

**POLICY PAPER**  
**TALIBAN POLITICS AND AFGHAN**  
**LEGITIMATE GRIEVANCES**



London, June 2007



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## ***Calling on the UK to Assume Leadership of a Successful International Strategy in Afghanistan***

Gordon Brown has a clear policy choice for Afghanistan: either stand by the same failed policies, or pursue a successful, coherent peace-building strategy in Afghanistan. The right choice is clear. The British Government must urgently review its current policies pursued in Afghanistan. Decisive leadership is called for to address the current crisis. The incoherent manner in which the military, development and counter-narcotics campaigns are undertaken on the ground feed deep insecurity and extreme poverty. The government should step away from Bush/Blair-led policies.

Whilst the establishment of a newly elected government in Afghanistan represents a step towards freedom, democracy, and prosperity, the country imperatively needs assistance for reconstruction, proper governance and leadership. Misguided development and counter-narcotics policies provide the Taliban with authority, increased legitimacy and the support of the local population. Afghanistan is at the brink of becoming a Taliban stronghold once again.



*A refugee camp in Helmand Province*

**One of the UK Government's top mission priorities in Afghanistan is to urgently provide coordinated and substantial humanitarian and development aid to the local population.** It is essential that British initiatives are regarded as supportive of, and do not undermine, the efforts of the Afghan Government – if not, both the UK and the Afghan Government will fail to gain the support and trust of the Afghan people.



*Counter-narcotics operations, such as forced poppy eradication, must stop undermining the stabilisation and peace-building mission.*

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## Executive Summary

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The legitimate grievances of the Afghan people are successfully maximised by the Taliban in their propaganda campaign. Critically, this could allow the Taliban to progressively become a legitimate political movement in the southern part of the country. The United Kingdom and the international community risk losing what has been achieved so far in Afghanistan.

Decades of internal fighting and foreign intervention have disrupted the rule of law and allowed for illegal activities and corruption to flourish. At present, the reality in Afghanistan is that of three interacting crises - security, poverty and narcotics. Peace and stability in Afghanistan will not be achieved by military means alone. Lagging development, a booming illegal drugs trade, widespread corruption and the steady increase in civilian casualties are challenges that the UK is called upon to urgently address. Public resentment



*Two of this man's children were buried alive during bombing campaigns of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)*

towards the Karzai Government and international forces are on the rise, with violence now spreading across Afghanistan's relatively secure areas and the capital Kabul.

The British presence in Afghanistan is under threat. To gain the trust and support of the local population and achieve its mission in the country, the UK must define a new coherent strategic course. Without a clear articulation of well-defined objectives and course of action, the UK will fail Afghanistan and the British public back home.

### A List of Unremitting Challenges

- ***Taliban politics causing an upsurge in violence and insurgency:*** Afghanistan is ravaged by a huge increase in violent attacks in recent months. **Critically, violence is now spreading geographically to the relatively secure northern and western parts of the country.** The legitimate grievances people hold in the country are benefiting the Taliban and threaten to turn the Taliban into becoming a legitimate political force.
- ***More and more civilian casualties***As a result of intense fighting and the extensive use of aerial bombing, large numbers of civilians have been killed. The steady

succession of civilian casualties fuels increasing local distrust of British and international troops.

- ***Misguided counter-narcotics operations:*** Insisting on forced eradication operations has proved to be both ineffective and counter-productive. In the absence of immediate alternatives, the livelihoods of rural communities are being destroyed, fuelling further public disillusionment towards the UK, international forces and the Afghan Government. This has crucially led to increased violence and lawlessness. **The US pledge to implement chemical eradication by aerial spraying of poppy crops for the next planting season will be disastrous.** Such ill-advised policies put the British military mission at grave risk.
- ***Lack of vital development aid:*** Living conditions in Afghanistan, particularly in the south, remain appalling. The lack of essential aid relief and development infrastructure is maximised by the Taliban to gain local support and undermine the counter-insurgency mission of British and international forces. The UK is progressively losing the battle for the hearts and minds.
- ***Effective Grassroots politics:*** Public information warfare in Afghanistan is key to winning the support and trust of the local population. At present, psychological operations are lacking the coordination, means of communication and clarity necessary for a successful planned information campaign. Instead, the Taliban has employed a winning propaganda, building on the international community's failure to improve the lives of the Afghan people in the south.
- ***Distant neighbouring relations:*** The relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan are critical for the stability of both countries and in evolving regional dynamics. The porous border is a major source of instability for both Afghanistan and Pakistan – by exploiting the ill-defined border, the Taliban is regrouping and gaining more power.
- ***Karzai Government under threat:*** Instability and corruption within the Government are effectively leading to a governance crisis. The deterioration of the security situation, lack of provision of urgent development and the support of aggressive counter-narcotics operations have led to widespread resentment towards the Afghan Government. Karzai is losing the support of his own people.



*Local elders are being ignored.*



### Changing Political Dynamics: Iraq scenarios in Afghanistan

During 2001 and 2002 the international community was fighting what remained of Taliban resistance and their foreign Al Qaeda brothers-in-arms. Since then, the political dynamic has changed considerably. The remaining core of fundamentalist Taliban has benefited from a widespread, often legitimate, set of grievances - economic, political and social. This has given birth to a resurgent, grassroots Taliban movement.

Poverty, lack of economic opportunities and broken promises have fuelled this movement and increased the scope and perceived legitimacy of the Taliban. Recently and much like in Iraq, the Taliban have stepped up attacks in largely populated areas, producing high civilian casualties.

This has magnified the perception that the Afghan Government and international community are unable to provide security. The growing Taliban support base and the increased scope of attacks are destabilising and de-legitimising the Afghan Government in the eyes of its people.

These attacks, in conjunction with US-led bombing tactics that have also produced high civilian casualties, are changing the political dynamics in Afghanistan. The Taliban has begun to tip the scales in its favour.

### *The Way Forward: Balancing Objectives and Strategies*

The key for a successful mission in Afghanistan is for the international community and the Afghan Government to garner public support by visibly improving life chances for all Afghans. The UK and NATO must be able to collectively demonstrate that their presence in the country is essential to building lasting peace and supporting the elected Afghan Government in its reconstruction efforts.

- ***A coherent campaign:*** Building on the underpinnings of the counter-insurgency theory, the military mission must be accompanied by the provision of immediate aid and development. Balancing the military and development efforts – both in terms of project implementation and spending – is essential to winning the hearts and minds in Afghanistan. Without an effective development and aid infrastructure and limiting civilian casualties, the counter-insurgency campaign of British troops is bound to fail.
- ***A development-based Poppy for Medicine initiative:*** The next planting season is of crucial importance, signalling the choice between the destructive policy of chemical and ground spraying, and positive development-based initiatives. The Poppy for Medicine initiative, advocating for the licensed cultivation of poppy for medicinal purposes, would allow the central government and the UK to engage

positively with rural communities and help break the ties and dependency on the illegal drugs market and the Taliban. The next planting season can mark a new, affirmative beginning with the implementation of Poppy for Medicine pilot projects.

- ***Conveying a positive message and supporting Afghanistan's local structures:*** There needs to be an immediate and drastic improvement in demoralising the Taliban and conveying the democratic vision of Afghanistan. The UK and the international community must actively demonstrate their strong commitment to support and help the Afghan people and its elected Government. The traditional local assemblies (*jirgas, shuras*) are particularly valuable in the fragile south, voicing local concerns to be addressed and functioning as a law enforcement forum. Crucially, a stable and secure environment within local communities would help rebuild local support for the Karzai Government, the UK and NATO presence.



*Poppies ready to be used for the production of Afghan morphine*

- ***An assertive response to Afghan-Pakistani issues:*** Both Afghanistan and Pakistan will benefit from a close relationship aiming to address their shared problems and achieve stability. The UK and the international community could assist both Pakistan and Afghanistan by proposing the establishment of a joint presidential committee, co-chaired by the Presidents of both countries, with the sole purpose of working together –constructively and persistently– on joint problem solving.

The UK has the opportunity to assume leadership of a successful international strategy to build peace and prosperity in Afghanistan. Past mistakes must not be repeated – instead, a renewed commitment to effectively addressing Afghanistan's interacting crises of security, development and counter-narcotics ought to be made.

**Gordon Brown must exemplify the leadership and vigour to overcome failed policies and pave the way for a coherent, Afghan-oriented mission. Afghanistan is being lost - there is no time to waste.**



*The burning remains of a British military vehicle in Helmand province following a roadside bomb explosion*



## I. UK Mission in Afghanistan: Overarching Objectives and Challenges Ahead

The UK, along with the US and other nations, has been engaged vigorously in rebuilding Afghanistan since the removal of the Taliban in autumn 2001. To properly assess the UK strategy in Afghanistan, it is essential to reflect on the objectives of the mission as these were originally envisaged and thereafter portrayed in policy-making.

### *Endorsing a Coherent Security and Development Mission in Afghanistan*

In October 2001, following the dramatic events of September 11, the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair announced Britain's commitment in Afghanistan with British forces engaged in military action against targets inside the country.

***"We are taking action on all three fronts: military, diplomatic and humanitarian. We have to act to alleviate the appalling suffering of the Afghan people and deliver stability."***

*UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, October 2001*

Throughout the six years of British engagement in Afghanistan, the UK Government has reiterated its initial proclamation underlining that its mission in Afghanistan is to help the Afghan people to build their economy and democracy, and to protect the reconstruction of the country.

Importantly, the UK Government emphasised the fundamental linkage between security and development efforts in Afghanistan. Acknowledging that success in Afghanistan will not be achieved by military means alone, the UK speaks of the need to marry together the elements of security and force with those of reconstruction and development. Former Defence Secretary John Reid stressed that stability in Afghanistan depends on a viable legitimate economy, with Afghanistan having the infrastructure and capability to govern itself effectively.



*Humanitarian efforts: Will Gordon Brown ensure someone takes care of this malnourished child?*

Within a coherent policy, the role for the military is to help maintain and create a framework of security on which legitimate Afghan institutions can grow and thrive. In this context, NATO, through its leadership of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), has a major role to play.

***“The international community needs to work in a coordinated way across all the different lines of operation – security, governance, law and order, reconstruction and development– to deliver a truly comprehensive approach.”***

*Defence Secretary Des Browne, November 2006*

Counter-narcotics policy has accurately been considered as an integral component of the efforts in Afghanistan. Since 2001, the UK Government and the international community have emphasised the detrimental role of the drugs trade in financing the Taliban regime, and have thus striven to tackle the illegal drugs production. Counter-narcotics proclamations have focused on the efforts to build up the Afghan police and army, and to reconstruct the economy on a basis that does not depend on narcotics.



*A clear need to balance military efforts with sustainable development*

Countering the illegal drugs production in Afghanistan is a very difficult yet vital mission, for which the UK has lead responsibility.

### ***The Promise of a Lasting Commitment***

Throughout the last six years, the UK has been reassuring the Afghan Government and its people of its strong commitment to the country's stability and development.

***“We will not turn our back on Afghanistan because it is right to remain engaged – we promised that we would do so – and if we do not, Afghanistan may return to the failed state in which we found it after 9/11. For us to remain engaged in the reconstruction of Afghanistan is not merely right – it is manifestly in our interest.”***

*UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, December 2001*

Prime Minister Blair reaffirmed this promise throughout the years ensuring that in relation to the British forces and boosting the development effort in Afghanistan, the UK will do whatever is necessary to succeed.

Exhibiting its commitment, the UK has commissioned a significant military contribution, with other NATO countries engaging somewhat disproportionately. UK's military engagement in Afghanistan has increased three-fold since 2001, with approximately 6,700 troops currently employed and these expected to increase to 7,700 by August 2007. Military engagement is accompanied by an equal important increase in expenditure with the estimated cost of operations for 2006-2007 reaching £770 million. **British troops are doing a commendable job under the most difficult circumstances in the insecure Helmand province.**



*Primitive pumps provide water to villages but are not accessible to many people in rural areas*

Significant funds for development and reconstruction in Afghanistan have also been pledged. The UK is Afghanistan's second largest donor of funds after the US with total spending exceeding £500 million.

The international community has learned its lesson in Afghanistan the hard way. The overthrow of the Taliban regime in autumn 2001 was recklessly viewed as a lasting success, allowing for corruption to thrive and insurgent actors to reinstate. The Taliban are now re-gaining control of the southern part, illegal activities are flourishing and the country is ravaged by extreme poverty. Improvements in security and reconstruction that the UK and the international community have striven to achieve in Afghanistan are at risk. Afghanistan's future is severely under threat. It is

imperative the commitment of the UK and NATO in Afghanistan is for the long-run but with immediate action. A hurried exit strategy would prove catastrophic for Afghanistan, the region and international security.

#### AFGHANISTAN AT A GLANCE

**GDP per capita:** USD 300<sup>1</sup>

**Malnutrition:** 7 million, 22% of the total population

**Population below minimum level of dietary energy:** 20.4%<sup>1</sup>

**Life Expectancy:** 44 years

**Infant mortality:** 13.5%

**Under five mortality:** 25%

**Access to clean water in urban areas:** 38%

**Access to clean water in rural areas:** 7%

**Access to adequate sanitation:** 12%

**Adult Literacy Rates:** 28.1%

**Adult Literacy Rate for women:** 15%

The UK mission in Afghanistan as originally envisaged incorporating the key element for success – a comprehensive strategy which integrates the three essential strands of security, development and counter-narcotics. The UK did get it right on paper. But are these mission statements reflected in equally coherent policies and operations?

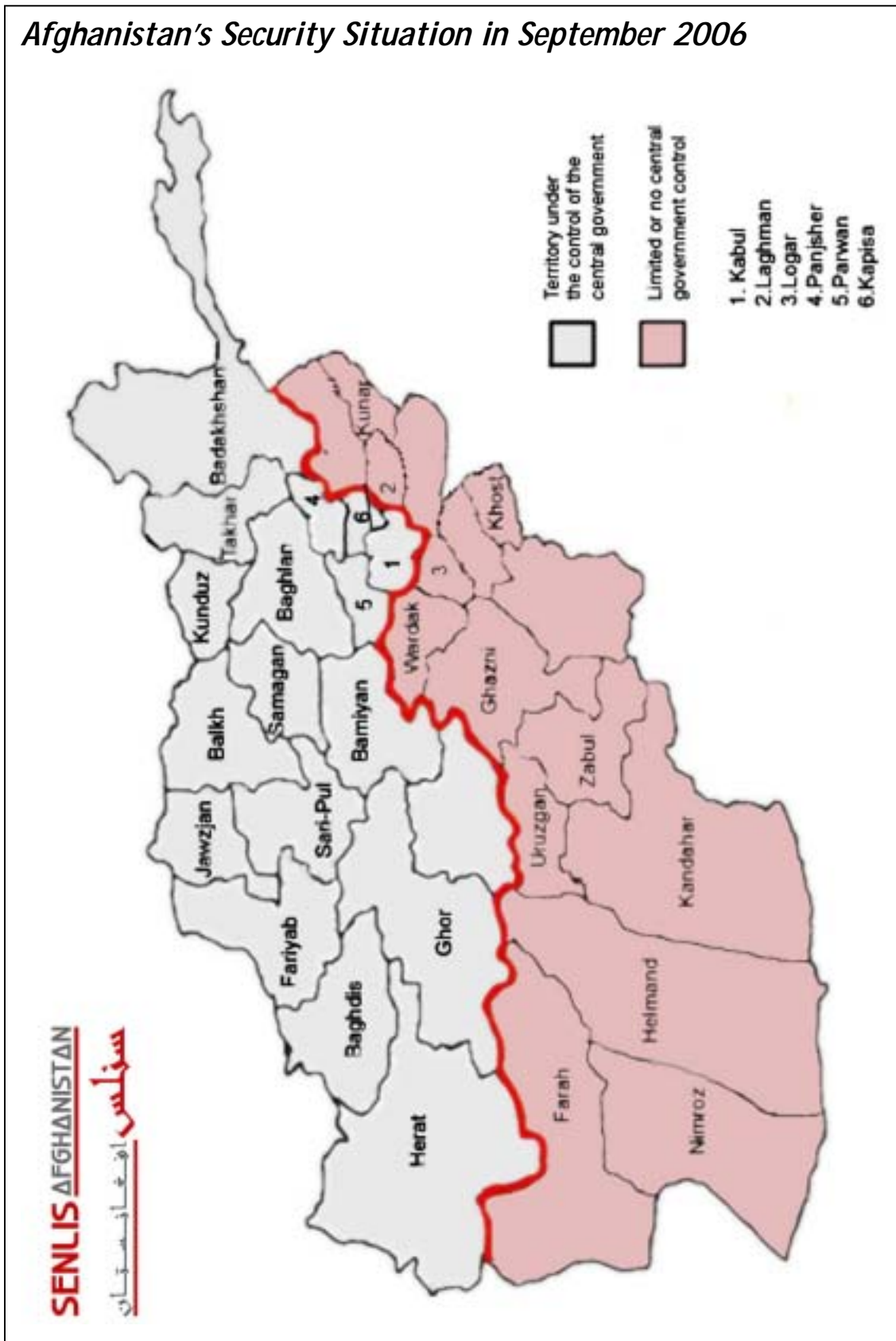
The current British policy in Afghanistan is ineffective.



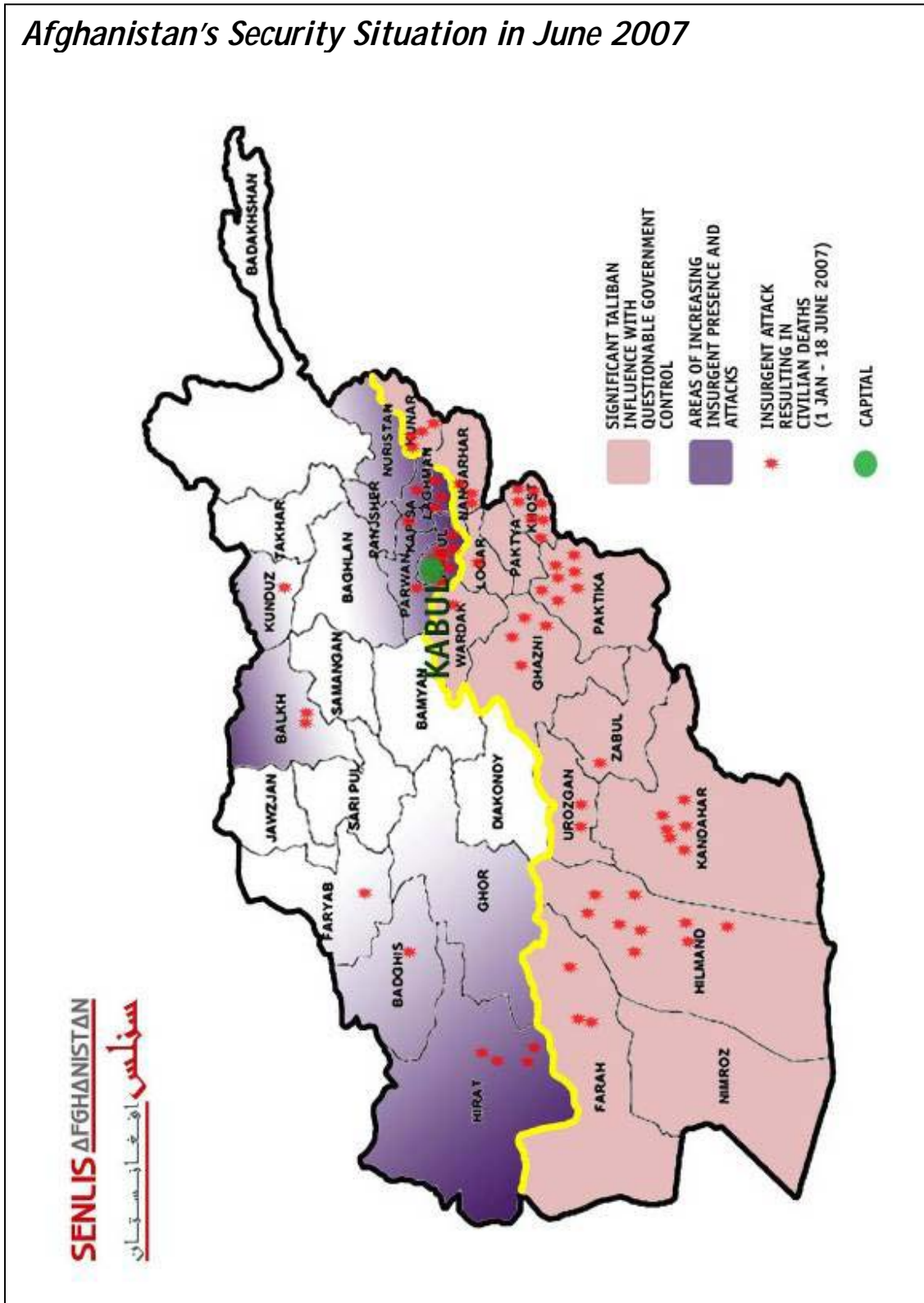
*Extreme poverty is still abundant despite almost six years of British presence in Afghanistan*



### Afghanistan's Security Situation in September 2006



### Afghanistan's Security Situation in June 2007



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### ***Unrelenting Errors in Policy Implementation are endangering the Peace-Building Mission***

Following decades of internal fighting and external intervention, Afghanistan has longed for lasting peace. A foreign engagement in Afghanistan has to be built on a base of a stronger peace, seeking to build economic prosperity, political stability and military security.

Building peace in Afghanistan essentially translates into a constructive relationship between the Afghan Government, its people and the international community; provision of development aid and a sustainable solution to the opium issue; elucidating on the lasting benefits of democracy and promoting education across the country; direct engagement with the rural communities and local institutions (*jirgas, shuras*); and a positive engagement between Afghanistan and its neighbours including Pakistan.

Winning the support and trust of the Afghan people and empowering the Karzai Government are indispensable components of a successful peace-building mission.



*Winning over the hearts and minds of young men is crucial to the peace building efforts of Afghanistan*

### *Missteps in Implementing a Coherent Campaign*

The overall mission of stability and development in Afghanistan is being seriously compromised by insufficient and conflicting operations. Misguided counter-narcotics policies, lack of sustainable development funding and aid infrastructure, ill-fated Psy-Ops and public information operations, inadequate military coordination between international forces and a steady succession of civilian casualties have resulted in increasing anti-occupation hostility and distrust of the Afghan Central Government.



*Another misfire by the international community*

***"The past six years have seen a succession of political errors, neglect and missed opportunities."***

Former Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani, June 2007<sup>1</sup>

#### ➤ **Lack of military coordination between international forces and a steady succession of civilian casualties**

NATO has a vital role to play in securing Afghanistan and facilitating to establish a lasting culture of democracy and peace. However, the military campaign is suffering from a rather disproportionate national commitment from its members and reluctance for greater and more coordinated engagement.

The extensive use of aerial bombing, often as compensation for the limited number of troops on the ground, and the indiscriminate manner in which Afghan civilians are being killed are fuelling public frustration and worsening the relations with the Afghan Government. This critically undermines the ability of the UK and its troops to present their mission as a humanitarian war to help the Afghan people and gain their support.

<sup>1</sup> Ashraf Ghani, "Rescue Plan for an Afghanistan perilously close to its tipping point," 19 June 2006, [online] Available at: <http://www.e-ariana.com/ariana/eariana.nsf/aa8e81dc17f7b0eb87256c030066e73b/86e50f584601c46c872572ff00433ffe?OpenDocument>

In an urgent call to reconsider the international operations in Afghanistan, on 12 June 2007 the International Committee for the Red Cross, commemorating its 20-year presence in the country, called attention to the heavy price the Afghan population is paying in terms of wounded, killed and people displaced. Likewise, Human Rights Watch has reported on several cases that international forces have conducted indiscriminate attacks or have failed to take adequate precautions to prevent harm to civilians.

Controversy rages over exact figures of casualties and displaced civilians as a result of fighting and air strikes. In the absence of a comprehensive programme to document the impact of fighting on civilians and, thus, provide relief and compensation, there is no complete and reliable data on the real situation on the ground. However, it is evident that figures have soared in the first half of 2007. Whilst reports refer to some 230 civilian casualties as a result of air strikes and ground operations by US military and NATO forces in 2006, this year the figures have increased by hundreds.



*International bombing campaigns have led to massive displacement of Afghans to camps where they live under terrible circumstances*

Bombardments have also led to mass internal displacement. Air strikes across the southern, eastern and western parts of the country have destroyed or badly damaged villages, leaving hundreds of thousands homeless.

The Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR), a group representing foreign and Afghan aid agencies including Oxfam and CARE International, has recently condemned excessive use of force and air strikes as this undermines support for international and Afghan military forces as well as for those involved in humanitarian and development work.<sup>2</sup>

The latest “friendly fire” incidents have revealed the extent of the detrimental impact of collateral damage and civilian casualties on the stabilisation mission. The incidents have been cleverly exploited by the Taliban to fuel further public resentment towards both the government and international forces.

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<sup>2</sup> The full text of the recent ACBAR statement on the Conduct of Military Operations in Afghanistan is available [online] at:  
[http://www.acbar.org/downloads/ACBAR%20Statement%20\(19%20Jun%202007\).pdf](http://www.acbar.org/downloads/ACBAR%20Statement%20(19%20Jun%202007).pdf)

### No compensation for the deaths of innocent civilians killed in NATO-ISAF operations

Since NATO-ISAF took command of operations in Afghanistan in October 2006, compensation given for innocent civilians killed in combat-weary provinces in the south has been meagre. The Post Operations Humanitarian Relief Fund, the compensation fund created by NATO-ISAF in December 2006 to help war victims, is thus far being funded by only four out of the 37 troop contributing nations. The initial contribution came from the Netherlands followed by Sweden, the Czech Republic and Lithuania. None of the bigger countries with extensive military operations in Afghanistan have contributed to the fund. **This is sending a message of Abandonment to the Afghan people**

The situation is at a critical point. Whilst anti-occupation hostility is rising, the insurgency has spread to previously relatively stable areas and imperils the governance and stabilisation. Insurgents are no longer merely targeting Afghan security forces and foreign troops, but have started targeting civilians as well. Public support for the Afghan Government and international forces is steadily being lost. The British and international mission is now severely under threat.



*Extreme poverty is driving young Afghans into the hands of the Taliban*

#### ➤ Development and aid policies failing to complement military efforts

Afghanistan is facing a poverty crisis of an unprecedented magnitude. Notwithstanding five years of international assistance, the country still ranks at the bottom of all development indicators. The majority of the population suffers from shortages of housing, clean water, electricity, medical care and jobs. With overall poor infrastructure and lack of resources for social development, Afghanistan descends further into poverty.

In 2000 the United Nations adopted eight Millennium Development Goals with the aim of ending extreme poverty. These Goals set out clear objectives for achieving progress towards specific poverty indicators such as halving the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day, halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, and reducing the under-five child mortality rate by two thirds. Afghanistan is the only

Asian country to have not met or to be on track to meet more than two of the Goals. Adequate shelter and sufficient food must be made immediately available to all Afghans, especially in the ravaged southern part of the country. The achievement of the targets encapsulated in these internationally agreed-upon goals would signal Afghanistan's sustainable measurable progress towards achieving peace and prosperity.

Thus far, international military expenditure has outpaced development and aid spending by 900 percent. The striking disparity between military and development spending reflects the lack of balance and coordination among the two policies with severe implications on the overall mission in Afghanistan.

**Failing to address the immediate and basic needs of the Afghan population has led to increasing public disillusionment and distrust towards the Afghan Government and the international community.** The lack of development and aid infrastructure has also been maximised by the insurgents to gain local support - villages ravaged by poverty are now the recruitment ground for the Taliban. UK and NATO military officials and soldiers on the ground have expressed their frustration with the lack of coordination between security and development operations. Inadequate development aid puts the military efforts at grave risk. **When British soldiers (re)conquer terrain on the Taliban, there are no development agencies or NGOs that can seriously build on this to make the military victory sustainable through development and reconstruction.**

Balancing the military and development efforts is essential to winning the hearts and minds in Afghanistan. Without an effective development and aid infrastructure, the counter-insurgency campaign of British and NATO forces is bound to failure.

#### ➤ **Misguided counter-narcotics operations undermine Afghanistan's stability**

The endemic drugs crisis lies at the nexus of development and security in Afghanistan. As counter-narcotics challenges facing Afghan and international forces in the province intensify, security and overall reconstruction efforts become irreconcilable. The commendable job of the British military in southern Afghanistan is severely undermined by unbalanced policies in the area of counter-narcotics. Aggressive poppy eradication has proved to be ineffective and extremely dangerous for the UK and NATO mission.



*Crop eradication only leads to more poverty*

Failing to address the illegal drugs trade has been a critical strategic mistake, with illegal drug cultivation in the southern provinces currently fuelling insurgent activities.

The number of Afghan farmers involved in poppy cultivation has increased by 44 percent in 2006, reaching almost three million, whilst overall cultivation has climbed by 59 percent. Earlier in June 2007, the Afghan Counter-Narcotics Minister, Habibullah Qaderi, has recently warned that poppy production in Helmand, Uruzgan and Nangarar provinces will increase significantly this year compared to 2006. It is generally predicted that opium production will increase by as much as 20 percent by the end of 2007.

### ➤ **Hard-line US policy promises chemical spraying of poppy crops**

The US insists on the “success” of aggressive eradication policy, especially advocating aerial and ground herbicide eradication, citing the Colombian experience. Since the 1980s, Colombia has targeted poppy plantings with aerial spraying of chemicals.<sup>3</sup> However, the reality in Colombia provides ample evidence of the ineffectiveness of crop eradication and the social and security costs this has inflicted on the population – the livelihoods of rural communities have been destroyed leading to mass displacement and instability. What is more, this policy has proved to be entirely futile in reducing the illegal drugs trade. **Despite record-setting fumigation and manual eradication operations, in 2006 coca cultivation in Colombia has hit a 20-year high.** Crucially, the narcotics trade has been a major funding and recruitment pool for Colombian insurgency groups, with the latter offering farmers protection from eradication and turning the local population against the Central Government.

The detrimental impact of poppy eradication is even more pronounced in Afghanistan, one of the world's poorest countries. In the absence of immediate alternative livelihoods and large-scale employment programmes particularly for the land poor, aggressive eradication operations reinforce farmers' economic vulnerability and exacerbate poverty. There have been widespread allegations in the rural communities that the eradication process is corrupted at many levels and that it typically targets the poor and those located in more visible locations. **Afghan crop**



*Left behind with no alternative livelihoods: Villagers observing eradication operations*

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed description of chemical eradication policies in Afghanistan, see: Francisco Thoumi, Jorrit Kamminga, James MacGregor a.o., *Impact Assessment of Crop Eradication in Afghanistan and Lessons Learned from Latin America and South East Asia* (January 2006). Available at: [https://www.senlisouncil.net/modules/publications/009\\_publication](https://www.senlisouncil.net/modules/publications/009_publication).



**eradication teams are either bribed by larger, resource-rich farmers or prefer to avoid this group because of fear for retaliatory attacks.** The inconsistent and unequal nature of eradication policies carried out has created increasing resentment among the local population. In particular, international troops are currently perceived as a purely military force, which jointly with the Afghan government, embark on targeted forceful action against farmers and their families.

As a result of aggressive eradication operations, local confidence in the Afghan government and international forces is being lost. Crucially, this leaves room for the Taliban to maximise on the public disillusionment, to offer protection for opium cultivation and, thus, effectively gain the support of rural communities.

Successful counter-narcotics interventions require not only the necessary economic infrastructure but, more importantly, institutions of formal governance and mechanisms of social protection. In the absence of immediate viable economic alternatives and with the authority of the central government to be shrinking visibly in favour of anti-government forces and narco-traffickers, forced eradication proves a disastrous policy in the fragile Afghanistan. **Aggressive chemical spraying eradication will not only poison the land but, more importantly, poison the relationship with the Afghan people.**



*Chemical spraying will leave the already fragile soil infertile for years after*

#### ➤ A Grassroots political campaign

Another front in the war on Afghanistan is the *war of the mind*. In Afghanistan's fragile security and political situation, public perceptions of the conflict and of the role of international forces are pivotal to the efforts to build lasting peace and stability. In the context of the psychological warfare, how actions or inaction are perceived by the Afghan people is equally, if often not more, significant than what actually occurs on the ground. Hence, winning the support and trust of the local population is crucial to the British and NATO mission in Afghanistan.

Integral to perception management, psychological operations (Psy-Ops) are designed to induce or reinforce certain attitudes and behaviours. In order to increase their effectiveness, Psy-Ops in Afghanistan ought to target both the local population and the enemy's beliefs.

Planned operations employed by the British and NATO military should seek to convey information and indicators to the local population in order to garner its support and confidence. However, the campaign in southern Afghanistan has been of such considerable intensity and hindered by a lack of provision of immediate aid and development, aggressive eradication operations which destroy the livelihoods of rural communities and a steady succession in civilian casualties. All these misguided policies

have led to increasing local resentment against international forces and the Afghan Government.

Currently, Psy-Ops in Afghanistan are lacking the coordination, means of communication and clarity necessary for a successful planned information campaign. For instance, whilst the message to be conveyed may be clear and targeted. **Instead, the enemy has been employing a winning propaganda campaign, building on the international community's failure to improve the lives of the Afghan people in the south combined with a carrot (incentives such as protection from poppy eradication) and stick (threats) tactic.** This has led to a situation in which the Taliban has become a legitimate political movement in certain areas.

It is imperative that the UK and international community invest in a planned, effective Grassroots political campaign. There needs to be an immediate and drastic improvement in demoralising the Taliban, and in conveying the democratic vision of Afghanistan and the strong commitment to support and help the Afghan people and its elected Government.

### ***Recurring Errors Undermine Afghan Ownership***

Unbalanced military and development commitments, irrational counter-narcotics policies which further exacerbate poverty, a dramatic increase in civilian casualties and an inadequate public information campaign have led to increasing public disillusionment and severely undermine the Karzai Government. A disjointed neighbourhood policy, especially towards Pakistan, is also a challenge that must be properly addressed.



*Disillusioned Afghans are losing trust in the National or International authorities*

High Versus Low Political Risk Policies (for Karzai government and International community)	
High Political Risk	Low Political Risk
Predominantly military campaign to defeat the insurgency	Matching development with security spending
Aerial bombing campaigns	Targeted counter-insurgency operations
Lack of development and humanitarian aid	Identifying and responding to the basic needs of local communities
Forced crop eradication	Alternative livelihoods, Poppy for Medicine project, targeted eradication once farmers have a choice between the legal and illegal economy

Instability and corruption within the Karzai Government are also rising, with the country now heading steadily for a governance crisis. Proclamations of promoting Afghan ownership of the stabilisation and development efforts have failed to realise. The vast majority of the local population in the south feels marginalised – they are left to live in the poorest and most insecure conditions. **In their perceptions, the vision of the “New Afghanistan” is an imposed vision.**

Whilst the Central Government grows weaker and Afghan people feel disengaged from the efforts to build peace and prosperity, the Taliban is gaining increasing local support and threatens to destroy Afghanistan once again.

In autumn 2001, the UK and the international community were presented with the opportunity to re-build the fragile Afghanistan and signal the beginning of a constructive relationship with the Muslim world. Now the UK is presented with the opportunity to realise that promise.

As the country responsible for the establishment of stability in the frail and highly insecure Helmand province as well as coordinating the international counter-narcotics efforts in the country, the UK can lead international efforts by employing a coherent campaign to address the interacting crises of security, development and counter-narcotics. The UK's contribution to Afghanistan is unquestionable. British troops in the country are expected to further increase in August 2007 in order to better tackle the rise in insurgency. Deliberations on additional deployment to Afghanistan in 2008 have also been expressed, especially in view of the possibility to pull out troops from Iraq.



*The remains of a truck after a Taliban ambush*



## II. Achieving Success: Critical Success Factors on Re-Balancing the Strategy in Afghanistan

Security, development and counter-narcotics strategies remain incoherent and limited in their capacity to impact positively on the very basic needs of the Afghan people, especially in Helmand province. The failure to demonstrably address extreme poverty, the significant imbalance between military and development efforts and the pursuit of counter-productive poppy eradication operations are all undermining the UK's vital mission in the country.

To achieve its mission to bring sustainable peace and prosperity to the south and Afghanistan as a whole, the UK must learn from its mistakes and move away from failed Bush/Blair politics. It should demonstrate the political and military flexibility necessary to chart a new strategic course of policy action. As such, it must identify coherent critical success factors aiming to re-balance security, development and counter-narcotics efforts.



*Street scene in Lashkar Gah*

**A complete overhaul of counter-narcotics, aid and development infrastructure in Afghanistan is imperative.**

***Critical success factor: Decrease number in civilian casualties and provide a comprehensive relief programme***

Increased incidents involving civilian casualties have proved to be detrimental in winning the support and trust of the Afghan people. The UK and especially the US and NATO forces must adopt a policy of ***zero innocent casualties***. Air strikes should be limited to those instances where the target is well defined and civilians will not be victimised. The damaging impact of civilian casualties on the relations between military forces – foreign and Afghan – and the local population is much higher than having a small number of Taliban units escape by hiding among the people.

NATO requires a greater number of boots on the ground to avoid the civilian deaths caused by destructive aerial bombing campaigns and to effectively suppress Taliban activity. Civilian killings must end if the international forces wish to gain support from the Afghan people. NATO member countries' contributions should be standardised in order to demonstrate a commitment to stability in Afghanistan.

The lack of a coordinated campaign to provide immediate aid relief and compensation to the war victims has further increased anti-occupation hostility. The Post Operations Humanitarian Relief Fund by NATO-ISAF should signal the demonstrable commitment of all troops-contributing nations in Afghanistan. Instead, at present, only four countries have contributed to this fund – remarkably, neither the UK nor any of those nations with extensive military operations have contributed to the fund.

The UK and the international community need to understand that providing compensation and relief aid is crucially important in sustaining the support of the population. **NATO countries must immediately contribute sufficient financial support to the Post Operations Humanitarian Relief Fund in order to provide medical, rehabilitation and development aid necessary to the villages bombed and the families affected.** To win the crucial battle for the hearts and minds of the Afghan people, military tactics pursued by the international forces stationed in Afghanistan must be immediately revised with the objective to limit civilian casualties, provide immediate aid relief and respect the Afghan sensibilities, particularly during house searches.



*Another civilian casualty, one of many*

**Critical success factor: Provide immediate food aid and healthcare to Helmand's population**

The striking disparity between military and development spending reflects the lack of balance and coordination among the two policies with severe implications on the overall mission in Afghanistan. The population's legitimate grievances regarding the appalling living conditions must be immediately addressed. The current system of food and medical aid is dysfunctional and inadequate to even address the minimum needs of the victims of fighting, poppy eradication and drought. Immediate widespread food aid is urgently required, including essential food distribution amongst displaced persons living in refugee camps.

The absence of healthcare is a decisive hurdle in winning the public support. The few hospitals established across the southern part of the country remain in a state of complete decay, lacking the resources necessary to provide even the basic care. The UK must provide the funds and assets required to immediately improve healthcare facilities. A key element of the effort to improve healthcare is the provision of mobile field hospitals, especially for the emergency treatment of civilian casualties.

The **United Nations' Millennium Development Goals** provide a clear set of objectives for providing immediate aid and accomplishing sustainable progress in Afghanistan. The achievement of these targets is essential to ensure lasting peace and prosperity in Afghanistan.

### United Nations Millennium Development Goals<sup>4</sup>

1. **Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. **Reduce child mortality, especially under the age of five**
5. **Improve maternal health**
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability, including sustainable access to safe drinking water
8. Develop a global partnership for development, including provision of access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries

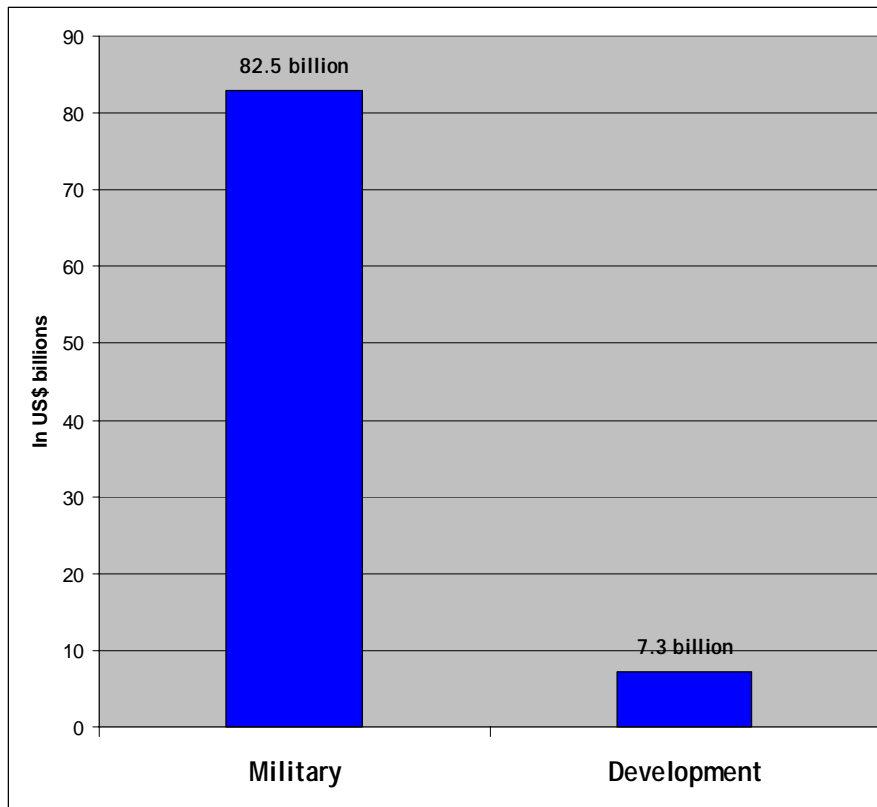
The UK must provide the essential funding and resources to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals focusing on the provision of immediate food aid and healthcare. Balancing military expenditure and development spending is a firm first step towards prosperity and stability in Afghanistan.

A substantial decrease in the number of the malnourished Afghan population, reducing child and maternal mortality rates, improving access to essential healthcare and medicines as well as building the development infrastructure necessary are all critical success factors for the UK mission in Afghanistan.



*Eradicate poverty and hunger instead of poppy*

<sup>4</sup> A full articulation of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals is available online at: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/goals.html>



*Development versus Military spending*

### **Critical success factor: An effective and positive counter-narcotics policy**

In the absence of substantial access to viable alternative legal livelihoods, all poppy eradication campaigns must immediately cease. Forceful eradication operations, especially chemical spraying as strongly advocated by the US, alienate rural communities and fuel instability. Furthermore, alternative livelihoods have failed to have a significant impact because of under-prioritisation, lack of funding and of implementing bodies. Senlis Council survey results reveal that misguided counter-narcotics operations such as poppy eradication contribute to the growing poverty crisis – **80 percent of the population in southern Afghanistan is facing food insecurity.**



*Who should benefit: the Taliban, or those in need of affordable Afghan-made medicines such as cancer and HIV/AIDS patients?*

Instead, a development-based approach which recognises the opium poppy as a potential economic resource for Afghanistan must be adopted. **A village-based Poppy for Medicine campaign, advocating the licensed poppy cultivation for medicinal purposes, maximises Afghanistan's tradition of strong local control systems and provides the necessary leverage for economic diversification. Crucially, Poppy for Medicine would allow the central government**



**and the international community to engage positively with rural communities and help break the ties and dependency on the illegal drugs market and the Taliban.**

The next planting season is of crucial importance, signaling the choice between the destructive policy of chemical and ground spraying, and testing the Poppy for Medicine scheme. **The UK should take the leadership on counter-narcotics efforts and endorse the implementation of Poppy for Medicine Pilot Projects in Helmand province for the next planting season in order to test the controllability and economic effectiveness of this counter-narcotics initiative.** Keeping to the same aggressive counter-narcotics policies will prove catastrophic for both the Afghan Government and the UK's mission in Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup>

***Critical success factor: Engaging directly with local population to understand their legitimate grievances***

The UK, the international community and the Afghan Government must listen and respond to the legitimate local grievances related to the impoverishment of rural communities, poppy eradication operations and civilian casualties. Accordingly, systematic consultation of British forces and the Afghan Government with local population in the south and across Afghanistan should be intensified in order for policies to reflect the priorities and real needs of the Afghan people.

*Jirgas* function as a forum of consensus-building and law enforcement in local communities, and may prove particularly valuable in the fragile south. The UK must build on Afghanistan's available resources and support these local assemblies. Giving a voice to the Afghans is a step ahead towards achieving our security objectives. Another crucial element in winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people is a successful information campaign. Psychological operations pursued by the UK and international forces must be well coordinated using the most efficient means of communications and clarity necessary. **Public information campaigns in Afghanistan are key to winning the support and trust of the local population.**



*Winning the hearts and minds of the local population is critical for the international community's success in Afghanistan*

<sup>5</sup> For further information about an integrated counter-narcotics, counter-insurgency, and development grassroots initiative for Afghanistan, see The Senlis Council, 'Poppy for Medicine: Licensing poppy for the production of essential medicines: an integrated counter-narcotics, development, and counter-insurgency model for Afghanistan', June 2006, [online] Available at: [http://www.senliscouncil.net/modules/publications/022\\_publication](http://www.senliscouncil.net/modules/publications/022_publication)

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***Critical success factor: Advancing relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan***

The ill-defined border between Helmand province and Pakistan is of particular concern with the Taliban gaining increasing power. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan will benefit from a close relationship aiming to address their shared problems and achieve regional stability.

The UK and the international community could assist both Pakistan and Afghanistan by proposing the establishment of a **joint presidential committee**, co-chaired by the Presidents of both countries, with the sole purpose of working together –constructively and persistently– on joint problem solving. Such a joint presidential committee could be facilitated by a neutral third party in the short term that has the trust of both presidents. For example, General David Richards, Former Commander of NATO-ISAF, is intimately familiar with the challenges facing both countries, particularly from a security point of view, and has the respect and trust of both Presidents.



*The remains of a suicide bomber in Lashkar Gah.*

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## Conclusion

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### *Charting a New Strategic Course in Afghanistan*

Around 7,000 British troops now stationed in Helmand province are engaged in daily fighting against the Taliban, in the heaviest military engagement since World War II and the war in Korea. So far, the British forces in Afghanistan have regrettably suffered 60 fatal casualties.

But the commendable job of the British military in southern Afghanistan is severely compromised by an incoherent mission characterised by unbalanced and ineffective Bush/Blair policies in the areas of development and counter-narcotics. Notwithstanding deliberations on the importance of linking stabilisation and development efforts, a list of unremitting problems continue to put the UK operations at grave risk – lack of development and aid infrastructure, a steady succession of civilian casualties, destructive counter-narcotics policies such as forceful crop eradication, and entrenched corruption. Crucially, the UK is now progressively losing the battle for the hearts and minds of the Afghan people.

The Taliban are gaining increasing control over the south whilst violence is now spreading geographically to the north and west of the country. Local resentment towards the Karzai Government and anti-occupation hostility are rapidly rising. The UK cannot risk Afghanistan becoming once again a sanctuary for terrorists. Afghanistan needs to be stabilised. For this, a clear targeted mission which encompasses effective development and a positive counter-narcotics strategy must be immediately articulated.

**The UK mission is at a crossroads.** A clear articulation of the UK's strategic objectives in Afghanistan and the path to achieving these goals is urgently required. Success in Afghanistan will not be achieved by military means alone. Unless immediate action is employed to respond to Afghanistan's interacting crises of insecurity, poverty and narcotics, the UK efforts in the country are bound to fail and Afghanistan will be lost.



## **Appendices**

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## Appendix 1: Transcripts of Senlis Film interviews

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### 1. Interview with Bibi Shakkira

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Since the drought has started four years ago, we have been travelling around...

But recently we moved to this camp because our village was bombed.

There are so many things that I need, I don't have any shelter, I don't have anything to feed to my children.

It has been five years since my husband died and since then I have never tasted meat again.

What you I tell you, what should I complain about to you...?  
Anything that you can provide would be appreciated

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## **2. A burned girl**

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**Bost Hospital, Lashkar Gah  
24 January 2007**

An eight year old girl was admitted to the hospital's paediatric ward

The only pain-killer available in this hospital is Paracetamol. The patients don't have access to essential pain medicines such as codeine and morphine

In rich countries, the extreme pain caused by burns is properly managed with morphine as this is the only effective treatment

The soft tissues of her nose and throat were slowly swelling in response to the burns. The standard procedure in this case would be to place a tube down the throat in the windpipe before the swelling closes the airway. Such a procedure requires sedation so that the patient does not have a choking sensation and therefore struggle against the tube

Such a procedure is carried out by paramedics, emergency physicians and anaesthesiologists many times a day around the world. But neither the tubes nor the sedation are available in either Kandahar or Lashkar Gah hospitals

The little girl died later that night. She died a horrible slow death of asphyxiation. While her breathing became more and more difficult her pain stayed the same, unbearable

The pain was avoidable as was her suffocating death. Yet the total cost of providing sufficient pain-killers and a breathing tube, to save her life, would have been just, \$ 40,-



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### *3. Refugee Camps as a recruitment area for Taliban*

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We escaped from the bombing and fighting in Sangin

I have lost six members of my family

Those of us remaining can't go back and we can't stay here either because we haven't had help from anyone at all.

We haven't received anything, not even a tent.

The government and others should come here and see our houses, talk to us and see how we live.

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#### ***4. The results of Crop Eradication***

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When they came with their tractors yesterday, I told them to run over me too because I can't afford to feed my family anymore.

I wonder what choice the government gives us now that they have eradicated our fields.

Are they supposed to just come here and destroy everything?  
Do you see my hands; I have worked hard all my life.

It were the foreigners who did the eradication but I don't know from where they came.

When they came, they pushed us away and they didn't let us come near

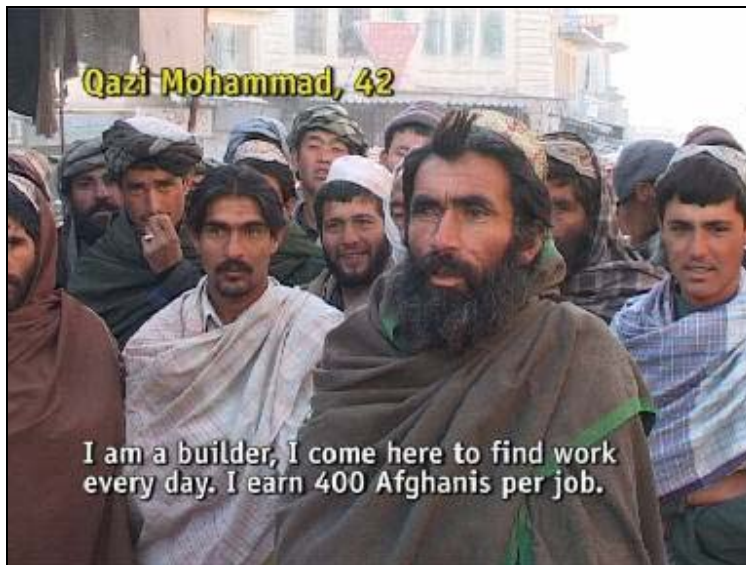
Some Afghans eradicated when the foreigners commanded them

We have spent all our money on our crops and worked with no help from anyone and now it's all gone.

What are we supposed to do now?

Look at my heads, I have worked hard all my life!

## 5. Charsoo Labour Market



What is your name?

*Qazi Mohammad*

What is your age?

*I am 42 years old*

How much money do you earn per day?

*I can earn around 400 Afghanis per day*

How many days do you work per month?

*Over the last 40 days, I have only worked 18. The rest of the time there was no work at all*

I am always anxious about feeding my family, I worry all the time.

*When there is no work I SHOULD be worried*

Do you support Karzai's government?

*Yes, why not. When the Taliban were in power we supported them and right now we are supporting this government. We are worried about feeding our families and finding work. We don't have time to worry about the government or the Taliban. We only care about our families, our children are dying of hunger.*

Who will win the war between the government and the Taliban?

*God knows, we don't know who will win the war. We are not interested in politics. We are just poor people minding our own business*



## Appendix 2. NATO-ISAF Attacks resulting in Civilian Casualties, 2007

Date	Place	Description	Civilian Deaths
Jan 10	Paktika, Urgan District	NATO-led troops shot and killed an Afghan employed at one of their bases after he approached a military vehicle at high speed and did not heed warnings to stop, the force said.	1
Jan 12	Kandahar	Police reports that 16 civilians and 13 rebels were killed in a NATO air strike against Taliban headquarters. NATO says no civilians were killed.	16
Feb 14	Helmand, Musa Qala District	Residents say dozens of civilians, including women and children, were killed in an air strike by NATO forces; NATO denies any civilian casualties.	18
Feb 16	Helmand, Sangin District	Local reported the death of four civilians in an air strike. NATO denies any civilian death.	0-4
Feb 17	Kandahar City, military airfield	NATO-led troops shot to death an Afghan man as he ran between the vehicles of a military convoy.	1
Feb 17	Kandahar, 12km west of the city	NATO-led forces in southern Afghanistan admitted they had shot to death an Afghan civilian they mistook for a suicide bomber.	1
Feb 27	Kandahar	A civilian driver was gunned down as he approached a broken-down Canadian armoured vehicle.	1
March 4	Nangarhar	American marines opened fire in a panic indiscriminately following a suicide bomb attack on their convoy	16
March 4	Kapisa	Militants fired on a NATO base just north of Kabul. A fighter aircraft returning fire hit a civilian home, killing six adults and four children.	10
March 5	Kandahar	The driver of a car following an ISAF convoy was shot by anxious soldiers.	1
March 10	Chinar	Three youngsters were killed by an ISAF air strike.	3
March 14	Kandahar	NATO forces fired at a truck that came too close to their convoy and killed the driver.	1
April 17	Kabul	A U.S.-led coalition convoy hit and killed a boy in	1

		Kabul.	
April 28	Heart, Zerkoh Valley	Aerial bombing of a valley by the American military killed at least 42 civilians. Later enquiries brought the figure to 49 or 51 deaths.	50
May 10 (count up to May 8)	Afghanistan	According to an Associated Press tally based on reports from Afghan and Western officials, 238 civilians had been killed by violence in 2007 at that point, including at least 102 blamed on NATO or the U.S.-led coalition (The Senlis Council count up to this point is: 124)	-
May 8	Helmand, Sangin District	Air strikes called in by U.S. Special Forces killed at least 21 civilians.	21
May 27	Helmand, Nahri Sarraj District	During counter-insurgency operations in the district air support was called upon; it is reported that four villagers were killed and others injured by the air strike; no further details.	4
June 3	Khost, Matun District	A young girl has died of a bullet wound sustained when CF opened fire on a suspicious vehicle which failed to stop when ordered to do so.	1
June 7	Wardak, Sayedabad District	A CF vehicle was involved in a traffic accident with a civilian vehicle traveling in the opposite direction; three civilians were killed and several others were seriously injured; The injured were transferred to the hospital at the Bagram Air-base.	3
June 11	Kunar, Pech Dist	In the late afternoon soldiers manning a CF check point opened fire on a civilian motor vehicle which failed to obey directions given; as a result three youths were killed and three others were injured.	3
June 13	Kunar province	ISAF soldiers opened fire on a vehicle that tried to run a roadblock.	3
June 14	Kabul City	A youth pushing a hand cart stepped out into the road in front of a CF convoy; The youth was knocked down and injured. He died later of his injuries; The situation was reported calm and under control.	1
June 16	Kabul City	A suicide/VBIED attack on a military convoy in the western part of the city, media reports that six civilians were killed and eleven injured; one ISAF soldier reported killed and another injured; as the	1

		convoy recommenced its journey it is believed that an ISAF member opened fire on a group of civilians who had gathered at the scene; one civilian killed and three others injured.	
June 17	Paktika, Zarghun District	Media reports that NATO forces announced that during the evening an operation was mounted against suspected Al Qaeda terrorists who were hiding in a religious training establishment adjacent to a Mosque; air strikes were called in to oust the group; NATO regrets to announce that a number of children were killed in the attack as were an undisclosed number of insurgents.	?
June 18	Zarghun Shah district, Paktika province	A U.S.-led coalition airstrike, targeting suspected al-Qaida militants, was launched on a compound that also contained a mosque and a madrassa.	7
June 18	Uruzgan, Chora District	A dispute is reported to have arisen between village elders and Taliban forces in the district; as a result the Taliban were told to leave the area; thereafter a fire-fight ensued which left around sixteen villagers dead; police responded which resulted in four policemen being killed also; ISAF responded and a number of air-strikes on the Taliban positions were made; significant number of Taliban said to have been killed; however, as the Taliban were taking shelter in amongst the villagers it is also reported that a large number of civilians were killed and injured; The number of casualties was not confirmed.	?
June 22	Helmand, Nahr-e-Saraj District	Some 25 civilians have died during aerial bombing by foreign forces in the southern Afghan province of Helmand, local residents and senior police say.	25
June 24	Uruzgan and elsewhere	President Karzai claims that in the past week at least 90 civilians were killed, 52 in Chora District in Uruzgan.	over 52
		<b>TOTAL CASUALTIES AS OF JUNE 24, 2007</b>	<b>At least 245</b>





### Appendix 3. Taliban Attacks resulting in Civilian Casualties, 2007

Date	Place	Description	Civilian Deaths
Jan 7	Khost	A bomb planted on the side of a road killed newborn twins, their mother and grandmother.	4
Jan 7	Helmand, Chanjir District	Armed men killed a school principal.	1
Jan 23	Khost	A suicide bomber killed himself outside a U.S. military base, killing 10 people and wounding 14 others, said Jamal Arsalah, the province governor.	10
Jan 24	Kandahar City	In the aftermath of an attack on a police checkpoint, angry policemen accusing residents of helping the Taliban opened fire, eventually killing a civilian bystander.	1
Feb 16	Helmand, Greshk District	Residents of the Mirmandi area reported that the Taliban had executed five people on charges of spying for foreigners.	5
Feb 17	Helmand, Sangin & Greshk	The Taliban claimed to have hanged two Afghans they accused of cooperating with foreigners.	2
Feb 27	Bagram, North of Kaboul	A suicide bomb attack later said to have targeted D. Cheney made 23 deaths at Bagram base.	23
Feb 28	Helmand	An Afghan doctor was kidnapped and shot by Taliban fighters.	1
March 1	Farah	A road side bomb targeting passing police vehicle exploded.	3
March 14	Khost	A suicide attack aimed at a police vehicle killed six civilians, among them a mullah.	6
March 14	Kaboul	A blast in an ammunition shop kills 6 civilians.	6
March 17	Kandahar	A Taliban Attack on a NATO Military Convoy kills a child.	1
March 19	Helmand	The driver of kidnapped Italian journalist Daniele Mastrogiacomo was beheaded by the kidnappers.	1
March 24	Lashkargah	A female government employee accused of spying	1

	Helmand	was kidnapped and killed by the Taliban.	
March 28	Kabul	A Taliban suicide bomber on a motorcycle detonated a blast near the car of a senior Afghan intelligence official.	4
April 1	Mihtarlam in Laghman	A suicide bomber killed himself near an Afghan army convoy (3 children killed).	5
April 1	Musa Qala Helmand	Taliban militants hanged three men yesterday after accusing them of spying for British troops.	3
April 5	Khost	Taliban rebels shot dead an Afghan interpreter.	1
April 6	Kabul	A suicide bomb car exploded near the parliament.	5
April 8	Unknown	Ajmal Naqshbandi was beheaded by the Taliban after the Afghan government refused to free several insurgents, although it swapped five two weeks before for the Italian reporter he was working for.	1
April 15	Gorboz (Khost)	A school headmaster was shot by the Taliban.	1
April 16	Khost	A suicide bomber killed himself next to several Afghan border policemen.	1
April 16	Kandahar	A suicide bomber targeted a private US security firm in southern Afghanistan yesterday, killing up to four Afghans working for the company.	4
April 17	Herat	A bomb attack killed four pupils and injured four others in a school.	4
April 17	Khost	Taliban militants shot dead the headmaster of a girls' school.	1
April 22	Khost	A suicide bomber killed himself.	6
April 22	Mehtar Lam (Laghman eastern province)	Bomb attack on intelligence service officers kills the driver.	1
April 23	Khost	A suicide bomber killed himself while chased by police, metres away from a previous explosion.	3
April 27	Ghazni, Giro district	The district mayor and four policemen were killed in a battle against Taliban fighters.	1
April 27	Khost	A policeman and one of his relatives were killed by gunfire.	1
May 2	Kabul	Abdul Saboor Farid, a Parliament Member and	1

		former Prime Minister has been assassinated.	
May 7	Kabul	A rocket attack in the Pul-e-Padsha area killed one civilian and wounded five others.	1
May 10 (count up to May 8)	Afghanistan	According to an Associated Press tally based on reports from Afghan and Western officials, 238 civilians had been killed by violence in 2007 at that point of which about 136 by the Taliban or fighting with the Taliban.	-
May 10	Paktika, Barmal District	A suicide bomber failing to reach a US base detonated himself.	3
May 20	Paktia, Gardez	A suicide bomber walked into a crowded and killed himself, missing a military convoy.	14
May 22	Herat, Shindand District	The decapitated body of a local national who was employed by the Coalition Forces was discovered; beside the body was a note which warned others they could expect the same fate if they too are in this form of employment.	1
May 23	Faryab, Maimana City	During the course of the morning an ISAF/PRT unit was on patrol a short distance from their base when they were subjected to an RCIED strike; one soldier is reported killed and two others injured; one civilian was also killed and another person injured; no further details.	1
May 26	Uruzgan, Chora District	Insurgents hanged a local civilian whom they accused of passing information to the security forces.	1
May 26	Gazni, Andar District	During the course of the morning a group of children discovered an IED on a track near the village; the device exploded when they were examining it; five children were killed and others were seriously injured.	5
May 24	Kapisa, Kohband District	Late in the evening unidentified armed men shot and killed a woman; the woman is said to have been an Iranian national married to a local man; motive for the killing is not known.	1
May 26	Kandahar, Dand District	A civilian was shot and killed by unidentified gunmen; no further details.	1
May 26	Nangarhar	An unidentified group of gunman shot and killed two local civilians (male and female); motive	2

		unknown.	
May 28	Bamyan, Bamyan District	Three children were killed when a UXO with which they were playing, detonated; a fourth child was injured.	3
May 28	Heratt, Herat City	A teacher was shot and killed by gunmen riding a motor cycle.	1
May 28	Kunduz, Kunduz City	Early this morning a three-vehicle convoy belonging to a US private security organization was targeted by a pedestrian suicide bomber who was wearing an explosives-rigged garment; bomber threw himself at the second vehicle; bomber was killed as were two civilian passers-by; some damage to one vehicle; at least one other civilian believed to be injured; no further details.	2
May 30	Helmand, Nahri Sarraj District	During the late afternoon a vehicle belonging to a private security company providing security for road construction in the area was subjected to an IED strike; the casualties were transferred to a second vehicle which shortly afterwards was similarly targeted by a second device; in all, two security staff killed and three injured.	2
May 31	Balkh, Dihdadi District	In the early evening an anti-tank mine exploded in close proximity to a local school killing two school-boys and injuring others.	2
May 31	Kunar, Sirkanay District	Late in the evening five missiles (type unknown) were fired towards the district HQ; one missile struck a residential dwelling which resulted in two females being killed and five other family members being injured, some critically.	2
June 1	Paktika, Sharan District	A local man who had previously been employed as provincial coordinator during the presidential elections in 2004, was shot and killed.	1
June 1	Kunar, Chawkay District	A combined ISAF/ANSF base was subjected to a rocket attack; one civilian was killed and two others were injured.	1
June 1	Kabul City	During the night a female television news presenter was shot and killed at her residence; one suspect has been arrested.	1
June 2	Paktya, Zurmat District	A school teacher was shot and killed by unidentified gunmen.	1

June 2	Gazni, Qarabagh District	In the early hours of the morning suspected anti-government elements attacked the residence of serving police officer; the officer was not at home but five members of his family were killed; police responded and it is reported that they killed ten of the attackers.	5
June 3	Khost, Sabari District	During the course of the morning two children died when an IED exploded near where they were playing.	2
June 3	Nangarhar, Kama District	During the course of the morning unidentified gunmen shot dead a male villager; motive not known.	1
June 3	Wardak, Saydabad District	Policeman opened fire on a taxi when the driver failed to obey his instruction to stop; it is understood that the policeman thereafter absconded.	1
June 4	Helmand, Nahri Sarraj District	Three children died as a result of playing with a UXO which exploded when they were playing with it.	3
June 6	Parwan, Jabulsaraj District	In the early hours of the morning unidentified gunmen forced their way into the home of a female journalist and media personality, and shot her dead in front of her children.	1
June 9	Kabul City	A child who was out collecting scrap metal was killed when a hand grenade exploded.	1
June 9	Logar, Puli Alam District	Late in the evening the house of a serving member of the national security agency was attacked by unidentified gunmen; one of the officer's male relatives was killed and his daughter injured.	1
June 7	Kunar, Asadabad District	During the course of the afternoon four missiles were fired in the general direction of the PRT base; two of them struck civilian residences; five civilians injured.	5
June 7	Nangarhar, Chaparhar District	In the early hours of the morning a hand grenade was thrown at a private dwelling; one inhabitant killed and one injured.	1
June 8	Kunar, Chapa Dara District	A female villager was murdered by unidentified gunmen in the early hours of the morning; motive not known.	1
June 10	Patika, Sar	Around midnight the residence of a tribal elder	1

	Hawza District	was attacked and the elder was killed; the deceased's son was abducted; the dead man is said to have been a staunch government supporter.	
June 11	Ghazni, Qarabagh Dist	During the course of the afternoon a farmer on a tractor activated an anti-tank mine resulting in the death of the farmer.	1
June 11	Badakhshan, Shuhada Dist	During the night a local member of an Afghan aid group was murdered at his residence by unidentified gunmen.	1
June 11	Zabul, Qalat Dist	A local person was hanged by insurgents for allegedly passing information to the security forces.	1
June 11	Paktika, Barmal	In the early evening a number of rockets impacted on/amongst civilian housing adjacent to a CF base; three children were killed and a woman was injured.	3
June 12	Logar, Mihtarlam District	Around noon today two gunmen on motor cycles opened fire on a group of school girls; six girls reported to have been killed and at least three others injured; motive unknown; attackers absconded on foot after abandoning their motor cycles.	6
June 13	Badghis Gurmach District	During the night a serving member of the Border Police and his father were shot dead at their home by unidentified gunmen.	1
June 13	Paktika, Tarwe District	During the early evening an engineer (no details) working for a construction company was shot and killed by suspected anti-government elements; motive not confirmed.	1
June 14	Farah, Bala Buluk District	During the course of the morning a vehicle belonging to a local vehicle repair company was ambushed on the main Herat/Kandahar highway; two persons were killed; no further details.	2
June 14	Farah, Bala Buluk District	Two bodies were located thought to be those of two local drivers who were abducted recently; insurgents suspected them of assisting the security forces in some way.	2
June 15	Tirin Kot, Uruzgan province	A suicide car bomber targeted a NATO convoy.	9

June 15	Kabul	A suicide bomber killed over 35 people, thirteen of which were civilians, in Kabul's busiest intersection.	13
June 15	Kandahar City	A suicide bomber wearing a garment rigged with explosives detonated his device near a CF convoy; one civilian killed, one civilian injured; bomber killed.	1
June 15	Kandahar, Panjwayi District	During the course of the morning a police vehicle was subjected to an RCIED strike; five policemen injured; vehicle extensively damaged.	1
June 16	Kabul, Kabul City	A suicide/VBIED attack on a military convoy in the western part of the city, media reports that six civilians were killed and eleven injured; one ISAF soldier reported killed and another injured; as the convoy recommenced its journey it is believed that an ISAF member opened fire on a group of civilians who had gathered at the scene; one civilian killed and three others injured.	6
June 16	Herat, Shindand District	In the late afternoon a Border Police checkpoint was attacked by insurgents (40/50); those killed included two BP, two Customs guards, two civilians and six insurgents; one policeman, one Customs guard and three civilians were injured; reinforcements were deployed.	2
June 17	Balkh, Mazar City	With reference to yesterday's report of a VBIED attack near the Blue Mosque in District 2 of the city, media reports that the attack was carried out by a bomber on a motor cycle who was targeting an ISAF convoy; appears that one civilian was killed and several others were injured; the bomber was also killed.	1
June 18	Uruzgan, Chora District	A dispute is reported to have arisen between village elders and Taliban forces in the district; as a result the Taliban were told to leave the area; thereafter a fire-fight ensued which left around sixteen villagers dead; police responded which resulted in four policemen being killed also; ISAF responded and a number of air-strikes on the Taliban positions were made; significant number of Taliban said to have been killed; however, as the Taliban were taking shelter in amongst the villagers it is also reported that a large number of	?

		civilians were killed and injured; numbers of casualties to be confirmed.	
June 20	Helmand Province, Sangin District (Hyderabad Area)	A convoy of seven civilian haulage vehicles which were transporting building materials for the security forces were stopped by Taliban; the seven drivers were shot dead; vehicles set on fire.	7
June 23	Zabul, Suri District (Kateri Manda Area)	During the course of the morning a mini-bus transporting around 20 civilian passengers activated an anti-tank mine; all the occupants were killed or injured.	10
		<b>TOTAL CASUALTIES AS OF June 18, 2007</b>	<b>At least 244</b>