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Maj (R), Drs. Ingrid van Bommel, TNO
Maj (R), Drs. Aletta Eikelboom, TNO

POC:

Ingrid van Bommel
TNO Defence, Security and Safety
Oude Waalsdorperweg 63
P.O. Box 96864
2509 JG The Hague
The Netherlands
+31 70 374 0363
Ingrid.vanBommel@tno.nl

‘COMPREHENSIVE AND ITERATIVE PLANNING’ IN URUZGAN

The development of a comprehensive plan in Uruzgan leading to a generic comprehensive and iterative planning process for all missions.

Maj (R) Drs. I.E. van Bommel and Maj (R) Drs. A.R. Eikelboom*

Introduction

The ISAF mission in Uruzgan is a complex endeavor that requires a comprehensive approach in which civilian and military organizations need to cooperate. In Uruzgan the comprehensive approach mainly consists of the 3D approach (Diplomacy, Defense and Development), a cooperation between the ministries of Defense, Foreign Affairs and Development in order to synchronize operations and activities that contribute to a stable and secure environment, a functioning provincial government and local security apparatus, and social and economic development. However, the comprehensive approach also concerns cooperation with other parties: IOs/GOs/(local)NGOs¹, coalition partners, local government and security forces. The TaskForce Uruzgan (TFU) seeks the cooperation with all these other parties as much as possible.

Creating unity of effort among these different parties forms a major challenge for succeeding in a comprehensive approach. The growing civilian role, increasing Afghan involvement and further internationalization of the ISAF mission only amount to this challenge. To contribute to unity of effort, TFU attempted to improve the comprehensive approach on *taskforce* level by developing an Uruzgan Campaign Plan (UCP)². The UCP is a long term planning document that translates the conceptual comprehensive approach into a comprehensive, iterative approach in the field.

The objective of the paper is to show the value and necessity of comprehensive planning on taskforce and higher levels. Therefore, this paper first describes and appreciates the comprehensive planning process that resulted in the UCP. Furthermore, the paper elaborates on the lessons identified that resulted from implementing this process in Uruzgan. Based on these lessons, a more generic comprehensive planning process was developed. This paper concludes with a description of the generic process for comprehensive planning in future missions and links this generic process to the new staff concept as being developed by the RNLA.

* The authors were part of the G5 branch during the mission of Tasforce Uruzgan 6 in Afghanistan in 2009. Ingrid van Bommel (ingrid.vanbommel@tno.nl) and Aletta Eikelboom (aletta.eikelboom@tno.nl) are both reserve officers and worked as operational analysts within the G5 branch. Both work as researcher/advisor for TNO Defense, Security & Safety.

¹ International Organizations, Government Organizations and Non-Government Organizations

² The auteurs would like to thank GMaj T.A. Middendorp (COM TFU 6) and Drs. J. Wijnands (CIVREP TFU 6) who were accountable for the development of the Uruzgan Campaign Plan. Without their steering, vision, commitment and enthusiasm the UCP would never been accepted and used by the subordinate units and coalition partners.

Value and necessity of a comprehensive plan for Uruzgan

The complex mission and mission environment of Uruzgan is characterized by the local political, social, economic and security situation. These areas are highly intertwined and influence each other continuously. The complex social network of military and civilian actors in the local (Uruzgan), national (The Netherlands) and the international domain add to this complexity. One can imagine that a rigid and end-state driven plan with specific long term end states will not provide the best method to execute a mission in a complex environment that changes constantly and is characterized by interdependency of many parties with different interests and motives. In such a complex multiparty environment mission planning to stimulate political, social, economic and security development should be done by a comprehensive and iterative approach. A comprehensive approach contributes to creating unity of effort among the different actors. An iterative approach offers TFU sufficient flexibility to adjust itself to (un)expected changes in the mission environment.

Previous TFU rotations already used a comprehensive planning process on taskforce level. This work offered a lot of insight in comprehensive planning and provided us with many lessons. One of the most important lessons was that a comprehensive plan should be developed in cooperation with the higher national level (Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs) and with the involvement of subordinate and coalition partners. Because of participation of coalition partners, the higher national level, and subordinate levels in the development, the UCP was accepted and supported.

Prior to and during the deployment of TFU 6 (the staff rotation from January 2009 until September 2009) the need for a comprehensive and iterative plan on task force level increased because of several factors of influence. One of these factors of influence was the growing civilian role in the mission and the increasing attention to sustainable social and economic development. In Uruzgan the number of NGOs present in the province had grown from 6 in 2006 to 30 in 2009. Furthermore, from the 21st of March 2009 on, a civil representative (CIVREP) commanded the PRT³ in Uruzgan. This was the first time in contemporary history that a delegate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs commanded a military unit.

Next to the growing civilian role, the Afghan involvement increased in cooperation with UNAMA⁴. Especially the role of the provincial government, local NGOs and local contractors became more prominent. Furthermore, the Afghan security forces improved their ability to perform their tasks. For example, an Uruzgan Security Plan was developed and executed in close cooperation with the governor, the chief of police, the commander of the ANA brigade⁵ and the Afghan intelligence agency.

³ Provincial Reconstruction Team, a company sized unit within the TFU responsible for civil military cooperation (projects) and sustainable development projects.

⁴ United Nations Assistance Mission Afghanistan

⁵ Afghan National Army

Another important factor of influence to the role of TFU was the internationalization of the mission. During TFU 6, military and civilian personnel from 7 different countries were present in Uruzgan. In that same period of time there were preparations for the expansion of the number of American units in the south of Afghanistan. This expansion was likely to have an influence on the operations in Uruzgan.

The complex mission environment and all factors of influence emphasize the importance of a comprehensive and iterative approach. We expected that the development of a comprehensive, iterative plan on taskforce level could contribute to unity of effort and adaptivity of all parties.

UCP comprehensive planning process

The comprehensive planning process resulted in the development of the Uruzgan Campaign Plan (UCP)⁶, an internal planning document that translated the conceptual comprehensive approach into a specific step-by-step approach to be implemented by the subordinate units. Because of the complexity of the mission and the mission environment, including the interdependence of activities and operations of all parties, we chose to make sure that the planning process to develop the UCP would be as comprehensive as possible. Therefore the planning process started with the formation of a comprehensive planning group. When the comprehensive planning group was formed, they went through several phases to develop the UCP. They started with a thorough orientation to increase knowledge of counter insurgency operations in general, Afghanistan and specifically Uruzgan. After the initial orientation the mission and role of TFU 6 were specified. Based on the mission and role the comprehensive planning group used a conceptual approach to gain insight in the complexity of the mission and the mission environment. Subsequently, the conceptual approach formed the base for the development of objectives and the comprehensive strategy to realize those objectives. Finally, the UCP was written in several iterations.

The UCP describes a comprehensive approach that provides direction for the long and mid term (August 2010) and sets specific priorities for TFU operations and activities on the short term (6 months). Because of the complexity of the mission and the continuous changes in the environment, the UCP needs to be updated regularly, at least with each new rotation TFU. The UCP offers an approach that fits the broader scope and allows subordinate units to act within the COM's and CIVREP's intent and to create synergy in (TFU) operations and activities.

The UCP builds on the body of thought of former TFU long term planning documents⁷. In addition, the UCP reflects policy, orders and directives of the Afghan Government, Headquarters ISAF in Kabul, Headquarters ISAF RC(S) in Kandahar, and of the Dutch Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs.

⁶ Generally, a campaign plan is not developed on taskforce level. The authors are aware of this, however the name Uruzgan Campaign Plan arose during the development of the plan and was relevant to maintain because the name UCP was already widespread.

⁷ TFU Masterplan (2006) and TFU Focal Paper (2008) developed by respectively TFU 1 and TFU 4

The next sections explain the following aspects of the comprehensive planning process into more detail: 1) formation of comprehensive planning group, 2) conceptual approach, 3) development of realistic objectives and 4) development of comprehensive strategy.

Formation of comprehensive planning group

The comprehensive planning group that was established for the purpose of developing the UCP did most of the work. The COM in cooperation with CIVREP offered steering and direction to the comprehensive planning group. Sessions of the comprehensive planning group were prepared and processed by the G5 planning section and the operational analysts. Within the comprehensive planning group civilian and military staff personnel⁸ and operational subordinate commanders participated. However, many other TFU military and civilian personnel, varying from the mission team commander in Deh Rawod to a representative of AUSAID⁹, provided input for the development of the UCP. Furthermore, the comprehensive planning group received support from the Australian and American partners who were also deployed in the province of Uruzgan, and from military and civilian personnel that was deployed in Uruzgan in earlier rotations. Through participation of all these parties many ideas, suggestions and contributions were integrated in the UCP, contributing to the overall acceptance of the UCP.

Conceptual approach

Formulation of the TFU mission and role was based on policy, orders and directives of the Afghan Government, Headquarters ISAF in Kabul, Headquarters ISAF RC(S) in Kandahar, and of the Dutch Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs. The mission and role were specified through deliberation of COM and CIVREP TFU 6 with their predecessors and representatives of the parties mentioned above. The mission and role were an important starting point in the development of a conceptual approach.

To gain a better understanding of the complex mission and the complex environment of Uruzgan we used a conceptual approach and developed a conceptual framework. Developing the conceptual framework for Uruzgan was an iterative process. Development of the framework provided and improved insight in relevant factors and their relations. Development of the framework was also a way for the members of the comprehensive planning group to exchange theories of change, theories of how they think their activities and operations might change the environment.

The process resulted in a conceptual framework that provides a line of thought, a frame of reference, and embodies the most important factors of the mission and shows how these factors are intertwined. The framework is shown in figure 1. The framework consists of several Reconstruction & Development (R&D) themes, on which progress is desired. Furthermore, it shows the disablers hampering and the enablers enhancing the progress on the R&D themes.

⁸ Deputy COM, Chief of Staff, G2, G3, G5, G7, Operational Analysts, Political Advisor, Development Advisor, Cultural Advisor

⁹ AusAID (Australian Agency for International Development) manages the Australian Government's overseas aid program, a federally funded program that aims to reduce poverty in developing countries.

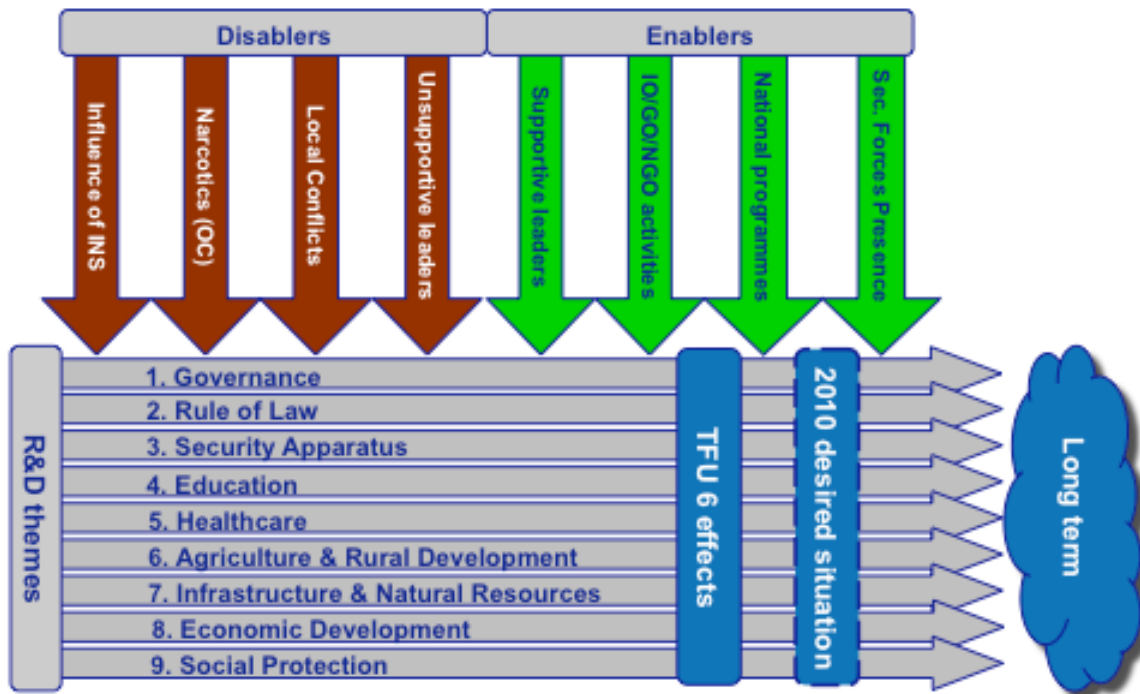


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

The grey arrows represent 9 **R&D themes**. Progress on these R&D themes is needed in order to create a stable and secure environment, in which the Afghan government and national and international development organizations can operate without TFU assistance and support. Enabling and contributing to progress on the R&D themes is therefore the main effort of TFU. These 9 R&D themes correspond with the 8 pillars of the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS)¹⁰, with the addition that the pillar ‘governance’ is split into a pillar for ‘governance’ and a pillar for ‘rule of law’. The pillar ‘governance’ was split because the themes ‘governance’ and ‘rule of law’ needed special attention. The ANDS pillars are used as the body of the framework because they are recognized by the Afghan government, (local) NGOs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Progress on the R&D themes will be hampered by **disablers** such as insurgents or local conflicts (red arrows). For example, influence of insurgents may seriously hamper progress on the R&D theme education (including building schools and setting the conditions to recruit teachers), when insurgents burn down school buildings and threaten (new) teachers. Although there are many more disablers, TFU chose to include only those

¹⁰ Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) is a policy document of Afghan Government (24th January 2006) and concerns “an interim strategy for security, governance, economic growth & poverty reduction”.

disablers that need special TFU attention and can be influenced by TFU or TFU's partners. The influence of some of these disablers will decrease with progress on the R&D themes. For example, through economic development jobs are created and income is likely to increase, which might lead to a decrease in the cultivation of narcotics, because the population has an alternative and legal source of income. However specific security operations are often needed to decrease the influence of disablers, e.g. operations to decrease the influence of insurgents or to create a safe and secure environment that sets the preconditions for development.

Other factors enhance the progress on the R&D themes. These factors are called **enablers** and are visualized by the green arrows in the conceptual framework. An example of an enabler is the presence of NGOs, for example a NGO in the field of healthcare that provides or improves vaccination programs. Besides the presence and activities of NGOs, there are many more enablers but TFU chose to include only those enablers in the conceptual framework that can actually be influenced and enhanced by the TFU. The effectiveness of most enablers will increase when development on the R&D themes increases. For example, increasing security makes the population more receptive to social and economic development which creates more possibilities for NGOs to settle and invest in Uruzgan.

It should be noted that the factor 'influence of key leaders' can be a disabler as well as an enabler. An example to clarify this: a warlord is a leader with a negative influence on the security situation if his militia is securing illegal drug transports; a governor is on the other hand a leader with a positive influence on the security situation when he conducts shuras¹¹ to negotiate in local conflicts.

Besides the disablers and enablers there are several **basic principles** like human rights, gender equality, tribal balance and Afghan ownership that are felt important by the international community. These basic principles should be taken into account as much as possible when realizing progress on the R&D themes, but also when decreasing the influence of disablers and increasing the influence of enablers. Activities to stimulate progress on education and social protection should for example always incorporate gender aspects as much as possible. The basic principles are not visualized in the conceptual framework.

The conceptual framework also depicts the **desired situations** for 2010 and beyond. These situations are depicted in a rectangle with a dotted line, because they cannot be formulated in precise, objective, measurable and specific (time and space) terms due to the complexity of the mission and the many factors of influence. The next paragraph will describe these desired situations in more detail and will also clarify the TFU VI effects that are also depicted in the conceptual framework.

The structure of the conceptual framework might suggest an orderly influence between the enablers, disablers and R&D themes. In reality however, all enablers, disablers and

¹¹ Meetings with tribal leaders, village elders, etc

R&D themes are intertwined and interconnected, making the framework look like a bowl of spaghetti. The framework does not intent to be a detailed model of Uruzgan but merely a line of thought, a frame of reference, which provides TFU with insight in the complex environment and which can be used to develop realistic objectives and a comprehensive strategy to realize those objectives.

Development of realistic objectives

Because of the complexity of the mission the continuous changes in the environment and the interdependence of actors, it is almost impossible to formulate realistic, measurable and specific objectives for the long term. In an iterative approach loosely defined objectives that provide guidance for the mid and long term are however sufficient. Consequently, the short term objectives need to provide direction to subordinate units and therefore need to be realistic, measurable and specific. Because of political sensitivity the short and mid term objectives are formulated in close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Long term objectives

TFU 6 chose to formulate the objectives for the long term (decades) in general terms: ‘progress on R&D themes’, ‘decrease the influence of disablers’ and ‘increase the influence of enablers’. Long term objectives can for example be formulated as ‘progress on healthcare’, ‘improvement of the security apparatus’, ‘diminish the influence of insurgents’ or ‘enlarge the activities of NGOs’. Whether these objectives change in the desired direction depends for a large part on the Afghans and their international partners.

Mid term objectives

It is easier to formulate objectives for the mid term (2010) than for the long term. In general, the mid term objectives contribute to realizing the long term objectives. Based on knowledge of the current situation and expected developments, it was possible to gain an idea about the situation of Uruzgan in 2010, when the Netherlands will hand over their role as lead nation. However, even when formulating objectives for August 2010 it is necessary to be cautious, considering that also for realizing the mid term objectives TFU is dependent on cooperation with other parties and the Afghan population. Therefore the mid term objectives were formulated for all factors in the conceptual framework as desired situations for 2010. An example is given for the R&D theme *infrastructure*:

In 2010, area based infrastructure and productive infrastructure will be enhanced. The connection of the Afghan Development Zones will be improved through sustainable infrastructure (roads and bridges like the Tarin Kowt-Chora road) and the majority of the population within the ADZ will have access to communication systems like radio and a mobile phone network. Furthermore, the airstrip in Tarin Kowt will be opened for civilian flights. A provincial plan on energy is being developed for which the Government of Uruzgan will be accountable.

Short term objectives

Each rotation of TFU needs his own objectives to deploy units for specific operations and activities that fit the broader scope of the mission (mid and long term objectives). Contrary to the long and mid term, it is possible to formulate realistic, measurable and specific short term objectives. Although political sensitivity and the dependency on other actors isn't smaller, there is more insight in what other parties can/will (not) do in the near future and what preconditions need to be set to realize the short term objectives.

Short term objectives were formulated for all factors in the conceptual framework in terms of effects. Because of the dependency on contributions of other actors, a distinction was made between *effects to achieve* and *effects to contribute*. *Effects to achieve* are effects that TFU can realize through own operations and activities. An example is 'sustainable form of entrepreneurship course provided¹²', through which entrepreneurship in Uruzgan is being stimulated. Effects to achieve are easy to translate in specific activities that contribute to the long and mid term objectives. *Effects to contribute* are effects that TFU can only realize by supporting other parties or through small contributions. An example is 'Branch office of the Kabul Bank opened in Tarin Kowt', through which the finance sector is being developed.

The effects to achieve and the effects to contribute for all factors in the conceptual framework need to be revised and updated every 6 months by a new rotation TFU. It is expected that the effects to achieve can be realized within 6 months. However, most of the effects to contribute are depended of contributions of other parties and might take more time to be realized. The effects offer specific guidance to TFU operations and activities. During TFU 6 the effects were translated into operational plans with specific tasks to units and civilian advisors.

Development of comprehensive strategy

The next challenge was to develop a comprehensive strategy to realize or contribute to the objectives. This comprehensive strategy gives guidance on where, how and in what order (or parallel) TFU can realize short term objectives and can contribute to mid and long term objectives. This strategy offers guidance for the planning and prioritizing of operations and activities in time and space. Because the objectives pertain to Uruzgan province and to specific areas in Uruzgan, the strategy to realize provincial and area specific objectives may also differ. Therefore the comprehensive strategy consists of 1) provincial approaches for Uruzgan and 2) area specific approaches for Uruzgan.

12 Via the 'Start and Improve Your Business'-course provided by IDEA (Integrated Development of Entrepreneurial Activities), a reserve officer's network in collaboration with the ministry of economic affairs and employer's organisations

The comprehensive strategy is based on the Afghan Development Zone (ADZ) concept. This concept describes the process of bringing governmental structures and tribal structures closer together. An ADZ is a populated area where this process is possible because of the relatively stable security situation and the social and economic development that is taking place. An ADZ is an area developing towards a stable and secure environment in which the Afghan government, in cooperation with national and international development organizations, can function without ISAF assistance and support.

When the security situation is relatively stable, and structural and sustainable development is taking place in an ADZ, it is possible to further expand this ADZ to adjacent areas and other ADZs. This results in a larger area where sustainable development can emerge and where governmental and tribal structures can grow closer together, provided that the security situation is maintained and improving. TFU can stimulate the development of the ADZ by seizing opportunities and solving problems together with the Afghan people. Therefore a **people centric approach** is needed. In general a people centric approach means that operations and activities should be planned and executed from the perspective of key leaders (top-down) but also from the perspective of the population in these areas (bottom-up).

To gain and improve situation awareness of the complex environment in Uruzgan in order to develop the comprehensive strategy TFU used four Counter Insurgency (COIN) perspectives (political, social, economic and security). On the one hand the perspectives were used as filters through which we analysed the situation within the province of Uruzgan. On the other hand they were used to identify political, social, economic and security challenges, opportunities and needs. E.g. the economic perspective delivers the identification of trade routes, supply chains and markets, together with economic problems, like isolated markets, and opportunities, like entrepreneurial possibilities for women. The four perspectives facilitated the development of provincial approaches and area specific approaches.

The provincial approaches offer guidance to activities and operations related to provincial objectives. Developing the security apparatus and improving the education system are typical provincial objectives that need a provincial approach. Based on information identified through the four perspectives a provincial political, social, economic and security approach have been developed in several workshops. These four provincial approaches are highly intertwined. Activities derived from one approach influence (planned) activities of the other approach. Example: Enhancing the political structure (political approach) influences coordination and execution of governmental development projects (social and economic approach) and the governmental control of the security apparatus (security approach).

Area specific approaches offer guidance to activities and operations related to area specific (short term) objectives. Local conflicts or the influence of insurgents can only be decreased through an approach, unique for that specific area. Because of the chosen people centric approach relevant areas were mainly based on social and economic

characteristics. The rough boundaries of the different areas of influence are depicted in the figure below.

For each of these areas specific political, social, economic and security approaches were developed in several workshops. The specific approaches are based upon local political, social, economic and security chances and opportunities identified for that area and consist of a situation assessment and a concept of operations to realize the TFU short term objectives. Within each area specific approach, possible influences induced by changes in that area on other (adjacent) areas were also discussed and described. These specific approaches give guidance to area specific operations and activities in order to realize the short term objectives and to contribute to the mid and long term objectives. Because of the continuously changing environment both the provincial and the area specific approaches need to be updated regularly (every 6 months).



Areas of Influence

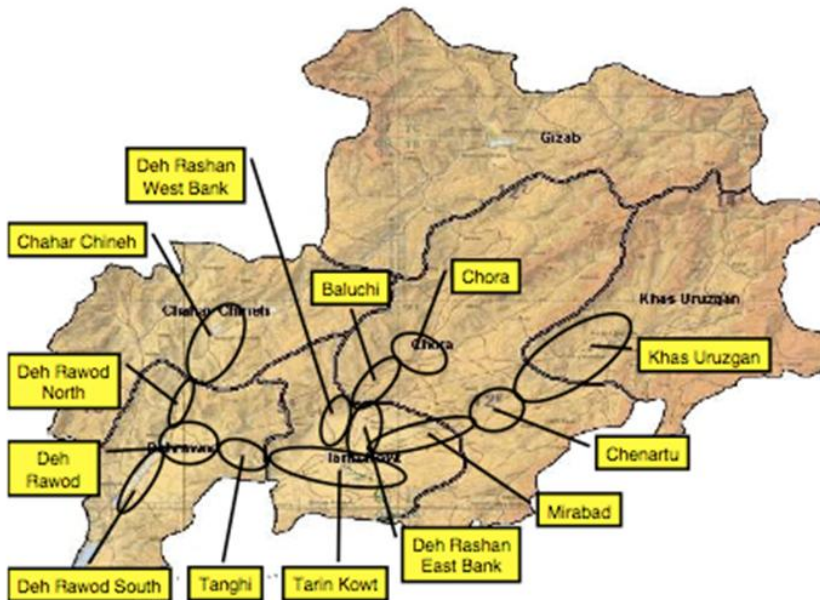


Figure 2: Areas of influence

Due to several factors of influence, like scarcity of personnel, limited number of means, and rotation schedules, it is impossible to maximally invest in all areas at the same time and to execute all approaches in parallel. Therefore the comprehensive strategy also contains a geographic approach, besides provincial and area specific approaches. In the geographic approach the approaches for the whole mission area and for specific areas are integrated and prioritized in time and space, by suggesting how, how intensive, and in what order the specific areas of influence should be approached. This geographic

approach is based upon political, social, economic and security challenges and opportunities, the availability of means, the interdependency between these areas of influence, and an estimate of the minimal effort a specific area needs to prevent relapse.

The comprehensive strategy, consisting of provincial approaches, area specific approaches and a geographic approach, facilitates the translation of the mission into specific operations and activities. Because the comprehensive strategy is strongly based on province wide and area specific problems and chances, the comprehensive strategy needs to be revised and adapted regularly.

Lessons identified

The development of the UCP was an intensive, comprehensive planning process, executed by the comprehensive planning group and many other military and civilian personnel. It was intensive because a lot of work had to be done in a short time. However, it was also intensive because the traditional and available (military) planning processes could not entirely be used. Traditional and available planning processes were neither comprehensive nor iterative enough and often lead to more end state driven plans. We intended however to develop a comprehensive plan that could be adapted easily to changes and developments in the mission environment. This meant that we had to use best practices from different planning processes and develop our own comprehensive planning process on the job. This learning on the job also meant that the comprehensive planning group went back and forth while developing the UCP. Developing the UCP led to numerous lessons identified, on which we will elaborate in this paragraph.

Participation of all levels leads to acceptance and support

In the UCP the conceptual comprehensive approach is translated into actual activities and operations in the field. The activities and operations conducted by TFU and subordinate units fitted the broader scope of the UCP and were in line with the guidelines of the higher military and national command. An important lesson identified is that this translation can only be made at taskforce level in close cooperation with the subordinate units, the coalition partners and the higher level. This cooperation is essential for gaining insight in influences of the local, national and international context of the mission. Participation of the higher national and military level, coalition partners and sub-units not only improved the quality and usability of the UCP, but also ensured widespread acceptance and support for the UCP. This led to a shared understanding of the broader scope of the mission and the commander's intent, but also to more unity of effort and synergy between activities and operations.

Role of COM and CIVREP is crucial

The steering role of COM and CIVREP was crucial for the development of the UCP. They offered steering and guidance for the comprehensive planning process and the content of the comprehensive plan itself. Furthermore, they actively promoted (the development of) the UCP. Their commitment and enthusiasm contributed to the active participation of the higher level, adjacent units and subordinate units. In turn this

contributed to the acceptance of and support for the UCP, and subsequently to unity of effort.

Comprehensive means comprehensive

The UCP was developed by a comprehensive planning group and with contributions of many other military and civilian personnel. However, IOs/GOs/NGOs in Uruzgan and Afghan partners (representatives of the provincial government, ANP, ANA, etc) were not involved in the development of the UCP. There were several reasons (some good, some bad) for not including these important parties in the comprehensive planning group and for not involving them in some phases of the comprehensive planning process. However, a comprehensive plan is truly comprehensive when it is developed, accepted and supported by all relevant parties. Only then it is possible to create unity of effort. In Uruzgan cooperation is sought as much as possible/acceptable. However, the next step is to improve cooperation with all relevant parties in the mission environment, including Afghan partners and IOs/GOs/NGOs. This means we have take comprehensiveness to a next level and include all relevant parties in the comprehensive planning group.

Teambuilding, an important activity for comprehensive planning group

During the process of developing the UCP the comprehensive planning group became a team. It would have been more effective to start the comprehensive planning process with the formation of the comprehensive planning group; the composition of the comprehensive planning group, but also teambuilding, the process of becoming a team. Teambuilding is an important precondition for success of the comprehensive planning process. Through teambuilding all members of the comprehensive planning group get to know each other, discuss the objective, tasks and expectations of the comprehensive planning group, but also divide roles and set up a working plan etc. It is important that members of the comprehensive planning group gain insights in each others motives, intentions and interests, and exchange theories of change. Teambuilding is even more important when not only military and civilian personnel from the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs are part of the comprehensive planning group, but IOs/GOs/NGOs and Afghan partners are included as well.

From an end-state driven approach to an iterative approach

The comprehensive planning process did not result into a plan with sequences of activities to achieve specific long term goals. We do not think that an end-state driven approach will work within the complex reality of counter insurgency. Instead we developed an iterative step-by-step approach with rough goals for the long term (decennia) desired situations for the mid term (years) and realistic and specific goals for the short term (months). This approach offers enough guidelines to plan activities and operations for the short term and enough flexibility to develop and adjust (iterative) strategies for the long term. This iterative approach can only be successful when integrated with an assessment cycle and the flexibility to adjust and add short term objectives based on changes in the environment, either induced by own activities, indigenous changes or by activities of others. An iterative approach requires a continuous revision and adaption of the comprehensive plan. It is therefore important that every rotation of TFU conducts this process and thereby adjusts the short term objectives and

comprehensive strategy. After the deployment of TFU 6, the UCP was revised by TFU 7 and was handed over to and subsequently revised by TFU 8 in the beginning of 2010.

Close collaboration with the intelligence community is crucial

A complex mission in a complex environment is intelligence driven. This means that the development of a comprehensive plan should start with a thorough orientation that continues during and after the development of the comprehensive plan. It also means that the intelligence community (G2) plays a very important role in the development of a comprehensive plan and thus in the comprehensive planning group. The development of the UCP did not start with a thorough orientation that was shared among the members of the comprehensive planning group. Nor did the intelligence community (G2) play a very important role in the comprehensive planning process to develop the UCP. Most of the intelligence was gathered among representatives of subordinate units that participated in the sessions to develop the UCP. The intelligence community participated in several sessions, but since the comprehensive planning process was new, not formalized, and not like other military planning processes normally used at taskforce level, the intelligence requirements were not clear at the beginning of the comprehensive planning process. This probably hampered proactive participation of the intelligence community. In formalizing the comprehensive planning process the link with the intelligence community needs to be improved. Furthermore, a thorough orientation should be done by the comprehensive planning group, but with the intelligence community in the lead.

Use of a conceptual approach offers insight and understanding

By developing the UCP we used a conceptual approach embodied by a conceptual framework. This framework is Uruzgan specific but can easily be adapted for missions in other fragile states like Sudan or Somalia. Factors like ‘narcotics’ will, for example, have less influence in Sudan compared to Afghanistan. On the contrary, factors like ‘piracy’ will have to be taken into account in Somalia for instance. It’s the complex environment with intertwined R&D themes, enablers and disablers that future missions in fragile states will have in common. We believe a comprehensive, iterative planning process with rough and generic long term objectives and specific realistic short term objectives is needed for future missions in fragile states.

Currently, TNO in close cooperation with the Ministry of Defense is developing a generic comprehensive planning process based upon the comprehensive, iterative process described in this paper. The remaining of this paper will focus on how the lessons identified and learned can be implemented and how we use this knowledge in developing a generic process to support comprehensive planning for future missions.

Generic Comprehensive Planning Process

Based on the description and the lessons identified of the development of the UCP during TFU 6, a generic comprehensive planning process for taskforce level and higher was developed in several sessions with subject matter experts. During these sessions all aspects of developing the UCP, varying from forming a comprehensive planning group, developing a conceptual approach to actually writing a comprehensive plan, were discussed and improved based on existing theories, models and experiences in the fields of politics, command and control, economics, social sciences, etc. The sessions with the subject matter experts resulted in a context independent and generic comprehensive planning process consisting of 7 phases: 1) formation of a comprehensive planning group, 2) orientation, 3) formulation of mission and role, 4) development of conceptual approach, 5) development of objectives, 6) development of comprehensive strategy and 7) writing of comprehensive plan. These 7 phases are described in a comprehensive planning process. The description of each phase consists of an introduction, an objective, a process description and the intended result of that phase. The comprehensive planning process and its 7 phases are visualized in the figure below.

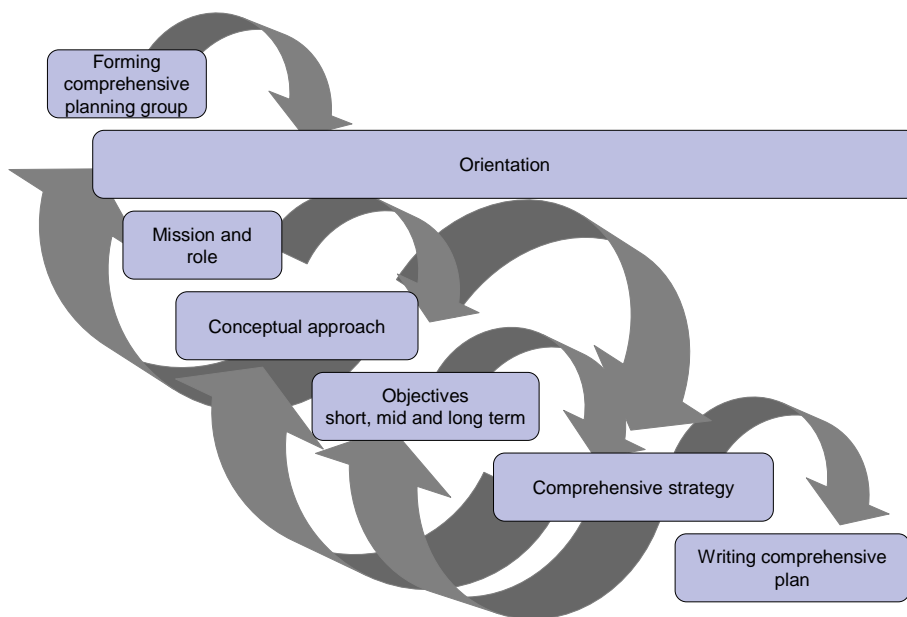


Figure 3: Comprehensive and iterative planning process

In this paper the 7 phases are only briefly introduced and described to give some idea of the generic comprehensive planning process. Especially the process of each phase is not described in much detail. It is also important to note that these phases are not strictly separated. Often a planning group will go back and forth between these phases during a comprehensive planning process.

Phase 1: Formation of a comprehensive planning group

The formation of a comprehensive planning group concerns the composition and the teambuilding process of a comprehensive planning group. Next to the military staff, at least the ministries leading, or contributing to the mission are represented in the comprehensive planning group. Based on a preliminary stakeholder analysis and dependent on the type of mission, the comprehensive planning group will be complemented with other relevant parties that contribute to the mission, for example other ministries, coalition partners, NGOs, local government etc. The comprehensive planning group determines with whom to cooperate, to coordinate or merely to deconflict. After a thorough analysis relevant parties to cooperate with are invited to join the comprehensive planning group. When the composition of the comprehensive planning group is clear, a teambuilding process is started to discuss the objective and tasks of the comprehensive planning group, to discuss expectations of all parties, to exchange theories of change, to divide roles, to set up a working plan etc.

When the formation process of the comprehensive planning group is completed, the leaders of the comprehensive planning group provide initial guidance for the development of the comprehensive plan. An outline of the mission and role, and guidelines for the content and procedures are offered to start the comprehensive planning process.

Phase 2: Orientation

The orientation phase is not a clearly defined phase, but a process that starts during the formation of a comprehensive planning group and continues during the development of a comprehensive plan and even during execution of the comprehensive plan. Orientation is a continuous process. However, the nature and the intensity of the orientation process may vary during the development of the comprehensive plan. In general, the emphasis on orientation will be strong at the outset of developing a comprehensive plan. After the initial orientation the orientation process of the comprehensive planning group will mainly consist of updates and integration of new information.

The objective of the orientation process is to create and maintain shared awareness and understanding of the current situation, relevant factors of influence, problems, chances, challenges and expected changes in the environment. Furthermore, the orientation process is also intended to share and understand differences between the members of the comprehensive planning group and other relevant parties, regarding views, opinions, ideas and frames of references.

The orientation phase consists of an individual and collective orientation and should result in an integrated analysis of the environment. This analysis includes the problem formulation, analysis and structuring of the problem, and a stakeholder analysis. This collective analysis of the environment contributes to the shared awareness and shared understanding of the environment.

Phase 3: Formulation of mission and role

After the initial orientation, it is the objective of the comprehensive planning group to specify the mission and role of the higher military and/or national (government) level for the parties who are going to execute the mission. The mission should consist of the objective of the mission, a rough description of a mission approach and long term guidance. The role should contain a role description and the contribution of all parties represented in the comprehensive planning group.

The mission and role may differ between the parties, but may not be inconsistent or contradictory with the mission and role of all parties represented in the comprehensive planning group. Therefore, the formulation of the mission and role is founded on policies, directives, orders and guidance of all relevant parties: the local government (mission area), higher military levels, relevant ministries (homeland, often Defense and Foreign Affairs), United Nations, NGOs, etc. Also, the formulation of the mission and role is done through an intensive group process that ensures agreement and acceptance of all parties that are part of the comprehensive planning group. The mission and role form a starting point for the development of a conceptual approach to the mission that will facilitate the development of realistic objectives and a comprehensive strategy to realize those objectives.

Phase 4: Development of conceptual approach

A conceptual approach is used to develop the conceptual framework to gain an understanding of the complex environment. The objective of the comprehensive planning group is to develop the conceptual framework that provides a line of thought, a frame of reference, and embodies the most important factors of the mission and shows how these factors are intertwined.

A conceptual framework is developed in several sessions of the comprehensive planning group. First, the comprehensive planning group determines which factors are relevant for the mission, for example governance, healthcare, local conflicts etc. Then, the group explores what types of factors (clusters) are identified. Factors may pertain to (clusters of) development themes (i.e. healthcare), disablers (i.e. influence of insurgents), enablers (i.e. presence of NGOs), basic principles (i.e. gender equality), engines (i.e. capacity building), etc. Simultaneously, the comprehensive planning group describes the relations between these relevant factors. Subsequently, the comprehensive planning group chooses or develops a type of framework that is most suitable to represent the (clusters of) factors and the relations between the factors. An example of a conceptual framework is offered in the description of the UCP planning process and in the figure below. The development of the comprehensive framework is a time consuming group process to make sure that all parties in the comprehensive planning group agree with the factors and interrelations, and accept the conceptual framework.

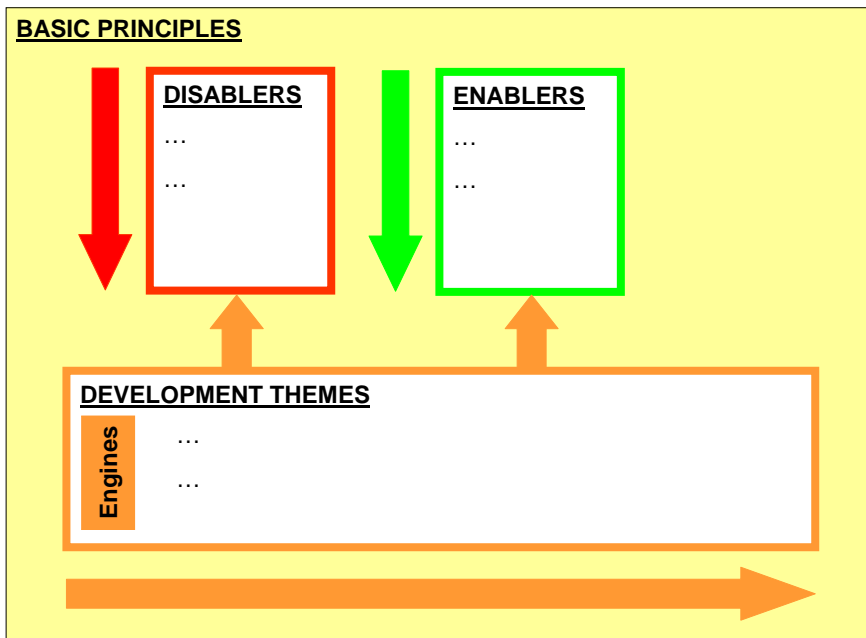


Figure 4: Generic conceptual framework

Development of a conceptual framework results in a line of thought for formulating objectives and a comprehensive strategy to realize those objectives; for all factors in the conceptual framework the comprehensive planning group needs to develop objectives and a comprehensive strategy to realize those objectives.

Phase 5: Development of objectives

The formulation of objectives is a politically sensitive process, even more so considering the dependence of (cooperation with) other parties in realizing those objectives. It is also a complex process because of the many factors and actors of influence. Therefore it is almost impossible to formulate realistic, measurable and specific objectives for the mid term (years) and long term (decennia). However, it is possible to formulate realistic, measurable and specific objectives for the short term (months). Therefore, it is the objective of the comprehensive planning group to formulate *general objectives* for the long term, *desired situations* for the mid term, and *specific effects* for the short term, for all factors in the conceptual framework! Although political sensitivity and the dependence on other parties is not less in the short term, there is more insight in what other parties can/will (not) do in the near future and what preconditions need to be set to realize short term objectives.

The objectives for the long, mid and short term are developed through an intensive group process that ensures agreement and acceptance among all parties that are represented in the comprehensive planning group. The development of objectives phase results in long, mid and short term objectives for all factors in the conceptual framework. The long term objectives (decennia) are formulated in general terms: progress/improvement/decrease/

increase of The mid term objectives (years) are formulated as desired situations. The short term objectives (months) are described as *effects to achieve* and *effects to contribute*. More explanation of the long, mid and short term objectives, including examples, are already offered in the description of the UCP comprehensive planning process. The objectives pertain to the mission area as a whole and/or to specific areas in the mission area. Dependent on the mission, the objectives, especially the short term objectives, need to be revised and adapted every 3 to 9 months by the comprehensive planning group.

Phase 6: Development of comprehensive strategy

After the development of objectives it is the objective of the comprehensive planning group to develop a comprehensive strategy to realize those objectives. The comprehensive strategy describes how and where the objectives can be realized. Because the objectives pertain to the whole mission area and to specific areas in the mission area, the strategy to realize mission area and area specific objectives may also differ. Therefore the comprehensive strategy consists of 1) approaches for mission area objectives and 2) approaches for area specific objectives.

Because of several factors of influence, like scarcity of personnel (infantry units, civilian advisors) and means (money, material, air support), and rotation schedules, it is impossible to invest in all areas at the same time. It is often not possible to execute all approaches at the same time. Therefore the comprehensive strategy also contains a 3) geographic approach, in which the approaches for the whole mission area and for specific areas are realistically integrated in time and space. This integration is based on the factors of influence and relevant criteria, like the minimal involvement needed to keep an area stable.

The 3 elements of the comprehensive strategy are developed through an intensive, time consuming and iterative group process, ensuring the agreement and acceptance that is needed to execute the comprehensive strategy synergistically. The group process results in a comprehensive strategy that makes it possible to translate short term objectives into specific operations and activities for (personnel of) all parties represented in the comprehensive planning group. By executing the comprehensive strategy synergistically, it becomes possible to realize short term objectives and to contribute to mid and long term objectives. Dependent on the mission, the comprehensive strategy needs to be revised and adapted every 3 to 9 months by the comprehensive planning group.

Phase 7: Writing of comprehensive plan

When all phases of the comprehensive planning process are completed, the comprehensive planning group is responsible for writing the comprehensive plan, including the mission and role, the conceptual approach, the objectives and the comprehensive strategy. The first draft is presented to the comprehensive planning group itself and its supporters. Thereupon, feedback is used to write a final draft which is presented to the higher levels of the parties represented in the comprehensive planning group and to all other relevant parties. Subsequently the final draft is rewritten into a final

version. The system of first draft – final draft – final version is important to create support for the comprehensive plan.

Summary and Conclusion

Current and future missions will often be complex endeavors that require a comprehensive and iterative approach in which civilian and military parties need to cooperate. In these complex endeavors unity of effort among all relevant parties forms a major challenge. We expected that the development of a comprehensive plan could contribute to unity of effort. In this paper we described how a comprehensive planning process resulted in a comprehensive plan, the Uruzgan Campaign Plan (UCP), and how this process was appreciated and contributed to unity of effort. The UCP is a long term planning document that translates the conceptual comprehensive approach into a comprehensive, iterative approach in the field. The UCP comprehensive planning process and subsequent lessons identified formed the base for the development of a more generic comprehensive and iterative planning process. This generic process is also briefly introduced in this paper and is currently being developed with subject matter experts in close coordination with the Dutch Ministry of Defense.

The generic comprehensive and iterative planning process can be applied in missions in complex environments that change constantly and are characterized by interdependence of many parties with different interests and motives. In complex multiparty environments a comprehensive and iterative approach contributes to creating unity of effort among the different parties and offers the flexibility to adjust to (un)expected changes in the mission environment.

The generic comprehensive and iterative planning process fills a gap in the need for long term planning processes in complex multiparty environments. The generic process can be embedded in the new staff concept that is currently being developed by the RNLA. This staff concept (see figure 5) concerns taskforce level and higher and is a flexible concept that allows the RNLA to execute all missions, from major combat to peace keeping missions.

Without going into too much detail, the staff concept consists of six processes/cells: Mission Environment (ME) cell, Mission Design and Assessment (MDA) cell, Plans cell, Current Operations (CO) cell, Mission Support cell, Information Management (IM) cell¹³.

¹³ More information about the development of the new staff concept by the RNLA is available with the authors of this paper.

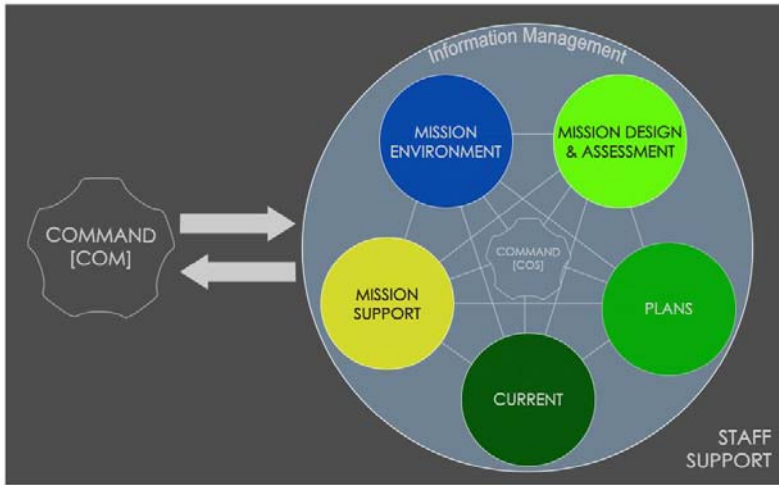


Figure 5: New staff concept RNLA

The generic, comprehensive and iterative planning process, as presented in this paper, can be applied in the mission design process of the Mission Design and Assessment (MDA) cell. The next step in the development of the generic, comprehensive and iterative planning process is to deepen and mature the process in workshops with subject matter experts from the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, TNO and other parties when possible, and finally to integrate the generic process in (the exercises with) the new staff concept.