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Seminar Report

AFGHANISTAN 2015: AN UPHILL ROAD?

**Seminar on the Security Situation and the Reconstruction of Afghanistan
Middelburg, 19 November 2009**

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Introduction

On 19 November 2009, on the initiative of Djejhoun Ostowar and with the support of Roosevelt Academy and the National Commission for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development, a high-level seminar on the security situation and reconstruction of Afghanistan took place in Middelburg (The Netherlands).

A group of diplomats and experts representing the Centre for International Legal Cooperation, International Center for Transitional Justice, The Hague Center for Strategic Studies, the Dutch Ministry of Defense, and the Embassies of the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan convened in Middelburg in order to evaluate achievements in the field of security and reconstruction in Afghanistan, and to reflect on expectations and policy priorities for the foreseeable future.

Among the participants at the seminar were also representatives from several Embassies, including those of India, Iran, Poland and Indonesia, and non-governmental organizations, including School Support 4 Afghanistan, Save the Children, Foundation IntEnt and Avalon. The event took place on the same day as President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai held his inaugural speech in Kabul.



Background

Since 2001, there has been an intensive and multi-faceted international involvement in Afghanistan. Afghans and their international partners have committed themselves to fighting the Taliban and reconstructing what has been destroyed by three decades of armed conflict. Eight years after the initial US-led military intervention, the Afghan people have participated twice in Presidential elections. In 2010 the nation will once again exercise its democratic right to elect members of the parliament.

However, one cannot ignore recent reports about the election fraud, the worsening of the security situation, the strengthening of the power of warlords and the re-emergence of the Taliban. ISAF, UNAMA and the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom have faced challenges in balancing the effects of the continuing fighting against the Taliban and the

pursuit of other objectives, such as the economic and social development of the country and the strengthening of the rule of law.

For these reasons, it was considered important to identify and analyze possible mistakes made by the international community and the new Afghan authorities, and critically assess some of the ongoing problems and policy priorities. The seminar also aimed to formulate a list of recommendations and guidelines for governments, NGOs, and inter-governmental organizations involved in Afghanistan.

Format of the Seminar

The Seminar took place in Middelburg's old City Hall from 14:00 until 17:30. The structure of the seminar was as follows: Ehsan Turabaz, President of the Netherlands-Afghanistan Business Council opened the event with a short speech. Two key-note addresses were delivered by Dr. Nezam, Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (also chief of the country's mission to the European Commission) and by Christa Meindersma, Deputy Head of The Hague Center for Strategic Studies.

The key-note addresses were followed by the discussion with the panel of experts which included:

- Dr. Herman Lelieveldt (Chairman)
Associate Professor of Political Science at Roosevelt Academy
- Andrew Mann
Counselor for Political & Economic Affairs of the US Embassy
- Lieutenant Colonel Wilfred Rietdijk
Former commandant of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Uruzgan
- Dick Oosting
Europe Director of the International Center for Transitional Justice
- Drs. Marie José Alting von Geusau
Director of the Center for International Legal Cooperation
- Dick Scherjon
Member Board of Directors of Rabobank Netherland

The second part of the seminar included an interactive discussion in three separate working group sessions: Afghanistan Military Missions, The Rule of Law, and The Role of the Private Sector. Speakers, experts and seminar participants convened in small groups in order to address specific questions relevant to each working group theme. The informed participation of the audience was stimulated by background reading on recent developments being provided beforehand. After the working group sessions Prof. Dr. Scott-Smith gave some concluding remarks on the main elements of the whole debate.

An Overview of Statements

The main question in all speeches was: “What has been achieved in the past eight years and what has to be done to improve the security situation and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan?” This question was addressed from different angles.



Ehsan Turabaz, President of the Netherlands-Afghanistan Business Council emphasized the responsibility of the Afghan government to ensure that the investment and major contributions of the international community “will not go to waste”. In this respect, the government and the international community have to do more to foster the inclusiveness of Afghans in the reconstruction efforts

Economic growth and development is the key approach to progress in the fragile process towards political and economic reconstruction. Afghans are “entrepreneurs by nature” and have to be given enough resources to develop businesses. In particular agriculture requires considerable investments in the years to come: “agricultural development with a focus on water management, farm credit and access to land can easily and rapidly make Afghanistan self-sufficient in food production”. Afghanistan’s legal rules for the private sector, its ecological conditions and its unique geographical position make the country fit for lucrative business investments. The positive impacts of this opportunity should not be underestimated.

H.E. Dr. Nezam, Ambassador of Afghanistan to Benelux and Greece (also responsible for Afghanistan’s relations with the EU and NATO) sketched the achievements and challenges of Afghanistan. First of all, he asked the audience not to consider and compare Afghanistan to other countries and other post-conflict contexts. Afghanistan has gone through three decades of armed conflict and has very distinct problems in terms of their nature and scale. Nevertheless, he argued that there have been positive developments over the past eight years. Afghanistan has made considerable progress in the areas of governance, security and development. With regard to the latter, improvements in infrastructure, telecommunications, schools and clinics should not be overlooked. Dr. Nezam echoed the opinion of Ehsan Turabaz about the great necessity of “Afghan ownership”, meaning that Afghans must be given more room to take leadership in the current and future rebuilding efforts.

H.E. Ambassador Nezam also paid attention to the main challenges that Afghanistan faces at the moment: terrorism, drugs and corruption. The security situation has seriously deteriorated in the last couple of years and terrorists are using new and dangerous techniques. Because of the strong regional dimension of terrorism, Dr. Nezam mentioned the importance of border controls in the south of the country. According to the UN Afghanistan is still the world's main opium producer, which damages the whole reconstruction process. While a reduction of opium production has been achieved, the challenge remains unresolved. It is important to note that drug production and trafficking has a strong local dimension, namely that "98 % of the poppy plantations are found in the seven south-eastern provinces." The three most troubled provinces are Helmand, Kandahar and Uruzgan. Therefore anti-drug programs have to pay attention to specific provinces.

With regard to corruption, the problems are evident but so also are government efforts to tackle the problem. This has so far involved introducing an anti-corruption law and agency, and action by the High Authority which led to the removal of thousands of civil servants, judges and high ranking police officers. However, it is vital to guarantee more transparency in the domain of foreign aid, a major source of finance in the country. In fact, "only 1/5 of the foreign aid passes through the Afghan government". Hence, in order to have a balanced analysis of the problem it is crucial to nuance the argument about the mismanagement by the central and local governments.

Christa Meindersma, Deputy Head of The Hague Center for Security Studies, addressed the audience on some other domains of the situation in Afghanistan, namely public perceptions and the necessary political strategies in the fight against the growing insurgency and the Taliban. The public mood in troop-contributing countries, including The Netherlands, has changed for the worse because of the mass fraud in the recent Presidential elections. Many politicians in most of the countries involved are unsure about their views on the commitment to Afghanistan.



However, there are shared concerns about the credibility of the Afghan government, and countries are searching for a joint strategy in response. There is a need for a reliable partner if the international community is to engage further in counterinsurgency, protect the population and rebuild the country. Hence we now face a combination of political confusion and a public perception problem.

As the public support for the military presence in Afghanistan is decreasing it is important to realize that withdrawing from Afghanistan is highly dangerous because of the real threat of the return of extremist movements to the country. However, there is a major limitation to what the military alone can achieve. In the longer term it is difficult to build partnership and trust among people, especially because Afghans realize that international troops will leave one day. In this regard it is important to increase efforts in training and operational support for the Afghan police and army, and to utilize diplomatic and political measures much better. The most sustainable way to fight the insurgency is to provide alternatives for people, for instance through providing basic services and stimulating civil engagement in governance at all levels.

With regard to the development of the Afghan armed conflict Christa Meindersma emphasized the growing regional dimension: “The war is no longer about Al-Qaida or Afghanistan. It is really about Pakistan and about preventing the collapse of Pakistan.” The problem is that the debate about Afghanistan centers around the number of girl’s schools and midwives while a critical discussion about the regional dimension of the conflict is often avoided. The serious engagement of Pakistan, India, Iran, China and Russia are vital: “a regional commitment towards Afghanistan’s future and a regional process is needed that involves these countries in peace conferences or a ‘group of friends’ mechanism.”

Further, Christa Meindersma commented on the necessity to talk to the Taliban. The points of reconciliation and power-sharing are clear. However the process is more complicated in practice: “The Taliban are not a neatly structured organization with identifiable representatives to talk to but a loose network of affiliated groups and persons.” Because of this fact the search for a potential partner on behalf of the Taliban is highly problematic. However, it is possible to focus on non-ideological Taliban members and those who are driven into joining the Taliban due to economic necessity. It means “addressing legitimate grievances of the population, strengthening local government and creating economic and development opportunities in the tribal areas where the Taliban recruits”, in particular the Pashtun areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Discussion with the Expert Panel

Panel Chairman Dr. Herman Lelieveldt based the discussion on a question in the article “Democratization backwards” by Richard Rose about what democracy really is. Rose identified four ingredients: accountability of government (horizontal accountability), rule of law, civil society, and free and fair elections. All of these are relevant to Afghanistan. Democracy is more than having free and fair elections. Dr. Lelieveldt’s questions revolved around these four ingredients, as well as the conditions that he sees as underlying them: peace and stability. This was the broader question and experts attempted to formulate their opinions with regard to policy priorities.

Lieutenant Colonel Wilfred Rietdijk stressed that a large part of the solution is in good governance. However, it is not governance at the national level, but provincial and community levels that matter. The idea behind this approach is that Afghans should be in the front; they should take the responsibility and also get the credit for operations. Afghan society should be made responsible for the situation.

Drs. Marie José Alting von Geusau, Director of International Center for Legal Cooperation, expressed her concern about the capability of Afghan society to install order and the rule of law. She noted that the structures for the rule of law are present, but it is not as if there exists a properly functioning system. In the 2001 Bonn Agreements the decision was taken on whether Afghan society was to be organized for peace or for justice. At that time peace was chosen over justice.



Dick Oosting, Europe Director of the International Center for Transitional Justice, explained that compromising on justice was a great mistake. ‘Peace’ was chosen, and as a result there has been a continuous constitutional crisis between the three branches of government, the executive, judicial, and legal. This also means that unlawful conduct by warlords and individuals involved in drug trafficking or the weapons trade are not addressed sufficiently. At this moment a solution to these issues and conflicts is not easily found. A weak judiciary and the poor state of rule of law result in strongly diminished trust among Afghans; this is projected toward the government, enforcement agencies and the international community.

Andrew Mann, Counselor of Political Affairs of the US Embassy in The Hague, and Dick Scherjon from Rabobank Netherlands both agreed with the importance of good governance, rule of law and the involvement and leadership of Afghans in private, military and state programs. With regard to a potential increase in international military personnel and engagement, Andrew Mann warned against losing sight of political strategies which involve engaging with the Taliban at the local level and creating secure spaces for businesses. Dick Scherjon pointed out that when we talk about the economic development of Afghanistan we need to be specific and know that, first of all, the process takes a lot of time, and second, that efforts can be more effective when they are directed at “local entrepreneurship, also in small villages and very small companies.” This would not only create more trust within the communities but also allow insurgents and non-ideological or economically-driven Taliban to have alternatives.

Overview Working Group Sessions

Wokshop 1: Afghanistan Military Missions

Main Speakers:

Andrew Mann

Lieutenant-Colonel Rietdijk

Chirsta Meindersma

Moderator: Prof. Dr. Giles Scott Smith

Rapporteur: Theresa Kayser

The first question, which took up most of the discussion, was on the issue of increasing NATO's military presence. General McChrystal's plan for President Obama asks for 40,000 extra US troops and the introduction of a counter-insurgency strategy for all ISAF units. President Obama will decide on this and other options at the end of November.

The response to this was that it is not necessarily a question of more troops, but it is a question what the troops do and how they operate. You have to be able to make sure that troops operational in Afghanistan operate in such a way that civilian casualties are minimized – that they are not there to literally kill the Taliban and insurgents, but to protect civilians and raise trust amongst the Afghan population. This is a matter of education within the military itself. There is thus quite a dramatic reorientation required.

Another point made was that a deadline for measuring achievements is needed. It is not for nothing that Gen. McChrystal said, "We are looking at twelve months – a crucial period," not because he wants to leave in twelve months – no, he wants to get results within twelve months. It is a long-term strategy with a very short-term aim to turn the corner from negative to positive.

Essentially, the main point was that without extra troops you will not reach anything, but if you focus entirely only on a military approach you will not reach anything either. The military involvement is necessarily only part of a much bigger political process.

The discussion continued by addressing the role of neighboring nations. A representative of the Embassy of India in the audience commented on the input his nation was providing in the field of development aid. There was also speculation that Pakistan was only able to direct its military against Taliban forces within its borders because tensions between India and Pakistan, for instance over Kashmir, had been temporarily put on hold. Finally, Andrew Mann was asked whether there were not sufficient grounds for greater cooperation between the United States and Iran, considering the Iranian opposition to the Taliban and the problem that Iran faces with a growing drug problem. He responded that from the US perspective the nuclear issue overshadows this and must first be resolved before efforts in other areas can be pursued.

Workshop 2: Development and the Role of the Private Sector

Main Speakers:

Dick Scherjon

Rapporteur: Michelle van Geffen

Drs. Ehsan Turabaz

During the discussion there was an agreement that there is a distinct role for the private sector when it comes to helping with the reestablishment of the Afghan economy, because there is a strong relationship between economic development and stability. Economic development helps to achieve stability in a country, but at the same time it is this same stability which is a prerequisite to establish trust and hence, economic development. Hence the business sector has interest in a stable world, and thus investment should not be based on maximizing profits but instead should be directed toward creating stability.

There are several reasons for companies to be active in the region, due to its geographical position and considerable resources. Yet Afghanistan remains, at this moment in time, a country not very well suited to establish large profit based companies (e.g. multinationals – ‘the quick game’ is not suited for a country like Afghanistan) and the focus should therefore lie on local initiatives.

For private companies it is often costly to start up a business in an unstable political environment, therefore extra incentives to start up businesses in these countries are needed. Experts suggest that reimbursements from the government to cover the extra costs should be made (e.g. security costs), to overcome this issue.

In addition Mrs. Turabaz and Mr. Scherjon emphasized that there should be a Dutch representative of business stationed in the Dutch embassy in Kabul (this has been accomplished). This is vital to overcome corruption issues since it is clearly the case that aid/money often does not reach its intended goals.

While the history of conflict in Afghanistan remains a major disruptive factor in business life, the speakers underlined that it is due to entrepreneurship that conflicts are often overcome. Additionally, the younger generations are said to be more focused on the future.

Workshop 3: The Rule of Law in Afghanistan

Main speakers:

Dick Oosting

Moderator: Imro Baldew

Marie Gosé Alting von Geusau

Rapporteur: Anton Buntinx

The Bagram prison near Kabul was the first topic of discussion. Approximately 600 persons are currently being detained in this prison. It is believed that many grave violations of human rights take place there. Soon after US President Obama was inaugurated, the US declared that they were going to give \$60 million to expand its capacity from 600 to 1100 prisoners.

Most workshop participants agreed that something had to be changed. It is necessary that these prisoners are given a certain status, especially since winning hearts and minds is one of the aims of the international (military) operations. First of all, every prisoner has to be able to get some judicial assistance. This is necessary because many of them are being detained for reasons that are often not clearly communicated, and prisoners have been in prison for a long time without any trial or conviction. In this regard, the US has the largest responsibility to do something about this situation. It is necessary to solve this issue to maintain some credibility for the international community in Afghanistan.

Another major problem is that the current Afghan government and parliament includes many individuals who are allegedly corrupt, have committed human rights violations and war crimes in the past, or are (indirectly) linked to drug trafficking and the weapons trade. The amnesty law gives amnesty to war criminals, war lords, and drug traffickers, allowing them to pursue key positions in the current government. There was a consensus in the working group that this situation is totally unacceptable because it damages the credibility of the government. A further concern was that Afghanistan still enforces capital punishment. Strangely enough, this is being supported by many local human rights organizations.

The issues of amnesty, detentions and prisoner treatment are strongly connected to the dominant sense of fear in Afghan society. People fear the Taliban, the Afghan prisons, the US army, etc. The problem here – and this is also a more general problem - is that almost all strategies in Afghanistan are based on short-term solutions instead of looking at the longer term necessities such as reconciliation, social cohesion and popular trust in political and judicial institutions.

Conclusions & Recommendations

The Broader Strategy

1. For sustainability and long-term progress there must be a greater emphasis on political strategies in counter-terrorism and anti-insurgency operations; a policy based primarily on military measures has major limitations;
2. It is crucial to build on better governance, the rule of law and economic development of Afghanistan in order to create more legitimacy for the government, stronger support among donor countries, and a more effective transition towards peace and stability in Afghanistan;

Military

1. The presence of international troops is crucial for preventing Afghanistan from falling back into a civil war or becoming again a ‘safe haven for extremism’. Therefore in the short term the withdrawal of troops is highly dangerous;
2. More troops and a better capacity in general can make operations more effective, but there is much more needed for successful counter-terrorism and anti-insurgency operations, namely engagement with elements of the insurgency on local levels and the involvement of more Afghans in civil structures of governance and humanitarian work;
3. There is a great necessity to prevent more civil casualties. It means appropriate command and the training of forces which are sent to Afghanistan; a less offensive military role for international troops would therefore be a good option, and in this regard operational support and training of Afghan army and troops is crucial. This way international troops are less visible and vulnerable and at the same time Afghan ‘ownership’ of the situation is stimulated over the longer term;
4. Military should (continue to) actively support and engage in (re-)building in order to create a safer environment for reconstruction and business activities. It will at the same time increase trust and support of the local population;

Private Sector

1. Investments in development projects and the creation of business opportunities can help reduce poverty and related problems and also decrease insurgency activity by providing alternatives for non-ideological fighters;
2. The international community must actively promote investment and business opportunities in Afghanistan. This means coordination, certain financial guarantees and supervision;
3. Afghanistan’s legislation and favorable ecological and geographical characteristics make the country well fit for lucrative businesses, in particular in agricultural goods;

4. Special attention has to be paid to the entrepreneurial Afghan tradition; investments in local and small businesses can be very successful;
5. Business activities in Afghanistan must have a social dimension, meaning that maximizing profit should not be the main aim, rather a sustainable development with an eye for future growth;
6. In drug producing provinces, in particular in South-Eastern part of the country, one of the priorities for business development should be providing strong alternatives to drug production. Investment can be directed at the agricultural sector, with a care for appropriate water supply as drought is one of the natural reasons for high poppy cultivation.

The Rule of Law

1. The current poor state of rule of law and widespread corruption has a highly negative effect on the public perception of the government, the legislature and the judicial branch. Therefore strong repairing measures are required;
2. In particular the Afghan government and the international community must be cautious about the Amnesty bill which was passed by the Parliament in 2007. Making this bill a law will have negative consequences for the security situation and the rebuilding process;
3. As ‘winning hearts and minds’ is the main corner-stone for international engagement in Afghanistan, all relevant parties must address the grievances of ordinary Afghans about arrests and detentions. In this respect Bagram military prison presents a serious problem which should receive more attention in the public debate. Giving prisoners a certain status and a possibility of review are the first steps in the right direction.
4. On a more general note, a lot still needs to be invested in the education and training of Afghans. The judicial branch, like many other sectors in Afghanistan, needs more qualified personnel.

Appendix 1

Ehsan Turabaz

Opening speech of the Seminar Afghanistan 2015: An Uphill Road?

May I ask you for a moment of silence for those who have scarified their lives and lost loved ones for peace and satiability in Afghanistan?

I wish to express my deep gratitude to the International Community for its strong support during the past 8 years. I am particularly thankful to the Dutch soldiers and their families for helping secure Afghanistan and making the world a safer place for all of us

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour and pleasure for me as president of the Netherlands-Afghanistan Business Council and Honorary Consul of Afghanistan in Rotterdam, to welcome you all to this important seminar on Security Situation and Reconstruction of Afghanistan organised by Roosevelt Academy in Middelburg at this beautiful and historic building of Middelburg City Hall.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Afghanistan is often in the Dutch news because of the presence and the great contribution of the Netherlands in the rebuilding of Uruzgan province. And we, in The Netherlands are too familiar with the challenges that the next Afghan government needs to address / to bring back hope for our people.

The new Afghan government need to assure our international partners as well as our neighbours in the region that their investment in Afghanistan will not go to waste. They have patiently helped Afghans to rebuild their country and provided training for the Afghan army and police forces invested in the rebuilding of infrastructure and private sector, to ensure that one day they will be able to take the security of the country into their own hands. And we cannot forget that all of this has come with a substantial cost of human lives against the growing insurgency.

Ladies and gentlemen,

After three decades of war, Afghanistan has taken a fragile way towards political and economical reconstruction.

Economic development in Afghanistan is the “the engine of growth”. Expansion of the private sector is since 2004 one of the pillars of the national priority program (NPP). This fits the Afghan soul and spirit: Afghans are entrepreneurs by nature; it has been and will be our instrument of survival and well-being all over the world.

During my visits to Afghanistan I noticed that this tradition of entrepreneurship was still alive and kicking. But most importantly, I saw a growing spirit of great responsibility and duty to cooperate and to rebuild the country as soon as possible.

While we continue to build on our achievements in the areas of health, education and

building roads, agriculture and energy will be our top priorities which require urgent and adequate investment over the years to come. Agricultural development with a focus on water management, farm credit and access to land can easily and rapidly make Afghanistan self-sufficient in food production. In this context, we welcome the increased attention duly paid to agricultural development from international community for Afghanistan. The effective coordination of our efforts at all levels is a crucial precondition for producing tangible results in these and other sectors of reconstruction and development.

Building up Afghan institutions to deliver services and guarantee a long term social and economic development must also be at the heart of our concerns.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The position of Afghanistan as a natural land bridge should not be taken lightly. It is this function that makes Afghanistan so important for the prosperity of the region.

Afghanistan can connect Central Asia to South Asia and Far East to Middle East – a market of literally half of the world population and vast resources. This will facilitate the transit of goods, energy and gas. With the construction of our ring roads, our national highway system, all Central Asian Capitals will be less than 32 hours from the Persian Gulf and the India Ocean.

For supporting and facilitating the investment process, the government of Afghanistan has created the specialized ‘Afghan Investment Support Agency (AISA)’. This ‘One Stop Agency’ assists potential investors in any business matters, to make their business activities in Afghanistan successful as well as hassle free. It is because of these measures that the World Bank “Doing Business Report 2006” has declared Afghanistan the easiest place for investing and starting business.

Let me talk about some of the challenges:

Security is a problem but not as bad as portrayed by the media. Plenty of investment and businesses already on the ground are indicative of our relatively conducive security and enabling environment.

Some of you, who know about Afghanistan through the media, may be concerned about the security as well as the entry of the new investments. We do have terrorist incidents from time to time, as so do many other countries; we do have deteriorated security in some specific districts of the country.

Investment goes parallel to security. Without security there can be no economic development and without economic development there can be no security.

The first and most important step that needs to be taken towards long-term peace in Afghanistan is the introduction of a national unity program. This program needs to be inclusive. It must be put forward by the Afghans for the Afghans, to ensure that everyone is a stakeholder

Laws and regulations have been modified to make them private sector friendly. Our laws

such as the investment law, tax law, customs law, banking law are the most competitive in the region. Our laws allow no distinction between national and international investors. Electricity is also a problem. However, electricity itself is one of the important areas for investment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Afghanistan warmly welcomes investment projects in the dairy production, livestock and horticulture from Dutch origin. All these activities and achievements of ours should make it possible that our economy grows and reaches the supreme goal: welfare for everyone! We have the duty to reach this goal for the people of Afghanistan as well as for the people of the region of which we are part.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the past 8 years Dutch-Afghan ties, relationships and even friendships have developed, committed to assist Afghanistan in different sectors. The visit of H.E. President Karzai in 2007 matchmaking Conference for private sector and the most important The Hague Conference on Comprehensive approach of Afghanistan challenges shows Dutch commitment and interest for peace, stability and economic rebuilding of Afghanistan.

The Netherlands has an excellent track record in areas such as agriculture technology, water management, environmental technology, public transport and logistics, medical and food technology. In some areas, modest initiatives for cooperation have been developed so far. We are working on the extension and institutionalization of these initiatives. Talks of a trade mission to Afghanistan are getting more serious every day.

I sincerely hope that your presence here today, and the mutual commitment I experience every day between the Dutch and Afghans, will open new channels of direct cooperation between both countries.

The road ahead will be long. There will be difficult days. And we will use all our resources to rebuild and secure Afghanistan. I entirely disagree with those who say "being in Afghanistan is dangerous; the fact is that, not being in Afghanistan is much more dangerous.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last but not least, I would like to thank you all very much the Roosevelt Academy, sponsors and special my dear fellow Afghan and RA student Mr. Ostowar for making this seminar possible.

Appendix 2

H.E. Dr. Nezam, Ambassador of Afghanistan
Key-note speech (French)

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Je suis honoré de me trouver parmi vous lors de cette importante réunion dédiée à l'avenir de l'Afghanistan. Je souhaite d'abord vous féliciter pour l'initiative d'organiser, par l'important Académie Roosevelt, un séminaire qui porte sur les aspects positifs et les objectifs à long terme en Afghanistan. Je profite de l'occasion pour remercier mon ami et Consul Honoraire de l'Afghanistan à Rotterdam, Drs. Ehsan Turabaz, pour ses aimables paroles. Puisque la situation est devenue plus complexe ces derniers mois, je l'estime important de présenter à l'audience occidentale les progrès achevés depuis 8 ans. L'Afghanistan est l'un des rares pays dont le passé récent est affligé par tant de drames et de douleurs et qui a tant de défis à relever aujourd'hui. Il y a en effet des évolutions considérables, bien que pas suffisants, dans les domaines de la gouvernance, sécurité et reconstruction.

I. Les développements

Des progrès remarquables ont été accomplis depuis la chute des Taliban en novembre 2001. Il y a huit ans l'Afghanistan était un pays détruit par la guerre, l'ingérence étrangère. Même si le pays demeure toujours pauvre et sous-développée, après huit ans d'efforts conjoints de la communauté internationale et l'Afghanistan, la situation a beaucoup changé.

a) L'amélioration de la gouvernance

La nécessité vitale pour l'Afghanistan consiste à instaurer un véritable Etat de droit, assurant la protection des droits des citoyens. L'état de droit est essentiel pour un gouvernement légitime et la protection des citoyens. Le bon fonctionnement d'un Etat est la conséquence de la bonne gouvernance.

La situation afghane est très différente par rapport aux autres Etats sortis de la crise. L'idée de construction d'un Etat (« nation building ») traduit historiquement des situations extrêmement différentes. Les Balkans des années 1990 et 2000 de l'Irak d'aujourd'hui avaient des structures étatique préexistantes, qu'elles soient politiques, sécuritaires et sociales. Mais en Afghanistan, après les Taliban, les institutions étatiques étaient inexistantes.

Par conséquent s'agissant de l'Afghanistan de 2001, tout était à inventer, puisque les Taliban avaient terminé le processus de démantèlement des structures étatiques commencé lors de l'occupation soviétiques des années 1980. C'est à partir de cette période qu'il convient de juger les progrès accomplis dans le domaine de la gouvernance.

Depuis la conclusion de l'accord de Bonn en 2001, la communauté internationale aide le Gouvernement afghan de mettre en place d'institutions gouvernementales efficaces et capables de fournir des services de base à la population.

Après des années d'efforts conjoints de la communauté internationale et l'Afghanistan, le pays a beaucoup progressé dans ce domaine. L'Afghanistan a aujourd'hui la Constitution la plus démocratique de la région. L'organisation des élections présidentielles en 2004 et parlementaires en 2005 ont été des vrais succès. L'enregistrement et la campagne des élections présidentielles de 2009 ont été également réussis. Les élections elles-mêmes, bien que controversées, peuvent être considérées comme un succès sur le plan de la sécurité. Aujourd'hui les trois branches de l'Etat, à savoir l'Exécutif, le législatif et la judiciaire fonctionnent convenablement pour une jeune démocratie comme la notre. La liberté de presse est en plein essor, des dizaines de chaînes télévisées et stations de radio et des centaines de journaux et autres publications ont été lancées depuis huit ans. Les afghans jouissent aujourd'hui d'avantage de droits politiques et sociaux (y compris des droits pour les femmes) que jamais au cours de l'histoire du pays.

L'Afghanistan est largement une société au caractère rural. Par conséquent l'établissement d'une gouvernance compétente au niveau local est très important. Afin de renforcer les liens entre l'administration centrale et locale, la Direction indépendante pour la gouvernance locale a été créée en 2007. Celle-ci a pour objectif de renforcer les institutions à l'échelon local et de favoriser la transparence et la responsabilisation.

b. La sécurité

Bien que la situation de la sécurité demeure critique, il est nécessaire de rappeler les développements qui se sont produits au cours de ces 8 ans. En 2001 l'Afghanistan ne disposait pas d'une armée nationale, il y avait plutôt des milices et des armées privées. Cependant, avec l'aide de la communauté internationale et de l'OTAN, l'Afghanistan a réussi à rassembler une armée nationale qui compte aujourd'hui 95 000 soldats et qui bénéficie de la confiance de la population. Ces militaires sont relativement bien entraînés ; ils participent à 80% des opérations menées sur le territoire afghan et ils assurent la direction de 50% d'entre eux. Il faut cependant souligner que la sécurité précaire existant actuellement en Afghanistan nécessite encore la présence voire l'augmentation des troupes étrangères qui se situent actuellement à 100 000 militaires de l'OTAN et de la coalition ensemble. Pour résoudre le problème à long terme, il est nécessaire de faire des efforts d'accroître les forces de sécurité afghanes jusqu'aux environs de 240 000 pour l'ANA et 160 000 pour la police. Les soldats et les policiers nécessitent plus que jamais de la formation renforcée et davantage d'équipement afin qu'ils puissent faire face aux insurgés. Au sujet de ce dernier aspect, je dois mentionner l'activité des OMLT, équipes opérationnelles de mentorat et liaison, qui sont une partie importante de la contribution de l'OTAN en Afghanistan. Sous la direction des OMLT les capacités de l'ANA augmentent progressivement. Aujourd'hui, plusieurs bataillons et quartiers généraux de l'armée ont atteint les standards nécessaires pour mener d'opérations militaires indépendantes. De même, l'armée ainsi que la police afghane bénéficient des programmes extensifs de formation, restructuration et développement menés par le CSTC-A, Commandement Joint pour la Transition de la Sécurité, une entité militaire multinationale chargée de préparer les forces de sécurité afghane à défendre le pays. Récemment, les activités des OMLT et du CSTC-A sont coordonnées par un

commandement unique sous l'autorité du Général Stanley MacChrystal.

Je dois mentionner aussi que depuis 2001 l'Afghanistan a une force de police comptant 80 000 policiers. Toutefois, cette force est encore loin d'atteindre les standards de professionnalisme et intégrité que nous souhaitons, ou même celles de l'ANA. Mais avec l'aide de la communauté internationale et surtout des Etats-Unis, de l'OTAN et de l'Union Européenne et sa mission EUPOL, ainsi qu'avec des sérieux efforts de la part du Ministère de l'Intérieur, nous espérons que cette situation changera dans le futur proche, car cet aspect est vital pour le pays.

Selon les prévisions des autorités afghanes, les forces de sécurité afghanes seront capables d'ici 5 ans de relever le fardeau de la sécurité du pays, et ainsi alléger ou éliminer complètement le poids qui pèse sur les épaules des militaires des pays alliés.

c. Reconstruction et développement

Il est difficile de construire en si peu de temps un pays pauvre qui a subi une destruction aussi massive et violente. De ce fait, un engagement international fort reste nécessaire pour faire face aux problèmes que l'Afghanistan doit surmonter. Ainsi, lors de la Conférence internationale de soutien à l'Afghanistan qui s'est tenue à Paris en juin 2008, les donateurs ont promis une aide généreuse pour la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie nationale afghane de développement, autrement dit pour financer, autant que possible, les priorités définies par le gouvernement afghan dans le cadre de la Stratégie nationale de développement de l'Afghanistan. ANSD est un programme d'orientation qui fixe des priorités pour la période 2008-2013 et il repose sur trois piliers : la sécurité, la gouvernance, ainsi que le développement socio-économique.

Sur le plan économique et du développement le progrès est important. Plusieurs milliers de km de route ont été bâtis. L'Afghanistan est sur le point de finir la construction de la grande route circulaire qui fait le tour du pays et qui constituera un important pont économique entre le sud, le centre et l'ouest de l'Asie. Le système de télécommunication est aussi étendu, aujourd'hui plus de 5 millions d'Afghans possède un téléphone. Des milliers d'écoles et cliniques et des centaines de barrages, ponts et centrales électriques ont été construits. Nous avons une croissance à deux chiffres ou proche à deux chiffres et une monnaie stable. Le PIB par habitant en 2008 était environ 450, c'est-à-dire deux fois et demie celui de l'époque des Taliban. Le programme de solidarité nationale géré en partie par la base a pu mettre en place des équipements souhaitées et nécessaires aux communautés locales dans deux tiers des villages du pays. Pour la première fois dans notre histoire les programmes de développement ont effectivement eu un impact sur le niveau de vie dans les villages.

Nous savons que l'action militaire seule n'est pas une solution au problème afghan. Il faut qu'on investisse aussi dans le domaine du développement, c'est-à-dire envisager une approche globale de la communauté internationale conjuguant les efforts civils et militaires et surtout soutenant la prise de responsabilité accrue par les Afghans et le renforcement de leur leadership, bref, l'appropriation afghane. Nous sommes par conséquence très contents de constater que la nouvelle stratégie américaine prend

fortement en considération les aspects civils du développement et de l'appropriation afghane dans la résolution de conflit en Afghanistan.

Donc il est important à constater que la communauté internationale focalisent sur le volet du développement à coté du celui de la sécurité.

II Les défis

En huit ans, l'Afghanistan a réussi à progresser, mais il nous reste encore beaucoup à faire, il nous reste des défis à relever. Les plus grandes menaces qui pèsent sur l'Afghanistan sont le terrorisme, la culture et le trafic de la drogue et la corruption ; elles sont toutes reliées l'une à l'autre et la cause de toutes est en grande partie la sécurité précaire.

a) Le terrorisme

Il n'y a aucun doute que la sécurité s'est détérioré en Afghanistan, spécialement dans les zones frontalières avec Pakistan et tout au long d'un certain nombre de routes, à cause des activités terroristes.

Le problème du terrorisme en Afghanistan est plus grave et plus compliqué que jamais auparavant. Nous affrontons un ennemi à la composition transnationale et avec objectifs au niveau mondial qui est soutenu et protégé à l'étranger. Lutter contre le terrorisme à l'intérieur de l'Afghanistan n'aura qu'une portée limitée. Le gouvernement afghan a demandé à l'OTAN et la coalition de se concentrer davantage sur le contrôle de la frontière, en réduisant la menace transfrontalière, car de l'autre coté se trouvent les principaux sanctuaires des terroristes. C'est là où ils se regroupent et de là ils organisent des attaque contre l'Afghanistan.

Il y a plus de taliban et de combattants étrangers dans la région aujourd'hui qu'à n'importe quel moment au cours de ces dernières années. Ces terroristes viennent en Afghanistan généralement à travers nos frontières poreuses, surtout de l'est et sud.

Nous constatons beaucoup de progrès chez nos ennemis les terroristes : une meilleure formation, beaucoup de ressources et équipement, de nouvelles tactiques (par ex. les attentat-suicides, explosions à la longue de la route, IED – engins explosifs improvisés), l'amélioration de commandement et coordination, tous ces signes montrent le danger de ce fléau pour l'Afghanistan, pour la région et pour le monde. L'Afghanistan se trouve en 1^{ère} ligne de ce combat et malheureusement première victime. Donc en Afghanistan il n'y a pas un front armé classique et il est difficile d'éviter les morts et les blessés dus aux explosions, les IED et les attentats-suicide. Malheureusement, aujourd'hui nous nous trouvons face à des menaces communes et nous devrions agir ensemble pour faire front devant ce défi que est le terrorisme.

Les activités terroristes ont aussi d'autres conséquences néfastes pour le pays, comme l'augmentation de la culture du pavot ou la corruption et elles endommagent également la restauration de la démocratie et la reconstruction du pays.

La drogue

Les chiffres publiés par l'Office des Nations Unies contre la Drogue et le Crime (ONUDC) montrent que l'Afghanistan reste malheureusement le principal producteur d'opium, bien que ce rapport fasse état d'une diminution de la production par rapport à l'année précédente.

On constate dans le rapport des progrès notables en comparaison de celui de l'année 2008. D'abord les surfaces cultivées ont été réduites de 157 000 hectares à 123 000 hectares, ce qui représente 22% de baisse. La production d'opium en Afghanistan a baissé pour la deuxième année consécutive, avec un recul de 10% en 2009, et la production revient à 6900 tonnes cette année, après un pic à 8200 tonnes en 2007, avant de retomber à 7700 tonnes en 2008. On note également que le nombre des provinces cultivant l'opium est en recul, et au contraire il y a une hausse des provinces sans cultures de pavot de 18 à 20, trois fois et demi plus par rapport à 2006. Cela signifie que l'opium n'est plus cultivé dans plus 3/5 des 34 provinces de l'Afghanistan. La majorité des agriculteurs de ces régions s'étaient reconvertis dans les cultures légales, essentiellement dans la culture du blé. On aperçoit également que dans 27 provinces d'Afghanistan la culture du pavot représente 2% de l'ensemble et à l'inverse 98% de l'opium est cultivé seulement dans sept provinces du sud-ouest, à savoir les 5 provinces du Sud (Helmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan, Zabul et Day Kundi) et deux provinces de l'ouest (Farah et Badghis)

Le problème de la drogue est fortement lié aux activités terroristes et à l'insécurité. Actuellement la quasi-totalité de la production d'opium est effectuée à une superficie limitée, c'est à dire 98% des cultures du pavot à opium se trouvent dans les 7 provinces de Sud-ouest, tandis que les 27 autres provinces produisent que 2% du totale de la récolte. Les trois provinces les plus touchées et qui arrivent en tête pour la production d'opium sont l'Helmand, Kandahar et Uruzgan.

La province de Helmand, où se trouvent plus que moitié de la culture du pavot en Afghanistan, est aussi le territoire le plus affecté par l'insécurité. Nous connaissons la forte connexion entre les terroristes, les criminels et les trafiquants de drogue, qui, à la faveur d'un environnement marqué par l'instabilité, agissent en toute impunité. Les activités terroristes constituent le principal facteur qui facilite la production de la drogue en Afghanistan et les terroristes restent également aussi les plus importants bénéficiaires de cette culture.

c) La corruption

Une autre conséquence négative de l'instabilité est la corruption. Il est évident que l'Afghanistan, selon l'Indice de perception de la corruption 2008 publié par Transparency International, est l'un des Etats les plus corrompus au monde, en même temps que d'autres théâtres de conflit tels l'Iraq, la Somalie, le Myanmar et la Soudan. On sait que la corruption constitue une menace grave pour l'édification de l'Etat et le développement en Afghanistan. Mis à part le gaspillage et la perte des fonds publics, les effets néfastes de la corruption comprennent l'inefficacité de la prestation de services publics et spécialement un énorme préjudice aux pauvres.

Il est important à souligner que qu'une des causes majeures de la corruption est l'argent provenant du commerce illégal de stupéfiants, qui finance la corruption du secteur public, facilitée par le faible salaire des fonctionnaires.

En réalité, selon les chiffres de l'ONUDDC, de 90 à 160 millions de dollars d'argent de la drogue seulement reviennent aux Taliban par année. Le reste de l'argent est saisi par d'autres groupes terroristes.

Dans le domaine de la lutte contre la corruption le gouvernement d'Afghanistan a introduit des mesures afin de combattre ce fléau. La loi anti-corruption est adoptée et l'organisme destiné à contrôler ce phénomène est mis en place. Il s'agit de la Haute Autorité de lutte et de surveillance de la corruption. Elle a pour mission de superviser et coordonner la mise en œuvre de la stratégie anticorruption. Celle-ci a été adoptée en conformité avec la convention des nations Unies contre la corruption que l'Afghanistan avait déjà ratifiée. L'objectif est d'éliminer la corruption dans le secteur public et privé afin d'améliorer l'efficacité et la transparence et de créer un environnement propre à l'investissement qui est nécessaire à la croissance économique et la réduction de la pauvreté.

Les efforts du gouvernement consistent également à reformer les systèmes légaux et judiciaires, en particulier le bureau du Procureur général et la Cour suprême. Des tribunaux spéciaux (de sûreté publique) ont été également aménagés afin d'examiner seulement les affaires de corruption. En outre, un département anticorruption séparé a été mis en place sous l'autorité du Procureur général.

A la suite de ces mesures des milliers de fonctionnaires, de juges, des hauts fonctionnaires de police et autres ont été destitués, poursuivis en justice et condamnés. Les ressources de l'Etat ont augmenté plus de 50% cette année en prenant des mesures contre les fraudes fiscales aux douanes.

Il est également important à souligner qu'une grande partie de l'argent dépensé en Afghanistan provient de l'aide étrangère. Dans ce domaine également nous avons besoin de plus de transparence. Le budget de développement dans sa totalité et une partie du budget ordinaire du pays sont financés grâce à l'aide des pays amis comme les Etats-Unis, le Japon, les Pays-Bas et d'autres pays et organisations internationales comme l'Union Européenne, la Banque Mondiale et d'autres. Cette aide a contribué de manière significative à l'amélioration du niveau de vie en Afghanistan. En améliorant la gestion de cette aide nous pouvons l'utiliser plus efficacement. Il est important à souligner que seul un cinquième de l'aide étrangère passe par le gouvernement afghan et tout le reste est distribué par les donateurs eux-mêmes. On a souvent l'impression que la totalité de l'aide passe entre les mains du gouvernement et que le gouvernement l'avait mal géré. Mais la réalité est que la corruption existe en Afghanistan. Certaines causes sont inhérentes au gouvernement et d'autres sont extérieures.

Conclusion: Comme nous le savons tous, il y a encore une multitude de défis à relever en Afghanistan, et l'année prochain sera difficile, voire un tournant pour l'avenir. Le Président afghan a renouvelé son engagement à la lutte contre la corruption et le renforcement de la sécurité. En même temps, la communauté internationale commence à envisager une amélioration de la stratégie générale en Afghanistan, avec le plan stratégique préparé par le Général MacChrystal et le Blue Book européen. Tout ça pourrait signifier un nouveau début dans le processus difficile, mais pas impossible, de la stabilisation et reconstruction de l'Afghanistan.

Appendix 3

Christa Meindersma
Key-note address

Afghanistan: where to go from here?

This week the German weekly *Der Spiegel* featured an interview with German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle. The interviewer said: "Your biggest foreign policy challenge is Afghanistan. How does one work with a president who has stayed in power as a result of election fraud?"

This is the question on everybody's mind.

Minister Westerwelle answered: "The important thing is that we make it very clear to the reelected president what we expect from him: good governance and action against corruption. It is precisely because of the many questions about how the election was carried out that President Hamid Karzai must try to be a president for all Afghans. That is what we will demand."

The massive election fraud and President Karzai's re-election have changed an already bad mood about our troop commitments to Afghanistan for the worse. The unexpected visit of Hillary Clinton to grace the inauguration ceremony in Kabul today does not change that. Rather, it underscores what Minister Westerwelle said. She emphasized that "There is now a clear window of opportunity for President Karzai and his government to make a new compact with the people of Afghanistan to demonstrate clearly that they're going to have accountability and tangible results that will improve the lives of the people who live throughout this magnificent country."

The public debate in several troop contributing countries is becoming more critical and vocal. The question "what are we doing there?" is asked frequently and openly. Politicians don't have an answer. Several countries are looking for new, or joint, strategies. For instance, in the same interview referred to above, Minister Westerwelle said that "We're in the midst of a discussion about realistic goals and a joint strategy. Only after that discussion is finished can we talk about the resources that we will each have to contribute." President Obama has been consulting his advisors for over two months now and has not made a decision on a way forward. One of his reservations concerns President Karzai. An official present in the situation room meetings said that "one of the biggest obstacles in reaching a decision is uncertainty surrounding the credibility of the Afghan government." US Ambassador to Afghanistan Eikenberry publicly opposes sending additional troops and has expressed strong concerns about Karzai's reliability as a partner and the pervasive corruption in his government. This has huge ramifications for the proposed US strategy: how can you do counterinsurgency, protect the population and rebuild the country when there is no-one to hand over to?

Democratic congressmen urge Obama not to send more troops. Nevertheless, the US is looking for continued commitments from troop-supplying nations in Afghanistan. Americans don't make it a secret that they also want Dutch troops to stay in Afghanistan. "Everything the Netherlands can contribute after 2010 will be valuable and welcome," General McChrystal said, when he visited The Hague on 11 September 2009. The fact that he spent this anniversary of 9/11 not with his troops or in New York, but in The

Hague, was in itself an indication of how badly the US is seeking continued international and Dutch support.

The problem, however, is that the Dutch public is not convinced. As with politicians in other European countries, Dutch politicians have a hard time explaining why Dutch troops are in Afghanistan. Every three months an update is sent to the Dutch parliament, with a list of concrete projects that have been accomplished. So many girls schools built, so many wells dug, so many midwives trained, so many Afghan police graduated. Yet the narrative is not convincing. Particularly when we see footage of Afghan police handing their weapons to the Taliban.

We have a public perception problem. In 2001, when Al-Qaida attacked the Twin Towers, we joined the fight in Afghanistan out of solidarity with our American allies. For America, Afghanistan is a war of necessity. The aim, President Obama has emphasized, is to dismantle, disrupt and defeat Al-Qaida and ensure that Afghanistan will not again become a safe haven from where Al-Qaida can attack the West. For America, the fight against Al-Qaida in Afghanistan and Pakistan is a national security priority.

But the national security argument is not convincing us Europeans. Except for a few security analysts, the public does not see fighting the Taliban and Al-Qaida in Afghanistan as a national security issue, let alone a priority. Some even argue the opposite: Joining the fight against Al-Qaida makes us more prone to terrorist attacks.

In the Netherlands, the core argument is not part of the debate. The core issue is that the Dutch matter internationally because they are in Afghanistan -- and that they are in Afghanistan because they want to matter internationally. Holland has a seat at the G-20, is a key voice in NATO and aspires a high European post. It could not realistically do this without making a serious contribution in Afghanistan. And that may be true for other European countries as well.

And that is the other important point. Stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan is of vital interest to the Netherlands and to Europe. The destabilization of Pakistan could trigger a regional conflict on the outskirts of Europe involving nuclear powers. The war is no longer only about Al-Qaida or Afghanistan. It is really about Pakistan and about preventing the collapse of Pakistan.

The problem is that nobody talks about this. The talk is about girls' schools, about wells and midwives. The honourable task of reconstruction is what convinced most European nations -- and their parliaments -- to send troops to the Afghanistan. Therefore, the continued suffering of the Afghan people and our inability -- after eight years - to stem the insurgent tide makes us doubt whether the effort is worth it. On top of that, the election fraud and rampant corruption has outraged many of us. As one friend of mine commented to the recent news that the Afghan government had established an anti-corruption office: "Oh, just one more layer to be corrupt." Afghanistan is now the most corrupt country on earth, just surpassed by Somalia. Oxfam Novib warned yesterday that corruption and poverty are the main causes of the war. Sympathy has made way for cynicism. President Karzai symbolizes for many everything that is wrong with Afghanistan.

According to a survey conducted by the German Marshall Fund published in September, Europeans support increasing contributions to Afghanistan's economic reconstruction, but they oppose sending more combat troops. A majority of respondents in troop contributing European countries actually wants to see the number of their soldiers reduced or even their forces totally withdrawn. We are committed to Afghanistan and the Afghan people but not convinced of the military approach.

In America public support is also waning, but for opposite reasons. For Americans, the Afghan war starts looking too much like a nation building effort and too little like a neat and clean counter-terrorism operation. The former revives memories of Vietnam.

The lack of a clear, honest and convincing narrative that explains why Europeans are in Afghanistan -- to fight and build -- and what is at stake in the region, is more and more endangering the whole effort in Afghanistan.

So what is the way forward?

I think we have to recognize that a large foreign military presence in Afghanistan is as much part of the problem as the solution. A few weeks ago, US diplomat and military Matthew Hoh resigned as the "NATO war effort is making matters worse, not better." Does this mean we should withdraw our troops and leave Afghanistan to sort out the mess by itself? We obviously cannot. According to a Pakistani intelligence official quoted in the *International Herald Tribune* today: "If they leave in haste, like they have done in the past, we will be back to the bad old days. Our jihadis would head back to Afghanistan, reopen training camps, and it will be business as usual." NATO Secretary-General Rasmussen expressed fear at a NATO meeting in Edinburgh this week that there will be a global jihad if we withdraw from Afghanistan. There is no reason to assume they are wrong.

On the other hand, we must recognize the limitations of the military approach. The military can clear an area, perhaps hold it for some time, but it cannot win over the people. It cannot guarantee lasting security. Pakistani troops are encountering the same problem. They have occupied former Taliban strongholds in South Warzirstan but the problem is finding a reliable partner. In Afghanistan the problem is compounded by the fact that they are foreign troops. It does not make sense to shift your loyalty to someone who will leave.

To my mind, what is missing in the Afghanistan narrative and in our efforts on the ground, is a political offensive. Diplomacy is certainly the underemphasized D of the so-called 3-D approach. In March this year, in The Hague, Secretary of State Clinton emphasized the importance of a surge not only in troops but also in development and diplomacy as well. Yet there is very little emphasis on the diplomatic effort to reach a political solution. And without political resolve, there is no end in sight to what we are doing in Afghanistan. Any General will tell you this war cannot be won militarily. NATO troops cannot defeat the Taliban and vice-versa. The Taliban don't have to defeat NATO. They just have to wait until they leave. That's why they are aiming to weaken our resolve at home. Through causing casualties among western troops. Through provoking civilian casualties among Afghans by western troops. In that sense, they are winning

So we must pursue a different strategy. A strategy that recognizes that the war on terror and building a stable Afghanistan are two different things. Al-Qaida has largely disappeared from Afghanistan and moved to Pakistan. And the best way to defeat the Taliban is by creating or strengthening a trustworthy alternative. Civilian activities aimed at establishing good governance, authorities that deliver basic services at all levels.

According to some NGOs active in Afghanistan, civilian efforts should be protected by the Afghan people, not by foreign troops.

We also need a strategy that involves Afghanistan's neighbors. Looking at a map, you realize that Afghanistan will not be stable without the serious engagement of Pakistan, India, Iran and Russia, and China, given its economic interests in the country and relations with Afghanistan's neighbors. A regional commitment towards Afghanistan's future and a regional process is needed, that involves these countries in a peace conference or a 'group of friends' mechanism.

And a strategy that involves the Taliban

'Talking to the Taliban' is a recurring mantra in the Afghanistan discourse. Recently, UK Foreign Secretary Milliband, NATO's new Secretary-General Rasmussen and the head of the UN in Afghanistan, Kai Eide, publicly said we should talk to the Taliban. Talking to the Taliban was a key issue in the Afghan elections: the main candidates all spoke about how to engage the Taliban. The need to do so was not disputed.

A few weeks ago, I asked the new US Ambassador to NATO, Ivo Daalder, whether talking to the Taliban was part of America's new strategy for the region. "Bombs and bullets are not enough," Obama said in March when he presented his new so-called AfPak strategy. Ambassador Daalder responded that there is the issue of reconciliation, which is up to the Afghan government and reintegration of former Taliban fighters who had decided to lay down their arms, which was a top American priority. "The US does not need to reconcile with the Taliban," Ambassador Daalder said, "It is the Afghans who need to reconcile."

The Afghan government, with Saudi backing, has been talking to the Taliban for years and a formal policy to reconcile with Taliban willing to renounce their links with Al-Qaida and work within the framework of the constitution has been in effect since the Bonn Peace Accord in December 2001. However, according to a recent analysis, only twelve of the one hundred and forty-two UN-listed senior Taliban figures of the previous regime have reconciled.

It is easy to say that we should talk to the Taliban. But who do we talk to? The Taliban are not a neatly structured organization with identified representatives to talk to but a loose network of affiliated groups and persons. They have no bureaucracy, no headquarters and rely predominantly on verbal communication. When you fight them, they disperse, only to re-appear somewhere else.

According to Ambassador Jawad, Afghan Ambassador to the United States, who visited The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies during the Afghanistan 'big tent' meeting in The Hague in March this year, ideologically the Taliban can be divided into three groups. Taliban who are affiliated with Al-Qaida, mercenaries, and 'paycheck-Taliban.' The goal of the first group is to defeat the West and drive western (infidel) forces from Islamic lands all over the world. This is what most people think of when we refer to 'hardline' Taliban. These Taliban are driven by religious zeal, conservatism and fundamentalism. There have been talks with these groups of Taliban, for instance, in the border region of Warziristan, and in the Swat Valley in Pakistan. But the agreements that were reached led to a strengthening of the Taliban's position and then, finally, to a military offensive.

The second group of Taliban comprises Afghans that are in it for the money, that have suffered casualties from US and NATO military operations or who are treated badly by corrupt Afghan officials. According to Ambassador Jawad, these Taliban can be reconciled through "dialogue, buying-off, bribery and coercion." The third group is

pay-check Taliban,' people who join the Taliban out of economic necessity. These groups don't need talking to, they need recognition, reparation, jobs, economic opportunities and the basic necessities of life.

Geographically, Taliban operate in Afghanistan and Pakistan. They are separate but have connections. In Pakistan, according to a study by the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, an Islamabad based think-tank, the Taliban has developed from what was regarded as a reactionary, temporary movement, motivated by the events in Afghanistan, to a full-blown insurgency, with the potential to threaten the Pakistani state and linked to global terrorist networks. Some Taliban groups fight the foreign presence in Afghanistan, while others aim their attacks at the Pakistani state. The recent military offensive in South Waziristan is particularly aimed at the Taliban that threaten Pakistan, while deals are apparently being struck with Taliban groups that operate in Afghanistan. Amir Rana describes the Pakistani Taliban as "not a distinct organization but an alliance of different groups, which have common goals but different agendas, making it a complex phenomenon." In FATA, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan, there are more than 50 local Taliban and many other violent religious groups. Tribes set up their own Taliban-affiliated militias. Many of these groups are loosely knitted together under the umbrella organization of a Pakistani Taliban.

In my view, talking to the Taliban should be part of an integrated strategy towards the Pashtun areas in Afghanistan and Pakistan, aimed at separating the insurgents from the population, addressing the legitimate grievances of the population, strengthening local government and creating economic and development opportunities in the tribal areas where the Taliban recruit. Only then does it make sense to talk about talking to the Taliban.

President Obama said yesterday that his preference "would be not to hand off anything to the next President." My suggestion would be that until such time, our military efforts should be aimed predominantly at training and operational support. These troops would operate in a less visible way and attract less violence. Meanwhile, civilian efforts should be stepped up, aimed at building good governance, civilian capacity and creating economic opportunities, at the district and provincial levels. Areas where things are going well should receive extra attention to sustain the gains made. And perhaps it is time to talk about changing the Afghan Constitution to devolve more power to the provinces and districts, as well as to the legislature.

Thank you.

Appendix 4

Professor Giles Scott-Smith
Closing Speech

Distinguished guests, it is a great pleasure to finish off this extremely interesting and stimulating afternoon. It has fallen to me to offer some closing comments, which considering the depth and breadth of what has been said, is not what I would call an easy job.

I would like to start by quoting the journalist and foreign policy advisor Ahmed Rashid, one of the best experts on the South Asian region. This is his latest book [*Descent into Chaos: How the war against Islamic extremism is being lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia*], and I would like to consider briefly what he says, because it directly connects with a lot of what has been said today: “There is no more a political solution in Afghanistan by itself, than there is single military solution, nor can a solution be reached through a piecemeal approach to Afghanistan and Pakistan such as the one the United States has pursued since 2001. The leading players – the United States, the European Union, NATO, and the UN – need to agree on a new global compact and launch a united international political and diplomatic initiative to help this region to resolve its problems.”

He then lays out three broad points: The one is to seek a political solution that has the cooperation of as many of the Afghan and Pakistani insurgent groups as possible. I find it very interesting, because it is bringing up the issue exactly of human rights, democracy, and what kind of outcomes are achievable if you are trying to bring in as many people as possible with different ethnic and political allegiances. Secondly, a regional diplomatic initiative would address the vast array of issues that have become intertwined with the Afghan crisis, including countries such as India (which was discussed by an Indian diplomatic representative in the military working group), Iran, the five Central Asian republics – all of whom have a stake in the future of Afghanistan and in stabilizing the region. So, it is a broader issue, and we have heard this today. Also, any such initiative would need to be backed by a multi-year international development aid package for regional economic integration, education, and job-creation programs throughout Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asian region. Again, we have heard it today; it is not a short-term problem or issue. And to conclude, the key to peace for the entire region, according to Ahmed Rashid, lies with Pakistan – I find that an extremely important comment in relation to what we have heard today. Christa Meindersma made exactly this point in her presentation – it is really not just about Afghanistan, if anything it is about the future of Pakistan.

Pakistan is currently going through a very violent phase of 'blowback', referring to a situation when the negative consequences of a nation's foreign policy come back to damage it. The Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence agency backed the rise of the Taliban in the early and mid-1990s as a force that could stabilize Afghanistan and provide a pro-Pakistani authority in Kabul. For a while this worked, and the Pakistani military even were able to withstand all outside pressure to break off this relation in the years after 9/11. Now, for the first time, the large-scale Pakistani military operations in the border regions against the Taliban forces have brought suicide bombings against ISI buildings and personnel – the insurgency has turned on its benefactor. The positive side to this is that the Pakistani leadership has finally accepted that they have a serious national security

problem within their own borders. Also, that they have decided to act on the scale they have indicates that some form of rapprochement with India seems to have been reached, since the Pakistani military will never act if they think that it leaves them vulnerable to the East. The negative side is that the current situation is testing the strength and the stability of the Pakistani state like never before. The disruption of the Taliban's hold on FATA and Waziristan may well cause the international side to its network to shift location to Somalia or Yemen, meaning the battle is won but the war is not. Nevertheless, it could have a potentially dramatic effect on the long-term effectiveness of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.

The working groups produced much food for thought on the current situation in Afghanistan. The military group included a multi-faceted discussion, involving panel and audience, on the strengths and weaknesses of the military approach. I must thank Lieutenant Colonel Rietdijk for his contribution in explaining the counter-insurgency approach, and the subsequent discussion on the demands this places on the military personnel themselves was valuable. In practice, the way the military operates has to fundamentally change, and at all levels – strategically, logistically, psychologically – this is extremely demanding. That, more than the issue of more troops, is General McChrystal's main message. On the need for a regional approach, the conclusions were fairly sober. Pakistan and India are playing key roles, but Iran remains closed out and Russia, while tolerating NATO supplies through central Asia, is hardly accepting that this is a matter of common security interest. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is not present in the deliberations, and it is not clear if this is due to Western or Eastern indifference.

With the private sector and rule of law groups, the issue of credibility was paramount. No investment is going to be attracted to Afghanistan unless there is a credible and trustworthy legal environment and a secure situation. With the rule of law, there is a severe gap between the talk of human rights and nation building and the actual reality on the ground. Likewise, an amnesty law which is used to incorporate those tainted by relations with the insurgency or corruption and crime is on the one hand a very important means of building trust in a certain way with certain local leaders - but of course it is also a very dangerous issue. You have to have a very stable state to be able to introduce an amnesty law like this, otherwise it can exactly undermine that state's entire credibility, if not its existence. To sum up, interesting views were also expressed about the lack of a national identity amongst Afghans. We are talking here about a nation which in many ways is not really a nation. We think of it as a nation, but we are outsiders. People there think often in very local, regional or tribal terms. We hope that there will be some form of nation coming out of this with a collective sense of responsibility, identity, and unity. That is a long way off, but that is basically the route that we hope that we are heading along. And this may require all sorts of difficult compromises along the way.

I would like to finish the day by thanking the Ambassador, Mr Turabaz, and all our special guests who came to speak to us today. The level of discussion and debate was high throughout, and it has been a privilege for us here to hear from people who have been working on the ground in Afghanistan and who know exactly what is going on. I would like also to thank the organizing committee, Djeyhoun, Arne, and Marijke. I think they have done a fantastic job. Thank you.

Appendix 5

Program

14:00 - 14:10 Opening by Drs. Ehsan Turabaz, President of the Netherlands-Afghanistan Business Council and Honorary Council of Afghanistan

14:10 - 14:50 Keynote speech by Ambassador of Afghanistan, Dr. Nezam
(*Translation from French by RA-student Lou-Davina Stouffs*)

14.50: - 15:10 Keynote speech by Christa Meindersma,
Deputy Director of The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies

15:10 - 15:40 Discussion by the expert panel:

- Dr. Herman Lelieveldt (Chairman)
Associate Professor of Political Science at Roosevelt Academy
- Andrew Mann,
Counselor for Political & Economic Affairs of the US Embassy
- Lieutenant Colonel Wilfed Rietdijk,
Former commandant of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Uruzgan
- Dick Oosting,
Europe Director of the International Center for Transitional Justice
- Drs. Marie José Alting von Geusau,
Director of the Center for International Legal Cooperation
- Dick Scherjon,
Board of Directors of Rabobank Netherlands

15:40 - 16:00 Questions and discussion with the audience

16:00 - 16:15 Coffee & tea

16:15 - 17:00 Workshops:

1. Afghanistan Military Missions (English).
Location: Burgerzaal, Rapporteur: Theresa Kayser
2. Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en de Rol van de Privaatsector (Dutch)
Location: Raadzaal, Rapporteur: Michelle van Geffen
3. Rechtsstaat in Afghanistan (Dutch)
Location: B & W Kamer, Rapporteur: Anton Buntinx

17.05: -17:20 Concluding Remarks by Prof. Dr. Giles Scott-Smith,
Associate Professor in IR, Roosevelt Academy / Ernst van der
Beugel Chair in Diplomatic History, Leiden University

17:20 - 17:40 Closing (Coffee & tea)

Appendix 6

Speakers Biographies

Dr. Zia Nezam

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

His Excellency Dr . Zia Nezam was appointed by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan as Chief of this country's Mission to the Kingdom of Belgium, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Grand Duchy Luxembourg and Greece, Chief of the Afghanistan Mission to the European Community and responsible for relations between Afghanistan, EU and NATO.

Drs. Ehsan Turabaz

President of the Netherlands-Afghanistan Business Council

Ehsan Turabaz is the founder of the Netherlands-Afghanistan Business Council which actively promotes bilateral trade between the Netherlands and Afghanistan. In addition, he is the chairman and founder of the Foundation Friends of Afghanistan, which focuses on education and the cultural heritage of Afghanistan. He is also Honorary Consul of Afghanistan in Rotterdam.

Christa Meindersma

Deputy Director of the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies

Christa Meindersma is Deputy Director External Affairs and Director Conflict Management at HCSS. Previously she worked as senior political adviser at the United Nations and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Christa Meindersma has been involved in peace negotiations and policy advice in East Timor, Nigeria, Cameroon, Kosovo, Darfur, Nepal and New York.

Dick Oosting

Europe Director of the International Center for Transitional Justice

Lawyer Dick Oosting has worked for many years on human rights and related issues. He has led the Dutch branch of Amnesty International and was director of the Dutch Refugee Council. In early 2008 Dick Oosting joined the International Center for Transitional Justice as Europe Director and will soon switch to the European Council on Foreign Relations as interim manager.

Andrew Mann

Counselor for Political & Economic Affairs, U.S. Embassy The Hague

Trained as a lawyer, Drew has served in several developing countries, including Mexico, India, Sri Lanka and Bosnia. He has been involved with legal and rule of law issues throughout his career. Most recently, Drew spent two years in Afghanistan (from 2005 to 2007) after which he became the Counselor for Political & Economic Affairs of the US Embassy in the Netherlands.

Lieutenant Colonel Wilfred Rietdijk

Operations Officer Directorate of Operations, Ministry of Defence

Lieutenant Colonel Wilfred Rietdijk has been involved in United Nations peace missions in Angola and in Afghanistan, the latter as Commanding Officer of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Uruzgan. Currently he is working at the Operations Directorate in the Netherlands Ministry of Defence.

Drs. Marie José Alting von Geusau

Director of the Center for International Legal Cooperation

Marie José Alting von Geusau has worked as an advisor at the European Commission and the Dutch parliament. She worked for several years at an NGO for development cooperation and at the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, where she concentrated on international social policies within the European Union and worldwide. Marie José Alting von Geusau is currently the director of the CILC.

Dick Scherjon

Board of Directors of Rabobank Netherlands

Dick Scherjon developed a project whereby Dutch reserve officers, who are entrepreneurs and advisors in their daily lives, provide colleagues in (post-) conflict zones (Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan) with advice. His initiatives focus on increasing the involvement of Dutch businesses in the development of fragile states.

Prof. Dr. Giles Scott-Smith

Professor in International Relations at Roosevelt Academy

Giles Scott-Smith has been senior researcher with the Roosevelt Study Center since 2005. He has been lecturing in International Relations at the Roosevelt Academy since its first academic year in 2004-2005. In 2009 he was appointed to the Ernst van der Beugel Chair in Transatlantic Diplomatic History at Leiden University. His interests cover 21st century security problems and the importance of 'soft power' in international affairs.

Appendix 7

List of Seminar Participants

Speakers

Dr. Nezam,
Ambassador of Afghanistan in Brussels
Chief of Afghanistan Mission to the European Community

Ehsan Turabaz
President of the Netherlands-Afghanistan Business Council
Honorary Council of Afghanistan in Rotterdam

Marie José Alting von Geusau
Director of Center for International Legal Cooperation

Andrew Mann
Counselor for Political and Economic Affairs of the U.S. Embassy, The Hague

Dick Oosting
Europe Director International Center for Transitional Justice

Christa Meindersma
The Hauge Center for Strategic Studies

Lieutenant Colonel Wilfred Rietdijk
Former commandant of the Reconstruction Team in Uruzgan

Prof. Dr. Giles Scott-Smith
Professor of International Relations at Roosevelt Academy

Dr. Herman Lelieveldt
Associate Professor of Political Science at Roosevelt Academy, independent moderator

Embassy Representatives

Embassy of Indonesia, The Hague
Arvin Jose C. Reyes
Alfiano Tamala

Embassy of Iran, The Hauge
S. A. Hosseini

Embassy of India, The Hague
Y. K. Sailas Thangal

Embassy of Poland, The Hague
Maciej Karasinski

Organizations

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Martien Lankester

FreedomHouseArt
Iris de Leeuw

IntEnt
Farid Hadi
Nawid Popal

Save the Children
Bert van Ruitenbeek

School Support 4 Afghanistan
John Langerak

Roosevelt Academy

Roosevelt Academy staff

Prof. Hans Adriaansen
Prof. Barbara Oomen

Roosevelt Academy students

Majd Aboubead
Mir Hasim Ali
Sabine Ameijden
Klaas-Henk Binnendijk
Elles de Boer
Anton Buntinx
Janneke van Casteren
Alexandra Chirea
Guilianna Di Lauro
Michelle van Geffen
Tijmen Gengler
Wouter Greup
Christina Heinze
Anne Hordijk
J. L. Hupkens
Dara Ivanova
Shota Kasradze
Theresa Kayser
Ozan Kellici
Julia Khazanova
Ann Krueger
Anna Kwakernaak
Carmen Leidereiter

Ange Nadine Mahoro
Carlyn van der Mark
Fereshta Mirzada
Robbert Mos
Wietske Nijlman
Rineke van Noort
Marloes Noppen
Titus Oosting
Ahmad Shah Popal
Matthias Ploeg
Ira Radjkovetsky
Angelica Reitsma
Sandra Ronde
Isabella Rossen
Thomas Ruzovic
Zeynep Sentek
Keristiena Shenouda
Bart Simons
Joram Snijders
Sila Sonmez
Maria Veldhuizen
Lizzy van Velzen
Shavar de Vries
Agata Walczak
Andrei Coos-Magheti
Robert Meershoek
Lina Rabae

General public

Joris den Ouden
Martin Schepers
Marin Aalders, Bureau Werk op Maat
Patman Afghaniar
Merel van Andel
Sekander Atmar
Imro Baldew
Siety Baldew
Minou Bogers
Alice Boom
Ton Boom
Willem Cleven
Fateh Girowal
Sanne van Grafhorst, Christelijke Hogeschool Ede
Marcel Hagens, Azuda Insurance BV
Ahmed Shekib Hamraz, TU Delft
Matthijs van der Hoorn
Z. Hupkens-Miljus
Jan Jensma
Jorrieth de Jong

Elly Joose
Justus Knoppers, Dagblad Utrecht
Gert-Jan Leenknecht, University Tilburg
Annieke Logtenberg
Barones van Lynden
Arwin Noor
Wais Noor
Amanullab Ostowar
Rouhafza Ostowar
Sayhoun Ostowar
Aysel Sabahoglu
Kimberly Turney, Christleijke Hogeschool Ede
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