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Norwegian and Polish Security Sector Reform Experiences from Afghanistan

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In the coming decade, NATO and EU security is likely to be challenged by the ongoing conflicts and potential instability in different parts of Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa. Both organisations are capable of supporting stability through different forms of cooperation with their partners but they could improve their impact significantly by closer collaboration. One of the most promising platforms for such a unity of effort could be Security Sector Reform (SSR)—a vital measure for building sustainable peace. Both NATO and the EU could use the experience of Norway, a NATO-member, and Poland, a member of both the EU and NATO and a country that contributed significant military and civilian resources to the stability and development of Afghanistan between 2001 and 2014. Although the precise results of the SSR process in Afghanistan remain contested, the lessons hard learnt by both countries should be regarded as a noteworthy asset, not least when it comes to building closer cooperation between Poland and Norway during future SSR missions.¹

SSR in Afghanistan: Basic Features

After the Al-Qaeda terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York and Washington, the George W. Bush administration launched a counterterrorism mission in Afghanistan, conducted by a coalition of the willing led by the United States, within the framework of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). In late 2001, NATO also invoked Art. 5 (the “all for one” rule) of the Washington Treaty. Together with the Bonn Agreement and the UN Security Council authorisation, this gave a legal basis for a separate alliance mission in Afghanistan. The International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) mission operated from March 2002 until December 2014.

¹ During our research we used the methodology of structured and individual interviews with both countries’ civilian and military officials, supported by government documents and statements as well as a selection of other expert papers and reports on the topic. Working on this paper, we benefited greatly from our previous experience in public service and long-time special interest in Afghanistan, from one of the author’s six-month deployment in Afghanistan, and from panel discussions and separate Norwegian–Polish brainstorm during the “GoodGov” conference in Warsaw, May 2014. To achieve greater openness from both administrations, we conducted our interviews under guarantee of anonymity with Norwegian, Polish and NATO International Staff officials in Oslo, Warsaw and Brussels in October 2014. Selected bibliography of important documents and literature is attached at the end of paper. We would like to thank to Dr. Nina Graeger (NUI) for her comments to our draft.

Once the Taliban regime, which had been harboring the leader of Al-Qaeda, collapsed in late 2001, the international community was able to initiate a programme of Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan.² Initially, however, this effort was limited in scale, largely uncoordinated, and suffered from the lack of an overarching strategy. The international contribution to building the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) was channelled through the OEF, although the ISAF mission in Kabul was well established and despite the 2002 creation of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

The international contribution focused on five different pillars of SSR (military reform, police reform, justice reform, counter narcotics, and DDR—disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration), but became more coordinated only after the London conference in 2006. The task remained daunting. Between 2007 and 2014 the SSR work in Afghanistan was performed by a number of different players, including OEF, with 40,000 troops, and the NATO-led ISAF, with up to 87,000 personnel from 49 countries, were engaged in stability operations and also provided training and mentoring of the ANSF. Established in 2009, the 5,000 personnel of the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan (NTM-A) focused on the large scale recruitment, equipping and training of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP). The European Gendarmerie Force (EUROGENDFOR), Military Police force with the ability to carry out civilian policing, deployed more than 400 personnel and was responsible for training the ANP. The European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL-A), with up to 400 personnel, was tasked with establishing the ANP as a civilian force. UNAMA led all international efforts to support and strengthen governance and the rule of law, and provided human rights training and mentoring for the ANP and the Ministry of the Interior. These efforts were supported by the NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission (NROLFSM), which took responsibility for providing security and technical support for the local and international personnel engaged in building of the Afghan criminal justice capacity.

The SSR was challenged by a critical security situation and the constant threat from the Taliban. Although in the first years after the fall of the Taliban regime the security situation throughout the country was relatively calm, the lack of international commitment to SSR resulted in a deterioration of the situation in the southern and eastern parts of the country. Since 2001, more than 20,000 Afghan civilians and 3,500 coalition members have been killed in Afghanistan. The challenges to performing SSR included the threat of insider attacks, but also the basic illiteracy of the ANSF, corruption, ethnic divisions, desertion and a high attrition rate. The international community was also working under political pressure to withdraw from Afghanistan. At the 2010 NATO summit in Lisbon, the alliance set the year 2014 as the target for Afghan forces and authorities to take over responsibility for their country. Thereafter, the coalition forces focused on placing security in Afghan hands in time for the presidential election in April 2014.

At the end of 2014, the international community has managed to build a 352,000-strong ANSF plus a 30,000-strong village militia (Afghan Local Police—ALP). As a result, the security situation across the country has improved. From 2015, NATO will continue its support for the Afghanistan SSR through a much more limited “Resolute Support” mission, which is supposed to focus on mentoring and assisting the ANSF. Support will be confined to the presence of trainers and mentors only in five strategic bases (Kabul+4 model). However, it will be up to Afghanistan to secure broader, long term support for SSR from other international organisations and states.

The Political Context: The Significance of U.S. Leadership

Norwegian and Polish approaches to SSR in Afghanistan were determined by the wider situation in this country after the fall of Taliban regime. But decision-makers in both countries increasingly adjusted their national approaches above all to the changing priorities and strategies of the United States, which became the driving factor in the post-Taliban period of the stabilisation of Afghanistan.

Initially, the George W. Bush administration had focused its efforts on the counter-terrorism mission in Afghanistan and, despite support from NATO, did not expect a meaningful military contribution on the part of the alliance beyond political solidarity. But from March 2003 the administration’s perception of

² The aim of SRR is to establish effective national security forces and institutions. A number of experts suggest the limitation of SSR to post-conflict scenarios, and stress the importance of a quality-oriented approach, contrary to American Counterinsurgency (COIN) military doctrine, which stresses a need for more local forces. The authors believe the concept of SSR should be a part of a comprehensive approach, and as such should be flexible enough to adapt to different realities of a changing security environment.

Afghanistan as an almost-accomplished mission shifted priority to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), another coalition of the willing, this time led by the U.S. and the UK, and without a UN Security Council mandate. The intervention in Iraq and the growing insurgency there dented Washington's enthusiasm for state-building and security issues in Afghanistan significantly. It also resulted in the lack of strong political leadership and appropriate military efforts by NATO-ISAF, not to mention reducing pressure on the wider international community to engage in economic development or civilian assistance for Afghans.

Divergent interests and contributions to the OEF, ISAF and OIF military missions influenced NATO members' contributions to capacity and institution-building in the Afghan security sector. The lack of a long-term alliance strategy, and the existence of frequently changing military commands of OEF and the ISAF, also limited the effectiveness of the Afghan civilian administration and security sector building efforts, which were in turn poorly coordinated by NATO, the EU and the UN. These factors, coupled with the weakness of central government in Kabul, the growing alienation of the Pashtuns, and the alleged Pakistani assistance to the Afghan Taliban, boosted the insurgency in the southern and eastern provinces of the country and strengthened local warlords and power-brokers in the west and north.

By the end of the George W. Bush administration, American dissatisfaction with NATO and pessimistic assessments of the situation in Afghanistan by European governments had forced the ISAF to increase its presence and take greater responsibility for the stability of Afghanistan and SSR.³ The results of internal debates within the incoming U.S. administration of Barack Obama, and the recommendations of his third strategy review in 2009, were also approved by other NATO members. Guidance for the ISAF to the end of the mission in 2014 now took the form of a "surge" in U.S. and NATO troop numbers in Afghanistan, greater synergy between counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and the different elements of SSR, and the "Afghanisation" of security through increasing the size of the ANSF.

Norwegian and Polish Engagement in Afghanistan: Five Shared Motives

First and foremost, both Norway and Poland strongly supported the idea that the NATO allies should show solidarity and stand "shoulder to shoulder" with the United States, also by invoking Art. 5 (the collective defence commitment) in the face of the 9/11 attacks. This way of thinking survived changes in government coalitions in Oslo and Warsaw throughout the course of the Afghan mission. For governments of both countries, the security guarantees of the Washington Treaty constitute a major pillar of their security policies. Therefore it was natural for them to commit in Afghanistan, even if, as the war dragged on over time yet yielded few positive results, there were minor alterations in national security strategies. Norway and Poland, due to their locations on the eastern flank of NATO, have been consistently interested in presenting NATO as a traditional collective defence alliance.

Secondly, Norway and Poland have been interested in strengthening their bilateral cooperation with their most important ally in the security sphere, the United States. For instance, both countries contributed forces to the OEF in the early stage of the Afghan mission. Norway sent its special forces, four F-16 fighter aircraft and C-130 transport planes with personnel to Afghanistan and Kirgizstan, and later logisticians to Kabul and Kandahar, while Poland contributed its special forces, some liaison officers and logisticians, and the multi-task logistical ship *ORP Xawery Czernicki*. Both countries participated from the beginning in OIF, with limited Norwegian forces (150 troops) and later a large Polish military contingent in Iraq (2,500 troops). They nevertheless changed their posture when participation in OIF became unpopular domestically. After the 2005 election, Norway's new coalition government of social democrats, socialist left and centre parties decided to withdraw its contribution (the remaining ten staff officers) from Iraq, which was completed by the end of that year. However, in trying to revitalise its position in U.S. affections, Oslo decided to increase its military and civilian commitment in Afghanistan. Similarly, Poland, which commanded the Multinational Forces Division Central South in Iraq with its peak contribution in 2003, began decreasing its presence a year later and withdrew completely in 2008, shifting the resources to Afghanistan.

Third, Norwegian and Polish participation in OEF, the ISAF and OIF marked a new experience for both countries' armed forces. Prior to this, Oslo and Warsaw had long records in the UN's peace-keeping and

³ In 2003, the ISAF comprised 47,000 troops from 28 countries and increased to almost 150,000 in 2011 from 49 NATO and partner countries (with 70% from the U.S.). The ISAF area responsibility expanded in several stages and over four regions, then the entire country in October 2006.

“non-kinetic” stability operations. Norway and Poland have contributed to missions in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and in the former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), and were engaged in NATO’s missions in the Balkans. Stepping into Afghanistan, their militaries were in the midst of transformation, from the Cold War mass conscription model to smaller all volunteer forces prepared for a wider spectrum of operations including territorial defence and crisis management missions.

Fourth, during the whole period of Afghan engagement, Norway and Poland declared their strong support for fighting international terrorism. However, for Poland, almost without Muslim minority communities, international jihad was not seen as a direct threat to national security. Some critics of the Polish presence in Afghanistan argued strongly that it even increased the threat to the country’s citizens and interests. For Norway, the threat from Al-Qaeda, its affiliate groups, or individual terrorists, were potentially more important as an additional national security rationale for all efforts in Afghanistan. In 2010, Norway’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that the main strategic objective for the presence in Afghanistan was to prevent the country from again becoming a base for international terrorism.⁴

Fifth, both countries felt that the Afghanistan mission fitted their own defined role in the world. Norway and Poland are proud of having neither a colonial past nor significant economic interests in the developing world, something which gives them a certain clout of neutrality. This also influenced decision-makers in Oslo and Warsaw, with initial stress on the Norwegian image as a “peace nation” and Poland as a “peaceful transformation mentor.” These ambitions were also visible in declarations about Norway and Poland’s civilian, humanitarian, development and economic assistance to Afghanistan. Some interests, such as women’s rights and human rights, were also very visible in civilian projects realised by the Norwegian government (the NORAD aid agency) and non-governmental organisations in Afghanistan.

Experience on the Ground: Common Problems Faced by Norway and Poland

Norway and Poland followed changes in American strategy by boosting their military, civilian and economic assistance to the Afghan government and people. To gain a full picture of their efforts it is necessary also to look at their provincial and local engagement in Afghanistan. Since 2005 Norway has steadily increased its presence in the northern Faryab province, within the ISAF Regional Command-North, and since 2008 Poland has increased its presence in the eastern Ghazni province, within the ISAF Regional Command-East. Despite different local factors, both areas lacked efficient Afghan administration and suffered growing insecurity limiting more ambitious assistance and development projects there. Faryab, historically destabilised by ethnic tensions between the Pashtun minority and Uzbeks and Tajiks, faced additional tensions after 2001, caused by warlord rivalry and by the return of the Taliban from neighbouring Baghdis province. Ghazni province, which ranked as one of the most dangerous areas in Afghanistan due to its position on the main communication route (Highway 1) between Kabul and Kandahar, has a large population of Pashtun people supporting the insurgency, and experienced a constant influx of enemy fighters from Pakistan.

There are other similarities in the challenges both countries faced in Afghanistan. Changes in approach on the part of the U.S. and NATO, for instance, meant that Norway and Poland had to adopt their presence to the wider American and allied strategic vision for Afghanistan. This was clearly less problematic when both countries participated with limited troops and tasks within OEF, but it became challenge with growing national contributions to the ISAF. A shift from a strict military combat role to wider “whole of government approaches” meant that guidance and tasking from NATO HQ or national capitals was not always enough for Norwegian and Polish military and civilian personnel in Afghanistan. Problems with international consultation and cooperation in non-military projects in Afghanistan became an issue due to the limited role of the UN and the EU, and their secondary role within the command structures of NATO ISAF. The U.S. and German idea of 2009, to formalise consultation and coordination between international institutions and national governments via Special Representatives and an International Contact Group for Afghanistan and Pakistan, was not particularly fruitful.

Some similarities between Norway and Poland can also be noticed in the coordination of operations and tasks by their national civilian and military administrations. After 2001, both implemented their policies

⁴ In 2011, the head of the Norwegian Security Intelligence Service (PST) declared that home-grown radical Islamists, some of whom might visit training camps on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan, were Norway’s greatest internal security threat.

towards Afghanistan mainly within the structures of ministries of foreign affairs and national defence. Initially, inter-agency coordination in both countries was very limited in terms of strategic guidance, planning and execution. Stronger inter-agency coordination was given higher priority when Oslo and Warsaw decided to send larger military contingents, took more geographic area responsibility, and raised the level of their contribution to Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). In Norway's case, this happened with PRT Faryab in the spring and summer of 2005, and for Poland it was with PRT Ghazni in the autumn of 2008. Also in 2005, the Norwegian government established the Afghanistan Forum, with five state secretaries, representing defence, foreign affairs, development, justice, and the Prime Minister's Office. In 2008, a directive from the Polish Prime Minister created a similar forum called the Inter-ministerial Group for the Coordination of Civilian Military Operations of the Republic of Poland in Afghanistan. This was headed by the deputy state secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and convened meetings with officials from other agencies every three months.

A more unified approach towards Afghanistan was also achieved by the adoption of comprehensive strategies. They were prepared and published at a relatively late stage of both countries' presence in Afghanistan. For Norway, the interagency *Strategy For Comprehensive Norwegian Civilian and Military Efforts in Faryab Province* was finished by May 2009. This is the first separate and unclassified guidance document that is dedicated only to this province of Afghanistan and stresses the importance of capacity-building of the ANSF as a vital pre-condition for the "Afghanisation" of security. The Norwegian strategy of 2009 also indicated the need for more efforts to strengthen the police and justice sectors in Afghanistan. In the same year, Poland announced a short-term strategy called *Directions of Polish Engagement in Afghanistan*, which stressed the need for intensified training for the ANSF. In 2010, *Directions of Polish Engagement in Afghanistan for 2011–2014* was published, which adjusted the Polish presence to the planned withdrawal of international forces and enhanced training of the ANSF in the transition period.

Differences between Norway and Poland: Potentials and Instruments

Norway and Poland obviously have different potentials and assets, and during their engagement in Afghanistan they used different instruments in the area of SSR. The prime difference is one of scale: Norway, with a population of 5 million, and armed forces of 25,000 personnel, has limited military and police assets but relatively big development and financial assets. Poland is the reverse, with a population of 38 million and a 100,000-strong military, but more limited financial resources. These basic factors had practical implications for the range and scale of the options available to decision-makers in Oslo and Warsaw when they worked on planning and implementing assistance to the ANSF.

Norway

Norwegian engagement in Afghanistan and support for SSR can be divided into three phases. The first, during the period of 2002–2005, was limited to Norwegian Special Forces, logisticians and Air Force units within OEF, and civilian assistance and police advisory efforts focused mainly on Kabul. In the second phase, of 2005–2009, Norway focused on the contribution to the ISAF, boosting its combat contingent in Faryab province and support to ANA units in Balkh province. The third phase, 2009–2012, was guided by the Faryab Strategy and the "Afghanisation" imperative, with mentoring provided to the ANSF and assistance to Afghan institutions in Balkh, Faryab and Kabul. After September 2012, as well as the transition of security in Faryab and the closure of the PRT there, Norway continued SSR assistance to the central government in Kabul. Now, with the end of the ISAF mission, Norway has announced also up to 75 military trainers, logisticians and other specialists to the NATO Resolute Support mission, beginning in January 2015.

The implementation of SSR became a challenge with the second phase of the Norwegian presence in Afghanistan. Norway steadily increased its contribution, to 250, 300, 350 and then between 500 and 550 troops, with increasing assistance to the 209th ANA (Falcon) Corps in Faryab. Norwegian combat troops were assigned initially and mainly to the ISAF Quick Reaction Force in Mazar-i-Sharif, as well to the protection of the PRT in Meymaneh (Faryab).⁵ Also during the second phase, Norway increased its support

⁵ Protection of the PRT in Meymaneh became an important task after riots against Norwegian-led staff in February 2006. This incident was also the reason for deployment of the infantry *Telemark Battalion* with more heavy equipment, and four lightly-armed MEDVAC helicopters to Meymaneh.

to Afghans through one ISAF Operational Mentoring Liaison Team (OMLT). Between 2009 and 2012, this was assigned to an ANA battalion (a unit known as a kandak) based in Meymaneh, a unit from the 1st Brigade of 209th Corps with HQ in Mazar. Norwegian OMLTs were always fully staffed with 45–50 mentors and support personnel, rotating after tours of six months with Afghan kandak. From 2010 to 2011, Norway also contributed two officers to every tour of the joint Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish OMLT assigned to support units from the 1st Brigade of 209th Corps deployed to Meymaneh. This multinational OMLT was much smaller, with eight mentors and 17 support personnel. In both cases, and before the tour to Afghanistan, Norwegian Army mentors and support units were set up from a roster of candidates to integrate their team, although some Norwegians viewed this as too cautious and long a preparation period. From 2008 to 2010, Norway also helped to finance and construct two bases for kandaks of the ANA 209th Corps, whose own troop numbers grew from 8,261 in 2011 to 15,214 in the summer of 2014. The PRT in Faryab was another vehicle for supporting local governance and SSR. It operated September 2005 to September 2012, and there were 19 team rotations involving different compositions and sizes.⁶ The PRT was staffed by between 25 and 50 personnel from the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence, supported by troops from main Norwegian contingent. After the takeover of PRT leadership from the UK, decision-makers in Oslo constantly stressed the importance of separating the roles of civilian and military players in Faryab. This separation was different to NATO's common approach of fully integrated civilian and military teams at provincial and district levels. The Norwegian-led PRT became de facto dominated by military goals and staff. Moreover, it was a multinational venture, with staff from Finland, Iceland and Latvia, guided by the vision of a joint Nordic effort. A small Norwegian civilian staff at the PRT was usually limited to only two or three officers recruited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NORAD, who were responsible directly to the embassy in Kabul. Of much more importance for the SSR was a mission of 16 civilian police advisers in Faryab, which operated with the PRT but was formally subordinate to EU EUPOL-A and bilateral projects, and not to the ISAF (see below).

After the 2012 withdrawal of OMLT, of the PRT, and of combat units from Faryab, the Norwegian Army continued mentoring the ANSF. This was conducted in Mazar from 2013 to 2014, with 20–32 military and military police personnel of NOR PAT (the Norwegian Police Advisory Team) assigned to the ANP. NOR PAT contributed to the paramilitary capabilities of Afghan police officers in Mazar, and also to the organisation of medical and health care for ANP units there. Bigger and longer lasting support came in the form of building the ANP Crisis Response Unit (CRU) in Kabul. This was done by the Norwegian Special Forces operators (up to 150 personnel) in three periods, from March to October 2007, March 2008 to October 2009, and April 2012 to December 2014. The elite ANP CRU was trained mainly in counterterrorism special weapons and tactics.⁷ Other Norwegian military contributions to SSR included support for the creation of an Afghan National Defence University (opened in 2012, and later renamed the National Security University), with staff of the Norwegian Defence International Centre (NODEFIC) and Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI) contributing to its curriculum.

Norway, with help from personnel of the Police Directorate and Ministry of Justice, also contributed to non-military aspects of the Afghan SSR. The majority of their projects in the fields of building and training the ANP between 2009 and 2012 focused on Faryab, where up to 23 or 24 Norwegian police officers were spread across a variety of organisations and projects in Afghanistan. In 2009, for instance, four officers served with the U.S. military-led Focus District Development in Faryab, a further three with the EUPOL-A mission, nine in UNAMA, and seven on the bilateral Norwegian Police Support to Afghan Authorities Project (NORAF). In the case of EUPOL-A, Norway provides one advisor to the Ministry of the Interior in Kabul, who worked on gender and human rights courses attended by around 12,000 Afghans, in the Afghan Police Academy between 2003 and 2006. The Norwegian contribution to this EU mission was enlarged between 2009 and 2011 to include the City Police Justice Programme in Mazar and Maymaneh. Norwegian police officers with EUPOL trained ANP personnel from these cities in firearms, self defence and driving skills, as well in the basics of investigation, forensics and human rights.⁸ A high-level Norwegian police officer was also assigned to the UNAMA Senior Police Adviser Group in Kabul, which, during the presidential election of 2009, was engaged in the UN's supervision of the ANP.

⁶ PRT-19, from May to September 2012, was officially renamed as Transition Support Group-Faryab.

⁷ With the creation of the ANP CRU, Norwegian Special Forces soldiers also conducted direct combat missions in the Kabul area, mainly in 2007 to 2008. In 2010 to 2011, a New Zealand Special Air Service team was mentoring the ANP CRU.

⁸ Oslo support for EUPOL was unique at a time when many EU Member States preferred bilateral projects. Since its creation in 2007, EUPOL has also been supported by other non-EU countries, such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Norwegian civilian agencies also instituted other bilateral and signature projects, financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. NORAF was established in 2004 and operated until 2012, in six-monthly rotations of changing size, usually comprising six or seven police, rule of law, justice and legal advisors.⁹ From 2005 to 2009 the Ministry of Justice also operated the NORAF project in Maymeneh, with two or three advisors to the provincial prison, who helped in improving protection of prisoners' human rights and creating a separate women's section there. In 2005, within NORAF, Canadian and UNDOC advisers in Kabul offered support to the Criminal Justice Task Force created within the Afghan Ministry of Counternarcotics. Two legal advisors and two judges from the Norwegian Ministry of Justice were engaged in advising and mentoring the task force until 2008, in areas of narcotics-related investigations and court cases.¹⁰ From 2008 to 2010, NORAF also initiated a Safety Awareness Course for ANP's female officer instructors, a project well-recognised by other international donors. From 2013 to 2014, seven advisors previously assigned to NORAF were transferred to UNAMA (one) and to EUPOL (six), and the embassy in Kabul kept on one officer responsible for monitoring issues and continuing working contacts with the ANP.

Norway, over all phases of engagement in Afghanistan, contributed to financing the Afghan SSR and ANSF via international channels. Oslo, especially after 2005, tried to balance its military and civilian assistance, as well bilateral and international projects.¹¹ The majority of Norwegian funding for the Afghan government was channelled through the United Nations, especially the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF, administered by the World Bank) and the UNDP Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA). Among many projects, ARTF funds have been used since 2002 for addressing capacity building in the Afghan Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Court. Since 2008, also through the ARTF, Norway has co-financed the National Institute of Management and Administration in Kabul, which has educated more than 2,500 students (including 500 woman). Norway committed NOK 900 mln (approximately \$132 mln) to the UNDP between 2010 and 2012, and NOK 750 mln (\$110 mln) from 2013 to 2015. The multi-phased LOTFA also contributed to electronic payrolls for police and Central Prison Department officers, for increasing their professionalisation, for greater recruitment of female officers in the ANP (13,000 in 2012), and for greater transparency of the Afghan Ministry of Interior. From 2009 to 2010 Norway, delivered NOK 81.5 mln (\$11 mln) to LOTFA, and NOK 17 mln (\$2.5 mln) to the Disbanding Illegally Armed Groups programme.

Poland

The Polish military and civilian presence in Afghanistan, and contribution to SSR, can be divided into two distinct periods. From 2002 to 2007, Polish troops participated in the U.S. led Operation Enduring Freedom and ISAF operations, with up to 300 personnel scattered across Afghanistan. In 2007 the second phase began, with a much bigger presence and coordination of effort. Poland put its troops under ISAF command, established Task Force White Eagle (TF WE), and took over responsibility for Ghazni province. From 2010 to 2011, the Polish contingent in Afghanistan numbered more than 2,500 troops and civilians. The top priorities of the Polish contingent included stabilisation tasks (including kinetic missions) and providing training for the ANSF.

With the majority of Polish troops gathered in one place, they could carry out training of ANSF units based in Ghazni province with a more coordinated and controlled approach. Training was focused on the 3rd Brigade 203th Corps, which numbered approximately 4,600 soldiers, and was performed on the kandak and brigade HQ level. Polish trainers taught Afghan soldiers tactics, techniques and procedures, as well as training them in planning and executing operations. They also participated with Afghan units in common missions (partnering). Since 2007, training of the ANSF have been provided through Operational Mentoring Teams (OMLT) and Police Operational Mentoring Teams (POMLT), later replaced by Military Advisory Teams (MATs) and Police Advisory Teams (PATs). The number of mentoring teams has grown from one in 2007 to 14 in 2010, when Poland had four OMLTs and 10 POMLTs consisting of 345 soldiers, making it the

⁹ From 2003 to 2012, more than 100 police officers served in NORAF and its projects with the ANP.

¹⁰ This Afghan unit was seen by many international partners as a possible model for other specialised Afghan investigators, detectives, attorneys and judges.

¹¹ These funds, via the United Nations, were coordinated by staffs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NORAD in Oslo, and the embassy in Kabul. Apart from that, Norway gave separate bilateral, civilian assistance to Faryab province and to the government in Kabul, committing NOK 350–500 mln (\$44–73 mln) annually from 2002 to 2007, and NOK 700–750 mln (\$103–110 mln) annually from 2008 to 2013. In 2014, Norway delivered NOK 700 mln (\$103 mln) in aid and pledged NOK 750 mln (\$119 mln) for 2015.

third biggest contributor to ANP training (the U.S. was first with 279 POMLTs, and Germany second with 11). Since 2011, Polish Military Police have provided training for the Police Training Centre located on the outskirts of Ghazni city. In 2013, after the training of 9,000 police officers, including women, the Afghan trainers took over responsibility for the centre. Additionally, Polish Special Forces trained the “Afghan Tigers,” an elite anti-terrorist unit of the Provincial Response Company (PRC), and the personnel of Afghanistan’s intelligence agency, the National Directorate of Security (NDS). Throughout the mission in Afghanistan, the process of building the ANSF in Ghazni was supported by psychological operations (PSYOPS). The PSYOPS team operated the radio station (Radio Hamdard), which devoted a significant part of the programme to shaping the positive image of Afghan forces in society.

Another form of support for SSR was the deployment of two specialists from the military to the NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission, which was intended to facilitate civilian efforts in developing the judiciary. Further support for the development of the judicial system was delivered mainly through the U.S. PRT, a joint team of civilian and military personnel operating at the provincial level and engaged in a range of security and assistance operations. Originally, Polish specialists were part of the U.S. PRT in Gardez, where they learned how the PRT can be used for stability operations. Since 2008, Poland has had an independent unit of 20 to 30 military and civilian personnel in the PRT in Ghazni, run by the United States. Polish projects were independent, although often delivered in coordination with their U.S. counterparts. They were initially financed by USAID, the U.S. Commanders Emergency Response Programme (CERP), and subsequently by the Polish MFA and MoD. PRT projects related to SSR were aimed at improving the conditions in the local jail (kitchen, bakery and carpenter’s workshop) and courses for inmates. It also offered a small number of projects, such as English courses, IT training, and seminars for the representatives of the judiciary. The PRT was also a useful tool for maintaining regular contacts with the administration, the office of the prosecutor, prison staff, and judges.

The Polish contingent also contributed to the enhancement of the ANSF’s command and control ability through the Operations Coordination Centre (OCC), which was established to facilitate information sharing between the ANA, the ANP and the NDS, and to give the ANSF a common operating picture. Poland provided personnel on a 24/7 basis to the provincial centre (OCC-P) located in Ghazni. However, one of the Polish flagship SSR initiatives was the development of crisis management capabilities, and the construction of the Crisis Management Centre in Ghazni, where representatives of different government departments and security services could coordinate their activities in the case of emergency. The local personnel for CMC were trained in Ghazni, and the representatives of the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Agency were trained in Poland, with the support of the National School of Public Administration. Poland also contributed to the formation of the Afghan firefighting services by offering training and equipment. Firefighters from Kabul were trained in Poland in cooperation with the Central School of the State Fire Service in Częstochowa. The TF WE also helped establish the first ever firefighting unit in Ghazni. Firefighters were designated from the Afghan police, and were trained by military personnel in the base.

Although the Polish contribution to SSR was based primarily on the military presence in the framework of the NATO operation, Poland has been supporting the development of tools useful for stability and SSR operations in the framework of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Polish personnel were engaged in training the ANP through the EUPOL mission, with three or four police officers offered by the Ministry of the Interior and Administration for one-year deployments, and through support for the European Gendarmerie Force (EUGENDFOR), which develops standardised tactics, techniques and procedures for military police and supports the development of this force as a flexible tool for operations in military and civilian environments.

Polish financial support for the SSR, provided as a part of development aid administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was mainly channelled through the Polish Military Contingent, the Polish embassy in Kabul, and NGOs.¹² Moreover, Poland provided assistance to Afghanistan through voluntary contributions to international institutions and organisations such as the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund and the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), which pays for the costs of the ANP. Since 2008, Poland has invested \$35 mln in development and SSR civilian projects.

¹² In 2013, projects were financed by the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Poland.

Norwegian Lessons Learned

Despite only having a small population, Norway undertook a wide range of activities in Afghanistan, gaining experience in an extremely challenging and dangerous conflict area. Norway devoted huge financial and human resources to NATO, EU and UN missions in Afghanistan. The Norwegians made an important contribution to building and improving different pillars of the Afghan security sector, recognised by many allies.

Norwegian mentors were satisfied with the progress of Afghan soldiers' combat skills, even if private assessments of kandak readiness were much more critical than those presented by higher ISAF commanders.¹³ According to official ISAF statistics for 2011 to 2012, the ANA 209th Corps' rate of absenteeism without leave stands at just 6–9 %, a much lower percentage than in other corps. The FFI also assessed that a total of 32 of the 35 milestones for the ANSF in Faryab were achieved by 2012, and that it was capable of performing security tasks with less assistance from the ISAF by the time Norwegian combat units were withdrawn from the province. The positive perception of the ANSF's professionalism was confirmed by public opinion polls in Faryab between 2010 and 2013.

There is evidence that Norwegian Armed Forces soldiers and mentors, as well as many civilian advisors, became respected for their sensitivity for local culture, their high skills, and their "learning by doing" approach with Afghans. The riots in Faryab in 2006 were not provoked by Norwegian units, and happened during a period of similar incidents around many ISAF and PRT bases in other regions of Afghanistan.¹⁴ A sensitivity to and awareness of Afghan specifics guaranteed a lack of "green-on-blue" attacks against Norwegian trainers and mentors, incidents that intensified against other NATO soldiers in many ANSF units during 2009–2012. This shows successful pre-deployment cultural training for Norwegian soldiers, police officers and civilian advisors, a practice that should be continued during all future missions.

Due to the creation of separate pools of national experts in the main agencies, Norway proved better suited to SSR in Afghanistan than many other ISAF countries.¹⁵ Norway was able to deploy competent military and civilian experts to Faryab province quickly, even if the tasks ahead of them were enormous. Non-military advisors in particular helped build links between the judiciary, law enforcement and broader SSR, when few other countries tried to implement this approach and even fewer had competent personnel with whom to make such an attempt.

Even if local conditions and overall (that is, American) strategies determined trends in Afghanistan, Norway tried to implement its own vision of civilian and SSR assistance there. These holistic and quality-focused efforts in SSR were different to the quantity-focused COIN promoted by the U.S. within NATO-ISAF structures. In future and similar conditions, Norway must pay much more attention to whether the international/coalition framework is flexible enough to promote its national model. In this sense there is also a need for further work on specifying and operationalising the "Norwegian Model" of civil-military cooperation in conflict and post-conflict environments if Norwegians want to maintain such a visible trade mark among allies and the international community.

Experience with the inter-agency Afghanistan Forum confirms the need for high level strategic coordination in Oslo of separate governmental and NGO players engaged in larger scale missions led by NATO, the EU, and/or the UN. It may be difficult to bridge cultural institutional differences between Norwegian civilian and military players, but they need to work on unity of effort at the operational and tactical (local) levels. In the

¹³ In 2010, some Norwegian mentors were sceptical about the idea of sending units of the ANA 209th Corps to southern Afghanistan, stressing the risk of desertions there.

¹⁴ Riots in Afghanistan in 2006 were caused by the publication of the Danish cartoons of Mohammed. In some provinces of Afghanistan, protests were inspired by mullahs and Taliban, but in many northern provinces they were provoked by local warlords in the hope that the international presence there would become limited.

¹⁵ Norway's Ministry of Justice and its Police Directorate has had, since 1989, around 80 civilian police related SSR experts in its CIVPOL pool. Since 2007, the Norwegian Ministry of Defence has maintained a pool of up to 75 military officers trained in best practices of defence related SSR, as well as, since 2010, a separate staff (three or four personnel) of NODEFIC, specialised in this area and cooperating with other think tanks such as the FFI. In 2004, Ministry of Justice created a unique Judicial Crisis Response Pool (*Styrkebrønnen*) of between 80 and 90 legal advisors, half of them ready at any given time. Support for SSR efforts is also an area of interest for NORAD, the development aid agency supervised by Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Other rosters of experts that may otherwise help in Norwegian international efforts are NORDEM and NOREPS, although their expertise lies outside the area strictly understood as SSR.

event of another Afghan-scale mission, this could be improved by appointing a special coordinator of governmental agencies within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Ministry of Defence, with their affiliation and “mandate” determined by the scale of military and civilian needs. For smaller missions, unity of civilian and military efforts might be achieved at the lower head of task force level, as well as on a daily basis through consultations of civilian and military officers on the ground (in particular during international missions).

Polish Lessons Learned

Polish personnel operating in Ghazni made substantial improvements in the capacity of the Afghan security sector. It is estimated that the Polish Task Force trained a total of 11,000 Afghan soldiers and policemen. In autumn 2013, the 3rd Afghan Brigade of 203 Corps, trained by the Polish task force, was assessed as the best trained of eight brigades operating in Regional Command-East, and one of four with the lowest desertion rate in all Afghanistan.

At the early stage, however, tensions were reported between Polish and Afghan military personnel, due to the Poles’ insufficient pre-deployment cultural training. Gradually, Polish trainers learned to form good relations with their Afghan counterparts. Polish soldiers indicate that they learned how to motivate Afghans by showing respect to their culture and traditions rather than pressing with the schedule.¹⁶ It is likely that, without the physical presence of the trainers at the battalion and brigade level, this kind of motivation may quickly evaporate.

Polish military and civilian personnel encountered numerous problems with the recruitment of civilian specialists and their deployment as civilian experts on the military payroll. There were no legal and procedural solutions in place to facilitate the deployment of civilian personnel to the combat zones as part of a military mission. The long overdue changes in law will have to be implemented to enable the deployment of civilian personnel from departments other than the MFA and MOD. Poland should consider the creation of a pool of specialists specialised in development and SSR, who would be willing to deploy at short notice.

In the early phase of the mission, the effectiveness of its civilian component was hindered by the long decision making process required by the coordination between military, MFA, MOD and other departments such as the Ministry of Interior or Ministry of Finance. The coordination has improved, but there is a need for joint training of military, administration and NGO personnel, to better synchronise the efforts of all players involved in SSR and broader stability operations.

The Polish military has adjusted and adopted procedures that enable a more flexible approach to stability operations, in line with the developing U.S. and NATO doctrines. The military developed CIMIC procedures, learned to interact better with civilians, and created conditions for better cooperation involving the civilian component. It also displayed the ability to use the PRT concept for SSR purposes. Altogether, Poland has improved the ability to shift from a presence based on military kinetic operations to a military-civilian or purely civilian assistance mission. However, to make the results of future operations sustainable, civilian actors should be involved in the mission planning. It will also be necessary to develop a practice of independent assessments of the mission’s outcome.

Potential for Cooperation between Poland and Norway

The Polish and Norwegian Afghan experience have opened new ways of cooperation for the two countries, based on common interests of providing security outside EU and NATO territories. With the ongoing conflicts and potential for instability in different parts of Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa, both countries will face growing pressure to deal with numerous security challenges to the Euro-Atlantic community, and a growing need for SSR in postconflict, conflict and hard to define environments. By working together, Poland and Norway could have a wider set of policy options offering the flexible use of political, military and civilian tools for stability operations and SSR in the framework of coalitions led by the UN, NATO, the EU, the OSCE, or the United States, or on the bilateral level.

¹⁶ Interview with Polish officer from the Military Advisory Team (MAT), Ghazni, March 2014.

Poland and Norway should place on their bilateral agenda the creation of a shared concept of SSR as a part of stability operations. This could lead to better cooperation and enhanced influence on the development of NATO doctrine and concepts of PRT, a comprehensive approach and defence capacity building. Thus, both countries could more effectively shape the security environment in line with their priorities, and the priorities of the main international organisations they see as pillars of their security.


With an agreed vision of SSR, Poland and Norway could cooperate more closely on SSR in the framework of NATO and the EU, and advance closer cooperation of those organisations in crisis management missions. Poland, as an EU Member State, could present an agreed approach at the decision-making level. Practical cooperation could be developed on the basis of the Framework Participation Agreement, which provides the legal and political framework for Norway to participate in EU missions.

Both countries should cooperate on the development of common tools necessary for effective SSR. Since the military police play an increasingly important role in NATO doctrine, Poland and Norway could set up regular consultations and cooperation on doctrine and concept development, education and training, research and development, analysis, and lessons learned. Further practical cooperation could be developed through the newly established Military Police Centre of Excellence in Bydgoszcz, of which Poland is the framework nation.

Similarly, both countries could coordinate and cooperate on the EU level and support both MP and civilian police SSR capabilities in EUPOL, of which Poland is a member and Norway is an Invited Third State, as well as through EUROGENDFOR.

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