



On **May 12-14 2005**, academics, graduate students and practitioners from Canada and abroad gathered at the Centre for International Governance Innovation in Waterloo, Ontario to assess the impact of Canada's 3D approach in Afghanistan, with particular focus on the Canadian Forces, in a conference conceived by the **Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies (LCMSDS)**, the **Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI)**, the **Centre on Foreign Policy and Federalism (CFPF)** and the **Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS)**.

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Afghanistan is in the midst of a historic transition. Its progress to date has been guided by a 2001 treaty, the Bonn Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan, which transferred power to the Afghan Interim Authority chaired by Hamid Karzai, defined the implementation role of the United Nations and set out a roadmap towards a permanent government. In line with the provisions of this agreement, a specially selected Emergency Loya Jirga legislature chose an Afghan Transitional Authority in 2002, while a Constitutional Loya Jirga approved a new constitution in early 2004. Having chosen Karzai as their president in the country's first election last year, Afghans will soon vote for a new parliament, which will complete the government and put an end to the main thrust of the Bonn process.

Afghanistan's security outlook remains complex. Operation Enduring Freedom continues its hunt for Al Qaeda and Taliban forces along the border with Pakistan, while rogue warlords and drug traders threaten much of the country. At a regional level, Iran's nuclear ambitions and Pakistan's historic interest in Afghanistan endanger an already delicate balance. As the United States turns its attention towards Iraq, some worry that the existing shortage of military forces and police officers in the country will be aggravated.

These shifts coincide with significant transformations in Canada's relationship with Afghanistan. Afghanistan is already the largest recipient of Canadian aid and military forces. Furthering its involvement, Canada will provide a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to Kandahar in August and a brigade headquarters to the region in 2006. Ottawa's foreign policy tools are also changing, as it embraces new priorities outlined in the International Policy Statement, looks to improve its force structure and attempts to join defence, development and diplomacy under the umbrella of 3D.

Canada has considerable interests at stake in Afghanistan. From the security of the Afghan people to supporting NATO and the United States, there is an abundance of reasons to stay involved in the region. Yet Afghanistan has influenced Canadian operations as profoundly as they have affected their host country. By showcasing the

practical and institutional applications of a coordinated foreign policy, the Afghan experience was the first opportunity to put 3D to the test. Establishing a PRT, particularly taking over from an American command and dealing with the baggage that it entails, has brought a new immediacy and complexity to the theory.

The challenges Canada faces in Afghanistan are tremendous. Political fragmentation, security gaps and inadequate quality of life all threaten the region's stability. Addressing them will require resolve, honest assessments of progress and a commitment towards collaboration from Canadian agencies and their partners. 3D must develop into more than a catch-all, feel-good idea. It must be a process through which decisions are made that provide tangible benefit to the defence, development and diplomacy officials on the ground, who often cooperate on their own initiative. In spite of these obstacles, Canada has done tremendous good in Afghanistan.

Professor William Maley of Australian National University opened the conference with a look at the immediate political challenges facing Afghanistan. **While the success of the presidential election was undisputed, the upcoming parliamentary contest will be more problematic.** In the former, candidates expected a Karzai victory. The latter elections will see far more bitter competition. As they will be conducted at the provincial level, there must be complex infrastructure in each province. Afghanistan's single non-transferable voting system is flawed, leaving a lack of proportionality between votes and seats, as well as hindering the development of political parties. There will also be a lack of resources and experience in the new government. Running a country under such circumstances will be difficult. **As a result, domestic Afghan politics may soon have an even greater impact on security.**

## THE BROAD CHALLENGES FACING AFGHANISTAN

Though Afghans have accomplished a great deal in a short time, one academic argued, one should have no illusions on the development and security challenges facing the country. An Afghan government has barely existed since the Soviet invasion in 1979, leaving the population unfamiliar with central authority. Aggravated by the disintegration of the army and by an impenetrable geography, different focal points of influence were able to spread over the country. As the state re-emerges, one must guard against the entrenchment of corruption and factionalism. On a regional level, South Asian conflict and Iranian nuclear ambitions continue to colour the Afghan plight. The danger of reverting to a terrorist breeding ground remains, yet the War on Terror has already moved to Iraq. **As attention drifts, Afghan forces must be trained and police deployed to take on security responsibilities. A lasting partnership with the United States is needed, as the intervention has not yet undone years of statelessness. The world must remain engaged in Afghanistan, the academic urged.**

Despite these threats, one diplomat stated that as long as there is strong leadership in Kabul and well-managed development programs, the country would be on the road to success. **The end of the Bonn agreement should not be the end of international support. Instead, it should give way to a Kabul-driven process that solidifies gains and commits to strengthening institutions, improving the economy and defeating corruption.** The Afghan people are increasingly holding their government accountable for their quality of life. They want visible results, including a strengthened private sector and infrastructure such as railways and water irrigation. For its part, the government must expand its revenue. As the parliamentary election will bring new political scenery to the country, the international community must focus on maintaining peace and strengthening the rule of law. A multinational committee managed by Afghans may help, bringing together parliament and civil society to discuss a shared future.

## AFGHAN SUCCESS STORIES

While facing many challenges, two international officials argued Afghanistan also has stirring success stories. The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program has achieved a great deal, serving as one instance of a fully functioning national program. **By convincing fighters to disarm, leave the Afghan Militia Forces (AMF) and rejoin civilian life, the DDR program is vital to stabilizing the country and to removing the incentives and structures of violence.** Reintegration ranges from political solutions for top-level commanders to streamlined training programs for regular troops and low-level officers. Funded with a large contribution from Canada, the program has demobilized over 50,000 troops during its existence. Its widely acknowledged success has led it to branch out to heavy weapons and ammunition. These results are achieved through a communications strategy extolling Afghan themes of renewal. The official believed that the Afghan desire for regeneration enabled these achievements.

**The United Nations has also played a critical political role in Afghanistan, from the fall of the Taliban to the Bonn conference and beyond.** Under difficult circumstances, the UN was able to alleviate tensions in the Loya Jirga. Its role in identifying candidates, running logistics, providing assistance and legitimizing the government have all been critical. In Kabul, it has provided a coordination body that brings it together with security agencies and ISAF. Outside of the capital, it attempts a similar role. Resurfaced factional differences, especially in the North, have been tempered by UN involvement. It has also created a successful, efficient, Afghan-run de-mining program. In the future, the United Nations may lead a formal reconciliation process in the country. Its Independent Human Rights Commission will hold the government accountable to its commitments. **The official argued that, while it is still too early to pass on responsibilities, Afghans understand their opportunities. The UN can continue to help prepare the way for a true national consensus.**

## CANADA'S OPERATIONS ON THE GROUND

One defence official described the activities of a recent rotation of Operation Athena in Afghanistan. Task Force Kabul's (TFK) mission was to assist ISAF and Afghan security organizations. In the midst of a high-risk environment, Camp Julien was well run, designed and equipped. Tasks included de-mining, patrols, securing elections and assisting CIDA through civil-military cooperation units. The overriding mission remained protection from detractors, including terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and Hizb-I Islami Gulbuddin, as well as warlords. Canadian troops witnessed suicide bombings and suffered rocket attacks on their camp. Contact with the local population saved lives, often yielding advanced warning of attacks. These Canadian sources, cultivated through public outreach, were the envy of ISAF. **The mission was successful, as free elections were held and security improved. Although defence can only set the stage for change, the official urged that ISAF be renewed. Canada's forces will remain in Afghanistan.**

**CIDA's operations in Afghanistan, one development official explained, attempt to make the local government the driver of policy for Canada's most significant aid program.** An Afghan-elaborated national development program framework guides initiatives. Funding the national budget directly through a World Bank fund, programs focus on expanding the rule of law, promoting democracy and natural resource management. Private sector development and integrated approaches to counter-narcotics are other significant areas. Gender-specific programs acknowledge the particular needs of women, while the Canada Fund, which is at the Ambassador's discretion, provides for grassroots projects. These various programs have achieved results while maintaining accountability. Cooperation with defence and diplomacy was more effective on the ground than in Ottawa. **The aid figure is set to decline, making it all the more important to set priorities now. The official concluded by saying the quality of life in Afghanistan remains unacceptably low.**

One foreign policy official argued that Foreign Affairs (FAC) might have the broadest view of Afghanistan, seeing the country through a variety of geographic and thematic lenses. **Because of the resources focused on the country, Afghanistan is a litmus test for the international community. Getting Afghanistan right is crucial, yet 3D has not developed into a truly integrated and results-driven approach.** It is plagued by miscommunication, stereotypes and the rotation of staff. The approach is nevertheless essential, but there is reason for FAC to be reluctant. While Foreign Affairs has the broadest interest in the country, it has the fewest resources. There is only one political officer in Kabul, a symptom of a wider lack of resources. For 3D to be more than tactical, Canada must create integrated units with real decision-making power. Canada went into Afghanistan to support NATO and the United States, fight against drugs and terrorism and improve the life of the people. In the official's view, this has not only seen the 3D policy, but the whole international community put to the test.

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

At dinner, the Honourable Bill Graham, Minister of National Defence, addressed conference participants. **The Minister argued that through vibrant leadership and new funding, the Canadian Forces (CF) were experiencing renewal.** With the International Policy Statement's recognition of their importance, the capability gap has been replaced by a focus on growing, sustaining and equipping the CF. As a force that operates with allies, it is focused on improving conditions in weak states and on the defence of Canada. Afghanistan is a threat to both regional and global security. **Canada's Afghan operation has transformed the forces, increasing their cohesion.** Characterized by new technology, the operation has also promoted flexibility and adaptability in cooperating with other nations. Its complexity, due to the range of missions and the involvement of diverse agencies, blurs traditional lines. The mission has thus required a new sensitivity and communication with local elements. Afghanistan is now on the road to success. A PRT deployment to Kandahar in August will be joined with new commitments to be

delivered in 2006. The goal is a meaningful role in the world through a positive impact on peace in Afghanistan.

## THE PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM FRAMEWORK

To the academic who opened discussion on the second day, no two PRTs are alike. However, their intellectual foundation is akin to 3D. Despite initial enthusiasm, PRTs have become contentious because of their use of the military for development work. **Rather than institutional culture, it is humanitarian space that is at issue. The license to conduct humanitarian work is inherently political.** While the military does not require exclusivity in humanitarian operations, it demands participation. However, the value of this space is greatest when claimed by a single actor. Humanitarians may thus not accept a sharing of roles. The PRTs express the range of military views, as some are only concerned with security, while others undertake development work. Claiming a historical prerogative, neutrality and local support, NGOs exclude the military based on its violent capability and what they see as mixed motivations. The military, for its part, argues that security is paramount, while it alone has the ability to undertake large projects. **At the institutional level, the academic worried that the people both intend to help may be forgotten.**

One prominent example of a successful PRT was the UK operation in Northern Afghanistan, one military official stated. **Its mission was to assist the Afghan government in extending its authority, facilitating the development of a stable environment.** This work centred on cooperating with all regional players. A multinational force, it received direction from a command group composed of military, political, development and police officials. **Decisions were made through consultation. The PRT did not undertake any projects outside of Security Sector Reform (SSR) and government support, which allowed for an equal dialogue with development organizations.** Operating in a near-feudal environment, the PRT aided institution building and democracy, enabled the work of NGOs and UNAMA and extended the

rule of law, especially the police. While armed groups continued to act with impunity, their legitimacy eroded. Despite these challenges, the official believed the UK PRT was successful in balancing complementary capabilities.

## PREPARATIONS FOR CANADA'S PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

### TEAM

Because development is a security issue, one development official stated, the PRT focus allows for a coming together of priorities in one region. **All three departments have been involved in the consultations for the Canadian PRT in Kandahar, looking beyond their usual parameters of operation.** The PRT will extend government authority while reflecting Canadian values. The capacity for SSR and development is slight at the moment, but there are high expectations of the PRT to correct this reality. Canada will facilitate the return of development actors and work towards stability together with a wide variety of actors. The final shape of the PRT has yet to be endorsed. A necessarily temporary structure, the goal is for the Afghan government to take them over.

Canada has had a role in Afghanistan since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom, one foreign policy official indicated. After a significant operational pause, the CF can now use the PRTs to make a significant difference. Kandahar was chosen because of its importance as a major city and former seat of Taliban power. While the American operation and ISAF are different, they will inevitably converge. Canada can aid the transition, its involvement contributing to the success of NATO, the quality of Canada-US relations and the War on Terror. This operation will be unique. **It will be in the centre of the security threat, benefiting from a large combat presence and facing a population that fails to distinguish it from American forces. Shaped by a dearth of NGOs in the region and by the transition from a US-led PRT, the official hoped the Canadian PRT would be able to leverage these forces to make a difference in Afghanistan.**

From one defence official's standpoint, PRTs are the way ahead for 3D. Officers understand that 3D is not solely a Canadian Forces issue. **The complex of interrelated forces in typical Peace Support Operations lead the CF to try to engineer 3D groups overnight. There must be more advance institutional planning.** Multinational operations have sometimes posed problems, except when undertaken with NATO allies. Partnerships are also challenging, as NGOs can be difficult to work with at an institutional level. They may take advantage of the pretence of impartiality, sometimes even indirectly helping adversaries, threatening the peace process. **As Canada's military has no insidious purpose, it should have humanitarian credibility, the official argued.** Leadership is the key exigency for 3D operations.

One development official reminded the audience that NGOs have a long-standing commitment in Afghanistan. **While many NGOs have reservations on the PRT system, security is essential. Where threats are at their worst, no NGO can operate.** While they endeavour not to take sides, the difficulty of maintaining this profile is underscored by the lack of demarcation between the United States, ISAF and the PRTs. Taking over a US-led PRT in Kandahar will complicate the issue for Canada. The official argued that the American approach to PRTs might be too robust and insensitive. The British model of having the military focus on security and development organizations work on their areas of expertise may be better suited to Canada's needs. The relationship between the military and NGOs should be complementary. It is important for them to share information with each other. **If Canada is serious about the structure of its forces, the official believed it should develop standards for PRT success.**

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF 3D

To one foreign policy official, the International Policy Statement (IPS) outlined the near future of the 3D policy. **The government is providing a strategic framework, new investment and a vision of Canada affecting the world.** Priorities in this approach include improving global security and promoting development. The 3D policy will be implemented in failed states with new initiatives such as the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force, the Global Peace and Security Fund and United Nations reform. Aid will be doubled, while diplomacy will create partnerships and contribute more personnel on the ground. A whole-of-government approach will ensure policy receives broad input. **In both its elaboration and execution, the IPS is imbued with 3D.**

**Gender must be incorporated into Canada's 3D policy, one academic argued.** Women remain under threat. A truly gender-sensitive approach should expose unequal structures in society, study war's unique impact on women and favour equal participation in reconstruction. Women have the ability to be peace brokers and involved in development. By ensuring the implementation of instruments such as the UN Security Council's Resolution 1325, women's rights in conflicts can be respected. Through their setting the foundations for participation in a new society, peace agreements are also crucial to women. **The 3D process in Afghanistan has a moral imperative to empower women, provide specific funding and work towards achieving a place for all genders in the new Afghanistan, the academic concluded.**

The rule of law is another important facet of 3D, one development official stated. Afghanistan has a rich legal history. Its earliest constitution was one of the first of any Islamic country. Its formal justice system is coupled with a set of customary and Muslim laws. Projects are underway to restructure the system by training personnel, including a significant number of women. **Access to justice must now be improved.** A public defender institution should be created to offer genuine representation. Judges will be trained in commercial, civil and contract law to help develop the private sector. The civil

code should be reviewed in cooperation with the Afghan government, bringing it in line with international commitments. **Success will hinge on security. To the official, the fear of bringing cases to court, the spectre of constitutionally entrenched conservative Islam and the inability to enforce decisions must be solved before there can be progress.**

Disarmament is also crucial to a truly comprehensive security strategy, argued one development official. **Security is usually determined by domestic, not external factors, making development at least as essential as military forces. 3D could be expanded to “5D” to include democracy and disarmament in its aims, focusing on good governance, inclusion and human rights.** Fighting the proliferation of small arms and light weapons will help make states more functional. Canada also needs a range of responses to WMD proliferation. Out of the money spent on the 5D-related institutions and programs, over three quarters is on defence. The new budget will do little to change the equation. **For a security policy that recognizes non-military threats, this is unacceptable, it was argued.**

The final panellist, a military officer, argued intelligence remains crucial to any successful integrated operation. **While technology has had an impact, human intelligence continues to account for the majority of information and lives saved.** Being a good neighbour and communicating with locals can thus improve the security situation. All parts of 3D are involved in the fight against warlords, drug lords, terrorists and indifference. **The officer concluded that victory would ultimately be ensured by the remarkable qualities of the Afghan people.**

## CLOSING REMARKS

**State failure is not a linear process, concluded one academic.** The disintegration of governments does not imply societal breakdown. Some groups of varying good will are strengthened under these circumstances. Locals should be responsible for building these networks, using an internationally provided framework. **Available responses have also grown more difficult.** Intervention can have unexpected consequences. The Canadian government has complexities of its own that hinder the development of 3D, requiring a degree of leadership. In the future, one will have to monitor the development of the new Afghan voice, as the country's own politics start to have effect. **For its part, Canada must determine where its assistance fits in with its wider global concerns, developing a contingency plan in case the situation unravels.** Ultimately, Afghans will have much to say on the future of 3D.

## CONCLUSIONS

In line with the complexity of the Afghan situation, the breadth of this conference defies a single characterization. From one standpoint, it outlined a complex set of battles over political space, both in Canada's overseas deployment and in Afghanistan itself. As Kabul-based authority, provincial leaders, warlords, terrorists, drug dealers, corrupt officials and civil society struggle to control the region's political future, so do international organizations, NGOs, military forces and diplomatic officials vie for the opportunity to help Afghanistan develop. As one panellist described, the people on the ground can often be forgotten under such circumstances. On the other hand, there has been considerable progress in pursuing an integrated approach at a tactical level through the PRTs and through Civilian-Military Cooperation teams, and good will towards matching institutional changes. It is sensible for such a wide range of groups to work together on the ground, as they often serve as a temporary government in areas where there is no other central authority. These partnerships' ability to set the scene for

a return to Afghan government control will be one factor through which they will be judged.

Taken from another angle, the discussion revealed a number of “elephants under the table”, problems that are too complex or difficult to address. First, the process for ensuring the extension of state authority from Kabul to the rest of the country, while the stated mission of the PRTs, was not described in detail. Given the inexperience, factionalism and meagre resources of the Afghan government, there is an authority gap to address. These flaws express themselves through development operations as well: although some Afghans and development staff advocate for spending to alleviate poverty, the government is set on pursuing vast infrastructure projects, suggesting the existence of a policy-making gap in the Afghan administration.

Then, of course, there are the powerful warlords and drug producers, the biggest unknowns of all. Their impact on the daily life of much of the country must not be underestimated. This effect is compounded by a severe police shortage being addressed at a lamentable pace. Some participants described these issues as problems to put on hold until more egregious development and security problems are addressed. Yet there is the danger they will become entrenched in national life. To draw from one suggestion in the concluding remarks, some genuine contingency planning must be developed to address those who are deliberately isolated from the state, likely through positive incentives.

Despite recent announcements of even greater involvement in Afghanistan, many participants feared a waning of interest in the country. With American attention focused on Iraq and the implementation of the Bonn process proceeding well, signs of optimism may be misinterpreted as signals to move on. The need for a sustained commitment may be an opportunity for Canada to assert its place in the world by taking command of larger elements in Afghanistan. This was underscored by positive statements from officials in attendance, who stated that Canadian Forces would be in the region until at least late 2006, while CIDA has a long-term commitment to Afghanistan, its most

extensive development project, until 2009. It is notable that Foreign Affairs Canada will likely outlast both defence and development concerns through its indefinite diplomatic commitment. While the focus of resources and network consolidation has been on more immediate needs, the personnel shortage at the embassy in Kabul must be addressed. Unlike many such conferences, there was hardly a single mention of CIDA or the Canadian Forces lacking resources, a testament to the extent of Canada's investment in Afghanistan.

Discussion on Provincial Reconstruction Teams yielded the most specific conclusions. While most agreed that it was preferable for Canada to follow the British model of separating defence and development, it was also clear that this might not be entirely possible in Kandahar. The area has few NGOs. Canada will be taking over an American-led PRT and will have to adapt to the model in order to ensure continuity and meet expectations. Operation Enduring Freedom forces are actively engaged in combat and the threats are imminent and real. The greater the danger, the more all actors, including NGOs, ISAF and the PRTs are forced to consider their security, as one panellist suggested. While the composition of PRTs may be similar to the British force, it is unlikely its missions and circumstances will be comparable. An American perspective on the PRT role and on Operation Enduring Freedom would be essential to the debate on what to expect from a hybrid model of this nature.

In line with the objectives of PRTs, participants throughout the conference showed great deference to the Afghan government, arguing defence operations extended the government's reach into remote areas, in line with the 2001 Bonn Agreement, while development programs were coordinated based on government policy. In a country where the central government remains absent in some regions, this is a laudable exercise, setting the scene for an eventual transfer of power from international forces to the Afghan authorities. However, deferring to an absent national government should not go so far as to erode individual responsibility. What steps may the international community take when abuses are identified, such as police collusion with local warlords

or the flimsy enforcement of gender rights? While not requiring intrusion into internal Afghan affairs, Canada should develop standards for success and achievement to consider progress towards its goals in the region, along lines suggested by both development and defence officials.

While the Canadian 3D policy, one of the focal points of the conference, was extensively discussed, many questions remain. Military viewpoints generally acknowledged the greater effectiveness of NGOs in delivering humanitarian aid and accepted a role in guarding the periphery, while the development community acknowledged the need for security and cooperation in humanitarian space. The British PRT example demonstrated that, like any effective compromise, no group was entirely satisfied with sharing space. Canadian military structure is also evolving, focusing its attention on smaller units better able to communicate with the local population, carry out civil-military operations and work with other agencies.

However, while results and understanding were positive at the ground level, the development and military communities remain institutionally opposed to each other. It is in Ottawa that the 3D policy needs to be implemented, bringing CIDA, DND and FAC together in an official capacity. Relations at the ground level under stress have always been successful, but these groups must learn to be more than friends of necessity. A concept only defined in the most general terms, the 3D policy should sharpen its orientation towards action to avoid becoming “something for everyone.” The consensus that neither security nor development can be put on hold provides all the incentive necessary to pursue an activist 3D policy. It must not merely be a means through which Ottawa takes credit for the work of the brave defence, development and diplomacy officials on the ground.

Despite these challenges, one was struck by the tone of optimism that permeated the conference. Its greatest successes came in giving Afghanistan a human face. The Afghan people have supplied crucial information to the international force. The conference demonstrated the contributions and needs of the Afghan people, their remarkable

qualities and their fascinating complexity. In the face of so much change, they have started to rebuild their lives by disarming, entering political life or making use of development assistance to start a business. As they enter into another election, their impact on the future will be unpredictable. Indeed, the indication many panellists gave that NGOs have been discredited in the eyes of the local population by highly paid foreign consultants and fraudulent development projects is one of many difficult issues raised by local concerns. Nevertheless, the fact that one of the principal challenges to NGO involvement is legislative demonstrates how far the country has come. When assessing Canada's approach in Afghanistan, there is only one true certainty: that the Afghan people will ultimately decide on the future of 3D in their country.