

International Rescue Committee UK Annual Lecture 2010

## **Soldiers on the School Run: Sensible Strategy or Disastrous Compromise?**

The Risks and Opportunities of Armies Delivering Aid

14 June 2010

Royal Geographical Society, London



- Major General (ret'd) Tim Cross, former British Army commander in the Balkans and Iraq
- Ahmed Rashid, author of *Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia*
- Mike Young, IRC Regional Director for Asia and the Caucasus
- With a video contribution by Dr Ashraf Ghani, chairman of the Institute for State Effectiveness and former Afghanistan presidential candidate
- Introduced by Jeremy Carver and chaired by Sir Jeremy Greenstock

### **Introduction: Jeremy Carver**

Good evening and my apologies that we're slightly late. In the nature of these things assembling everybody takes time. My name is Jeremy Carver and I have the honor of chairing, co-chairing, the International Rescue Committee, IRC UK, and this is our 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Lecture and it promises no less than any of the previous ones....My role is very short- not so much sweet but to lay the ground for Jeremy Greenstock to take over and chair this evenings meeting which has a particular buzz about it which I can already hear in the discussion that was preceding among you.

My role is very simple. I simply say and remind you all that this is the IRC's annual event and it is the IRC that benefits from this evening and I hope that you benefit from your long association, some of you, with the IRC. The friendship and support that we value from you and indeed making our voice known as a distinct voice based upon now 75 years of experience, 78 years of experience, working in conflicts, with the aftermath of conflicts and picking up the victims of conflicts all over the world as we have done and continue to do and unfortunately will continue to do and to try to find better ways of doing it. For that purpose we need support. We much appreciate the support that we get from many of you here and look to receiving more and receiving also from you ideas, thoughts, conversations as well as the occasional contribution in financial terms to make sure that we do things better. Certainly the demand for our work is enormous. That's all I need to say and except to express our appreciation as IRC for those who've sponsored this evening. I mention in particular Tishman Speyer whose generosity in making sure this evening happens is very much appreciated and handover to Jeremy Greenstock. Thank you so much.

### **Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Thank you Jeremy, very much. Thank you everybody who has come this evening. Not a pleasant London evening but so many of you in this audience are faithful to these Annual Lectures with the IRC UK. Because of your interest in what is going on out there in the

developing world and what you as donors, as interested public citizens, can do, can think, can act on behalf of the international aid community who do so much good work in difficult countries like Afghanistan. What we've got for you this evening is in three parts. We have 4 speakers, because Dr Ashraf Ghani who wanted to be with us but is involved in meetings on Afghanistan at the moment is going to speak to us through the screen in a moment, and then Ahmed Rashid, General Tim Cross and Mike Young will be giving you a presentation from the lectern and after they have given their presentations I will take them through some of the things they've said. They may want to comment from their seats on what each other has said and then we will open up the floor to you in the audience to put your questions and comments in the final half an hour of this 90 minute session.

So let's roll. But remember the difficulties with a country like Afghanistan. I feel quite strongly that our politicians have not explained to us with sufficient depth and clarity the importance of the political scene out there in Afghanistan. It was the same with Iraq in my experience. The military are asked to go, very difficult, go and do very difficult things against an enemy and yet what we the international community are being asked to do is to help Afghans reinvent their country without violence, without threatening their neighbours, without threatening us in the West. And that can only be through a political solution. So if we're talking about Soldiers on the School Run we're talking about the role of the military in combination with the political operators of course, first with the Afghans, and with the aid agencies and other contributors on the ground who are doing so much in difficult circumstances and the interrelationship of those contributors and getting the results that we need to turn Afghanistan into a stable country is something that I feel public opinion in western democracies haven't yet fully grasped and haven't yet fully had explained. I hope this evening will help in that respect.

Now first of all we're going to start with a short film from Ashraf Ghani who will give us his input into the evening and then we'll proceed with our speakers. Ahmed Rashid the distinguished journalist and author, particularly writing about the Taliban and Al Qaeda and his book you'll remember *Descent into Chaos* in Afghanistan illustrates some of the things we'll be talking about this evening. General Tim Cross, distinguished soldier, contributor to the post invasion scenario in Iraq and to many other aspects of the British military feeding their expertise into war torn countries and Mike Young who is the IRC regional director for Asia and the Caucasus who has been directing IRC's input into this theatre and remembering always that IRC has been in Afghanistan since 1988 and has huge experience of what works and what does not work on the ground. So let's roll please with Ashraf Ghani's presentation.

### **Dr. Ashraf Ghani (video)**

Greetings from Kabul. I'd like to thank IRC and Sir Jeremy for organising this important meeting. I am sorry not to be with you in person. My duties as the coordinator of the Kabul conference prevented me from being with you. I'd like to organise my remarks in three categories.

First, assumptions. Second, a need for a network approach. Three the context in Afghanistan. First the scale of the disaster is going to be increasing due to global warming and a variety of other factors. Two our inherited business models are not up to this task. Three, the financial, the global financial crisis is going to make competition for resources intense and we need to be able

to make our case. Therefore there is need for a different approach. I call this approach a network approach. Some people have called it a mega communities approach. The first thing that is required here is agreement on a common information platform. We need to build a lot more.

Two, we need to focus in medium to long term and create the partnerships around this. The response to hurricane Andrew by Florida provides a very good model of bringing business, government and communities together. We need NGO's of course. We need to broaden and deepen the nature of partnerships.

Three, we need to tackle causes, rather than symptoms. Afghanistan for instance is sooner or later going to be threatened by an earthquake and none of the building codes, none of the building processes, is geared at...(unclear)... of course learning from lessons of the past. Fourth we must be cost effective in creating systems of mutual accountability.

Now on to Afghanistan. First, the National Solidarity Programmeme is a model of national programmes that I had the privilege of leading and designing between 2002 and 2004 has paid off. Here I'd like to register my thanks to IRC for being an implementing partner. The question however that comes is most of the NGO's that are not in the context of national programmes have yet to create a system of accountability to the Afghan population and the Afghan population is equally skeptical of NGO's, the government, the military and other actors on the scene. The main reason is we have not put their needs in the centre of our enterprise. What we have done largely is to view it from the perspective of organisational culture in the interests of a particular organisations. Here NGOs in particular need to innovate vis a vis national solidarity to count generation two and three. Thus far I've seen very little effort from them.

The failure of the military is even greater. PRT's have not been organisations that have resulted in creation of capability, of Afghan institutions at the provincial or district level. PRT answer is not going to be the debate among you, the NGO's and the international military. The key here is a strategy of building the state as a responsible and accountable and effective organisation both in terms of function in levels of government and here we need to seriously think about a framework where natural disaster management becomes a priority and where we are able to create an alliance of communities, NGO's, businesses, government and international organisations that can respond to the scale of the need and shift from humanitarian approaches to being improvised and reactive to one, proactive and eliminate the causes and are able to deal with the consequences. Thank you.

### **Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

I'd now like to call on Ahmed Rashid to give us his presentation.

### **Ahmed Rashid**

Well thank you very much. I'm very grateful to the IRC for inviting me and fortunately I happen to be in London at this time and thanks again. Now let me just start by saying that there certainly is an enormous crisis, in my opinion between the military and humanitarian organisations. This crisis has been going on for the last ten years and it has really been very unaddressed or

ineffectually addressed by the international community whether governments or by the big NGO's, the UN and the ICRC and others or by the military itself. And unfortunately this is one of the inheritances that we are faced with in the future.

But let me just point out that since the end of the cold war the international community has been faced with so many new political events which we have failed to address completely. The idea of regime change which became very prominent in the war in Iraq which was unheard of in our youth or childhood. The idea of humanitarian intervention, what we saw in Somalia by the Americans in the 90's and what we see now for example in the tsunami. For example, trying to, whether the military, western militaries have a right to go in for example a country like Burma and actually go in and force them to accept aid and relief when they're not willing to do it. The idea of failed states and failing states just didn't exist 15-20 years ago. We have not adequately discussed, the international community has not adequately discussed how to deal with failed and failing states. In fact after there were all these promises made by governments after Afghanistan, after 9-11 that there would not be any more failed states and yet of course today we have Yemen, we have Somalia, we have the countries that are considered to be failing or failed states.

So thirdly there's the whole question of Islamic extremism which is again another new phenomenon which has not been-how can you address Islamic extremism which has brought forward this weapon of suicide bombing which takes the war into the civilians in a way that could not be imagined ever before? How do you protect NGO's and how do you protect development workers in a situation where you have suicide bombing? Now you know we have been used to, for a very long time that war ends and then the state building begins, nation building begins, the humanitarian agencies go in and what we have seen in Iraq and Afghanistan is that everything has to happen at the same time. I discuss this quite deeply in *Descent into Chaos* where in Afghanistan at least and certainly in the aftermath, in Iraq of course you never had a post building programme. There was no state for the NGO's or what they were supposed to do or where they were supposed to act. And the extremists in Iraq of course targeted the NGO's first. Remember the first major attack took place against the United Nations when Sergio de Mello was killed. The second major attack in Iraq took place against the Red Cross, the ICRC. So the same thing has been happening in Afghanistan. So it's very clear that this is an insurgency that does not respect anything that we consider to be neutral, impartial, the rules of war etc. So now all I'm really wanting to say is really there has not been any serious discussion about any of it.

I spent a lot of time in 2003 once I realised how difficult this situation was becoming for the NGO's trying to get the UN, Lakhdar Brahimi at that point, and the ICRC which I consider to be one of the largest, most influential NGO's to actually try and hold a conference about this, to talk to the Americans and NATO and the big militaries as to where the NGO's are going to fit into military operations at a time when you have to do development work and nation building work as well as carry out military operations at the same time. Do they follow on afterwards? Do they become part of the military which of course is unacceptable to a large number of NGO's? Or is there a way that you can partition the two off and that they can work together? As I said none of this has been discussed.

Let me just very quickly on Afghanistan say that Ashraf brought up this whole issue of the PRT's. The PRT's don't forget were suddenly seen by the Americans as some kind of panacea for all these problems. You have the military protecting these NGO's who go into these outlying areas where nobody else can go in and do development work. But the point is that the PRTs were actually a result of a total failure of American-of the Americans-to send sufficient forces to Afghanistan because they were planning to go into Iraq and the total failure of NATO, of the Americans to even accept NATO contributions back in 2002 and 2003. So the PRTs were actually the best of the worst in a sense. Rather than having sufficient troops to actually secure the terrain and the population centres and stuff that is happening now in Afghanistan perhaps too little too late. But instead of having a sufficient number of resources and troops, you send out 100 soldiers to go out into some district headquarters to try and protect the people. This model was ...(*unclear*)...which was then taken to Iraq and put down there. But this is not, PRT's were never considered to be a solution. So the idea in Afghanistan simply has been that there has never been sufficient resources, manpower, security, any of the things needed to carry out nation building either by the Afghans or with the help of the international community. There has never been enough.

If I give you one example, in ten years the international community has not deemed fit to build a civil service academy in Afghanistan. There is no actual mechanism until very recently to train Afghans to be civil servants, to and you know when General McChrystal talks about government in a box going down to Helmand, what government in a box? Where was the mechanism to train those Afghans who were going to be the administrators and the educationalists and the layers between the foreign forces and the local population? So unfortunately what my feeling at the end of the day is that we still need the coming together of the military and big NGO's, the global international NGO community, development experts to be able to decide on new rules of the game as to where and how development is going to take place at the same time that war is taking place. Because we cannot, we are not likely to go back to our childhood when these things were compartmentalised and we did these things separately. Thank you very much.

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Thank you Ahmed, General Tim Cross.

**General (ret'd) Tim Cross**

Thank you again for our invitation. I would add that tensions between the military and non military and I clearly speak from a military perspective here, what we often call complex emergencies is not new. I've just finished reading, I don't know whether any of you have read it, Ben Sheppard's new book the *Long Road Home: the Aftermath of the Second World War*. He lays out in graphic and painful detail the way the allies dealt with IDP's, refugees, reconstruction of Europe and the establishment of the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration which was established in 1943 with a budget of 2 billion dollars. There were enormous tensions between the various players and Ben very early in his book and I quote "the relationship between UNRRA, as opposed to UNWA in Palestine today, most needed to resolve was that with the military. Even though the Italian campaign had taught the generals that dealing with the civilians

was an important part of modern warfare, such an understanding did not lead to a smooth relationship". It's therefore very rarely anything new in this world.

My own experiences go back over 40 years but the defining time for me was in the Balkans in the 90's. I did three tours there including Kosovo, Macedonia, Albania where commanding a brigade we built refugee camps, we ran into reconstruction issues, we were into nation building issues from establishing railways to all sorts of other things. And then on into Iraq and Afghanistan. But the last 15 years have convinced me that the debate is not about if the military should be doing this stuff. The reality is it's not about if, it's about how. How do we manage the processes? How do we bring these two sides better together, whether it's in natural disasters, major disasters like those in Pakistan or Haiti at the moment, man-made emergencies like the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan or one could say the BP oil spillage in the Gulf of Mexico. The military are inevitably going to be involved. So the question is how do we engage better, how do we manage the interfaces, how do we manage the handovers, how do we better train and prepare? I want to make 3 points if I may and reach a conclusion.

First I want to stress that there is no such thing as **the** military. Any more than there is any thing such as the NGO, the IO, the government agency. There are good and bad, effective and ineffective, efficient and inefficient. I would argue, not surprisingly, that the British army's not bad, but we have our faults, of course we do. But over the years and the deployments in Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and so forth, I think we've done a reasonable job. I work with many other militaries who are as good as us and have worked alongside them well. I've also worked with less professional armies who added little to what we'd been trying to achieve. And we all know perfectly well that out there there are various cutthroat, ruthless, crooked and amateur organisations who call themselves army but are effectively state sponsored terrorists and they're certainly not friendly forces in the context of this debate. So 'what does the military do' in a sense is not helpful. We have to understand the spectrum and I have to tell you too that I've walked alongside very capable NGO's and IO's over the last 20 years or so. I've also worked alongside some pretty awful ones, some inefficient ones, some ineffective ones who've added no value whatsoever. Well meaning they may or may not have been, but they've done little to add to the end that we're trying to deliver. So when we talk about the issue we must be careful not to use sweeping judgments and assertions which are rarely, if ever, helpful.

Secondly, whilst the bottom line is that the best armies are first and foremost, and it is important to stress this, first and foremost war fighting organisations they are deployed by the state in order to deter or defeat an aggressor, to establish security in a failed or failing state, to bring a conflict to an end, to deal with the fallout, planned or unexpected, of those operations. But we, the military, have to understand the wider implications of a deployment and we have to be prepared to be able to deliver a wide range of practical support and assistance to those caught up in the maelstrom of these complex emergencies. Winning hearts and minds is not just some interesting theological, interesting debate doctrinally; it's a practical and important part of achieving what the military have been sent to do, the end state of that deployment, however poorly thought through that end state might have been by the government who dispatched us there in the first place. There is in other words a humanitarian imperative, indeed a moral imperative alongside and embedded within what we might call a military imperative. Contrary to

popular opinion not all armies are made up of unthinking automatons primed for a fight and uncaring of the consequences. The reality is far from that. We are, it has to be said, a mixture of missionaries, misfits and mercenaries but I would argue that the reverse side of the coin fits pretty well with quite a few of the organisations that we've worked with. We wear of course the equipment that gives us the image hard, tough and so forth but underneath it all most of the good military are keen to deal with the problem that's bringing about the pain and trouble in the first place. Getting my soldiers to build refugee camps and support humanitarian action in Kosovo campaign and indeed elsewhere was not difficult. They felt that they wanted to make a difference and that capability I think is important in this debate.

Thirdly, leading on to capability we must recognise I think that both sides of this coin, this divide, military non military, bring important capabilities to this emergency. Generally speaking the military role is to support, not supplant, the work of the non military players, and I know there are many in the community who are worried that the military are trying to take over and we can perhaps come back to some aspects of that later but I would argue that the military are there to serve, not to be served. Logistics, medical, engineering support, the management of air heads, sea ports, transportation, shelter, so on and so forth, as well as the provision of a secure environment are all key roles together with the command and control arrangements can deliver that capability. Of course most aid agencies are principled, knowledgeable and committed but the reality is they also have very limited resources compared to the military as a whole and they can be slow to respond. So the military bring to this 'fight' this capability. It's not by chance that the Haitian government turned to the US military to run the air space management for the inflow of all the stuff coming in after the earthquake. No aid agency would have had that capacity. I think I'm correct in saying that today there are 900 registered NGO's in Haiti, 170 of them involved in the watsan cluster. That can only be about passing information, not about making decisions. You need a different structure to make decisions in that sort of example.

So what. Those are my three points as noted earlier. It's not about if, it's about how and I would argue up front in the sort of grand strategic sense if you like, that what we're about tonight is a part of what I sense has been happening for some time; it is the dialogue that was referred to earlier. We have got together to produce the doctrine, understand the principles of how we work better, talk to one another to lead us to the development of a doctrine. It would be idle to suggest that's going to be easy. Complex emergencies are difficult and the linkages between organisations, foreign offices and aid agencies like DFID, the DTI, MOD and so forth is very difficult. But it is a truism to say that the military, there is no such thing as military success in these deployments. The military is simply a means to an end and politics and so forth have got to play their part in that. But I think people have a right to expect that all of us engaged in these deployments like Afghanistan should work better together to deliver some sort of integrated campaign plan under an umbrella of understanding, doctrine, whatever words we want to use. And that doctrine must take into account conflict prevention, early warning, early deployment of forces, preventive diplomacy, disarmament, peace building, all these other things. And it will be very difficult. I have no doubt about that. In the UK at the moment with the Strategic Defence

and Security Review maybe there's another opportunity to get into that debate and influence the outcome.

I want to finish with just one example. Being a logistician, forgive me for using the supply chain analysis but I would argue that all humanitarian operations are essentially underpinning it, is the ability to deliver supply chains, coherent supply chains, proactively managed, strategically managed, end to end chains and we have far too many individual supply chains operating, military and so forth, into these theatres of operations. There was a recent forum in Sydney which discussed the supply chains role in supporting humanitarian relief. They had gathered together NGO's, the Australian Red Cross, the Australian Defence forces, commercial and private sector organisations to look at how could they improve the delivery of this capability into these sorts of places. The discussions highlighted the simple reality that across these apparently dissimilar organisations there was a common belief that we must do this better to support the people who really matter. We don't matter. Those of us who run these organisations don't matter. The people who matter are at the receiving end of what we are collectively trying to deliver. And we have to do that better in my view. And we can talk a little bit more in detail about Afghanistan in a second but I just wanted to stake that out in the overall sense of the debate. Jeremy, thank you.

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Thank you Tim. Mike Young.

**Mike Young**

Thank you. What I offer to this discussion I think is a ground perspective; reflections on what I've witnessed in my work over the last several years in Afghanistan and Pakistan. I'm not an expert, I'm a practitioner. I've worked with the National Solidarity Programmeme in Afghanistan and I've spent the last 2 years as IRC's representative in Pakistan. My remarks are also made in recognition of shared good faith that everybody here on the panel is committed to assisting Afghan and Pakistani communities and societies find greater civility and security and realise their potential. Lastly, these remarks will be headlines when so much that's important in this debate is about nuance and detail so hopefully we can get into that in the question and answer session.

For me, the central question as a practitioner is 'what works?'. Does military led aid delivered as a component of an overall stabilisation strategy actually deliver? Does it increase security? Is the aid effective in terms of its quality and accountability? The simple answer is, we don't know. As one researcher at the Feinstein International Centre at Tufts University quoted "it's a weapons system based on wishful thinking." We simply don't know if militarised aid delivers security, or if development itself fosters security. Humanitarian aid and development can of course be good in themselves but there are few studies of the impact or the relationships between aid and security, especially in a stabilisation context. When one studies Iraq, and in my own experience there are already some worrying signs, I think that militarised aid, aid delivered by armed groups or aid delivered on policy decisions taken within military structures in a

counterinsurgency context, that this may not be the best way to deliver greater stability and development in these contexts.

In the time remaining I want to concentrate on 3 key aspects of how the militarisation of aid damages the greater efforts to help Afghans and Pakistanis stabilise their societies and communities. One, the erosion of humanitarian principles, two, the spread of risk and three, the basic effectiveness of militarised aid.

So erosion of principles: humanitarian principles are derived from international humanitarian law, also known as the laws of war. So let's remember first of all these principles, namely humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, universality, they're not abstract 'do good' notions. They're born of conflict, conflict every bit as bloody and devastating as those now going on in Afghanistan and Pakistan and there's a hard headed practical reason why those laws and principles define a civilian space for assistance to victims of conflict. Impartiality, humanity, independence, these keep us alive in insecure environments. They assure the war torn communities, the refugees, the oppressed that our primary interest is in *their* needs and how they can survive with dignity and then rebuild once conflict is over. It is that assurance that also helps those communities guarantee humanitarian organisations like IRC access, offer them security and mediate with armed groups. So that question among those in combat and those affected by conflict of our impartiality and independence, our absolute focus on their human needs is key for agencies like IRC. It's how we continue to operate in violent places like Khost on the Afghan-Pakistani border or in the tribal agencies of Pakistan. We don't have armed guards, we don't have armored vehicles. The only way we can work safely with the people that we're meant to serve is because we have that acceptance from them. There's a simple word for that of course: trust. And trust once breached is very very difficult to regain. Now the trouble is, comprehensive approaches, and I mean by that counter insurgency or stabilisation strategies and doctrines that seek to coordinate, to co-opt, to sometimes control nominally independent humanitarian actors or which facilitate the direct delivery of aid and development assistance by armed forces, they can fatally compromise those principles and degrade that trust. Humanitarian actors are then too easily seen as members of a party and they are targeted accordingly. Indeed they are often indistinguishable in the field and this carries real risks.

Secondly lets consider how military involvement and delivery of aid might spread risk rather than mitigate it. First and most importantly it can place communities in an impossible position. If community leaders accept militarised aid, they're going to be targeted as collaborators by the Taliban and other insurgent groups. If they refuse militarised aid they lose that benefit for their communities and they can even be labeled as sympathetic to or allied to insurgent groups. They become political pawns caught between two aggressive players and that can be deadly. Second, aid workers can be branded as members of that party as we've said and targeted accordingly with abduction and killing. This is an increasing trend in both Afghanistan and Pakistan and elsewhere. Afghanistan and Pakistan are now among the six most dangerous places in the world for aid workers. For example one Taliban night letter, a night letter is a principal means of delivering threats, that I received in Islamabad earlier this year made this explicit. It opened "You are an American slave. You are worth killing, you're all worth killing". Now it certainly boosted my self esteem ... So let's remember, we're not talking here about

large groups of expatriates driving around in large white Land Cruisers throwing beer bottles out the window and being very, very prominent and attracting attention. The vast majority of aid workers in Afghanistan and Pakistan are Afghan and Pakistani. In both countries IRC staff numbered around 1,500 in total. They are over 99% Afghan and Pakistani. So when militarised aid spreads increased risk on both sides, communities and aid workers, it's Afghans and Pakistanis who bear the brunt of that.

Thirdly, aid effectiveness. So that disseminated risk, that spreading risk, can also tighten the vicious circle. As aid workers are targeted, aid agencies can decide to withdraw. And that leaves an assistance gap obviously. And the military then feel the imperative to step in to fill that gap. And then the dominance of armed forces in deciding about and delivering aid is then accentuated. You might say so what? If aid agencies withdraw that's their decision and its maybe not the right one. The most important thing is that the aid still gets to the people who need it. But is militarised aid effective? Here lets remind ourselves of three things – there's always three things you'll notice –. Yes, some militarised aid, military delivered aid, is legitimate as civilian agencies withdraw in conditions of high insecurity, so there's no other option and here the army is to be commended in its efforts to meet life saving needs. Second, let's note the massive scale of military led aid – Commander's emergency response programme for example in Afghanistan is worth I think about £750 million pounds right now in Afghanistan. This is greater than the global education budget for US AID. Huge chunks of the 7.5 billion dollars that the US assistance is going to be delivering to Pakistan over the next 5 years is also dictated by counter insurgency goals. Third, no one questions the military's good faith or their logistic and professional depth, but a massive amount of aid money, millions and billions of dollars and pounds always means massive pressure to spend that money. And with the best will in the world, massive budgets and massive pressure to spend almost always translates into ineffective use of that money. Acting on the imperative for short-term political gains on the ground and at home and a real difficulty in getting and keeping human resources in structures like Provincial Reconstruction Teams, you end up with a lot of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) that quickly collapse. A study by a Consortium of Afghanistan Aid Agencies recently found that, yes militarised aid like that delivered through many PRT's in Afghanistan can be community led and it can have some kind of tactical impact, *but* it doesn't seem to translate into strategic impact or change people's attitudes. It's transactional, it's short term. And there are some lessons that surely we should all have learned in over a half century of humanitarian and development assistance since the end of the second world war – dumping massive amounts of money into a broken system doesn't fix it. Spending a lot quickly is a bad idea for everyone concerned. It tends to engender more insecurity rather than increasing public safety. It plays into tendencies for all kinds of rentier behavior, corruption, triggers zero sum games where clans or tribes can compete to capture all the resources on a beggar thy neighbor basis. A recent Tufts University study highlighted things like PRT finance contractors paying protection money to the Taliban, disaffection among the Gilzai tribe for instance in southern Afghanistan as they perceived all of the aid going to people they perceived as their political rivals, so in their perception, further cooperation with the Taliban becomes a viable strategic option for them. When short-term political money goes, dictated disbursement projects tend not to match communities real needs because only one set of politically important elders or big players are being consulted.

This short-changes dialogue among communities, which is so important in tribal societies. And then the results can be of poor quality because they're done quickly, the community didn't really want them in the first place and so the community has no interest in maintaining them or running them.

To finish with that question what works? Now one of the aid projects that has been acknowledged around the board as being among the most successful in Afghanistan is the National Solidarity Programme or NSP. NSP works with Afghan communities right across the country to help them define and deliver their own development dimensions; stuff like rebuilding water courses, roads, fixing up power supply, all kinds of stuff. It's also a programme that seeks to change the way people make decisions and rebuild the link between citizens and village, district and provincial level as well as with Kabul. By and large it works and works well so NSP I think has a lot of lessons for how we might consider this issue. First let's emphasise aid that puts ordinary people in the driving seat and works mostly at the local level. NSP and its sister programmes- they work because they respect and involve the people they serve at the grass roots and truly are people driven. Although they're government sponsored programmes the government by and large gets out of the way once the money is delivered and lets the community get on with it. Afghanistan and Pakistan also have 'big societies' - I understand that was a catch phrase recently - there's a massive resilience and potential at the grass roots, lets realise that. People driven, bottom-up programmes involving diverse actors, alive to the nuance of culture and places they work. Government in a box dropped from a helicopter doesn't work. So let's also have a sense of humility and acceptance of limits in this endeavor.

And lastly let's all take a deep breath and sharpen our focus collectively. Let's accept that one size doesn't fit all. The solution will be messy and diverse, that the solution will be Afghan and Pakistani because the main drivers for instability seem to be more governance and corruption than poverty or creed and those are things that only Afghani's and Pakistanis can fix. Let the military do what they do best - assure public safety, build the capacity of local security forces. Let's admit that strengthening the reach of the central state is not always the best solution, that ordinary citizens themselves and the levels of government nearest to them are in many ways more capable of refashioning governance in ways that work for them. Lastly, let the humanitarian development community, NGO's and relief agencies like IRC, let's grapple more honestly with the transformative nature of our work in these contexts. We need to be clearer about the risks, bolder in our interventions and *redefine* humanitarian principles so they can't be used as a safety blanket or an excuse for not intervening, but rather they become more alive in a new and challenging environment.

### **Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Thank you Mike. We're now going to have a few minutes when the panelists will take up each other's ideas or comment further. They've all pointed to gaps and deficiencies and we need to tease out of this conversation what the most important gaps are and how they can be filled. It can't all be criticism of what's going wrong. There's such magnificent work being done on the ground both by military and civilians that we don't want to see it wasted and yet as Tim Cross has said, we haven't yet shown that we've produced a collective doctrine that brings it all

together and we've been in Afghanistan for eight and a half years. It's the Afghans who matter and yet all we hear in the public debate about this is about our input and how we're winning or maybe not winning so well and about how our NGO's need to collect more money, produce more effect on the ground, get through to the local people, make a strategic impact as Mike said. Ahmed asked how we are training Afghans to be a decent government. Well let's take up some of these issues and remember also something perhaps which none of the three of you mentioned. There is a shelf life for the foreign presence on the ground. Afghans are a historically, and clearly now still in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a xenophobic people. They do not want foreigners on their soil and they're getting tired of this process themselves and we don't feel it's working. Ahmed, would you like to have the first shot at supplementing what you said and responding to what you heard from the other two and indeed from Ashraf Ghani.

### **Ahmed Rashid**

Yes, I just want to make a few points. First as you know, there are two sides of this argument- the military and civil/NGO side. In the last ten years what we've seen is that neither of them have come prepared for what they were expected to do. Whether we look at Iraq or Afghanistan or anywhere else. So we've seen this enormous amount of ad hocism. I mean, no military was prepared to undertake peacekeeping tasks in Baghdad after the war. No military was prepared to carry out state building in Afghanistan. They had to kind of learn on the job as it were and they've had to bring in the NGO's and learn how to work with the NGO's. So it's been a hit and miss ad hocism kind of situation.

The second point is, 10 years ago, a civil affairs officer in the US Army or in many of the European armies was considered a dead end job. You know, civil affairs officers were not promoted. You know, you were lame or sick or blind to be a civil affairs officer. Now thank god ten years on, now civil affairs officers have been given, ten years ago all the American civil affairs officers who were requisitioned to Iraq and Afghanistan were reservists. There weren't even any regular civil affair officers inside the regular army. Now thank God, I mean there has been, you know much greater respect bestowed upon those military officers who are doing civilian tasks of rebuilding or connecting with the population or whatever it is. But it's taken 10 years of this ad hocism to get where we are.

Thirdly, I think a point made by both - that military aid can only be temporary aid. Military relief can only be temporary aid, can only be temporary...(*unclear*) ...I think in Afghanistan at least the military has been faced with and if you see the current, you know, counterterrorism mantra which is: clear, hold, build and transfer. The most difficult thing, which has been unachievable in many parts of Afghanistan especially, has been 'transfer'. In other words transferring to the local government, to the local administration, or even to Afghan NGO's because what happens is the military-by the very nature-the military and the NGO's working together, the western forces working together, build up such a state of dependency, if you like, by the local population that it becomes very difficult for anyone, for the Afghan people to accept transfer. In other words if you Mr. Afghan now take the responsibility of doing what we were doing for the last 18 months-one year - this is the biggest problem that I think General McChrystal is finding right now in Marjah and this upcoming offensive in Kandahar which has been delayed.

Lastly, governments of the region should, you know, indeed there is a real risk of, Afghanistan thirty years of war and thirty years of enormous dependency on the west to deliver-it's very difficult to break the cycle. In Pakistan our entire development budget is foreign funded. We do not have the revenue and resources and we're not particularly pushed. Governments in the region aren't particularly pushed to find the revenue and resources to have a development budget which serves the people. So you know how does western aid, actually military and civilian, push governments to do more for their people? Thank you.

### **Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Tim, you heard what Mike said about the difficulties for NGO's in acting in the military theatre as it were when the military are the big boys around. When I talked with Ambassador Richard Holbrooke a year ago, and said 'you must change the business whereby aid comes in great volumes through the military because you're not connecting with the local communities', whereas IRC take a huge amount of trouble to connect with the local communities and yet in the end a big government wants to deliver big aid through the big processes. Is there inevitability about that?

### **Tim Cross**

I think there is some inevitability. I think I'll come back to that in a second if I may. Just to say that I'm not here to 'defend' the military. What I am here to say is that we are, I think, moving on a journey we've been on for about 10 years and I think there's an awful lot more sensible debate, an awful lot more engagement among the various players and tonight is a recognition of that. I think there's a recognition that in establishing some principles, the practical application of those principles will always be difficult and will always vary. What's right in Afghanistan today certainly wasn't appropriate in Iraq, certainly wasn't appropriate in the Balkans 15 years ago. So in developing a doctrine, understanding some principles, recognising that the practical application of those principles will always vary depending on circumstances and so on I think is really important. And I'm very, I don't know if we're going to come to questions on Afghanistan particularly, I'm conscious I haven't talked about Afghanistan much, but I think the overall piece is how do we establish these principles and how to we work together.

Now your point and other points that Mike has raised so far, I think they are terribly important but there's not many in the military, certainly in the UK military, who want to take over the humanitarian business. I'm very conscious that there are some armies post cold war who decided they were going to go into this business as a way of justifying defence budgets and so on. I think that's changed. I think that the reflection of the attitude within the military, how they see the civil side... I remember the US 1 star Brigadier, a really nice guy actually who stood up in CENTCOM in 2002, and was introduced as the man who was going to be thinking through post war Iraq and some of the issues we're talking about, the guy was just completely ignored, nobody wanted to talk to him and I can tell you they wouldn't ignore him now. I can tell you we have moved on here but there is always a part of, of course big government trying do this stuff. I think there's a place for it, we need to understand what that looks like, and how those interfaces are, how we hand things over to one another and of course I recognise, of course they're valid, the military are not there for long-term development, they're there to try and help fill a void when

there is one and I speak from personal experience where tens of thousands of people were literally starving to death and without shelter and if we hadn't built the refugee camps nobody else was going to. So you know you have to fill a vacuum sometime and then alongside that, yes of course the military will be using their capabilities where they can in the short term. But there's no suggestion, I'm certainly not suggesting that we want to militarise aid in the round.

So my last point if I may though having said all of that is that the principles that Mike refers to, and I hear those principles a lot independence, impartiality, neutrality, so on and so forth, they came out of years of operating in relatively simple environments. This word complex emergencies is not an idle word- these places are very complex and very different and there are often no 'goodies' and 'baddies'. There are no people living in their own little bubbles doing their own thing anymore. We're all integrated in this, rightly or wrongly whether we like it much or not, so I would argue that in today's world it is very difficult to stay neutral and independent and impartial. Nobody is. Now of course there's a spectrum. Of course the NGO community wants to hold as far as possible away from state, military and all the rest of it but I think those principles again are open to debate in my mind which is why I think establishment of, frankly I would take some of our staff colleges and I would bring people together, have them together for periods of time, looking at these operations thinking through and try to look at this in the round. I'll stop now and come back to it in a moment.

### **Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Mike, each NGO wants its own field to work in and has its own call on funds back home and yet you're not able as civil society yet to organise yourselves. You need to be under some external organisations in a particular theatre to produce the macro effect when you're doing the best work at the micro level. How do you from an NGO point of view try and micro macro?

### **Mike Young**

The thing again is it's a question really of what does work. First of all, I'd challenge the notion that we don't or can't coordinate. We do coordinate quite closely with all of the different actors. There are civil-military guidelines for cooperation in Afghanistan, we're working on them in Pakistan with the Pakistani military, there are coordination clusters for each and every intervention you could possibly think of. As country representative in Pakistan I spent half my life in coordination meetings to the point where I could go postal about them. Coordination happens. It's still messy, it's still imperfect but it happens on the ground and in general we have constructive relationships with the other big key actors.

Secondly, I would also challenge the notion that big universalist, strategic coordinated approaches actually deliver. Life is messy. Life is extremely diverse and really, approaches that allow different actors space to operate according to their own missions and goals, to feel their way forward and respond to context- that is the key. Responding to context, respecting culture, people, norms is key in being able to deliver the link between micro and macro.

Where I'd also part ways a little bit with Ahmed Rashid is this whole idea that we are across the board creating dependency and there's a transition problem. Yeah, chunks of that are correct. If

you look at programmes like NSP, the National Solidarity Programmeme, I don't want to harp on about that a lot but there are other programmes in health and education, vocational training, that do the same thing. They work at the grass roots but they also link Afghans up to district government up to provisional government and to Kabul. They transform the work of those Afghans in their communities, think about how they take decisions for themselves and how they would hold their politicians accountable. It's not a matter of transitioning to them, we don't hand things over to them. They're in the centre of the decision-making from the get go. And I think that's what works. Respect people, respect their resilience, their knowledge. These people are smart and they've spent centuries surviving in a very tough environment. Programmes like the National Solidarity Programmeme I think are the key to the future. They generally do join the micro to the macro. They join people's experience of their own lives in their own villages with policy at provincial level with policy in Kabul and they do it in a positive and constructive way. Thank you.

### **Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

That brings to mind what Dr Ghani was saying to us right at the beginning, that the key is the strategy of coordination. You heard that coordination is being done and I can testify to that. A huge amount of work goes into that. But is it, does it amount to a strategy? Have we got a convincing collective approach from the politicians at the top, internally and externally and all practitioners on the ground. That's something that I still think we need to ask questions about. Let's open the floor to you the audience. We can't take a huge number of questions but I'd like you to raise your hands if you'd like to comment and a microphone will come to you if I point in the right direction. Can we start here please in the front?

Please be quite brief in your comments.

### **Audience member:**

I would just like to make a couple of comments. I've just come back from the Afghan-Pakistan border and it seems to me that the comment made by Tim in relation to managing the interface is a very, very important one. The situation that I saw is as follows: you have a military operation which then captures and holds territory. They are not in a position to be able to transfer that territory to the civilian administration because the civilian administration isn't there. You have aid agencies that are seen by many people as force multipliers by their governments. In Pakistan it has reached such a level that you now have USAID seriously considering high visibility impact projects such as main roads rather than anything else because of the suspicion with which they are viewed. You also have a position where people see it as a transactual relationship.

The converse of that is a situation and it's just come to my mind as the last speaker was talking was that during the 2005 earthquake you had people who were actually carrying out very good humanitarian work but seen as a militant terrorist organisations. Added to that complexity is militants who I interviewed in a number of jails both in Peshawar and in Swat who say that actually the military's involvement in aid and humanitarian projects has completely altered the way they viewed the military.

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Mike, do you want to start on that?

**Mike Young**

Sure, I recognise many of the things you were talking about – we do work in the tribal agencies along the Pakistani border. I think one of the reasons why there is such difficulty in terms of some kind of transition, post campaign transition between the military to civilian agencies is not only the weakness of the Pakistani civil state. It's because the military themselves actively exclude further civilian actors from that space. So for example, during the inception and the height of the South Waziristan operation when hundreds of thousands of tribe's people were coming out of south Waziristan, NGO's like IRC were battling to get in there and work with them and the military, it was a military decision to exclude not only all international NGO's but all Pakistani NGO's from delivering direct services to that population. The military want to do that. That's been a consistent theme I think of a very military dominated humanitarian response in Pakistan and it has been damaging in many of the ways that we've talked about today I think.

One of the other worrying trends I think, is that the approach that the Pakistani military is adopting is in many ways a reflection or an echo of the counterinsurgency approach that's dominant and that's modeled by the US. It's not only about the Pakistani armies own dominance over the institutions in Pakistan, it's very much a response to specific external pressure from a key policymaker and supporter of Pakistan. So there are a lot of different factors involved in that.

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Tim, indeed in that area, that's an example of a neighboring government getting involved through it's macro-organisms. We've had to work in a number of theatres including in Afghanistan with the United States who want to do things in big way. Do you think they have adapted over the period when you've been watching or are they still doing the same things in an institutional way?

**Tim Cross**

Why I made the first point that I made really, that there is no such thing as the military, I mean how the Pakistan military approach things, the US military and so forth is different and it is an important distinction and I hesitate to say that one is right or wrong but there is no doubt that there are different approaches and some of them are less helpful than others. And I do think that the heart of this issue, and I'm deliberately trying to hold this at the strategic, policy level because we could all debate and we know that there are fantastic people. I was saying earlier on my son in law emailed me earlier today, he's in Sangeen, he's doing work out there and you know we could all talk about the tactical level, how people get on and so forth but ultimately picking up this point about the strategic level, if we have governments that go into these places without sufficient capability in the round, military and non military, understanding what it is we're trying to achieve here, they don't understand our principles and how we're operating, we're going to get into trouble and in these early days in Afghanistan in particular, there is no doubt in

my mind at all we had nowhere near sufficient talent, nowhere near sufficient capability, military and non military to achieve what was being called for. And what the military find themselves then doing is trying to fill that void in ways that they hope will help deliver and an American approach is different to a British approach and I don't want to say that a British approach is right and the Americans are wrong because that's not fair, that's not true, but it is a different approach and until we have an understanding of this which we've captured and talked about and trained people and educated people, we're always going to have these difficulties.

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Thank you. We'll take a question there, second row.

Question:

Good evening. Clearly there's a strong drive now to get forces away from Afghanistan as quickly as possible, Cameron wants to get forces out as quickly as possible. So with the aid workers that will be going into those areas, especially in the north, how will they manage security in an environment where there is really no government?

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Ahmed, do you want to? How can you get a more secure environment in a country where there is fundamentally so far, no effective government?

**Ahmed Rashid**

Well I don't think that's entirely true but look if you look at this kind of offensive, I really think the Americans have started the wrong way around. If they had first moved into the provinces around Kabul and then into Eastern Afghanistan and had moved down south at a later date, in other words, clear the areas adjacent to the big centre, cleared the ring road which would have supplied the major cities and supplied American forces, these were areas which were densely populated where the Taliban had not been in complete control for 10 years as they have been in the south, these were areas which would have welcomed newly trained Afghan army and police because a lot of them were recruited from these areas. So in other words what I think should have happened was exactly the opposite of what the American strategy has been in the last one year which was to go to the hottest place first and to launch a major offensive there, try to defeat the Taliban there and then placate other areas. If they had done, if they had cleared the Taliban from these more easy provinces which could have been secured with less foreign troops, more Afghan forces where the aid agencies could have gone to work, where development could have happened more rapidly, I think that would have been far more productive. The same thing in the north, I mean, there's a Taliban presence in the north now which is just two years old but very little has been done about eliminating it. Now it could be eliminated quite quickly and quite effectively I think if there was adequate attention being paid there in both military terms and in development and economic terms. But unfortunately what we are seeing is both British, American, NATO forces have taken on the most difficult task which is the south where the Taliban have literally been in power since 2001 and that's an awful long time to be in power and to be able to intimidate the population.

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Mike, do you want to comment?

**Mike Young**

Just like to highlight two areas where I think is a mistaken assumption in your question. First of all the idea that these areas have no government - I would agree with Ahmed Rashid, I think that's a mistaken assumption. There may be little to no presence of the State but there is certainly governance going on in these areas, whether that's a violent district in Afghanistan like Khost or a tribal agency like Pakistan. There is tribal governance and there is tribal codes, customary codes and although they've been degraded over recent years they're still very strong and vibrant institutions and you can build on those institutions.

Secondly, just very quickly, there's also a mistaken assumption to think that we *will be moving* into these areas. We are there. We've been there for decades. As I kind of pointed out in my talk, my initial presentation, most of our staff are Afghan and Pakistani so they've been there for decades.

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Thank you, I'm going to take a question, centre back.

**Question:**

David Clementi, Chatham House.

I wanted to quickly comment, quick question and that is there seems to be a fundamental disconnect when we talk about military and independent NGO delivery of aid, humanitarian development whatever it is. There's a fundamental disconnect in terms of timeline. And that is the military is very good at turning a fire hose on a situation such as Haiti, pouring ten or twenty thousand troops in overnight, which by the way, they're all gone now, almost all of them. But they're very quick and they're very good at delivering aid with a fire hose and getting the job done. Their timeline is very very different than the NGO's and the independent organisations such as IRC that have been in Afghanistan for 20 years. My question for the panelists is what suggestions do you have for as much as possible reconciling this drastic difference in timelines that often drives on the disconnect, the discord, and drastically different expectations on both sides for delivering this development?

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Tim, do you want to go now?

**Tim Cross**

Yeah. You're right of course, there is a distinction. I think if I may go back to your opening shot actually, one of the reasons that I think we need to be better at understanding this issue, getting staff colleges working, getting people working together is because language is really important

and you've used some words there that I may understand a certain way that other people may understand differently. We understand the language we're talking about, what we mean by the words that you're using.

Notwithstanding that, yes there is a difference. But again I do want to stress that in some countries, the military is a key part of delivering long term as well as short term stuff. When we, the UK or the US, go in or we get called into somewhere like the Katrina problem or Haiti, yes it is. It's about delivering quick effect, trying to manage the crisis, manage the disaster as best we can and but we are always going to be there for a relatively short period of time. I mean, it is state led, it is state funded, the government decide whether we go or not. I don't wake up in the morning thinking it's a good idea to go to Haiti, you know I wait for the government to send me places. Whereas the whole non government organisations and the rest of the development agenda is driven in completely different ways. So yes there's going to be that distinction but you're point is exactly what I was trying to say earlier: how do we understand this better to see how the transitions are made, how do we manage processes so that it's not we don't want the military or we do want the military. It's about recognising that all of these complex emergencies, all of these disasters are going to be different but nonetheless there are abiding, enduring principles and that there are processes to be managed and they are coherent and are done sensibly by people. I have to say I do think we're working towards that now much better than we were ten years ago but we've still got a long way to go.

### **Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

I think this is an absolutely central question because the professionals in governments and in civil society have, as Tim and the panel have been saying this evening, learned a tremendous amount since the end of the cold war, particularly in the last ten years but we still have a misfit between the governments sending the military or the aid workers or political practitioners to the country and then working through the team there, and the politicians and the communities on the ground who see the team on the ground and what's coming out of capitals in the west and what's coming out of the government on the ground or its neighbour as passing each other by in terms of what they are demanding. The teams who are as good as they've ever been in my lifetime, are having this divergence of political remit given to them from outside and from inside. That's what we've really got to do. Gentleman in the third row, centre.

### **Question**

Thank you very much. Michael Bailey from Oxfam. Thank you to the panel for really interesting contributions. I'm resisting the temptation to talk about Afghanistan and wanted to raise a couple of points about the role of the British armed forces which I think is an important issue with the National Security and Defence Review very much on the political agenda and will be moving fast in the next months. But first of all, there seems to be a certain consensus between Mike on the one and Tim Cross on the other that where the NGO's cannot tread or when civilian institutions cannot work as humanitarian needs that the army should respond, indeed this obligation I would say. My question though is to Tim Cross, whether the British army actually has enough capacity at the moment or should we be sympathetic to the Tory's proposal that has already been floated that we have a more substantial stabilisation and reconstruction force in

the British Army. Now from the NGO perspective we get a bit shaky about that because it looks like a slippery slope to a more American model where 20% of the US AID budget goes to the Department of Defense which we clearly don't want to see. On the other hand if it enables British engineers to restore electricity a bit quicker in Marjah, well we probably don't have much of a problem with that. So I just wondered if in your experience to build those refugee camps if you have the capacity in those situations where I think we're agreed the army has to do something although the wider mission creep that certainly the NGO's we would oppose.

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Tim, have a first go at that. But I'd be very interested Ahmed in a comment on the image of the British contribution from somebody who's watched these things from outside.

**Tim Cross**

Well I think you've raised a couple of really important issues. The SDSR is a strategic defence and security review. It's not a strategic defence review and I think the sort of issues we're talking about must be part of this debate. So I endorse that.

Secondly, we traditionally, the British army have always taken the view that generally speaking every one of our soldiers has to understand and be capable of engaging in whatever is necessary in the theatre of operations. We've resisted the idea that over here we have civilian military experts who are nation building and so forth and over here we have war fighters and I think we're right in that. Now that's not to say that the MSSG and the stabilisation group that's being talked about doesn't have a role. I think that's certainly possible and I have no problem with the idea that we do need some relatively small numbers of people who go out in bands of small and determined men to work in certain areas delivering some of their expertise. But I would not wish to see, personally, the British army lose that sense. Now that's partly because we're pretty small. I do have to remind my friends that if you march the whole of the British army to Manchester on a Saturday you do not fill two Premier League football stadiums so we are not a huge organisation compared to the US. So we have in my view no option but to ensure that every one of our soldiers understands the totality of this.

Final point I want to make-I do think going back in a way to what I was saying about the Defence and Security review, that the linkages between MOD, DFID, FCO, Home Office in this whole security piece requires, I think, a serious look at the architecture of government. We have moved into a different era here. In 1946 we had a War Office an Admiralty and an Air Ministry. By 1964 we had a Ministry of Defence for the nation and in this area of how we interface with the world in these complex emergencies, having siloed departments of state I do not think is helpful personally.

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Ahmed, the external image- do we misread ourselves when seen from outside?

### **Ahmed Rashid**

Well I think the British came in into Afghanistan with a number of liabilities. First of all they never had, the British army never had the kind of resources for civil affairs as the Americans. Officers didn't have the advantage of a quarter of a million dollars to spend on schools and bridges and all the rest. The second thing was the way the British came in. They came in... (*unclear*)... battling their way into Helmand as it were almost immediately. The Taliban took them on and that set the image for the British. It became very difficult for a British soldier who'd been fighting in the block houses back in 2004, 2005 to suddenly then become a kind of humanitarian nation-builder after that. It was very difficult for the Afghans to accept that.

And the third thing I think is the failure of DFID. You know we haven't talked about DFID but I think the British army was really expecting that on their heels DFID would come in and DFID just didn't deploy. It didn't have the people to go in, it didn't, or the people didn't want to go in and I think there was huge frustration by the British army for the first two years about the role of DFID. There was a partition. Unlike the Americans, the British officers were depending on DFID to come in and do the development and that never happened. Eventually the British army had to take on all these development tasks for which it didn't have the resources or the money and in many cases the expertise.

### **Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Thank you. I promise to end by half past 8 so I'll take one last question from the lady there.

#### **Question:**

Thank you very much. If we're looking at the crux of the matter between the balance of NGO's and military community about *how*, not if, they work together, who should provide the strategic leadership that is so oft talked about? You'll all be pleased to know that there is a cross government working group on health and conflict, there is research being undertaken around the benefits of health interventions in conflict environments but we get to the answer, we get some of the answers out and then we say and who's going to take the next leadership step? Who the panel thinks should take the next strategic leadership step?

### **Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

We may all want to go.

### **Tim Cross**

Just picking up my earlier point- admiralty, war office, air ministry, ministry of defence, eventually we got the permanent joint headquarters. A permanent joint headquarters is the campaign planning organisation. I think government needs the equivalent of a permanent joint headquarters probably in the Cabinet Office and it needs to be driven from the Cabinet Office. It then needs the resource to develop what I'm talking about, the doctrine and so forth. I would take a model, it may even be take the Defence Academy joint doctrine centre and turn it into a

government wide doctrine and centre for analysis of what we're talking about. That's a very quick answer and it's not as easy as that but that's where I come from.

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Mike do you think that kind of reorganisations is going to make a difference on the ground from your civil society viewpoint?

**Mike Young**

No.

(laughter)

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Ahmed?

**Ahmed Rashid**

Unfortunately the answer is who controls security. Because the kind of wars that I'm describing that we are fighting now we've not fought before. We cannot partition off development and security and the fact is development cannot take place without some level of security and who does security? Well the military does security. So eventually, essentially the NGO's and the aid community are beholden to the military to provide that security for them to operate. So your strategic person in the chair unfortunately not because they want to necessarily but because this is the nature of the war, the nature of the war that we are fighting.

**Mike Young**

I think that's mistaken. I think to go back to the remarks I concluded with, we've gotta have sharp focuses. Each of the players should concentrate on their core strengths, talk to each other, maintain dialogue and yes that's part of a common strategy but a strategy needs to be arrived at consensually with dialogue and consultation. So yes the military have to provide security and ensure public safety, train indigenous security forces to be able to transition that task but except for a few limited circumstances they should not be involved in delivering aid and NGO's like IRC are very very used to and have protocol and methodologies for delivering aid in insecure environments and we've been doing it for years.

**Tim Cross**

I want to stress that I do understand what Mike is saying and this is not easy but the changes that have gone on in the military have produced a far more effective output. If you go back to the old days, Army, Navy and Air Force working in silos we would nowhere near produce the output we produce today in places like Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans. I'm not saying we take over or anybody else takes over but I am saying that driven from somewhere like the Cabinet office an approach that says what are the roles of these organisations, how do they work best

together, how do we train and get people understanding these issues so that they do work where they are best. But maintaining silos between them in my view, we have got to break that. That is not going to be easy and I'm not suggesting for one minute that it will be easy and there will be lots of difficulties along the way, but that's where I would come from. So starting at that strategic level sets a really important message and that's, I could talk about it for ages, but that's where I come from.

### **Sir Jeremy Greenstock**

Ladies and Gentlemen, we could go on all evening. There are some extremely important and interesting questions that have been raised. Thank you for your interest in the subject and in your questions and I think we've had a remarkable set of views naturally describing the differences that there are from different viewpoints from four speakers and our 3 panelists.

I want you to take away from this a worry and a trust. The worry is that, and I think we come to this every time we've had the IRC Annual Lecture, that we don't have the strategic grip of these questions that really match the difficulty of what we're taking on. The task is underestimated before we put our soldiers particularly but also our NGO's and our practitioners on the ground in to contribute. And it's not just a matter of saying that as though there were some deficiency in political leadership or in the international structures that we've built that are better in this generation than any have ever been in previous generations. It is the fundamental complexity of trying to mend on the outside, especially from democracies which have their own domestic reasons for doing things, the business of a people on their own territory who are jealous about their history, their culture and their way of doing things. I feel one of the things that has come through most strongly this evening is the need to pay attention to what's going to work for Afghans in Afghanistan, for Haitians in Haiti, for Iraqis in Iraq etc. And never lose sight of that. And remember that what we put in from the outside is never going to solve the problem. It just might give the chance to those peoples to do something better in their next generation. In my briefing of Whitehall organisations on post conflict reconstruction I make it very clear by saying at the end, "your job is to turn a bloody awful mess into a mess." And that's what you must understand you're trying to do.

IRC will continue to contribute, will continue to put their oomph into some coordination. We've been designing as a Board and as an Executive ways to do this with other NGO's as well as with government. Your support is extremely important to us and I hope it will continue into the coming years. But for now could you please thank our panelists and I thank you all.

**End**