
**Caveats to Civilian Aid Programs
in Counterinsurgency**
The French Experience in Afghanistan

Amaury de Féligonde

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Introduction

“There is no method... or if there is, it is called flexibility, elasticity, adaptation to places, to time and to circumstances.”

H. Lyautey²

“We are happy where there is discord, where alarms ring and where blood flows. But we shall never be happy with a master.”

Ghilzai proverb³

An international coalition under the banner of NATO and the United States has been present in Afghanistan since 2001. An abundant French and international literature has accordingly examined counterinsurgency (or COIN) issues from a military point of view, but not so for civilian issues, and especially for the “civilian cooperation”, carried out alongside security activities. Such cooperation does not seem to benefit from the same interest as military matters do, at least in French-language publications.⁴ Indeed, it is not uncommon to hear skeptics wonder whether such cooperation is not simply “a costly illusion”.

The present text does not presume to provide a definitive response to this question, nor to put forward a systematic way in which programs for civilian or civil-military cooperation should be implemented in zones of conflict. Furthermore, the author has only been marginally involved in the all-important issue of governance in the Kapisa and Surobi districts. The paper starts by reviewing the context and the framework of French civil-military cooperation in Afghanistan, before analyzing some of the illusions which hinder the work of development practitioners. Lastly, it sets out some

² Hubert Lyautey, *Du rôle colonial de l'Armée*, Paris, Editions Armand Colin, 1900.

³ Quoted in Ella Maillart, *La voie cruelle*, Paris, Payot, 1988.

⁴ Despite some publications on the issue, and the seminar entitled “Arms and Hearts: the Paradoxes of Wars Today”, which touched on the subject marginally (see the proceedings in *Doctrine Spécial*, March 2010), available at: www.cdef.terre.defense.gouv.fr/publications/doctrine/no_spe_armes_coeurs/Sommaire_armes_coeurs_fr.htm. See also the section in the report focusing on the civilian aspects of counterinsurgency by Seth G. Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, Rand Corporation, 2008, available at: www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG595.pdf. Also, Theo Farrell and Stuart Gordon, “COIN Machine: The British Military in Afghanistan”, *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 154, No. 3, June 2009.



recommendations aimed at improving cooperation in the areas under French responsibility. These views were formulated in the heat of action. They result especially from many discussions, often passionate, with civilian and military personnel directly involved in projects in the Kapisa and Surobi districts, in eastern Afghanistan, in 2009 and 2010.

Civil-Military Intervention in Kapisa and Surobi

Before presenting the cooperation and development projects conducted by France in Kapisa and Surobi, it is useful to examine a few general issues related to France's actions in Afghanistan.

A Decade of French Involvement in Afghanistan

France has been present in Afghanistan since 2001, especially militarily, as part of the mandate granted to NATO to destroy the Al Qaida network and to contribute to the reconstruction of the Afghan state. French troops, which are stationed in operational bases in the field, are today positioned east of Kabul. Their number has gradually increased since 2003, to about 3,500 men in mid-2010. A significant force of gendarmes (150) has also been deployed to assist in training and mentoring Afghan police forces.

Despite the reluctance of much of public opinion, and France's limited deployment compared to many allies, both financially and in troop numbers,⁵ the strategic importance of Afghanistan to France has been reaffirmed repeatedly since 2008:⁶ first at the Conferences of Bucharest, Paris and La Celle Saint-Cloud, then via the appointment by President Sarkozy of a Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Similarly, there was a near doubling of the budget for civilian cooperation on Afghanistan, which rose from €20 million to €40 million between 2008 and 2009, at a time when public finances have been extremely constrained. Today, the post of Special Representative is currently vacant,⁷ and the President refuses to send further military reinforcements, despite insistent US requests. However, and contrary to some other countries such as Canada and the Netherlands, which have begun withdrawing their troops and perhaps their financial support, France's commitment to Afghanistan alongside the Coalition and the Afghan government remains on the agenda.

⁵ Over the years, France has on average been the 15th largest contributor of public development aid. Militarily, it has ranked 5th or 6th.

⁶ Some commentators nevertheless challenge the real reasons for our intervention: Jean-Dominique Merchet, *Mourir pour l'Afghanistan. Pourquoi nos soldats tombent-ils là bas ?*, Paris, Jacob Duvernet, 2010. Furthermore, many people with whom the author has spoken (especially in the military) wonder privately whether "the only reason we're here is to act as auxiliaries to the Americans".

France is especially present in Kapisa and Surobi which are disputed strategic districts, in a zone which is a “flank guard” vis-à-vis Kabul and on the road to Pakistan.

Civilian Action in Unstable Districts

In recent years, projects implemented by France have focused on the three southern districts of Kapisa (Nijrab, Tagab and Alasay), as well as that of Surobi (see the maps in Annex 3). Indeed, these districts corresponded to the French forces’ zone of responsibility when the projects were designed. The other four districts in the northern Kapisa province were originally under the control of American units.

Together, these districts account for less than 2% of Afghanistan’s surface area. They are made up of numerous valleys, some of which are enclosed and hard to reach. They are close to Pakistan, and are a strategic transit zone, towards Kabul and Bagram in the east and to the provinces in northern Afghanistan. Their population is between 300,000 and 400,000, and lives largely from subsistence agriculture. Under-employment and unemployment are endemic. The districts lie at the crossroads of the Tajik and Pashtun worlds and so are the locus of strong political frictions.

Furthermore, the Tagab and Surobi districts are the cradle of Pashtun tribes with marked warrior traditions, as the foreign powers present in Afghanistan in the 19th century learnt to their cost. Our beneficiaries’ very ancestors massacred a column of British troops retreating to the Khyber Pass and British India, during the first Anglo-Afghan war in 1842.⁸ The security situation is still characterized today by significant instability, though it is less acute than in the southern provinces (Helmand, Kandahar) or than in the far east (Kunar, Nuristan) of Afghanistan. This instability affects the zones of North Tagab, Alasay and the Uzbin valley especially. Civilian and military personnel have to take this into account in their operations, given repeated clashes and armed attacks, the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), regular if not systematic kidnapping attempts and extortion of project team members and contractors.⁹ It is only by tightly integrating the local communities with which they are working that our operators may be able to limit these dangers, as shown below. France is trying to pursue development projects in this particularly tense context.

⁸ For a detailed account see Florentia Sale, *Hostage: Lady Sale's Afghan Journal: Journal of Disaster in Afghanistan*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003.

⁹ For example, four workers were wounded on two construction sites financed by France, in the Tagab valley (early 2010); workers on US road projects were kidnapped in Tagab; there were two attempted kidnappings of members of our teams in projects in Nijrab and the Uzbin valley (2009). Several dozen IEDs were discovered by the TFLF on routes going through Tagab, Alasay and Surobi, and have led to the deaths of several French soldiers.

The Types of Cooperation Projects for Populations under French Responsibility

As already mentioned, France's budget for civilian cooperation has doubled from 2008 to 2009. A significant share of the additional resources (about a third) was allocated to the province of Kapisa and the district of Surobi: zones for which the French Army is responsible (with its Task Force La Fayette, or TFLF). Cooperation activities worth €15 million were launched in mid-2009. These are being supervised by the Interagency AfPak Cell and the French Embassy in Afghanistan (and especially by the Project Leader in Kapisa and Surobi), in cooperation with the *Agence Française de Développement*, the TFLF, and the relevant Afghan Ministries (see Annex 1).¹⁰

The aim of these programs is to facilitate the resumption of dialogue between the local populations of these districts close to Kabul and the national authorities, as well as to contribute to the acceptance of troops.¹¹ This is being done by meeting rapidly the basic needs of people living in areas that are mainly rural and agricultural. These civil and civil-military programs are supervised by a civilian organization, collaborating closely with the relevant military counterpart (the CPCO in Paris and the TFLF in Afghanistan).¹² This organization is not without substantial problems. Interagency intervention is still an experimental science in France, as shown below.

Cooperation activities in Kapisa and Surobi (see Annex 2) focus on three areas deemed to be priorities in meeting the basic needs of the local populations: 1/ agricultural and rural development (including electrification); 2/ education and training; and 3/ health.

All rural development projects are being implemented by NGOs¹³ and a United Nations Agency,¹⁴ which are the operators on the ground. The same holds for health projects and training for teachers. In contrast, the agricultural and electrification projects developed by France are being run by *ad hoc* organizations,¹⁵ providing technical assistance to the appropriate Afghan Ministries. Between 100 and 150 people are directly employed within the project teams, and several hundred temporary jobs have been created to implement them in their target communities.

¹⁰ This organization changed in July 2010, when the civilian stabilization unit assigned to the TFLF was significantly reinforced.

¹¹ In particular following the *Doctrine d'emploi des forces terrestres en stabilisation*, Centre de Doctrine d'Emploi des Forces, Armée de Terre, 2006, available at: www.cdef.terre.defense.gouv.fr/doctrineFT/doc_trans.htm.

¹² The *Centre de Planification et de Conduite des Opérations* at the General Staff of France's armed forces.

¹³ The *National Solidarity Program* of the Afghan Ministry of Rural Development and two projects supervised by the Civil-Military Actions unit of the TFLF.

¹⁴ Especially ActionAid, BRAC, Afrane Développement, GERES, CoAR, La Chaîne de l'Espoir and SAB.

¹⁵ UNHabitat.

These plans combine so-called quick-impact projects and long term effects.

Short term actions, for example, have involved the large-scale distribution of agricultural inputs (nitrogen fertilizers and selected wheat seeds). These are essential to improving immediately the living standards of populations carrying out subsistence farming. They also include a child healthcare program which aims to identify children with severe malformations so that they can be operated at the French Medical Institute for Children in Kabul.

Medium-term projects include the launching of beekeeping, poultry and fishery activities, using donations of equipment and providing relevant technical training. They also include the construction of rural infrastructure: roads and small water crossings, water and irrigation facilities, micro-hydroelectric power stations and community centers.

Long term programs help finance the creation and support of agricultural cooperatives. They also contribute to the further training of teachers and hospital staff. In addition, long term programs aim to create heavy infrastructures that are vital to the economic development of the districts, especially via the rural electrification program, which is being launched in Nijrab, Tagab and Surobi. They also relate to “governance”, the program set up by the Afghan Ministry of Rural Development,¹⁶ which includes elections to municipal councils¹⁷ responsible for implementing infrastructural micro-projects for community use.

All these programs are aimed at helping Afghan society develop. Their effectiveness is limited however by the persistence of a “triple illusion” within the international community, namely: aid is seen as always being beneficial and desired by a society, which is incorrectly held to be homogenous, and on which standards and “good practices” are being imposed to solve problems of corruption.

¹⁶ *National Solidarity Program.*

¹⁷ Called Community Development Councils.

The “Developers’” Triple Illusion

Before putting forward more operational forms of analysis, it is useful to raise three essential questions that are often absent from the development debate on Afghanistan, given emergency conditions which do not facilitate detached investigation. First, is aid really beneficial to those receiving it? Next, who exactly is being targeted to receive such aid? And lastly, how are the thorny problems of corruption and embezzlement to be tackled?

The First Illusion: Aid as a Systematic Lever

Views of aid and donations are generally very positive in our western societies, much influenced by their Judeo-Christian morality. Beneficiaries should show recognition to aid providers. Yet, this is very often a figment of the imagination: the sociologist Marcel Mauss, for example, has shown the ambivalent nature of all forms of gifts.¹⁸ In reality, a gift binds its recipient, as was already noted by Virgil “*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*”.¹⁹ An Eskimo proverb too states that “gifts make slaves as whips make sleigh dogs”. Furthermore, many actors unfamiliar with development tend to believe that injecting more money and providing more aid will somehow solve problems. They overestimate the very limited “absorption capacity” of the zones concerned. This is especially the case of Kapisa and Surobi that are largely agricultural and rural districts. Lastly, they overlook the fact that development is above all a social and psychological process, by definition long-term and complex. It must originate from within a given society, and not from outside actors, as many economists, such as Peter Thomas Bauer, have stressed.²⁰

To be sure, aid may be a powerful lever in contributing to the rapid injection of funds in a given area, with local operators hiring employees from targeted villages and working as much as possible in close collaboration with local communities. This is one of the objectives pursued within the framework of the small projects focused on rural infrastructures that are highly labor intensive (“cash for work” in nature). They have been set up in the Uzbin, Tizin and Jegdalek valleys. Aid may also contribute to the implementation or the reconstruction of basic infrastructures, that are heavier and necessary to economic development (roads in Kapisa,

¹⁸ Marcel Mauss, “Essai sur le Don. Forme et raison de l’échange dans les sociétés archaïques”, *L’Année Sociologique*, 2nd series, 1923-1924.

¹⁹ “I fear the Greeks even when they bring presents”, in the *Aeneid*.

²⁰ Peter Thomas Bauer, *Dissent on Development: Studies and Debates in Development Economics*, Harvard, Harvard University Press, 1972.

electrification projects, support for agricultural cooperatives, etc.). Such aid may also support human development actions, especially in terms of vocational training, education and health.

Nevertheless, aid may also become a millstone, and cause certain risks, if it is not properly controlled. It systematically leads to imbalances that are potentially destructive in a given society, as noted by British General Rupert Smith.²¹ Aid in Afghanistan thus often gives rise to looting or marauding raids. It leads to struggles, sometimes bloody, over resources that are similar to rents. The systematic extortion and attacks carried out against the road-building project by the American Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Kapisa is a textbook case.²² Indeed, as David Kilcullen has rightly pointed out, the construction of roads is an essential aspect of counterinsurgency, as it indicates the determination of pro-government forces to act in the long term. But it carries a number of major risks too: tension over expropriations, attempts at extortion and influence-peddling in attributing markets, inconveniences generated by construction itself and the routing of roads, etc. These risks need to be managed in a systematic manner, else they may lead to violence. Shipping in material may also be a source of conflict: the control of tractors provided by a French cooperation project led to altercations among the Maleks in Surobi.²³

Concentrating aid in unstable regions at the expense of more stable ones also constitutes a sort of “dividend for troublemakers”. Areas of violence have indeed received a greater proportion of international aid, as part of the funds destined for counterinsurgency.

Furthermore, poorly administered aid which does not require any significant contribution from its beneficiaries risks turning the latter into “corrupt beggars” who are assisted. This makes ensuring respect and esteem of populations hard. Yet without these sentiments, project managers cannot carry out their missions.

Lastly, injecting vast quantities of money in an artificial way into an economic system tends to sterilize and unbalance it: by raising local salaries and prices abruptly; and through unfair competition from products that are distributed freely (such as fertilizers), compared to goods available

²¹ “Impartial governance of humanitarian aid does not exist. In this environment, whenever you help someone you are harming someone else”, General Rupert Smith, Commander of UNPROFOR, 1995.

²² A PRT is a unit made up of military personnel, diplomats and specialists in governance and development issues who work together to support reconstruction efforts in unstable states. PRTs were tested in the Balkans and Iraq, and then created in Afghanistan, at the end of 2001 and beginning of 2002.

²³ Malek stems from the Arab word for “king”, which is used in Afghanistan to designate tribal chiefs or local community leaders.

in the local market. This is a well-known phenomenon in economics known as the “Dutch disease”.²⁴

How should these risks be dealt with? First, too much aid should not be injected into a system without taking into account its capacity to absorb it. Next, caution should be exercised in the objectives selected and the *modus operandi* used. All this requires that cooperation and development actors know the country receiving aid well, and understand the needs of the populations with which they are working.

The Second Illusion: the Homogeneity of Aid Recipients

Another illusion is widespread in the field of cooperation. Teams responsible for designing and implementing projects often assume that their beneficiaries are homogeneous, in this case “the Afghans”. Yet this country is highly fragmented and varied. Historically, the only factor which has been able to unite it, according to some authors like Michael Barry,²⁵ has been the struggle against foreign invaders: *jihad* against *kafirs* (unbelievers).²⁶

The zones in which the French are operating are indeed marked by complex and subtle social, political and economic dynamics that are linked and interconnected. They often vary greatly from one valley to another, and may comprise of the simultaneous presence of political parties (especially the Gulbudin Hekmatyar’s *Hezb e Islam*);²⁷ networks of veteran mujahideen who fought against Soviet forces; criminal organizations dealing in arms and drugs (specifically opium in the Uzbin valley); networks based on ethnic, tribal or family links (between south Tagab and Uzbin, for example, or between *Pashai* minorities). “Revenge networks” (linked notably to the *Pashtunwali*)²⁸ exist too, arising mainly over land and water problems, with overpopulation exacerbating conflicts over the control of scarce resources. Economic systems should also be mentioned, linked for example to the sale of agricultural products (especially pomegranates from Tagab and onions from Surobi to neighboring Pakistan), as well as Kuchis

²⁴ This syndrome describes the disequilibrium effects which may affect an economy experiencing a rapid inflow of liquidity following: the discovery of natural resources (as in the case of massive gas-fields in Holland in the 1970s, or the discovery of gold in the New World by Spain during the 16th century); development aid; or foreign direct investment. The expression was used for the first time by *The Economist* in 1977.

²⁵ Michael Barry, *Le royaume de l'insolence. L'Afghanistan 1504-2001*, Paris, Flammarion, 2002.

²⁶ Holy war fought against non-Muslim invaders.

²⁷ The HiG of former mujahideen and Prime Minister Gulbudin Hekmatyar was one of the main Afghan parties during the war against the USSR. It was supported massively by Pakistanis (notably the ISI secret services), through to the emergence of the Taliban movement. The party continues to exercise considerable influence in the districts studied here, often to the detriment of Coalition and Afghan government forces.

²⁸ The Pashtun code of honor, based on courage, honor, solidarity and hospitality, and which is transmitted orally from one generation to another. It governs tribal law, and sets out precise punishments and compensations for offenses.

solidarity networks, named after the nomadic tribe of pastors who straddle the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Kapisa and Surobi are directly in their paths.

New networks and organizations can be added to these. They are sometimes cobbled to existing structures in an artificial way, lacking legitimacy, or result from technocratic decisions. Cooperation projects thus seek to draw on official institutions (governors, sub-governors, judges, school teachers) or on recent creations such as the *Community Development Councils* (CDCs), or *District Development Assemblies*, whose legitimacy is often contestable and contested.²⁹ Some CDCs created in village communities in the Tagab and Alasay districts would appear to be purely formal structures, “empty shells”, set up by powerful actors in the region (commanders, *Maleks*) to tap into aid money from the *National Solidarity Program*. They are far removed from the ideal of local democracy and development which this program is meant to promote.

Given this context, it is absolutely vital to be familiar with the human environment. Indeed, as theorists of counterinsurgency have stressed,³⁰ “population is the prize”, though it is often hard, not to say impossible, to distinguish between “good guys” and “bad guys”, or “positive” and “negative influencers” to use the current terminology. That explains why, for example, General Galliéni (in his time) obliged people under his command in Tonkin and Madagascar to be well versed in the history, culture, language and behavior of their adversaries.³¹ It is from this viewpoint that French overseas development aid has launched a large-scale study which should eventually provide a detailed and systematic analysis of the political, economic and social characteristics of the difficult districts of Tagab, Alasay and Surobi (and especially Uzbin). This in-depth research is being conducted with a local bureau employing social scientists, as well as field teams of investigators who come from the local communities being studied.

Yet, even if aid is adapted to its target populations, the question of corruption in a country like Afghanistan still remains.

The Normative Illusion: Reporting as a Solution to Corruption

Corruption and embezzlement are major problems in regard to cooperation with developing and transition countries, especially in the current Afghan context. The issue is twofold. Locally, many surveys highlight how problems

²⁹ Types of municipal councils and provincial assemblies responsible for development, and set up as part of large-scale development projects supported by the World Bank and the UNPD.

³⁰ In particular US Army manual FM-34, which draws on the essential principles developed by David Galula in *Counterinsurgency warfare, theory and practice*, Westport, Praeger Security International, 1964.

³¹ See for example, *Les Instructions de 1898, concernant Madagascar*, by Joseph Gallieni, quoted in Gérard Chaliand, *Le nouvel art de la guerre*, Paris, Edition de l'Archipel, 2008.

of racketeering and embezzlement,³² at all levels,³³ are a major preoccupation of the Afghan people. Furthermore, accusations of corruption are one the key grievances of Western public opinion, which is generally reluctant to support armed intervention that is often seen as “a struggle to keep corrupt and incompetent rulers in power”, using taxpayers’ monies.

A certain number of instruments should indeed be put into place so as to contain activities detrimental to the smooth running of operations, as much as possible, while recognizing that no system is capable of eradicating corruption and embezzlement in the short term. A few common sense rules could be implemented. All projects must be subject to competition, either formally or informally, so that work is not always carried out by the same operators and entrepreneurs. There must be some competition among players. Similarly, every financially-significant contract should be assessed externally, once a year, if necessary by using the services of a local agency. Lastly, contracts drawn up with operators should be drafted so that the latter are obliged to provide summary reports (either monthly or quarterly). These reports should be precise and costed, indicating progress made and spending, as well as the extent to which the objectives and schedules set out at the start of the project are respected: any deviation in these indicators should be duly explained, and plans reviewed accordingly, as far as possible. Lastly, civilian and civil-military project leaders should make regular field visits to ensure the physical reality of projects financed. Systematic control is however difficult in certain zones, given the volatile security situation, especially in Tagab and Alasay. In addition, the units carrying out Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) cannot always meet these principles to the letter, due to the very strict safety guidelines that govern the activities of Task Force La Fayette.³⁴

Despite the crucial importance of these procedures in monitoring and reporting, it is worth noting that they should not become ends in themselves, but need to remain simple tools. The practical implementation of projects on the ground must be the absolute priority of project leaders, given Afghanistan’s general state of emergency. This may seem obvious, but is not always so in reality, especially within the very standardized world of NATO. The author has seen many project managers, who are in the ISAF chain of command, not having the time to get to grips with the detail of their projects because they are literally submerged by constant meetings, video-conferences, and the written reporting required by this organization.

³² In particular, the quarterly surveys carried out for NATO by specialized institutes, see “ISAF Afghanistan Nationwide Quarterly Assessment Research”.

³³ Certain projects also pay out locally *per diem* to government employees, as a legal way of “greasing the wheels of power”. Other programs financed by the international community have led to massive embezzlement, notably at the provincial and national levels (see reports by the IWA – Integrity Watch Afghanistan, www.iwaweb.org).

³⁴ The GIACM (*Groupement InterArmées des Actions Civilo-Militaires*) was created in July 2001. It is a unit of the French Army responsible for implementing civil-military activities.

On top of all the traditional difficulties which any development program faces in practice, Afghanistan presents a certain number of specific obstacles. First, the on-going, latent or open insurrection (depending on the areas) makes any rapid and effective intervention complicated. Then, both the country and local communities are marked by a strong sense of identity bordering on xenophobia concerning any sort of foreign meddling, which is often felt to be a provocation.³⁵ Lastly, there are many actors (civilian and military, local, national and international), and it is hard to arbitrate between their often-divergent interests. In this sensitive and unstable context, it is especially important to put forward ideas relating to concrete objectives, while *modus operandi* should be thoroughly discussed when launching any activity.

³⁵ Michel Barry, *op. cit.*

The Objectives and *Modus Operandi* of Cooperation Operations

Four questions need to be examined successively in defining the objectives and *modus operandi* of cooperation operations carried out by France in Kapisa and Surobi: what should be done; within what timeframe; how operation are to be conducted; and by whom.

What Should be Done?

Given the specific nature of “Complex Emergencies”,³⁶ which is the situation characterizing Kapisa and Surobi, it is essential to ask what should be done. Is it appropriate simply to meet the demands expressed at *shuras*³⁷ by the representatives of the local population? In this case, there is a danger of transforming beneficiaries into assisted persons, and not really taking into account the basic needs of the target communities. Another risk lies in supporting local figures, who may be disreputable, and seek to profit from development projects in an unstable situation to increase their own power and control over the population – as in the case of M., a mujahideen commander. He is a member of the Jamaat-e-Islami Party, and comes from one of the four main valleys in the Surobi district. He is well-connected with a local Parliamentary Representative, and seeks to put pressure on project operators, including by issuing threats, so that his newly-created company can get contracts. He is a typical example of a “commander-entrepreneur”, looking to reinforce his political and military power by investing in the local economy.

Alternatively, should we just stick to what we usually do the best, thus perpetuating the so-called “lighthouses and beacons syndrome”, the “*syndrome des phares et balises*” as they say in French.³⁸ An obvious example is that of a government minister and former doctor, who insists on

³⁶ The title of a book by Prof. David Keen, *Complex Emergencies*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2008. It defines these situations as being characterized by complexity (often linked to violent conflict) and by their state of emergency.

³⁷ Local Afghan assemblies, which are more or less formal, and often made up only of men, who take decisions for a given community’s life, based on deliberations.

³⁸ This French expression refers to the construction of lighthouses and beacons in French West Africa during the colonial era, when civil engineers were unable to find more useful infrastructural projects to undertake. In development agencies, this “syndrome” means that work is only carried out in sectors and on projects in which development teams have experience and finance.

systematically promoting and financing health projects in the regions he visits. Lastly, should efforts be made to favor French exports and know-how?

It would be most appropriate to focus first on what is most helpful and feasible, by adopting a systematic check-list. For each project, the list would analyze: i) the political impact (or interest for the Coalition and the Afghan government); ii) the economic impact, concentrating on basic needs; iii) the practical feasibility (essentially in terms of security); iv) the speed of implementation (which is important, given that nearly 10 years have gone by since the start of operation Enduring Freedom); and lastly v) its sustainability. All of these criteria must obviously be assessed in the light of available funding, which is by definition limited.

It should nevertheless be stressed here, that there is no such thing as an “intrinsically good” project. Indeed, the choice of projects always partly results from power struggles existing at any given time. Projects can generate much tension, as they are inherently the result of compromises between actors with diverging, if not opposing, objectives: between civilians and the military; between local communities and the central state; between villages and tribes; between the young and so-called “white-beards”, etc. Thus, politics outweighed all other considerations when the decision was taken to launch an electrification program for a village in Tagab. This zone was indeed held to be a priority area for cooperation, by the TFLF, in order to show the local population that its concerns in development issues were being taken into account by the government and Coalition forces.

Carrying out development projects is not in itself an easy task. In a war context, and an asymmetric war at that, it is all the more difficult because of constant time pressures and diverging objectives in terms of “action horizons”.

The Time Frame for Cooperation Projects

A counterinsurgency war is the backdrop of development operations in Kapisa and Surobi, and time is not on the Coalition’s side. Accordingly, “time steps” and “action horizons” are of crucial importance. Experience and numerous discussions among civilian and military actors show that it is necessary to establish a continuum between projects in the very short term (six months to a year), the medium term (one to three years) and the long term (four to five years).

So-called “Quick Impact Projects” essentially have an immediate practical or psychological impact. Their undeniable usefulness is tactical, in direct support of the military, especially in zones which are less controlled by the Coalition. However, they are often not very sustainable and fragile. Consequently they are strongly, and largely rightly, criticized.³⁹ These

³⁹ *Quick Impact, Quick Collapse – The Dangers of Militarized Aid in Afghanistan*, Oxfam, January 2010, available at:

projects are most often undertaken by PRTs and Civil-Military Co-operation teams.

Longer term projects are usually implemented through traditional development agencies (e.g. the French Development Agency or AFD),⁴⁰ in close collaboration with the Afghan ministries, especially in the most secure and hence most accessible zones. These agencies enjoy more than fifty years of experience in development, and a durable presence in countries.⁴¹ This enables them to conduct long term, complex projects, whereas the military usually only has a limited mandate, linked to the period of direct military involvement. Moreover, as US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently emphasized, “[there] is no credible model of [...] militarized development”.⁴²

Yet if “militarized development” is not a solution, it may legitimately be asked how cooperation projects are to be conducted effectively in countries at war like Afghanistan.

How to Implement Projects

While there is obviously no magic formula, experience does show that three factors are essential when designing and implementing development projects.

As was already stressed by Lyautey, a project succeeds above all if it is managed by the “right man in the right place”.⁴³ The first challenge is therefore to find men and women (both expatriates and increasingly nationals) capable and willing to work in troubled and potentially anarchic areas. This means individuals with a low aversion to risk, or even true physical courage, qualities that have become rare in Western countries in which the “precautionary principle” has become the norm. The problem with such personnel is that they tend to be a bit “bohemian”, making them difficult to control and little-inclined to carry out systematic reporting. Such characteristics are not compatible with the transparency requirements attached to using public monies as well as with the operational needs of armed forces. As far as possible it is also best to recruit teams made up mainly of locals or Franco-Afghans. This is largely the case of teams deployed by France in Kapisa and Surobi, 95% of which are locals, including project leaders. The latter offer many advantages: a natural knowledge of Afghan cultures and languages (Pashtun and Dari); an inclination to stay a long time in a country that “wears out” many expatriates rapidly; and a lower financial cost.

<http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/quick-impact-quick-collapse-jan-2010.pdf>.

⁴⁰ At least as far as the European countries are concerned, as American PRTs function in their own way.

⁴¹ As shown legally by Establishment Conventions.

⁴² Stated at the public presentation of the latest *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, May 2010.

⁴³ Hubert Lyautey, *op. cit.*

It is then necessary to establish a flexible organization, with as little bureaucracy as possible. This starts with having small teams, which are mobile and flexible, capable of working *in situ* without requiring the usual security measures, itself a major hindrance to good relations with local populations. In addition, it is imperative to overcome, as far as possible, standard procedures prevailing in countries where emergency conditions are less acute. Calls for tender should be simplified and framework contracts should be favored,⁴⁴ in order to rely on well-tested operators. Decision-circuits should be very short, and as much leeway as possible should be given to project managers on the ground. By using greatly simplified procedures and decision circuits, projects in Kapisa and Surobi have nearly all been implemented within 10 to 12 months. This is very short compared to normal practices found in national development agencies.

Projects must also be simple and robust. “Keep it simple” should be their motto, whenever possible. It is surprising to note that two bad habits die hard in this unstable context, in which the future is uncertain. One concerns the wish to create industrial units, at any price. This is most often a mere figment of the imagination: most of the districts in which cooperation projects are being undertaken are remote areas, where the security situation is very unstable. An initial proposition, put forward by a project leader in 2010 and aimed at setting up a tannery in Tagab, which is subject to relatively intense guerrilla activity, has been without success so far. The other error relates to the promotion of exports, carried out with much effort and substantial subsidies, despite the fact that Afghanistan has few comparative advantages on the international market, and that logistical costs are prohibitive. When Afghan comparative advantages regarding exports are effectively tapped into, it is sometimes to the detriment of local producers and consumers, who do not benefit from the income nor the products as they rightfully hope. As a result, many agricultural products (especially pomegranates from Tagab, as well as onions and potatoes from Surobi) are bought up uncropped by Pakistani intermediaries. They are then stored in Pakistan, given the lack of local distribution networks, organization and storage capacity, before being sold back to Afghanistan, off-season. This leads to losses for Afghan producers (uncropped prices usually being less than prices for harvested crops) and for local consumers (who bear the extra costs engendered by such practices). The project of creating storage cellars for agricultural products set up by CIMIC teams via the Geres NGO⁴⁵ aims specifically to limit such practices.

In addition to the tenet “keep it simple”, “keep it local” should also be advocated. Yet the “Afghanization” of development projects is easier said than done.

⁴⁴ A framework contract is a document which formalizes a long term agreement between two parties, in order to avoid repeated calls for tender and so save time. Its nature is general, and it fixes the conditions under which future, detailed contracts are negotiated and signed between parties.

⁴⁵ *Groupe Energies Renouvelables, Environnement et Solidarité.*

Actors to Carry Out the Difficult “Afghanization” of Operations

There is a natural temptation for civilian as well as military personnel to implement development projects directly in order to maximize the short term impact of aid, and this is often harmful. Thus the military often uses its own engineers to renovate roads, “as in the days of Lyautey”, according to some soldiers: the obvious difference being that France has no intention of staying in Afghanistan to colonize the country. Some development agencies (especially American) build medical centers or schools, with much money and human expertise, but without really implicating the Afghan State.

Furthermore, numerous parallel structures have been created or are developing, which are financed by Coalition resources. Top of the list are NGOs, especially international ones, which capture a significant share of the easy money flowing from the reconstruction budgets. Similarly, some *Provincial Reconstruction Teams* are embedded with combat units and are assigned to setting up development and governance projects locally. They have major drawbacks: they often completely bypass official Afghan government structures, both nationally and locally. And they are also clearly cut off from local communities and populations, demonstrating the so-called “Fobbit” syndrome, referring to the way units withdraw into large Forward Operational Bases (FOBs).⁴⁶ Moreover, they resort substantially to “contractors”, mainly American, including: the well-known Blackwater, renamed Xe Services, but also companies specialized in development, like DAI or Chemonics. These benefit from multiyear contracts, running into millions of dollars and funded by the PRT or USAid budgets, yet their methods are sometimes questionable and poorly adapted to the Afghan environment. They have even been accused of profiteering from the war to “loot the US Treasury”.⁴⁷

Contrary to such practices, it would be better to favor the “Afghanization” of aid as much as possible, both in the design and the implementation of projects, in order to strengthen the Afghan State. The terms of the NATO mandate in Afghanistan are clear on this point: the London Conference in February 2010 decided, at the insistent demand of the Afghan authorities, that at least 50% of international aid should transit through the Afghan State’s core budget in the next two years. Yet such Afghanization raises a number of fundamental issues, linked especially to administrative effectiveness,⁴⁸ and numerous cases of corruption and embezzlement. Given such risks, French projects carried out with the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture have teams of technical assistants financed

⁴⁶ Pierre Chareyron, “La contre-insurrection à l’épreuve du conflit afghan”, *Politique Etrangère*, vol. 75, No. 1, spring 2010, pp. 83-96.

⁴⁷ *Development Alternatives Inc.*

⁴⁸ Already in 1917, T.E. Lawrence was insisting on letting local people run operations: at the time Arab combatants fighting the Ottoman Empire. He wrote, “[d]o not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them.” T.E. Lawrence, “Twenty-Seven Articles of T.E. Lawrence”, *The Arab Bulletin*, 20 August 1917, available at:

<http://www.usma.edu/dmi/IWmsgs/The27ArticlesofT.E.Lawrence.pdf>.

by French cooperation institutions. Made up wholly of Afghans or Franco-Afghans, they are “embedded” with the administration, in a monitoring and mentoring capacity. Though technical assistants are not the panacea many expect, as they disappear when external financing ends, they nevertheless represent the most efficient solution to these problems at present.

This holds for public works, especially small-scale rural infrastructure (roads, buildings, *karez* exits)⁴⁹ financed by French cooperation in Kapisa and Surobi. Experience shows that it is best to use local resources where possible. Ideally, workers from recipient villages should be employed as a priority, to maximize the income that goes directly to target communities.⁵⁰ This also ensures that works carried out by local communities and benefiting them are then preserved by them.⁵¹ If a company has to be used, it is best to use local firms as far as possible (based in the very village, or the surrounding valley or district). At the risk of incurring serious difficulties, companies from other districts or abroad should only be called on as a last resort, and contracts should include a clause making it mandatory to hire local workers. For instance, security incidents (improvised explosive devices/IEDs damaging construction vehicles) have recently followed the contracting of a building company foreign to Surobi to improve roads in some valleys of the district. Such security incidents clearly reflect practical imperatives which are not yet systematically taken into account in civilian or CIMIC projects.

However, it is the poor security environment which makes implementing cooperation projects so difficult in Kapisa and Surobi, whatever precautions are taken. Given the logic of counterinsurgency, civil aid and an improved security environment should go hand-in-hand, as development projects should help convince the local populations to support the forces implementing the counterinsurgency strategy. In practice, this is hard to achieve, thus raising legitimate questions about the real effectiveness of civil development aid.

⁴⁹ *Karez*s are traditional hydraulic systems made up of wells dug at the foot of mountains, along with gently-inclined tunnels that provide drinking water to villages and for crop irrigation.

⁵⁰ This avoids paying workers from outside the target community, and making profits for outside companies.

⁵¹ It has been observed in Kandahar, which is a province largely under the control of insurgents, that buildings (schools, clinics, etc.) constructed with funds from the NABDP of the UNDP, yet following this community model, have not been subject to the destruction carried out via companies or other “contractors”.

Is Civilian Aid COIN-compatible?

“The strategist is a passing bird dying to alight”.⁵² The principles of the past, including those which have proved effective, cannot be emulated as such. As far as counterinsurgency is concerned, the writings of Lyautey on the link between military and civilian actions still seem to hold sway, though they are more than a century old.⁵³ While many of the principles of the French Marshal remain wholly relevant, it is nevertheless necessary to look at our actions on the ground, given the demands of the 21st century. First among these comes the near-absolute refusal to accept human losses, whether they are soldiers or local populations, and this even at a cost to stated objectives.⁵⁴ Added to this, the repudiation of coercive and extralegal methods⁵⁵ strips the military of much room for maneuver, making it henceforth difficult to “win minds”. In addition, it is far more important today than before to “win the hearts” of public opinion at home. Working in an interagency context has also to be taken into account, with civilian and national actors (sovereign governments) which did not always exist at the time of colonial wars. As a result, the “organization on the march” or “oil slick” method (the French *technique de la tache d’huile*), has to be overhauled fundamentally, while it is necessary to re-think civil-military relations completely.

Winning the Hearts and Minds?

In Kapisa and Surobi, experience suggests that there is no direct or immediate cause and effect relationship between civilian or civil-military aid and acceptance of the TFLF’s presence; nor between development projects and recognition of the Afghan State by the local populations. As obvious as it may seem, this observation nevertheless contradicts conventional wisdom, as well as numerous speeches given about projects, disseminated

⁵² Général Lucien Poirier, quoted in the article by Pierre Chareyron, *op. cit.*

⁵³ The works of Lyautey are regularly quoted by the French military, including in doctrinal publications. See for example the tactical doctrine of the French Army (FT-02) and the document entitled *Winning the Battle, Leading to Peace (Gagner la bataille, conduire à la paix)*.

⁵⁴ In contrast to colonial practices, see David Loyn, *Butcher and Bolt: Two Hundred Years of Engagement in Afghanistan*, USA, Hutchinson, 2008.

⁵⁵ Colonel Trinquier describes police operations carried out secretly against insurgents, which do not conform to the law (see: *La guerre moderne*, Paris, Economica, 2008 and *Guerre, subversion, révolution*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1968). For a good introduction to French thinking on counterinsurgency, see the CDEF article intitled *De Galula à Petraeus, l’héritage français dans la doctrine américaine de contre-insurrection*, Cahier de la Recherche Doctrinale (2009), available at: www.cdef.terre.defense.gouv.fr/publications/cahiers_drex/les_cahiers_recherche.htm.

either in the media, among the general public, or even within the ranks of those implementing projects.

In fact, development activities are but one of the numerous components of stabilization operations. Securitization measures (by armed forces or police, and especially by local forces) and governance (strengthening the rule of law in particular) are also crucial. It could even be argued that development activities merely accompany the former (security and governance), which are the core, traditional missions of the State. It is now acknowledged that one of the reasons why populations are attracted to the insurgency movements, and the “Taliban”, stems from the fact that they manage to provide relatively fair and effective justice, albeit expeditious, whereas the Afghan government has not been able to do this. Furthermore, as has already been pointed out, aid and grants are not always positively received by their beneficiaries. Lastly, as Colonel Chanson,⁵⁶ who commanded the GTIA in Kapsia in 2009,⁵⁷ has emphasized, it is probably more important to win the minds than the hearts of these populations. They have to be convinced by concrete arguments – sustainable projects, the return of security and restored governance – that their future will be brighter by cooperating with the coalition forces and the Afghan government than by supporting the insurgents. This appears to be partly borne out by the relative stability found today in Surobi (apart from the Uzbin valley), which was an extremely unstable zone just three years ago.⁵⁸

However, it is not enough to “win the hearts and minds” in the country of intervention. Public opinion at home must also be convinced of the merits of action in Afghanistan, in a context in which the “resilience” of the population (and even that of the national authorities) is known not to be very robust. This is notably so for France, and was clearly shown by public reactions to the ambush in the Uzbin valley in August 2008.⁵⁹ In this respect, development operations can be used as a strong argument in favor of intervention, if they are well used and are well communicated. Indeed, the public regards such activities as a means for contributing to the establishment of the rule of law, and to improving the well-being of local populations, which is a message that is far more palatable. Improving living conditions of local populations can only take place slowly, village by village, valley by valley. From this point of view, the “oil slick” model is still a benchmark, at least in the official discourse.

The Oil Slick Technique as a Figment of the Imagination

The oil slick technique was first theorized and applied in Tonkin and Madagascar by Galliéni and his subordinate Lyautey, both of whom

⁵⁶ See the feedback from Colonel Chanson, *Tactique de contre insurrection en Kapisa. La population au centre des préoccupations : la raison plutôt que le cœur*, 13 August 2009, available at: <http://sites.google.com/site/amicale22bca/tactique-de-contre-insurrection-en-kapisa>.

⁵⁷ GTIA or *Groupeement Tactique InterArmes*, a force made up of about 1,000 men.

⁵⁸ See the op-ed article by Colonel Benoît Durieux, “L’Afghanistan ne sera pas le Vietnam”, *Le Monde*, 23 October 2009.

⁵⁹ Ten French soldiers were killed in one day.

were soldiers as well as administrators. The latter further developed the technique on a large scale in Morocco. It consists of carrying out a “pacification” policy that combines military action (and the use of force as needed in Lyautey’s time), administrative and development activities. The doctrine was recently restated in a manual entitled *Doctrine for Counterinsurgency at the Tactical Level*.⁶⁰ It has been adopted and transformed in Anglo-American thinking using the expression: “clear, hold, build”. Before implementing development activities (“build”), it is necessary to defeat insurgents (“clear”) using military action, and to ensure sustained control of a given area (“hold”). Yet, this approach may be little more than a figment of the imagination with regard to Surobi and south Kapisa. Indeed, the projects set up in these districts are in zones that the Coalition (the TFLF) has never controlled fully. Apart from a lack of personnel and other reasons, this is due to the fact that the insurgents are largely drawn from the local population, imbued with a well-entrenched warrior culture. It is thus impossible to “separate” civilians from insurgents.

In this context, implementing development projects (“build”) by creating links between teams representing even indirectly, the Afghan State or Coalition forces, and local communities (which are sometimes under insurgent control) is a prerequisite and not the final stage of security and stabilization operations (“clear” and “hold”), carried out by the military. Cooperation projects, along with governance measures, may allow local populations to be “tamed”. The latter could then eventually better accept the Afghan State as well as its main representatives, the Afghan national police and army, supported by the Coalition. Colonel Chanson does not seem to be saying much else when he stresses that in Kapisa “security and development must be pursued simultaneously, and can only work within the framework of a sustained dialogue with representatives of the population [...] some development projects leading directly to greater security”.⁶¹

However, as this officer has rightly pointed out, only long term action can guarantee real stability.⁶² Peaceful areas need to be continuously protected (by the police and army), and assisted. Funding should not dry up immediately, but should continue, before being reduced progressively over several years (or even a decade), as local resources develop, thanks to a more favorable local environment.

Military and civilian personnel need to work in unison, for such projects to be sustained over time. Yet, civil-military relations themselves

⁶⁰ Centre de Doctrine d'Emploi des Forces de l'Armée de Terre, 2009 available online at <http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/frenchcoindoctrine.pdf>.

⁶¹ Colonel Chanson, *op. cit.*

⁶² From this point of view, it is interesting to note that the motto of the Colombian army, which has experience in counterinsurgency, is instructive: “God concedes victory to tenacity”. See the prologue of the report by Lieutenant-Colonel Jérôme Cario, *L'action intégrale ou la récupération sociale du territoire en Colombie*, Paris, Cahier de la Recherche Doctrinale, 2008, available at: www.cdef.terre.defense.gouv.fr/publications/cahiers_drex/les_cahiers_recherche.htm.

also follow a rocky road, and it is only a slight exaggeration to suggest that they are illustrated by the “fable of the frog and the scorpion”.⁶³

The Fable of the Frog and the Scorpion: a Parable of Civil-Military Relations in COIN

When compared to other countries in the Coalition (the United Kingdom, the United States and the Netherlands), France is still in its infancy in terms of large-scale interagency cooperation in areas of conflict. No doctrine has yet been formalized. Moreover, cooperation between ministries and agencies of the same country is not easy for any of the nations involved in Afghanistan, as the Rand Corporation has shown concerning the Americans,⁶⁴ or as the British Journalist James Ferguson has observed in counterinsurgency operations and civilian development by Britain in Helmand.⁶⁵ The US and the UK can nonetheless draw on their experience of complex counterinsurgency operations and “State building” in Iraq (which turned out in fact to be a failure for the British in Basra and Maysan).⁶⁶

Difficulties in cooperation between persons and institutions linked to different ministries, and especially between civilian and military personnel stem from a whole range of causes, especially cultural. Given their different cultures, traditions and experience, civilian and military actors often have quite diverging “world views”, especially about development. Furthermore, a certain misunderstanding if not real mutual distrust of the “opposing party” may be observed. The author’s own experience as such is highly diverse. His working relations with some military personnel were excellent, whereas others were characterized by a lack of understanding. There was sometimes even a measure of aggressiveness shown to “civilians who are incapable of supporting the military effort through rapid and effective development activities”.⁶⁷

Particular bureaucratic interests are also important, as are differences between ministries, especially between those primarily concerned with operations in Afghanistan (the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Ministry of Defense). Along with the weight of interests, there are also divergences in appreciation, for example about the lack of time, discussed above. Military personnel generally focus on

⁶³ An African fable in which a frog and a scorpion seek to escape drowning by crossing the rising waters of a river. The scorpion asks the frog to carry him, reassuring the frog that he will not sting him because if the frog dies the scorpion will die too by drowning. The frog thus accepts to carry the scorpion across the river on his back. But in the middle of the river, the scorpion mortally stings the frog. “Why did you do that?” the frog asks, passing away, “you too will die.” “It’s my character...” replies the scorpion. This is a good example of the reciprocal attitudes that are sometimes found between soldiers and civilians in the Afghan context.

⁶⁴ Seth Jones, *op. cit.*

⁶⁵ James Ferguson, *A Million Bullets: the Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan*, New York, Bantam Press, 2008.

⁶⁶ See notably Hilary Synnott, *Bad Days in Basra : My Turbulent Time as Britain's Man in Southern Iraq*, New York, Tauris, 2008 and Rory Stewart, *Occupational Hazards: My time governing in Iraq*, USA, Picador, 2006.

⁶⁷ Words heard in Afghanistan on several occasions by the author.

deadlines linked to their campaign plan, or to their mandate,⁶⁸ whereas civilians place a greater emphasis on the long term. These different “time horizons” led to recurrent discussions between the author and some of his military partners, in order to make them understand the necessary complementarity between short term projects (corresponding to the operational priorities of the moment) and long term projects.

Lastly, nearly all NGOs and international organizations refuse (at least officially) to work with armed forces, for several reasons: the refusal to be instruments of the military (or even to be infiltrated by various intelligence services);⁶⁹ respect for the principle of neutrality with regard to parties in conflict; a legitimate fear concerning the safety of their teams, which may be threatened by the confusion between civilian and military actors.⁷⁰

In this complex context, and to carry out their mission better, the civil and military parties must openly recognize their differences, and especially divergences in culture. It is also important to identify systematically areas of disagreement, to tackle them and unstated problems. Moreover, it is crucial to have written documents. They provide not just an objective basis for action, but also help in dealing with difficulties arising from the rapid turnover of staff.⁷¹ A doctrine for intervention at the interagency level would certainly be useful, but it is still in its infancy. Finally, a principle of systematic benevolence should be adopted by both civilian and military partners with respect to the “opposing party”. This is less a matter of basic morals, but rather a truly effective tool for facilitating the progressive implementation of real and sustainable, civil-military cooperation.

⁶⁸ Six months in the large majority of cases.

⁶⁹ This fear is not wholly without foundation, given for example the use by Coalition forces of the “honey pot technique”, whereby some development projects are used to attract insurgents with the aim of eliminating them.

⁷⁰ In a certain number of violent incidents, insurgents have used improvised explosive devices to attack NGO vehicles which they mistook for Coalition vehicles, as the Coalition sometimes uses white, off-road vehicles for transport, as NGOs do. In addition, NGOs working for official French projects have experienced specific threats, stemming from their relationship with Coalition and French forces.

⁷¹ For this reasons, common documents between the TFLF and the Embassy have been drafted, including: i/ a Concerted Master Plan, setting out operations in Kapisa and Surobi over a year or two, ii/ project documents which are the basis of precise contracts fixing objectives, means and budgets, and iii/ shared rules of procedure and reporting.

Conclusion

There is an Afghan proverb that says “the sky is dark but hides pure water”. The current situation in the country is unstable, and its future is unpredictable. Still, it may be hoped that France’s present actions in Kapisa and Surobi will help these districts find some stability. This is not necessarily a costly illusion, but a realistic aspiration, provided certain conditions are met. Yet, civilian and military actors will need to continue their actions for a while – beyond the announced withdrawal of US forces in 2011 – and not abandon the Afghan security forces, which are still weak. In addition, close collaboration with Afghan government officials needs to be developed. This is clearly a principle that is hard to apply concretely as local governance structures are little reliable. Lastly, it would be better to define and apply an overall counterinsurgency doctrine which would include not only military considerations, but also civilian concerns (governance and development). The latter remain all too often the poor relatives of our activities, despite the undeniable progress made during the last two years.

French intervention thus faces numerous challenges in supporting long term peace. But it is peace that the majority of the inhabitants in the districts under French responsibility hope for today: peace more than ever, after thirty years of uninterrupted conflict.

Annexes

Annex 1: Table of Abbreviations

AFD: *Agence Française de Développement*

BRAC: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee

CDC: Community Development Council

CDEF: *Centre de Doctrine d'Emploi des Forces*

CMAs: Civil-Military Actions

COAR: Coalition of Afghan Relief

CPCO: *Centre de Planification et de Conduite des Opérations*

DAI: Development Alternatives Inc.

FCO MAIL: French Cooperation Office with Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock

GERES: *Groupe Energies Renouvelables, Environnement et Solidarités*

GTIA: *Groupement Tactique Inter-Armes*

GTZ: *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*

ISAF: International Security and Assistance Force

MAEE: *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et Européennes*

MRRD: Ministry of Reconstruction and Rural Development

NABDP: National Area-Based Development Program

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO: Non-governmental Organisation

NSP: National Solidarity Program

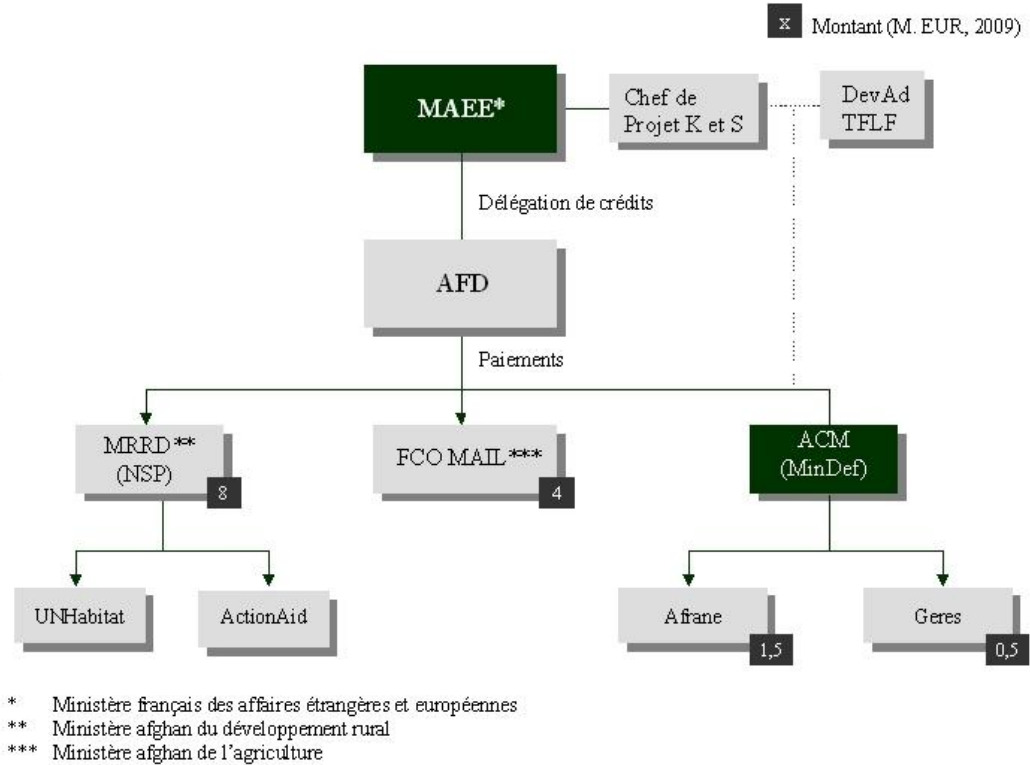
PRT: Provincial Reconstruction Team

SAB: *Solidarité Afghanistan Belgique*

TFLF: Task Force La Fayette

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

Annex 2: The Detailed Organization of Cooperation, 2009

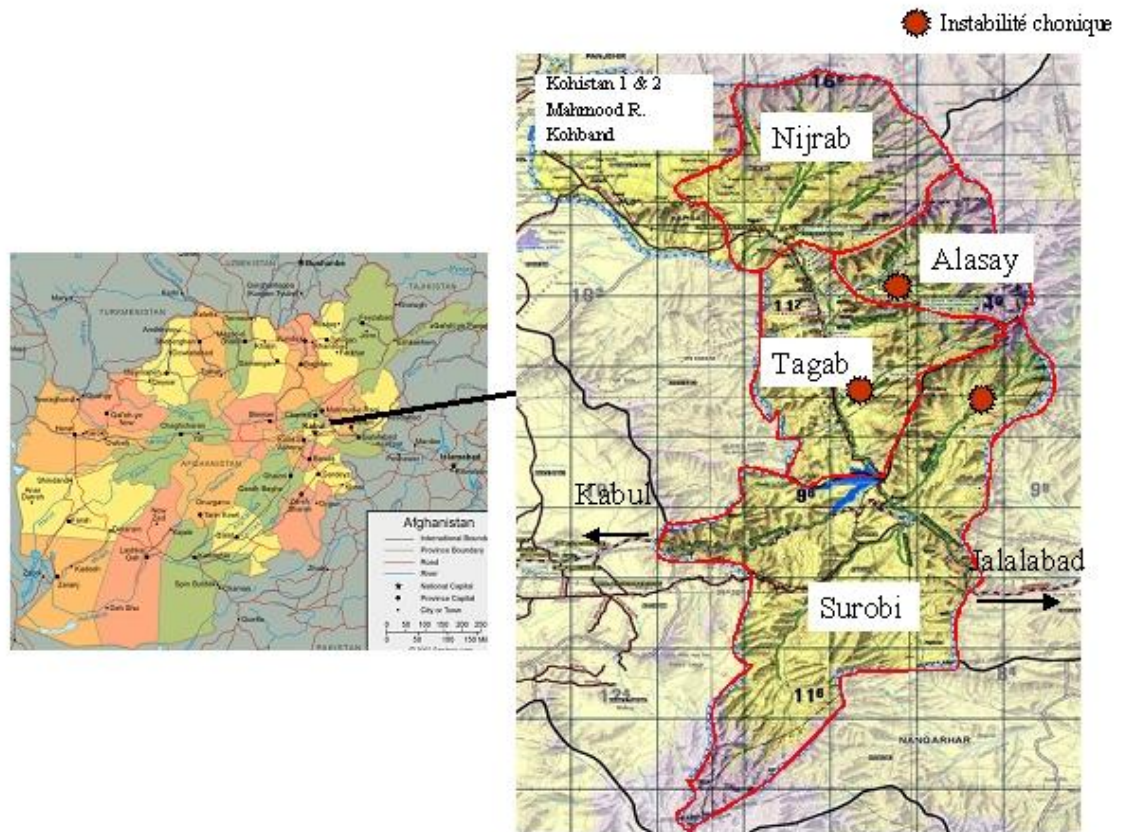


Annex 3: A Detailed Description French Projects, in 2009, 2010, 2011

	Objectifs	Partenaires et opérateurs	Indicateurs
1 NSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gouvernance : élection de CDCs Petites infra. rurales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Min. dév. rural Agence UNHabitat, ONG ActionAid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 mio EUR 15-25.000 familles 250 - 300 CDCs
2 MAIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribution de semences et d'engrais Activités apicoles, avicoles, piscicoles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plate forme française auprès du min. afghan de l'agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 mio EUR 20.000 familles
3 Afrane D.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aménagement hydrauliques Terrasses plantées 1.000-1.500 familles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CIMIC ONG Afrane 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.5 mio EUR 2.000 familles
4 Geres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celliers (conservation de produits agricoles) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CIMIC ONG Geres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.5 mio EUR 400 - 500 familles
5 Chaîne Espoir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Santé infantile (chirurgie réparatrice) 100-120 familles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ONG Chaîne de l'Espoir 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.1 mio EUR

	Objectifs	Partenaires et opérateurs	Indicateurs
6 BRAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Réhabilitation de l'hôpital de Surobi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Min. santé ONG BRAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.5 mio EUR
7 GTZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Développement des réseaux électriques des villes de Tagab, Nijrab et Surobi Réhabilitation des micro-centrales de Nijrab 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Min. énergie GTZ IS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7.5 mio EUR 30.000 familles
8 SAB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formation continue des instituteurs Construction d'un centre de formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Min. éducation ONG SAB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.5 mio EUR 400 – 500 instituteurs
9 NABDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gouvernance : appui au DDA Infra. provinciales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Min. dév. rural Communautés 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 mio EUR 40-70.000 familles

Annex 4: Focus Districts in 2009



Source: French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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