

# The German Concept *for Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT)*

## The Army's Principles of Employment and Experience in Matters of Peace Stabilization

### The federal government's concept for Afghanistan: PRTs' role and value within an inter-agency approach

The German forces' engagement in Afghanistan was initiated during those conferences that were intended to finalize international assistance coordination (2001 in Bonn - Petersberg; 2002 in Tokyo; 2004 in Berlin, and 2006 in London). That series of high level consultations highlights the requirement for **adapting political military instruments in order to transform the military victory over the Taliban into a political success.**

The intent was to bring back Afghanistan towards the international community after 22 years of war. The war had almost entirely destroyed the country's material and institutional infrastructure. About 6 out of the 27 million inhabitants of Afghanistan had sought refuge in the neighboring countries. For years there had not been any regular schooling system and women as well as minorities had very few opportunities to blossom in the public life. The dissolution of the country's political, economical and social structures had caused its isolation on the international stage.

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On 15 October 2003, the federal government decided to take the leadership of the Kunduz PRT - which was up to then under American control - and to send there an interagency reconstruction team. **PRTs are essential elements of the international** engagement outside Kabul. PRT Kunduz which covers both Kunduz and Takhar provinces has been conceived as being a pilot project with international participation aiming at spreading out stabilization efforts in Afghanistan. As an integrated institution of the federal government, **PRT is in charge of getting together the activities of four federal ministries, i.e. Foreign Affairs, Economic Cooperation and Development, Interior, and Defense.**



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In the fiefdom of the former Northern Alliance, it is intended to first establish a secure environment in order then to support the reconstruction efforts. The integration of military and civilian efforts, in a limited time and space context is intended **to improve peace stabilization operations.**

Within PRT Kunduz **the Bundeswehr's mission** consists in:

- Reinforcing regional stability,
- Establishing a secure environment for the PRT,
- Promoting and supporting the establishment of security structures,
- Providing support and advice to the demilitarization, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process of the Afghans who had remained in place or who are returning, and
- Providing the Afghan National Army (ANA) with a training support thanks to the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLT).

**Military activities** focus mainly on the **liaison tasks** in order to observe and influence the security situation thanks to a system of contacts throughout the PRT's area of responsibility. Up to now, liaisons have been established with more than 150 formal and informal, political and religious leaders.

The Bundestag's mandate allows the commitment of up to 450 German soldiers in Kunduz. In May 2007, about 420 German and 30 international (BEL, CHE, HUN, ROM and FRA) soldiers were serving in the PRT.

Each of the "civilian ministries" has sent up to 5 representatives. Police and civil experts, serving as advisors or coordinators, are able to reach a large part of the society and they have the support of local police forces instructors, local collaborators as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations which have a multiplier role.

By comparing the figures, it has to be noticed that **the military, thanks to their presence, establish first the secure environment** into which civilian forces can operate. These "boots on the ground" require however a rather high number of soldiers.

PRT Kunduz has a multinational vocation. As far as the civilian component is concerned, promises for additional advisors support have been made. France, among other nations intends to send there a cultural advisor.

The **civilian component's mission** consists in:

- reinforcing the central government's influence,
- reinforcing the civil society,
- promoting reconstruction and sustainable development,
- establishing and reinforcing political and administrative structures as well as the legal state foundations,
- promoting the development of police and security forces.

## PRT's integration within ISAF's structures

On the initiative of Germany, PRT KUNDUZ has been the first to leave the US led Operation enduring freedom (OEF) command and control organization, and to be placed under ISAF and thus NATO's authority. That step was motivated by the differences that exist between OEF and ISAF as far as popularity is concerned and as a consequence, differences in their political efficiency.

Within ISAF structures, the PRTs are organized according to the Lead Nation concept and they regroup a large array of capacities brought by the international forces. This guarantees a global and international type of approach; the efficiency of the action and the transfer of capabilities induce synergy effects.

The implementation of a large set of means should guarantee **a flexible execution of the operations.**

## German PRT's structure and functioning

PRT KUNDUZ organization is placed under dual headed leadership: a military commander and a diplomat from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They ensure **an optimal cooperation between**

## civilian and military forces within the PRT.

In the Kunduz region the **engagement in matter of development** within a guaranteed secure environment consists in:

- proposing emergency assistance programs focusing on development,
- long term investments in the social and economic infrastructure (e.g. road construction and provision of drinking water),
- promotion of private investments,
- job creation,
- assistance to business creation by former military and repatriated refugees,
- promotion of women's participation in all reconstruction domains, and
- promotion of the legal administration and State.

In order to establish and maintain links and contacts, PRT members visit everyday the local and regional officials, dignitaries and decision makers. Thanks to that personal presence, it is possible to exert some influence and to contribute to the security situation's stabilization. Patrols complete that network organization. They observe the local specificities in order to collect information on the actors' interactions and intermingling. The combination of the local and international forces' capacities should **allow the Afghan institutions to assume more and more security missions in an autonomous manner.**

In that respect, the PRT's camp serves as a "bridgehead" to progressively widen the PRT's zone of influence. A satellite of PRT Kunduz has been opened in Taloqan (Takhar province). Additional satellites are planned.

## The Army's contribution to the PRT concept

From March to June 2007, the 10<sup>th</sup> armored division provided the personnel for ISAF 13; most of the operational contingent belonging to the 30<sup>th</sup> Mechanized brigade. **The military element** is comprised of the staff, the HHQ company, the protection company, the medical company, the military police

company, the OMLT company and an office in charge of the administration of the defense in engagement area. In order to conduct the operations, additional elements were available: a CIMIC platoon, two tactical PSYOPS-teams (TPT), three military intelligence teams, an electronic warfare task force, plus a Belgian platoon in charge of reconnaissance and neutralization of ammunitions and IEDs.

**PRT protection and regional security missions** are entrusted to an infantry company that regroups three light infantry and one reconnaissance platoons. They provide most of the personnel in charge of the daily patrols, they conduct about 20 patrols during the day and 2 at night; and in addition, 2 long distance patrols per week and between 9 and 15 patrols conducted jointly with Afghan National Army or Afghan National Police forces. The PRT Kunduz's area of operations in the Kunduz and Takhar provinces covers an area three times the size of Belgium.

OMLT is **in charge of training a Kandak** (battalion size unit). Within the framework of the Kandak's training, Afghan forces are integrated into the multinational force's security and patrol service in order to take advantage of the synergy efforts conducted with the Afghan military whose number totals about 270. The objective, at the end of the training, is to progressively transfer the responsibility for regional security to the ANA forces.

The PRT military element's power results from **an astute combination of an armed presence with the work of the liaison elements and the conflicts management activities**. This has not anymore anything in common with the traditional concepts according to which the armed forces can only be employed within the framework of the use of military force. However the fact that in Afghanistan the situation is by nature unstable should not be underestimated. An authority capable to confront the many weapons bearers present in the region is absolutely indispensable. **Without the military being present to stabilize the country,**

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humanitarian projects can be developed but **no reform of the security sector can take place**. The initial fear that the military could hinder the humanitarian assistance's independence was not confirmed. On the opposite, most of the time the civilian forces' engagement may only take place under military protection.

### Possibilities and limitations of the co-operation with governmental and non-governmental organizations

For all actors, **the guiding principle** consists in **integrating all measures within the national development framework** that was established between the Afghan government and international donors. The **active governmental organizations** include the Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst (DED) - German Development Service-, the Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) - Technical Co-operation Service and the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) - Institution for financing reconstruction efforts. The non governmental organization efforts include the Arbeitsgruppe Entwicklung und Fachkräfte (AGEF) - Working group for development and qualified personnel, and the Deutsche Welthungerhilfe - German Agro Action. **The relations between NGOs and PRT**

**Kunduz, were initially tense**, but now most of these tensions have cooled down. Actors are still guided by interests that are different and they may have diverging assessments of the situation. However they agree on the fact that reconstruction can only be achieved in a secure environment. An open type of communication allowed to clarify the distribution of tasks between PRT and NGOs, and even, in several domains, it permitted to reach a high level of cooperation.

The CIMIC platoon's main mission is to cooperate with IOs and NGOs thanks to liaison and project teams that explore the infrastructure in the countryside, towns and villages and submit collected information and well targeted projects to the humanitarian actors. In order to do so, the CIMIC teams operate as if they were the IO/NGOs' "fact finding teams".

It has been widely admitted that **the military element and the civilian assistance to reconstruction one need each other**. Without the military, stability is missing; without the NGOs, development and prosperity, which have positive and lasting effects on security and stability, are missing.

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## Conclusions about the efficiency and sustainability of the conduct of the missions and the reconstruction projects

The reconstruction process raised several conflicts related to the objectives definition. In the regions priority is given to the **provision of stabilization by preventing local armed conflicts outburst**. This could be opposite to the development objectives of the Kabul central government and those of the international community. The essential key words are the engagement in favor of democracy, of a legal state and against drug. A confrontation strategy based on a drug war would deprive the PRTs concept of its meaning. Within the framework of the PRT concept, it is thus a matter of **contributing indirectly to the anti drug operations**, e.g. by ensuring a secure environment for the police forces to work and providing them with intelligence. This is a difficult task which imposes to merge the actual complex challenges with the available capacities and the international willingness to take chances.

**The PRT concept is starting to bear fruit. Those who oppose that situation which is being stabilized are also conscious of that fact.** As a consequence the successes of the reconstruction process or the improvement of the security situation are becoming the targets of the insurrection's attacks. This results into terrorist actions that are being noticed at international level (e.g. the murder of humanitarian assistance truck drivers). This imposes to regularly study the concrete successes as well as their origin in order to reinforce and adapt accordingly the relevant approaches.

Within that context, it is necessary **to influence the erroneous perception that is generated by part of the international media and according to which the international community is engaged in a mostly military way in Afghanistan**. Given the fact that Afghan security organizations able to operate are missing, the multinational military force provides an essential contribution. Consequently, it will be possible to redeploy the NATO soldiers, only when Afghan police and armed forces will be able to protect their countries institutions. That vital military contribution should however not appear to be the only suitable one.

No other stabilization and reconstruction project, but the PRT Kunduz's one, encompasses and integrates such a multitude of aspects. It has acquired **a symbolic status and brings a practical evidence of the fact that the international actors' indispensable coherence may work**.

Indeed diverging interests may entail disagreements which constitute specific challenges to be upheld by all involved actors in order to achieve the desired political end-state: an autonomous development accepted by the majority of the Afghan population. Thanks to a common approach by four different ministries, the PRT pilot project is reaching **an integration level that had never been achieved before**, and which links closely the direct military management of crises and security, the security sector reform, with short, medium and long-terms measures in favor of the development of institutions and support to the economy and to the civil society. To conclude with the essential, **PRT concept is a success**. This is also illustrated by the German PRT Feyzabad which operates in the Badakhshan province as well as by the planned deployment of additional PRTs.