to grow crops other than poppy, and a greater sense of local ownership. However, these positives were balanced out by several

² Type 2 Radicals as defined by Gallup: perceive themselves as victims, downscale, leader seeking, ideology seeking, and are typically accepting of violence

limitations and potential weak points. First, violence levels and casualties are likely to be ‘worse before better,’ which could reduce population trust and coalition domestic support. Second, ANSF development takes time - if pushed to operate independently too quickly, they may perform poorly, damage morale, and be unable to protect work camps. Third, shifting forces from other provinces may undercut previous gains – backslide and drive grievances. Fourth, workers and their families and/or tribes are likely to be targets of insurgent / criminal violence and intimidation. Last, it takes time to identify local leaders, recruits, and managers who are not affiliated with insurgent / criminal groups.

Review of Distributed Essential Services – Afghanistan (DES-A)

PA Consulting used its Afghanistan causal diagram to assess the positive and negative impacts of Distributed Essential Services – Afghanistan (DES-A) in Helmand. It found that effective efforts to develop infrastructure and services can drive positive momentum. These include immediate employment benefits, long-term licit opportunities, reduction of susceptibility to criminal / radical alternatives, greater sense of ownership and likelihood of durable gains, expanded markets, strengthened economy, and increased tax base. The causal diagram also revealed common challenges for public infrastructure and services development. In regard to coalition and coordination challenges, there are several challenges including a requirement for high-level support and coordination between Afghan, US, coalition, and international institutions, complications with authority structures, and timeliness and flexibility of development funding. Finally, pressure to show progress can be counter-productive if the local population is not engaged or that the government/private sector capacity is not also nurtured and improved.