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Preparing for the Future

Key Organisational Lessons from the Afghanistan Campaign

Major General Andrew Hocking

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Acknowledgements

The Chief of the Defence Force initiated this study but the views expressed are the independent views of the author. This study has been informed by a broad literature review and direct engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. It would not have been possible without the experienced insights of current and ex-serving Australian Defence Force personnel, the diverse and objective inputs of academics and the expert views of national security leaders. I am grateful for the cooperative spirit with which these hard-earned insights have been shared. It is a privilege to be part of a defence force that is rightly proud of its achievements, humble enough to learn from its experiences, and willing to support the publication of independent and objective bodies of work to prepare it for the challenges of the future.

Contents

Abbreviations

ADF	Australian Defence Force
ADFHQ	Australian Defence Force Headquarters
AFP	Australian Federal Police
ANA	Afghanistan National Army
ANZAC	Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (also Anzac)
C2	Command and Control
C3	Command, Control and Communication
CASG	Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group
CDF	Chief of the Defence Force
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DVA	Department of Veteran Affairs
FCU	Force Communications Unit
FET	Force Extraction Team
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
HQ	Headquarters
HQJOC	Headquarters Joint Operations Centre
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISAF RC	International Security Assistance Force Regional Command
ISAF -SOF	International Security Assistance Force-Special Operations Forces
ISR	Intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance
IT	Information technology
JLC	Joint Logistics Command
J6	Joint Signals Staff Officer
JLC	Joint Logistics Command
JTF	Joint Taskforce
LOAC	Laws of Armed Conflict
MEAO	Middle East area of operations
MPE	Mission Partner Environment
MSC	Military Strategic Commitments
MSP	Military Strategic Plans
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OER	Operational Establishment Review
OMD	Operational Manning Document
PAR	Post Activity Report
PMV	Protected Mobility Vehicle
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team/s
POPS	Post-operational Psychological Screening
ROCL	Relief Out of Country Leave
RtAPS	Return to Australia Psychological Screening
SCNS	Secretaries Committee on National Security
SERCAT	Service category
SOCOMD	Special Operations Command
SOTG	Special Operations Task Group
TG	Task Group
TF	Task Force
UWO	Unit Welfare Officer
WHS	Work, Health and Safety
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
VCDF	Vice Chief of the Defence Force

Executive Summary

We can't rewind the clock in Afghanistan … we should learn from the 20 years, not try to forget it and wash it away, or sweep it under the rug.

John Sopko, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction [1]

This study finds that the collapse of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) in August 2021 represented a failure to achieve the primary objective of the NATO strategy:

> to enable the Afghan government to provide effective security across the country and develop new Afghan security forces to ensure Afghanistan would never again become a safe haven for terrorists.[2]

Nonetheless, this study finds that the contribution made by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and other whole-of-government partners to the war in Afghanistan denied terrorists safe havens, enhanced Australia's alliance with the US (and relationship with NATO) and provided the Afghan people with an opportunity to pursue a better way of life.

This study finds that the Afghanistan Campaign contributed significantly to the development of the ADF's combat capability. However, the evolving character of war and the potential for future conflict to be existential and less discretionary than the Afghanistan Campaign will demand an increased and accelerated development of combat capability. This will need to be complemented by refinements in broader aspects of national security and the military art, ranging from strategy making through to culture. While some of the demands on Australia's whole-of-government security apparatus will be new, many are likely to be continuities of those experienced in past wars, including in Afghanistan.

One of these continuities is likely to be the complexity of making strategy in a coalition environment, where individual nations seek to calibrate their commitment to align with sovereign national interests, public/political will and capacity constraints associated with other competing demands. Despite this complexity, this study highlights the importance of developing (and *influencing* as a junior partner) an overarching coalition strategy that has a clear-eyed, long-term view of the operating environment and the nature of the problem it seeks to solve. It also highlights the importance of troop contributing nations developing their own national strategies and clearly defining and communicating associated national strategic objectives.

This study finds that beyond the military commitment to Afghanistan, Australia's broader whole-of-government contribution had an important impact, but it was relatively modest given the significance of governance and development to achieving enduring strategic outcomes. While the whole-of-government contribution increased in size and importance over time, it was not central to Australia's strategic design. In an increasingly complex and dynamic strategic environment, this study identifies opportunities to further evolve Australia's whole-of-government strategy-making process in ways that might enhance problem understanding and optimise the application of coordinated whole-of-government action to achieve national strategic objectives.

This study identifies opportunities for the ADF to further evolve and enhance its contribution to broader whole-of-government efforts. Specific opportunities are identified in areas of military campaign design and assessment, including more robust consideration of force options and associated risks. It also identifies ways the ADF might learn from its Afghanistan experience and further codify command and control options, risks and opportunities in coalition contexts. This evolution might enhance Australian influence, increase national oversight and assurance, and ensure optimal alignment of tactical action to the achievement of strategic ends.

Beyond the mechanisms of strategy making, campaign design, and command and control (C2), this study highlights the equally important human factors that translate strategy into practical action: through people, teams and culture. It identifies significant strengths in ADF culture, but it also flags inherent vulnerabilities. It suggests ways of better acknowledging and mitigating these vulnerabilities to cultivate a more balanced ADF culture, which better leverages

the talents of ADF personnel, mitigates moral risks associated with high-pressure military environments and increases the collective performance of the ADF in what is likely to be a more integrated and diverse whole-of-government and multinational future operating environment.

Finally, this study identifies opportunities for the ADF to improve organisational-level risk/opportunity scanning and better enable objective reflection that enhances strategy making and accelerates learning at all levels. It concludes that accelerating the pace of learning and adaption (including learning from the Afghanistan Campaign) will be critical to ensuring future success (or at least avoiding early failure) in a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive world. It is hoped that this study contributes to the necessary speed of adaption and by doing so ensures the ADF (and the broader national security community) is well prepared for any challenges ahead.

Organised into five focus areas, this study identifies 21 key organisational-level lessons and provides 50 associated recommendations aimed at preparing the ADF for the future. It also identifies a further 20 general observations.

Summary of Afghanistan Campaign
Key Organisational-Level Lessons

Focus Area 1: Strategy Making	
Lesson 1	A more dynamic, competitive and interconnected future operating environment will require strategy-making systems, forums and cultures to be more iterative and have a wider range of whole-of-government and expert inputs.
Lesson 2	Defining, reviewing and clearly communicating national and supporting military strategic objectives is essential to enabling a coordinated whole-of-government effort, maintaining public interest and support, and ensuring those in harm's way at the tactical level have a clear and unifying purpose.
Lesson 3	Western aspiration can be a strength but if due consideration is not given to local history, culture, politics and capacity it can lead to overly ambitious and unsustainable national and military strategic objectives.[3]
Focus Area 2: Campaign Design	
Lesson 4	The ADF needs to appropriately balance its education and overall investment across the tactical, operational and strategic levels to ensure success in future military commitments.
Lesson 5	Robust campaign design and assessment are essential to successfully achieving national strategic objectives and require appropriate education and overall investment.
Lesson 6	Force optimisation and force sustainability should be considered carefully and objectively when selecting the military means to achieve strategic ends. Force options and all associated risks should be formally communicated to government for consideration.
Lesson 7	The ADF and other government departments and agencies should be able to deploy capabilities that realise the full potential of coordinated whole-of-government effects, which are often necessary to achieve enduring strategic outcomes.
Focus Area 3: Command and Control (C2)	
Lesson 8	C2 structures and authorities are essential to promote the exercise of leadership, command accountability, risk management, operational coordination, coalition influence and to ensure alignment of tactical actions with strategic ends.
Lesson 9	Restrictions and caveats calibrated by national risk appetite can affect national reputation, strategic influence and broader alliance objectives, which over time can unintentionally increase risk to mission.
Lesson 10	There is significant risk in the practice of mission command having ad hoc/non-standing HQs and task groups within complex national and coalition C2 arrangements without having national formation HQs in the tactical chain of command. This risk should be considered carefully when determining force assignment, task group preparation, C2 design and the application of mission command.
Lesson 11	The excessive disaggregation of established sub-unit, unit and HQ capability bricks can increase risk in both deployed and non-deployed force elements.
Lesson 12:	The continuity of deployed personnel, structures and teams is important to achieving alliance objectives, effective command and leadership, and for the wellbeing of personnel during and post deployment. The risks associated with disrupting this continuity should be considered carefully against the benefits.
Lesson 13	Communications systems and protocols, combined with human connections and trust, are essential for enabling effective C2 in a coalition environment.

Focus Area 4: ADF Culture	
Lesson 14	The inherent complexity of warfare and its changing character demand an ongoing evolution of ADF culture and practice that retains existing strengths but appropriately acknowledges and mitigates vulnerabilities.
Lesson 15	Australia's egalitarianism is a cultural strength of the ADF, but inherent vulnerabilities need to be appropriately acknowledged, balanced and mitigated.
Lesson 16	Early Service emphasis on tribalism and unit pride can contribute to a sense of belonging and esprit de corps. Through time or if over emphasised, this can also generate individual and organisational overconfidence and a lack of humility. This can detract from behaviours that are required to integrate joint, whole-of-government and coalition effects and can contribute to 'identity fragility' on transition out of service.
Lesson 17	Beyond the general trend of ADF tribalism and unit pride exist elite cultures that are vulnerable to 'exceptionalism'. When combined with geographic isolation, excessive compartmentalisation and inappropriate empowerment, this 'exceptionalism' can further exacerbate barriers to cooperation, sharing of information/learning and generate resistance to appropriate oversight and external checks and balances. This in turn can create institutional risk and deprive the broader force of opportunities for collective improvement and combined effect.
Lesson 18	The ADF would benefit from a simple, consistent and regularly applied tool for measuring and monitoring organisational culture. Such a tool could contribute to pre-emptively identifying risk or exploiting opportunity to optimise individual and team performance.
Lesson 19	The nature of warfare requires a well understood ethical and cultural basis to guide decisions and actions, and to support an increasingly educated and aware workforce to process their military experiences.
Focus Area 5: Learning, Adaption and Risk Management	
Lesson 20	The ADF is unbalanced in its application of learning due to the current emphasis on capturing lessons by *Service at the tactical* level, rather than capturing and implementing lessons along domain, joint, enterprise or interagency lines at *all* levels.
Lesson 21	The ADF would benefit from tools, education and practices that appropriately support identifying, registering and mitigating the risks (and exploiting the opportunities) that exist between the tactical-event and enterprise levels.

Other General Observations

Pre-deployment Preparation	
Observation 1	ADF personnel and training remain of very high quality.
Observation 2	Units dedicated to individual and collective force preparation had a positive and sustained effect.
Intelligence	
Observation 3	The ADF's intelligence capabilities have seen significant improvement.
Logistics And Capability Acquisition	
Observation 4	Rapid acquisition of capability and effective evolution of processes provided superior force protection and speed of adaption.
Observation 5	Global logistic capabilities need to be planned for to ensure they meet future requirements.
Observation 6	Force Extraction Teams are an essential element of effective retrograde operations.
Locally Employed Staff	
Observation 7	ADF policies on locally employed staff need to be carefully considered and evolved.
Detainee Management	
Observation 8	Detainee management and civilian casualty investigation processes saw significant development throughout the Campaign.
Return To Australia	
Observation 9	ADF approaches to decompression evolved and demonstrated positive outcomes.
Observation 10	Post-operational screening and support significantly improved across the 20-year campaign.
Health	
Observation 11	ADF understanding of the mental health impacts of military operations developed significantly throughout the campaign.
Observation 12	General health support innovations based on lessons from operations have further evolved Defence health systems.
Observation 13	There has been significant effort in mental health understanding, but further work is required.
Personnel and Family Support	
Observation 14	Having welfare officers and family support for the total force has an important effect on sustaining capability.
Observation 15	Unit Welfare Boards are continuing to evolve and improve the health and wellbeing support provided to ADF personnel.
Observation 16	Notification officer training and processes have profound impact and need to be sustained.
Observation 17	Support for veterans and their families continues to improve and must be sustained.
Observation 18	DVA claims processes are becoming more efficient and transparent and must be sustained.
Observation 19	Honours and awards are emotive and can be unintentionally divisive.
Observation 20	More timely transition decisions and notifications are required.

Introduction

While the ADF's strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures, contributions and lapses were on occasion magnified or exacerbated by the conflict environment in Afghanistan, none of them were created there. As for generations of military forces going back to antiquity, we fought essentially as we trained. Reflecting thoughtfully on our Afghanistan experience provides a lens through which to strengthen our training and preparation for the challenges of the future.

General Angus J. Campbell, Chief of the Defence Force, September 2021 [4]

This study has been conducted at the conclusion of Australia's longest contribution to a war.[5] Led by the US and NATO, the Afghanistan war was framed at the political level by evolving aspirations; characterised at the strategic level by challenging coalition considerations; and executed at the tactical level in an environment with complex historical and cultural dynamics. It was a war in which Australia's involvement was calibrated based on national interests and other competing operational demands. Like most wars, the war in Afghanistan drew out remarkable individual qualities of leadership, adaptability, courage and compassion. Organisationally, it drove an evolution of the ADF's warfighting capability in areas such as intelligence fusion, rapid capability acquisition, force protection, detainee management, personnel support and overall combat mindset. It also saw the first Australian deployment of gender advisers to inform planning and optimise operational outcomes.

Australia now faces rapidly changing strategic circumstances, characterised by constant competition and an increased focus on the Indo-Pacific region. The character of war is evolving. Grey-zone activity and hybrid warfare are becoming more prevalent.[6] Traditional maritime, land, air, space and cyber domains are converging as missile and other technologies produce greater reach and combined effect.

This study is careful to focus on lessons that have relevance to this changing outlook and to avoid those that are only narrowly applicable to the Afghanistan context. Accordingly, this study provides only a brief overview of the Afghanistan Campaign and couples this with a general sense of the expected future operating environment. It concentrates on lessons with future relevance. These are organised into five focus areas: strategy making, campaign design, command and control, ADF culture, and learning/adaption/risk management. The lessons highlighted in this study have specific relevance to Defence and the ADF, but in several cases also have wider relevance to Australian whole-of-government.

Finally, the lessons identified in this study have been derived from a broad literature review, the experienced insights of current and ex-serving ADF personnel, the diverse and objective inputs of academics, and the expert views of national security leaders. The study is practical in nature, written in plain language and published at the unclassified level so that it is accessible to military and civilian audiences. It is focused at the organisational-level and seeks to complement ongoing learning and reform endeavours, rather than duplicate them.[7] It provides an objective review of both the ADF's strengths and vulnerabilities. But being a study (rather than a report), it is not conclusive and aims to generate ongoing reflection and debate. While this debate may be messy and uncomfortable, it is a willingness to accept this that might differentiate us from future adversaries. It is hoped that this study not only serves as an exemplar to others in this regard, but also acts as an enduring reference point to accelerate the ADF's *continuous improvement* and provide it with a vital edge in an increasingly competitive world.[8] This is of particular importance at a time when the enduring realities of the violent, uncertain and high-risk nature of war should remain acutely present in the political and broader national conscience.

Campaign Overview

Thanks to my reading, I have never been caught flat-footed by any situation, never at a loss for how any problem has been addressed (successfully or unsuccessfully) before. It doesn't give me all the answers, but it lights what is often a dark path ahead.

James N. Mattis, Former US Secretary of Defense and US Marine Corps General [9]

To determine the organisational-level lessons from the Afghanistan Campaign that have future relevance, it is necessary to understand both the campaign context and the anticipated future operating environment. At various times during the 20 years of the Afghanistan Campaign, the ADF faced competing demands on its forces. While these demands varied in nature and intensity, they were perhaps most intense around 2005, which has been anecdotally described as a time when 'the ADF cupboard was bare'.[10] Throughout the course of the campaign, concurrent and competing demands included commitments in Iraq and the broader Middle East area of operations (MEAO), multiple stability operations in East Timor and the Solomon Islands, support to domestic security operations – including the 2002 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) – and support to a range of foreign and domestic disaster relief efforts. While responding to these competing demands was a significant achievement for the ADF, it also generated risks and highlighted the limitations of a force the size of the ADF. These pressures also affected force option considerations throughout the campaign.

This study will leave the detailed documenting of the campaign chronology and history to our official historians and others;[11] however, the ADF's involvement in Afghanistan can broadly be broken down into three parts.

2001–2002 and 2005–2006: Small Unit/Conventional
Special forces-led combat operations

2006–2014: Counterterrorism/Counterinsurgency/Reconstruction/Capacity Building
Special forces-led combat and military capacity-building operations; conventional forces-led military capacity building including establishment of a Trade Training School; engineer-led reconstruction supporting a civilian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT); and individual embedded personnel (embed) enabled 'train, advise, assist' support in Afghanistan National Army (ANA) military schools and headquarters

2014–2021: Train, Advise, Assist
Formed sub-units and embed-enabled 'train, advise, assist' support in ANA military schools and headquarters.

This combination of combat troops, trainers and embeds generated a range of tactical effects. Having 'boots on the ground' also provided Australia with a visible and persistent presence that generated a degree of credibility and a limited influence with US, NATO and other coalition partners.[12] While the strategic objectives evolved over the 20 year campaign, the ADF commitment in Afghanistan broadly sought to address the threat of terrorism, support the Afghan government to develop capable and sustainable security forces, and by doing so in partnership with the US, strengthen the Australia/US alliance. The evolving nature of the campaign is described in more detail below.

Australia deployed special force elements in support of the US-led coalition following the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001. The aim was to destroy Al Qaeda, dismantle the Taliban regime and in doing so address the threat of international terrorism. On completion of this mission in 2002, the majority of Australian forces were withdrawn from Afghanistan and did not return until 2005.

After withdrawing the majority of Australian forces from Afghanistan in 2002, Australia committed maritime, air, and land forces (including a 500 strong Special Forces Task Group) to support the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Similar to the 2001 Afghanistan commitment, the majority of these forces were withdrawn within that same year. From May 2005, approximately 500 Australian conventional troops were again deployed to Iraq in the southern province of Al Muthanna, where they remained until July 2009.

Concurrently in 2005, Australian special forces elements were again deployed to Afghanistan. This was initially under US command as part of Operation Enduring Freedom then subsequently under International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from 2007 and International Security Assistance Force – Special Operations Force (ISAF SOF) on its formation in 2008. Other commitments included the 2006 deployment of a CH47 Rotary Wing Group and a Reconstruction Task Force in support of a Dutch-led PRT. This Reconstruction Task Force (later transitioned to a Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force, and then a Mentoring Task Force) was placed under the command of a Dutch formation-level headquarters from 2006 to 2010 and then a Combined Team Uruzgan formation-level headquarters from 2010 to 2014. Combined Team Uruzgan was commanded by a US officer from 2010 to late 2012, despite having a significant number of ADF personnel in the headquarters, including the Deputy Commander. From 2012 to 2014, an Australian officer commanded Combined Team Uruzgan.[13] From 2008, Australia also deployed a troop of artillery personnel under British operational command in Helmand Province.

From 2014 through to Australia's withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, the ADF mission focused on training, advising and assisting in ANA training schools and headquarters. Throughout the entirety of the campaign, individual ADF personnel were also embedded ('embeds') in key US and NATO headquarters and, for some of the time, the military commitment was complemented by an important but modest whole-of-government contribution of intelligence, Australian Federal Police (AFP), AusAID and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) personnel. In this respect, the Afghanistan Campaign highlighted the limitations of military power and the importance of coordinated whole-of-government effects in achieving enduring outcomes.

In total, over 39,000 ADF members and Defence civilians deployed in support of the Afghanistan Campaign, 41 ADF personnel were killed while serving in Afghanistan and 262 were wounded. Some who served suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and tragically, some have taken their own lives on return. The significant and sustained efforts of the ADF and other whole-of-government/coalition partners denied terrorist organisations a safe haven in Afghanistan from which to plan attacks. Further, over 2,500 Afghan officers and 600 Afghan soldiers were trained or advised by ADF personnel. This provided Afghans with the opportunity to ensure their own security when coalition forces were withdrawn. Defence also contributed USD680 million to the Afghan National Army Trust Fund for projects to build the capacity of the Afghan Army.[14] A by-product of these efforts was that Afghanistan became a [rudimentary] functioning democracy, millions of previously persecuted girls were educated, and much of the country's infrastructure, hospitals, schools and economic activity were restored.[15]

In August 2021, the Taliban rapidly regained power in Afghanistan. This precipitated the ADF's involvement in a DFAT-led operation to evacuate 4,168 Australian citizens, permanent residents, visa holders and approved foreign nationals from Kabul. While the future of Afghanistan remains unknown, the CDF's message of reflection sent to all Defence personnel on 27 August 2021 summarises nicely the juxtaposition of pride and pain felt by many, and for the purpose of this study is worthy of quoting directly.

> For twenty years, Australia contributed to the NATO-led mission to deny Afghanistan as a safe haven for international terrorism. Following the drawdown of international forces, we have witnessed the Taliban move swiftly and aggressively to regain control of Afghanistan.
>
> The situation in Afghanistan is distressing and disheartening. Many of us are deeply worried for the Afghan people. We were guests of, and partners to, the Government and people of Afghanistan. Our contributions towards counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, security force capacity building and national stability were part of our collective experience. We sought to protect our own nations and wanted to help the Afghan people.
>
> We do not yet know the nature of the new Taliban regime, but its core ideology and past behaviour appal us all. However, they will have to learn how to govern an Afghanistan changed by our collective coalition efforts over the past two decades.
>
> Afghanistan today has thousands of kilometres of improved road infrastructure, offering mobility and market opportunity for small traders. Young, educated people have moved into urban areas, away from the isolation and, for many, the oppression, of village life. Telecommunication networks and Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure have brought connectivity, information and personal banking; valued by both the powerful and the poor.

> And the Taliban cannot erase the example provided by so many good women and men from around the world, who showed Afghans that there are other ways to live, and that there are other possibilities for their future. These and other changes, while indirect, may help influence the trajectory of a future Afghanistan under Taliban rule. All this is yet to be seen.
>
> To every member of the ADF, past and present, I say thank you for doing your duty and contributing to our national effort in Afghanistan. We saw numerous acts of gallantry and distinguished service. Your skill, dedication and professionalism were demonstrated, and appreciated by Australia, our partners and the Afghan people. Our nation and I can ask no more of you than that; well done.
>
> Overwhelmingly, your contribution should be remembered with pride. Pride in the way you represented our country, pride in your courage in adversity, and pride in your compassion to those in need.
>
> We will never forget the ultimate sacrifice paid by 41 Australian soldiers who died on operations in Afghanistan. Some of our people continue to live with lasting physical and mental scars, and tragically we have lost more of our people since they returned home. We respect and give meaning to their sacrifice by remembering them, by living lives of value to our community and by reaching out to mates in need. This is what they, our fallen, would expect of us.
>
> To all our Australian Defence Force and wider Defence personnel, and their families, past and present, thank you for the service you give to our great nation.[16]

Describing the entirety of the ADF's contribution to the Afghanistan Campaign over a 20-year period is not possible within the constraints of this study. However, additional context is provided in the Key Appointments, Formed Unit, Exemplar ADF Command and Control Arrangements, and Afghanistan/Uruzgan province maps at annexes A to D.[17]

Chief of the Australian Defence Force, General Angus Campbell AO, DSC, attends the Last Post Ceremony held at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, marking the 20th anniversary of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks.

The Future Operating Environment

No one in this room can accurately predict the future, least of all me. The nature of war is never gonna change. But the character of war is changing before our eyes — with the introduction of a lot of technology, a lot of societal changes with urbanization and a wide variety of other factors.

General Mark Milley, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff [18]

No matter how fast weapons and technology evolve in the 21st century, one thing remains constant is that war is a human endeavor, a grueling contest between two learning and adaptive forces. Victory, therefore, rests on how smart, how tough, and how dedicated our boots on the ground.

Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono, Former Indonesian Military Officer [19]

To determine the utility of lessons from the Afghanistan Campaign, it is necessary understand the macro trends that are likely to characterise Australia's strategic environment and future warfare.

The *2020 Defence Strategic Update* describes our region as being in the midst of the most consequential period of strategic realignment since the Second World War. We are likely to face military modernisation, technological disruption and the risk of state-on-state conflict as well as the enduring threat of terrorism. Our region is more uncertain, contested and apprehensive, circumstances that may be further exacerbated by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Unlike the Afghanistan Campaign, future conflicts may not be discretionary. In the extreme they may be existential in nature.

To address these trends, the Australian government directed Defence to focus on Australia's immediate region with the following objectives:

- to shape Australia's strategic environment
- to deter actions against Australia's interests
- to respond with credible military force, when required.[20]

The government further directed Defence to prioritise our immediate region; improve self-reliance for delivering deterrent effects; expand capability to respond to grey-zone activities; work closely with other arms of government; enhance lethality; maintain the ability to deploy forces globally, including in the context of US-led coalitions; and enhance capacity to support civil authorities in response to natural disasters and crises.

To complement this, the government also outlined broader whole-of-government plans. These include capabilities to support an enhanced defence posture and whole-of-government efforts to build Australia's partnerships and influence in the region; as well as more potent capabilities to hold adversary forces and infrastructure at risk further from Australia. More durable supply-chain arrangements with strengthened sovereign industrial capabilities are planned to enhance the ADF's self-reliance. In the context of high-intensity operations these include increased investment in capabilities to respond to grey-zone activities (such as improved situational awareness, cyber capabilities, electronic warfare and information operations) and measures to enhance ADF support to civil authorities in response to national crises and natural disasters (such as pandemics, bushfires, floods or cyclones).[21]

Within this future strategic context, assessments also indicate the following evolving (and enduring) characteristics of future warfare:

- increased whole-of-government and cross-sectoral partnering before, during and after conflicts
- ongoing likelihood of multilateral coalitions
- greater integration of cross-domain capabilities to achieve desired effects

- increased need for more agile command and control approaches supported by fused intelligence from a range of agencies and partner nations to deliver timely and integrated effects
- further prevalence of grey-zone operations as part of routine statecraft
- closer integration of whole-of-government soft power in concert with both hard military power and soft military diplomacy.

These dynamics will generate increased and persistent contestation, compress and merge the relationship between policy and operations, and reduce the timeframes and consequences of decisions at all levels. This is likely to occur in an increasingly ambiguous environment where the fidelity of intelligence will be less than that experienced for the majority of the Afghanistan Campaign.

The combination of the future strategic environment and character of future warfare outlined above are likely to place additional demands on the ADF. It will need to focus on **high-intensity operations** but also maintain expertise and readiness across the **full spectrum of military operations**. To perform within a **more dynamic and integrated environment**, the ADF will need to **evolve and refine its model and means of command and control**, including within coalitions and alongside a broader range of other partners. Further, the ADF will need an increased focus on **cultural awareness/skills** (self-awareness, whole-of-government culture, regional culture etc.) to optimise partnerships with a **broader range of whole-of-government, cross sector, regional and coalition partners**. The ADF and government more broadly will also need the systems and cultures to enable more dynamic decision-making in **increasingly uncertain and ambiguous environments**.

In conclusion, while the ADF's future operating environment is likely to be different from that experienced during the Afghanistan Campaign, several aspects are likely to persist. For instance, there is likely to be an ongoing threat of terrorism and the requirement to conduct a wide spectrum of military operations (often concurrently). Another consideration will be the need to continue developing national strategies and military campaigns within a broader coalition environment and establishing dynamic C2 arrangements within complex coalition structures. Further, the need for whole-of-government effects to be integrated to achieve enduring outcomes and understanding culture in both strategy making and tactical execution will remain important. However, the ongoing demand on military personnel to be courageous, compassionate and deal with complexity and ambiguity at all levels will endure. These continuities give future relevance to the many lessons from the Afghanistan Campaign that follow.

(L-R) Deputy Minister of Defence Dr Enayatullah Nazari discusses issues with Chief of Joint Operations Lieutenant General Ash Power, Australian Ambassador to Afghanistan, His Excellency Ambassador Paul Foley and Commander Joint Task Force 633 Major General Michael Crane at the Afghan Ministry of Defence, Kabul Afghanistan.

Focus Area 1:
Strategy Making

Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory.
Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.

Sun Tzu [22]

Introduction

Strategy means different things to different people. For the purpose of this paper, strategy is defined in the simplest and broadest of terms: 'a long-range plan for achieving something or reaching a goal, or the skill of making such plans'.[23] Western history is littered with examples of failed strategy. The Vietnam War is but one example where 'battles were won' but the 'war was lost'. The economic and human costs of failed strategy are often high. For this reason, there is a clear line of view between Australia's Parliament House, where national strategy is made, and the Australian War Memorial, where the costs of supporting military strategies are poignantly remembered. Put simply, strategy matters and is of utmost importance to any nation that values the lives of those it puts in harm's way.

This study does not seek to evaluate the US, NATO or Australian strategy in Afghanistan. This will more appropriately be unpacked by others over time. Rather, this section of the study focuses on the more enduring topic of strategy making. Suffice to say, the coalition environment in which NATO, the US and contributing nations developed their respective strategies for Afghanistan was highly complex. Objectives were derived within a context of differing national interests and evolved over time. While in the early stages of the war the objectives of the campaign were, in general terms, focused and relatively aligned, Kissinger described the subsequent US political objectives in Afghanistan as 'abstract' and 'elusive'. He also described the subordinate military objectives as 'absolute' and 'unattainable'.[24] As indicated in the previous section, similarly complex policy and strategy-making dynamics are likely to remain prevalent in future campaigns. As a nation that is often a junior partner in a coalition, it is important Australia learns to manage the risks associated with this reality and optimise its sovereign national and military strategy-making mechanisms.

Strategy Making Theory

Strategy making is the art and science of aligning ends, ways and means. At the apex of the strategy-making paradigm is the 'national interest' and the formulation of national strategic ends (policy objectives) that contribute to its achievement. National interests and national strategic 'ends' will always have the 'higher purpose' in strategy making. For this reason, they become the focus in determining the appropriate whole-of-government 'ways and means' to be applied in their pursuit. Similarly, in any supporting and aligned military strategy, national strategic ends will directly inform the development of the military strategic ends (military strategic objectives) and consequently how military power is applied. For these reasons, it is essential that policy and military strategic objectives are clearly defined and communicated.

Military strategy is developed at the strategic level and is underpinned by the formulation of military strategic objectives.[25] Once military strategic objectives are determined at the strategic level, the essential art and science of campaign design begins at the operational level. This focuses on orchestrating and applying military ways and means to achieve the military strategic objectives. It should also include the articulation of the eventual military end state. While in theory this appears to be simple and linear, the strategy-making lessons from the Afghanistan Campaign that follow highlight the complexity and future importance of strategy making in a coalition environment.

Lesson 1:
A more dynamic, competitive and interconnected future operating environment will require strategy-making systems, forums and cultures to be more iterative and have a wider range of whole-of-government and expert inputs.

Strategy making is as important for smaller powers as it is for superpowers. It is particularly important in the context of coalitions in which contributing nations often have differing objectives. By definition, strategy is dynamic in nature and exists in a context of competition where adversaries have a 'vote'. This necessitates constant monitoring, review and iteration,[26] and having an approach to strategy that continuously scans for both risk and opportunity. Any overconfident 'set and forget' approach to strategy should be guarded against.

As described in the introduction, Australia's national strategy in Afghanistan quite rightly evolved over time. Coordinated by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, this evolution was partially informed by senior official discussions in the Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCNS),[27] but mostly it was guided and directed through the National Security Committee of Cabinet. Updates and reviews occurred approximately every six months.

In an increasingly complex, interconnected and rapidly changing strategic environment, strategy making is likely to require a more iterative and exploratory approach and demand a broader range of whole-of-government and external expert inputs. The ambiguity associated with an increase in 'grey-zone' activity is also likely to demand more regular engagement, laterally (across government departments) and vertically (across the departmental/political interface). Enabling this more iterative and exploratory approach is likely to require evolved strategy-making forums and mechanisms, more time from senior officials and political leaders, stronger cross departmental relationships at all levels, and appropriate cultures that are supportive of objective lateral and vertical exchange. From a cultural perspective, it will be particularly important for departments to avoid 'second guessing' government or tailoring their formal advice to perceived government desires or requirements. [28] This evolved approach will ensure government is able to formally consider the broadest range of options within what is likely to be a more dynamic and iterative cabinet process.

From an ADF perspective, it is likely that tactical actions in the future operating environment will have greater and immediate strategic consequences. Equally, it is likely that strategic decisions will have more immediate impact on tactical actions. In certain circumstances, supporting government in this more dynamic strategy-making environment is likely to require the ADF to compress and/or evolve its traditional tactical, operational and strategic layers of military command and control.

Recommendations

1.1 **Government consider reviewing Australia's strategy-making and monitoring mechanisms.**
The purpose of such a review would be to ensure structures, arrangements and procedures are optimised to support the National Security Committee in the design and oversight of whole-of-government strategy in an increasingly complex and dynamic environment.[29]

1.2 **Develop a whole-of-government national strategy-making curriculum.**
Such a curriculum would better integrate and consolidate the efforts of existing institutions such as the Australian Public Service Academy, the National Security College and the Australian Defence College and should include participation by current and future senior officials and political leaders.[30] The curriculum should include 'theory of change' models,[31] which focus on the logic pathways that lead to 'enduring outcomes' and avoid fixation on 'temporary outputs'. Alternate futures methodology should also be considered for incorporation.[32] Innovative ways for senior officials to more regularly and collectively develop whole-of-government strategy-making skills, cultures and relationships should also be considered.

1.3 **Codify the roles and expected behaviours of those involved in strategy making.**
The United Kingdom's 'Good Operation Handbook' and 'Reasonable Challenge Guide' could be used as the basis for developing appropriate Australian guidelines to meet the needs of a more ambiguous and dynamic strategy-making system.[33] This should include codifying the need to formally present options and associated risks to government.[34]

1.4 **Conduct a review of Defence military strategy-making mechanisms and processes.**
Defence requires the capacity to support a more dynamic and iterative future whole-of-government strategic decision-making process. Responsibility for leading the development of executable military strategy must be clearly defined in both crisis and routine operations to ensure the most agile and appropriate advice is provided to CDF and government. Specific consideration should be given to the roles and capacity of Military Strategic Commitments (MSC), Military Strategic Plans (MSP), International Policy Division (IP Div.) and Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC). To avoid any unintended risk of conflating advice on 'policy' and 'military' options, in certain circumstances, consideration might be given to separating defence policy advice and defence military advice when advising government. By no means does this suggest that there is a separation between policy and operations, which are necessarily entwined at the strategic level, rather this approach seeks to ensure government is able to consider the broadest range of policy and military options.

1.5 **Review ADF Command, Control and Communications (C3) paradigms.**
A review should retain tactical, operational and strategic paradigms for most aspects of military C2 but further evolve them to enable more rapid information passage from the tactical to the strategic levels in more dynamic circumstances.

Lesson 2:
Defining, reviewing and clearly communicating national and supporting military strategic objectives is essential to enabling a coordinated whole-of-government effort, maintaining public interest and support, and ensuring those in harm's way at the tactical level have a clear and unifying purpose.

Formulating the national and military strategic objectives (ends) that contribute to the 'national interest' requires consideration of a vast range of inputs. These inputs might include history, culture, partner nation equities or just the limitations and practicalities of the means available.

Australia's national and military strategic objectives in Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002 were limited and clearly defined as the destruction of Al Qaeda and dismantling of the Taliban regime, thereby addressing the threat of international terrorism. However, when Australia and its partners recommitted to Afghanistan from 2005 onwards, consideration of Australia's national interest, strategic objectives and broader force options (beyond just special forces) evolved more quickly and less satisfactorily[35]. In 2009, the necessity for a clearer strategy and broader whole-of-government effort was acknowledged by international partners and articulated by the Australian Prime Minister.[36]

In a complex coalition environment, the challenge of defining national interest, and communicating national and military strategic objectives within a contemporary media and political landscape, cannot be underestimated. In many respects, the Clausewitzian Trinity and the tension between three fundamental elements of war (the government, the people, and the military) remain truer today than perhaps they have ever been.[37] For most Western nations, the most important principle of war – 'selection and maintenance of the aim' – remains of utmost relevance.

There are many practical and contemporary reasons for these enduring axioms. For instance, a clear articulation of national and military strategic objectives enables the equally important articulation of accountability to deliver these objectives in execution. Having commonly understood national strategic objectives enables whole-of-government coordination and unity of effort that creates complementary and unified outcomes and a more efficient use of national resources. Clearly communicating national and military strategic objectives to the public acts as an important democratic check and balance, and ensures veterans return to a community that has an awareness of their contribution.

The ADF's understanding of national and military strategic objectives at the operational level enables campaign design that focuses tactical activity to achieve strategic ends. Similarly, understanding of national and military strategic objectives at the tactical level is in many ways central to the 'soldier/state compact'.[38] It both guides and motivates tactical action and in doing so reduces the risk of moral injury that is associated with unclear purpose. It also aids with ongoing recruiting and retention. Finally understanding of national and military strategic objectives supports wounded soldiers and grieving families cope with the hardships they bear.

Recommendations

2.1 **Review Defence's approach to media during operations and campaigns.**
A review of Defence's approach and policy in relation to media engagement might enhance mechanisms available for government and the ADF to further engage with the public on the purpose and progress of operations and strategy.

2.2 **Review ADF strategy-making, planning, orders and leadership doctrine.**
ADF strategy-making doctrine should be reviewed to ensure the importance of having a clear understanding of national and military strategic objectives (including military end states) is appropriately emphasised as part of the military strategy-making process. Beyond the current requirement to articulate the higher commander's intent and specific mission purpose/method/end state, overall national and military strategic objectives should also be considered for inclusion in military planning and orders doctrine. The role of commanders in actively communicating this to serving personnel should also be emphasised in leadership doctrine.

Lesson 3:
Western aspiration can be a strength but if due consideration is not given to local history, culture, politics and capacity it can lead to overly ambitious and unsustainable national and military strategic objectives.[39]

Western optimism and its associated democratic aspiration have been a driving force that, in the main, has contributed to significant improvements in the lives of millions across the world. This spirit of aspiration and betterment for others will always be a part of Western culture. But like many strengths, it also comes with inherent vulnerabilities, which must be consciously acknowledged and actively mitigated to optimise strategic outcomes. One of these vulnerabilities is that it can create unintended blindness to historic, cultural, political and capacity contexts and their limitations, which can constrain the effectiveness of a strategy. While noble in aspiration, setting ends through an optimistic Western lens can risk strategic failure.[40]

US Admiral James Stavridis, a former Supreme Allied Commander NATO, asserts that the coalition aspired in its strategic ends to build an Afghan Army that was overly sophisticated and unsustainable within the context of the Afghan education and industrial base.[41] It is possible that early operational success in Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002 may also have contributed to overly optimistic campaign aspirations. While human nature constrains the ability to truly appreciate and visualise the execution of strategy through different cultural, historic and economic lenses, the need to do so remains a fundamental component to successful strategy making and for this reason must be accounted for in more effective ways.

Recommendations

3.1 **Enhance ADF professional development in regional history, culture and language.**
In addition to improved professional development, more opportunities for exchange postings with Indo-Pacific regional partners could be offered. Recruiting efforts could also be further weighted towards Australian citizens with these cultural backgrounds.

3.2 **Include specialists, experts and gender advisers in planning and strategy making.**
Including deep specialists (including anthropologists, sociologist, historians and political scientists), cultural experts and gender advisers in ADF planning teams, intelligence agencies and whole-of-government strategy-making fora would allow more diverse points of view to have input to planning processes and challenge habitual thinking. [42] It would also improve problem framing and definition. Consideration should also be given to including these diverse disciplines and cultures on permanent staffs and/or in 'red-teaming' functions and structures.

Conclusion

Strategy making is complex, dynamic and often uncertain. It requires diverse inputs and needs to be taught and practiced across the whole of government. While national strategy is ultimately decided or endorsed at the political level, it requires mechanisms, structures and cultures that integrate inputs horizontally across the whole of government and vertically across the operational, strategic and political levels. An absence of these can lead to inadequate definition and communication of national and military strategic objectives. This can limit the coordination and overall effectiveness of whole-of-government ways and means, which in turn can lead to suboptimal strategic outcomes. In a more dynamic and competitive future operating environment, it may also limit the speed at which a strategy can be enacted or the rate at which it can be adapted.

For the ADF, a clear understanding of national and military strategic objectives is an essential precondition for effective campaign design. Any weakness in their logic or communication can have flow-on effects throughout the entire campaign. These effects can manifest themselves in different ways and are described in the subsequent sections of this study.

Australian advisors deployed to the Kabul Garrison Command (KGC) participate in a rehearsal of concept drill alongside Coalition partners and personnel from the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) during the Presidential election held on 28 October 2019.

Focus Area 2:
Campaign Design

The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish... the kind of war on which they are embarking: neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive.

Carl von Clausewitz [43]

Introduction

Defining national and military strategic objectives (ends) is paramount to both the strategy-making process and the military campaign design process.[44] But viewing the ends/ways/means strategy-making paradigm as a strictly 'top down' or linear process can lead to suboptimal outcomes. An overly top down or 'can-do' approach at the departmental (ways/means) level can increase the risk of strategic failure. Ways and means are as important to determining *achievable* national strategic ends, as ends are to determining *appropriate* ways and means.

Regardless of a nation's size and resources, ways and means will almost always constrain national strategic aspirations. These can be further constrained by other factors including the associated economic and human costs the public is willing to bear and broader political, legal, public, moral and practical considerations. As discussed in the previous section, this calibration and alignment of ends/ways/means requires effective whole-of-government cultures and mechanisms.

Military strategic objectives also set the limits and constraints of the subsequent military ways and means to achieve them. Determining the appropriate military ways and means to achieve these military strategic objectives is enabled by campaign design. This occurs at the operational level and is a critical bridge that links the ends determined at the political and military strategic levels with the practical application of military means at the tactical level.

It is important to note at this juncture that not all military activity needs to be subjected to the process of campaign design. Campaign design is a disciplined and long-term approach to arraying military ways and means. In a dynamic future operating environment, it is an approach that is unlikely to be sufficiently responsive to rapidly emerging situations. In such circumstances, existing campaign plans may inform responses but should not constrain them. Equally, having a national strategy that acts as a unifying reference point for urgent decisions and actions will be vital. For this reason, we should guard against any flawed notion that uncertainty voids the need for planning and strategy making. The Australian War Memorial should serve as a reminder that the reality is quite the opposite.

Lesson 4:
The ADF needs to appropriately balance its education and overall investment across the tactical, operational and strategic levels to ensure success in future military commitments.

There is a predominant cultural focus in the ADF (as in many militaries) on the tactical level.[45] This has been driven by a number of factors, from our ANZAC cultural heritage and past support of larger coalition partners (who have by default dominated operational and strategic approaches), to the fact that the tactical level is where battles are fought and ADF personnel face the greatest risk.[46] For different but appropriate reasons, there is also a Defence cultural focus on the interface with government at the strategic level. Focusing on the strategic and tactical ends of the overall Defence enterprise is understandable but an equal investment is required at the operational level.

An unbalanced concentration on the top and bottom of the Defence enterprise can lead to a lack of education and investment at the operational level. Failure to invest at the operational level generates increased risk that sacrifices made at the tactical level will not align with or contribute to desired outcomes at the strategic level. Over recent years, Defence has increased its focus on the operational level with the establishment of a dedicated Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC) in 2005, followed by the appointment of a dedicated Chief of Joint Operations. Defence has also increased its focus on the operational art at its War College. These were important steps towards strengthening the ADF's operational capacity and expertise and manifested in more comprehensive campaign design as the Afghanistan Campaign progressed. It will be important for the ADF to continue to invest in the operational level and further increase its expertise and capacity to orchestrate continuous and concurrent operations to shape, deter and, if need be, respond in both foreign and domestic settings.

Recommendations

4.1 **Review and refine the role of HQJOC and MSC.**
The ADF should review and refine the role of HQJOC and MSC and invest in the expertise, capacity and systems required to function effectively and persistently at both the operational and strategic levels.

4.2 **More regularly *exercise* the linkages between the political, strategic and operational levels.**
Such exercises should routinely involve whole-of-government partners and include regional and/or US coalition scenarios.

Lesson 5:
Robust campaign design and assessment are essential to successfully achieving national strategic objectives and require appropriate education and overall investment.

Both campaign design and campaign assessment are critical parts of the strategy-making system. Campaign design at the operational level is more than just a 'bridge' or 'positional linkage' between the tactical and strategic levels. It is the central driver in the conduct of operations and warfare. It provides a road map to achieving strategic objectives. Campaign assessment then provides an objective feedback loop for measuring progress and identifying risks.

The ADF's campaign design and assessment processes were limited in the early parts of the Afghanistan Campaign. In the absence of a clearly communicated ADF campaign strategy, some subordinate commanders attempted to write their own. These individual strategies did not always align with the broader ADF or coalition trajectory. From a broader coalition perspective, there were also examples of campaign strategies frequently changing depending on the personality and preferences of commanders. This created unnecessary friction and confusion, frustrated local security forces and detracted from the persistent and enduring effects that come with campaign discipline.

At times in the Afghanistan Campaign, objectives and metrics were overly focused on troop commitment numbers, which contributed to alliance objectives, or on casualty numbers, which might risk public support. On occasion, this was also coupled with campaign assessment frameworks that were narrowly focused on progress in the development of the ANA, without necessarily monitoring broader coalition campaign risks and opportunities.

The maturing of the HQJOC capability, after its establishment in 2005, saw ADF campaign design improve significantly throughout the Afghanistan Campaign. This was complemented by the ADF Strategic Command Group and the establishment of the Military Strategic Plans Division in 2020.

Australia's US alliance objectives will often have a high degree of prominence in any national strategy. The US, as part of a coalition, will often take the lead in any overarching coalition strategy in which Australia takes part. In this context however, it would be easy for the ADF to underinvest in its own sovereign military strategy, campaign design and campaign assessment capability. This could create unforeseen and unintended downstream risks.

These risks could include:

- inadvertent mission creep and risk of tactical/operational/strategic entrapment within broader coalition objectives
- a reduction in the necessary national oversight of tactical activity
- an increase in the risk of moral injury associated with ill-defined or unclear national purpose
- eventual and unanticipated mission failure.

Recommendations

5.1 **Further weight campaign design within the Defence training and education continuum.**
In addition to increased training and education, campaign design should be practiced within the ADF's exercise regime in a whole-of-government, coalition or regional context. Defence should include the need to measure those things that can provide advance warning of less obvious risks and vulnerabilities, such as host-nation will. An educational and procedural framework should also be developed for conducting whole-of-government campaign design and assessment that optimises the orchestration of all levers of national power.

5.2 **Invest further in HQJOC capacity and capability to conduct campaign design and assessment.**
This investment would include more sophisticated campaign design and assessment in the context of current regional shape, deter, respond campaigns.

Lesson 6:
Force optimisation and force sustainability should be considered carefully and objectively when selecting the military means to achieve strategic ends. Force options and all associated risks should be formally communicated to Government for consideration.

The selection and ongoing review of the military means to achieve military strategic objectives is a vital part of any military campaign. As mentioned above, national strategic ends appropriately set the limits and constraints of military strategic objectives and the subsequent military means that can be used to achieve them.

In the Afghanistan Campaign, personnel caps (upper limits of the number of personnel authorised to deploy) were imposed by government as a tool to manage the military means available to achieve Australia's national strategic objectives. This was common with all contributing nations. These personnel, or manning, caps limited and calibrated ADF force element and C2 options. These options were further constrained by competing foreign and domestic operational demands and the depth and sustainability of ADF enabling capabilities.

The ADF mechanism to review and adapt deployed force structures evolved significantly during the Afghanistan Campaign. Through the Operational Establishment Review (OER) process, HQJOC periodically checked appropriate troops were force assigned to meet operational requirements within the constraints listed above. Because of personnel caps, the desire to maximise fighting troops or trainers often led to compromises that generated risks in other parts of the deployed force. This dynamic was exacerbated by perceptions in some parts of the organisation that the ADF had limited scope to propose personnel cap adjustments to government.

As part of the OER process, it was important to consider force sustainability over time. This had particular relevance for low-density forces such as special forces, human intelligence and other niche capabilities. While these force elements may have been available and optimal to deploy at particular points in time, sustaining their deployment for extended periods was more challenging. It also generated risks to the health and wellbeing of personnel and, in some cases, impacted unit cohesion and morale.[47]

Early indicators of these risks became apparent around 2008. An increased number of deployment waivers began to indicate that certain force elements, including special forces, were being rotated beyond sustainable limits. [48] As is mentioned in the culture section of this study the ADF's 'can-do' culture has vulnerabilities. In this case, it manifested in a general reluctance for special force leaders and others in the community to pre-emptively flag force sustainability risks or reduce their commitment.[49] However a concurrent aspiration to integrate part-time soldiers into 'One Army' provided an opportunity to mitigate this emerging risk and part-time members were eventually deployed on full-time service for winter rotations of the Special Operations Task Group. This was a more effective utilisation of the Army's total forces available.

The ADF did consider other options that would have reduced the special forces footprint, but it is understood that they were not presented to government because these options were not Uruzgan focused. Other higher density conventional forces with more capacity for ongoing rotation and possibly better suited to both training and the counterinsurgency necessity of holding ground were also not deployed. This may have been driven by a false perception in some circles that these forces were not as well trained and/or presented a higher casualty risk. It is also worth noting that the traditional role of forces like the Special Air Service Regiment was long-range/duration strategic reconnaissance and indigenous force capacity building rather than raiding action.

Conversely, ensuring maximum utility is achieved from particular force elements is essential for a relatively small military such as the ADF. In this context, the effect embedded personnel had on Australia's reputation was remarkable and a testament to the quality of our people, their adaptability and overall training. The inaugural and subsequent Australian command of the newly formed International Security Assistance Force Special Operations Forces (ISAF SOF) in Jan 2008 was a testament to Australia's reputation and utility as a non-NATO nation. This relatively small Australian commitment also disproportionately increased Australia's credibility and influence. It was an exemplar of the strategic benefits of well-positioned embedded personnel (embeds). Further opportunity exists to optimise the future utility of embeds by more deliberately enabling and leveraging their influence, understanding and learning. Further optimisation could also be achieved by better connecting them with other whole-of-government embedded networks.

Recommendations

6.1 **Further codify in ADF doctrine an objective process for considering both immediate and longitudinal risks associated with force assignment and ongoing rotation.**
This should include a way to better codify and compare the sustainable capacity and mission effectiveness of a broader range of force elements.

6.2 **Re-examine and codify how the ADF might better prepare and utilise embeds.**
This includes ways of better directing their influence, harnessing their broader coalition understanding during deployment, and leveraging their significant learning and relationships post deployment. While experience in 'operations' functions is valuable, embed positions should be weighted towards senior 'plans' functions that can better influence the trajectory of coalition campaigns.

6.3 **Enhance and build on the ADF's extant and standing structures of Defence attachés, national liaison officers and embeds.**
This should focus on our region and ensure better integration with the broader whole-of-government embed posture. Such integrated structures could connect and enhance whole-of-government/coalition planning, understanding, influence and coordination on a day-to-day basis as well as in crises.

6.4 **Improve understanding of the application of personnel caps.**
While placing limits on military means through personnel caps is appropriate, consideration should be given to addressing perceptions of rigid application and how this might unintentionally lead to an 'economy of force' culture that can generate increased risks or missed opportunities over time.

6.5 **Enhance enabling capabilities in standing and deployed force structures.**
This will reduce the limitations on military force element or command and control options.

Lesson 7:
The ADF and other government departments and agencies should be able to deploy capabilities that realise the full potential of coordinated whole-of-government effects, which are often necessary to achieve enduring strategic outcomes.

National strategic ends are, more often than not, impossible to achieve with military means alone. Whether it is in counterinsurgency endeavours or ensuring post-conflict stability, there is often a need to build or rebuild governance and other structures to create a 'better peace.' A clear understanding and articulation of this better peace and an objective assessment of its achievability is central to strategy making.

Hard-earned counterinsurgency theory and doctrine are explicit on the need to *shape* the battlespace with special forces and information operations; *clear* the battlespace of insurgents through patrolling and kinetic actions; *hold* the battlespace with ongoing security presence; and then *build* governance and security structures to achieve a sustainable effect. This SHAPE, CLEAR, HOLD, BUILD approach has been a lesson from Vietnam, Iraq and, hopefully for the last time, Afghanistan. It underscores a number of enduring counterinsurgency lessons including:

- you can't just kill your way to victory[50]
- it is essential to deny the enemy a safe haven where they can 'wait you out'
- information operations must reinforce actions rather than be a substitute for them.

For these reasons, there were understandable drivers during the Afghanistan Campaign to build both Afghan military and governance capacity. This was a highly necessary but ambitious undertaking in the Afghanistan context that could never be achieved with an 'in/out' style of special forces raiding. Conventional troops were required to assist local forces with the 'clear' and 'hold', and beyond military capacity building, whole-of-government capabilities were required to enable the 'build'. While DFAT, AusAID and AFP contributions were vital in this regard,[51] their contribution was relatively modest in size and has been described by several study participants as being peripheral to Australia's strategy rather than central to it.[52]

Recommendations

7.1 **Develop whole-of-government counterinsurgency doctrine.**
The process of developing such doctrine would serve as a vehicle to enable whole-of-government learning from Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. This would build shared understanding that would benefit future strategy making and operations. It would also stimulate consideration of the need for increased *deployable whole-of-government capacity* that could provide government with a broader range of national power options to pursue national strategic objectives.

7.2 **Foster the skills and cultures of ADF personnel to effectively contribute to whole-of-government strategy, planning and operational execution.**
In doing so, consideration could be given to reviewing the respective curricula of the Australian Public Service Academy, DFAT Academy, Australian Civil-Military Centre, Australian Defence College and National Security College with the aim of improving whole-of-government understanding, collaboration and integration.

Conclusion

While the operational level is not at the more acute strategic/political or tactical interfaces, it is none the less of utmost importance to the achievement of national strategic objectives. In a military context, the operational level is more than just a 'bridge' or 'positional linkage' between the tactical and strategic levels. It is the central driver in the conduct of operations and warfare.

Both campaign design and assessment are critical mechanisms to formulating and orchestrating the most effective 'ways' to apply military 'means' to achieve strategic 'ends', often as part of a broader whole-of-government endeavour. Supporting campaign design and assessment skillsets, along with whole-of-government education and cooperative cultures, are essential to future success and require appropriate investment.

Beyond ends-ways-means orchestration, the operational level also designs the military C2 frameworks that enable effective leadership and command oversight of military activity in the pursuit of national strategic ends. The following section will outline key C2 lessons from the Afghanistan Campaign.

Australian advisors deployed to the Kabul Garrison Command (KGC) participate in a planning brief alongside personnel from the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) during the Presidential election held on 28 October 2019.

Focus Area 3:
Command and Control (C2)

Defining the battlespace and establishing a clear command and control system should be regarded as the very essence of effective planning at the operational level of war. All other operational functions rely on a clear demarcation by an operational headquarters of battlespace parameters and command and control organisation.

Lieutenant Colonel Chris Field, Planning in Operation Iraqi Freedom 2003 [53]

Introduction

Determining the ways and means of Australian C2 are critical outputs of campaign design. C2 arrangements are often framed and constrained by coalition considerations and national strategic objectives. These in turn are informed by associated risk appetite.

While easy to consider as just structural or administrative, military C2 is an essential enabler of the military component of national strategy. The C2 'wire-diagram' is far more than just a layout of forces available and respective command relationships. Externally, it determines the approach and degree of ADF influence over coalition tactical, operational and strategic matters. Internally, it sets the frameworks that enable military command, leadership and risk management, and establishes clear authorities and accountabilities for this. From an operational perspective, C2 arrangements also seek to ensure that the ADF can understand, decide and act faster and more effectively than our adversaries. Weaknesses in C2 structure, the application of mission command or the supporting communications architecture can inhibit tactical outcomes, increase governance and oversight risks, and limit influence within broader coalition settings.

It should be stressed that the C2 lessons that follow have been derived principally from land-based operations in Afghanistan. Whilst most have broad joint and service applicability, there are specific and unique considerations associated with some domains.

Lesson 8:
C2 structures and authorities are essential to promote the exercise of leadership, command accountability, risk management, operational coordination, coalition influence and to ensure alignment of tactical actions with strategic ends.

Multinational C2 and information-sharing arrangements are complex and will always require pragmatism and compromise. This further underscores the importance of units and embedded personnel having a clear understanding of the national mission and purpose. *Fulfilling and balancing command authorities and leadership responsibilities within these complex structures depends on goodwill and understanding at all levels.*[54] This complexity requires careful consideration and active management in a coalition setting to ensure 'compromise risks' are within acceptable thresholds.

While it is not possible within the scope this paper to outline all the various C2 arrangements adopted during the Afghanistan Campaign, some exemplar C2 structures are provided at Annex C to provide a sense of their general complexity. Key aspects of these structures are outlined below.

HQJOC: Canberra based, HQJOC was the senior operational-level headquarters overseeing Australian forces in Afghanistan.

Joint Task Force 633 (JTF 633): JTF 633 was based in the Middle East but outside of Afghanistan. It was subordinate to HQJOC and principally exercised 'national command' responsibility over forces in Afghanistan. HQJOC and JTF 633 also shared a degree of operational command responsibility over Australian troops. This division of this responsibility was not always clear to subordinates. JTF 633 also exercised operational responsibilities over other Australian force elements in the broader Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO).

Joint Task Force 633-A (JTF 633-A): JTF 633-A was based in Kabul but was not located in ISAF HQs alongside the national command elements of many other troop contributing nations. JTF 633-A shared a degree of national command responsibility over Australian troops with JTF 633. The division of this responsibility was also not always clear to subordinates. Unlike other nations, neither JTF 633 or JTF 633-A were integrated with the ISAF or Dutch command chains, and both were geographically dislocated from the centre of mass of the Australian troop contribution in Tarin Kowt.

Task Group/Task Force (TG/TF): The commanders of Australia's two largest force elements were of Lieutenant Colonel-level seniority and were the most senior Australian tactical commanders in Uruzgan for the vast majority of the Afghanistan Campaign. Despite these two Australian task groups both being based out of Tarin Kowt in Uruzgan, there was no superior Australian tactical commander to ensure a consistent national approach and coordinate mutually supporting tactical activity. This was left to the US or Dutch superior HQs that had operational control of these units, or any influence that could be exerted by the geographically dislocated commanders of JTF633 and/or JTF 633A. Alternatively, it relied on the relationship between the two Australian units, which at times were strained by being located on the same base but having ADF rules and standards applied differently in each (see Lesson 17 for more detail).

Special Operations Task Group (SOTG): From 2007, SOTG had a primary national mission of supporting forces in Uruzgan (particularly the Australian Task Force) but was assigned under Operational Control of the US Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF commander) and then eventually the ISAF Special Operations Forces (ISAF SOF) commander in Kabul. The ISAF SOF commander could task the SOTG to operate beyond Uruzgan but only if approved via Commander JTF 633.[55] Commander Regional Command - South and Commander Task Force Uruzgan had no command authority over SOTG.

In doctrinal terms, these excessively complex ADF C2 arrangements in Afghanistan impacted three of the eight key principles of command, namely:

- unity of command
- clarity
- accountability

Many of our coalition partners politely described them as both 'bemusing' and 'confusing'. This impacted our reputation and saw opportunities missed that could have enhanced our coalition influence and overall alliance objectives.

The complexity of these ADF C2 arrangements can be explained in part by JTF 633's broader MEAO C2 requirements, the evolving nature of the Afghanistan Campaign, coalition complexities, and national limitations related to a lack of appetite to deploy already trained formation headquarters (and the necessary enablers) to lead operations in Uruzgan. While these drivers are understood, at times the C2 risks were extremely high against key markers of coalition influence, national governance and overall decision speed/efficacy. Future operations would benefit from a disciplined understanding, codification and management of C2 risks.

Recommendations

8.1 **Include the requirement for formal C2 risk assessments in planning and strategy doctrine.** Such risk assessments are important given the centrality of C2 to success at the tactical, operational and strategic levels, the routine likelihood of the ADF being a junior coalition partner, and the increasingly integrated but geographically dispersed nature of the future battlespace. C2 risk assessments should appropriately document associated risks beyond just military C2, and include aspects such as coalition influence, national governance/ oversight and speed of decision-making across the entire C2 system. Consideration should also be given to assessing organisational deviance risk factors that were identified in a recent navy study.[56] Thresholds should be set for the formal elevation of C2 risks to the strategic and political levels for consideration.

8.2 **Strengthen assurance mechanisms that maintain the integrity of reporting, detect any filtering of information up chains of command, and enable confidence in dispersed C2 environments.** This is particularly, but not exclusively, relevant to coalition environments and geographically isolated units.

Lesson 9:
Restrictions and caveats calibrated by national risk appetite can affect national reputation, strategic influence and broader alliance objectives, which over time can unintentionally increase risk to mission.

The risks associated with the Afghanistan Campaign C2 arrangements were further complicated by national limitations on the ADF deploying formation headquarters at the tactical level. Unlike in the Vietnam War, where a brigade-size task force oversaw a coherent military structure and had ownership of a province, for the most part in Afghanistan, the ADF deployed bespoke units, smaller sized elements and embeds as part of a larger coalition force.[57] With the exception of Combined Team Uruzgan, which was commanded by an Australian officer from 2012 to 2014, Australia was the only Five Eye nation not to assume leadership of a province in Afghanistan.

Combined with a modest whole-of-government commitment, these dynamics made it extremely difficult for Australia to shape enduring outcomes in Uruzgan. It also affected Australia's influence and credibility. National restrictions that prevented ADF forces from operating outside of Uruzgan province with the Afghan forces they were responsible for mentoring, further compounded this dynamic. At a personal level, the requirement for other coalition partners to temporarily assume mentoring responsibility for units with whom they were unfamiliar was also morally difficult for ADF mentors.

Despite these restrictions and complexities, and as a testament to ADF training and culture, personnel at every level showed sound judgement and initiative to progress or mitigate any risks to our tactical and national objectives.

Recommendations:

9.1 **Carefully calibrate caveats and restrictions.**
In a campaign where alliance objectives are paramount, careful consideration should be given to any caveats and restrictions that may impinge on national reputation and associated influence.

9.2 **Review and establish more explicit 'coalition C2 models' within a Joint Operating Concept.**
This should form the basis of ADF C2 options in coalition environments and include the principles and thresholds to consider regarding battlespace ownership and the deployment of formation-level headquarters. C2 models should also include options to embed and/or 'dual hat' (one person with two roles) Australia's national commander within senior echelons of coalition structures. This will increase both influence and understanding of coalition strategy and enable better oversight of Australian tactical activity.

Group Captain Philip Arms (right) discusses Afghan Air Force C2 with Commanding General of Train Advise Assist Command - General Joel Carey of the US Air Force (left) in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Lesson 10:
There is significant risk in the practice of mission command having ad hoc/ non-standing HQs and task groups within complex national and coalition C2 arrangements without having national formation HQs in the tactical chain of command. This risk should be considered carefully when determining force assignment, task group preparation, C2 design and the application of mission command.

Mission command is a highly effective way to achieve the decision and action speed required to survive and win in the chaos of combat. But it is not a 'hands-off' endeavour. The doctrinal preconditions for mission command include:

- commonly understood doctrine between levels of command
- trust between levels of command through intensive, realistic training
- understanding of commander's intent
- robust processes to check and verify at the right time and place.[58]

In Afghanistan, many of these preconditions were not in place either within or between units and HQs. In parts, mission command was being exercised without the doctrinal checks and balances being adequately applied. This is likely to be based on an overweighting of the doctrinal precondition of accepting 'risk in order to ensure that gaining and holding the initiative was enabled by minimising time-wasting imposed by confirmation from higher command'.[59]

In certain circumstances, the gains of fully exercising mission command can be outweighed by the associated risks. These associated risks were exacerbated in Afghanistan by the formation of ad hoc units and headquarters, which were geographically separated and operating within a complex national and coalition C2 structure.

Recommendations

10.1 **Enhance 'mission command' doctrine and understanding.**
Mission command strengths should be retained but there needs to be better acknowledgement, understanding and mitigation of its inherent risks in certain contexts. 'Critical curiosity' and 'on-the-ground' checks to verify and give context to information coming up through the chain of command should be stressed. Rather than the current perception of checks and balances being a risk mitigation activity, they should be re-framed as the central enabler to the mission command philosophy. Through this evolved framing, *stronger assurance will be seen as the main enabler of increasing the speed of decision and action. This approach has increased relevance given the ongoing likelihood of the ADF being a junior coalition partner and the more geographically dispersed nature of the future battlespace. In certain high-risk contexts, consideration may also be given to further strengthening independent reporting assurance mechanisms.*

10.2 **Further stress in training, the key role that young officers and non-commissioned officers play in mission command execution.**
This includes their 'on-the-ground' leadership, diligence, moral courage and fault checking.

Lesson 11:
The excessive disaggregation of established sub-unit, unit and HQ capability bricks can increase risk in both deployed and non-deployed force elements.

While the benefits of task organising land forces based on mission requirements is acknowledged, the spirit of task organisation and battle grouping is based on assembling 'formed capability bricks' (sub-units, units and HQs) to meet operational requirements. For land forces particularly, breaking down these capability bricks to fit into personnel cap constrained and often predefined deployed structures undermines validated force design logic. It can also create brittle structures that become further stressed under the demands of relief out of country leave (ROCL) and the sustainment of casualties. This generates risk at the tactical levels and has been described as akin to deploying naval ships without their full complement of crew.

The formation of ad hoc HQs and task groups during the Afghanistan Campaign created a number of unintended leadership, governance and cohesion risks that subsequently imposed a high pre-deployment collective training burden.[60] It also contributed to a lack of continuity and custodianship of deployed unit records and, in some cases, a lack of ongoing 'deployed unit identity' on return to Australia. For teams who have shared success and tragedy, an ongoing collective identity can assist with the transition from operations and the ongoing health and wellbeing monitoring, and support personnel require. Forming ad hoc HQs and task groups also disrupted the non-deployed component of some contributing units, many of which were left with lean or hollow structures. At times, this also generated leadership, governance and morale risks.

Recommendations

11.1 **Further evolve task-organisation doctrinal concepts to retain their strengths but also acknowledge and mitigate the risks of forming excessively ad hoc, non-habitual HQs and task groups.**
In particular, careful consideration should be given to breaking down standing capability bricks such as sub-units, units and HQs.

11.1 **Where formed units are not deployed, incorporate non-deployed personnel into the structures of other non-deployed units.**
This enhances leadership and governance and provides increased capacity to support those deployed. It also presents an opportunity to enhance collective training opportunities and build deeper combined arms relationships between units.

Lesson 12:
The continuity of deployed personnel, structures and teams is important to achieving alliance objectives, effective command and leadership, and for the wellbeing of personnel during and post deployment. The risks associated with disrupting this continuity should be considered carefully against the benefits.

In general, the tour lengths of ADF personnel were shorter and ROCL entitlements were more generous than those of most of our coalition counterparts. Personnel and family welfare benefits were the principal drivers for these ADF policy settings. However, shorter tour lengths disrupted mentoring and coalition relationships that were central to achieving capacity building and alliance objectives. They also disrupted longer term campaign discipline and a deeper understanding of the operational environment by leaders and intelligence staff.

The risks associated with these disruptions were further exacerbated by the mid-tour posting cycle rotation of commanders and key staff. In most cases, this approach caused significant stress for those who returned home ahead of their teams and for those who remained in theatre and had to adapt and re-form relationships with new staff and leadership structures. It also generated risks to the continuity of command, leadership and governance oversight.

Recommendations

12.1 **Further study the effects of tour length on personnel, family welfare, governance and operational effectiveness.**
The results of this study should be used to inform and better calibrate future policy on tour lengths, ROCL entitlements and mid-tour rotations.

Lesson 13:
Communications systems and protocols, combined with human connections and trust, are essential to enabling effective C2 in a coalition environment.

The pressures of the Afghanistan Campaign contributed to the significant development of communications systems and protocols in a coalition environment. Periodically, new technologies had to be inserted into these communications systems and existing systems needed refreshing to meet new capability requirements. Each technology insertion and refresh required a deliberate implementation process involving capability managers, operational commanders and technical control authorities.

The Afghanistan Campaign also identified challenges to the operational effectiveness and utility of the Defence Secret Network in a disaggregated operational environment. The deployment of other bespoke and often poorly governed/supported systems generated risk.

The eventual creation of the Mission Partner Environment (MPE) communications system ensured Australian forces could more easily integrate with a coalition warfighting system and avoid being isolated on sovereign systems without coalition connectivity. This provided significant operational benefits including increased involvement and influence in coalition planning.

The maintenance of these complex systems required intense oversight and management. This was achieved by the formation and deployment of a dedicated Force Communications Unit (FCU) in 2008, whose commander also acted as the MEAO Theatre J6 (Joint Signals Staff Officer). Despite the challenging span of responsibility, this significantly improved the management of equipment and the enabling of C2.

Recommendations

13.1 **Evolve the information technology (IT) systems and protocols that enable the rapid sharing of intelligence and information across coalition and regional partners.**
This will build trust and optimise the decision action cycle of a broader and more integrated coalition within a more dynamic future operating environment. Future IT systems must also fully accommodate whole-of-government partners. To enable wider and more rapid sharing of information, consideration should be given to protocols and cultures that are less reliant on raw intelligence and more trusting of analysed intelligence that can be more readily shared.

13.2 **Ensure dedicated and appropriately resourced Force Communications Units remain part of future deployed force structures.**
Having FCUs as part of the deployed force structure is important given the increasing centrality of networks in enabling coalition operations and for ensuring operational records are appropriately maintained. It should be understood and expected that IT and other complex communications systems will need to be evolved and upgraded in stride during future campaigns.

Conclusion

While C2 is clearly an essential enabler of effective command, leadership and governance, on its own it does not guarantee good decision-making and risk management. Within the inanimate wire-diagram of responsibilities, accountabilities and authorities are real humans and real organisations that have powerful cultures and ethical frameworks. Under continued stress, organisational cultures and professional ethics can become the predominant force that cues individual decisions and actions.

The lessons contained in the next section of this study, highlight the importance of understanding, nurturing and monitoring these cultures and ethical frameworks.

Royal Australian Navy officer Captain Shane Glassock and his multinational team of military, civilian and contracted logistics advisers in a security brief ahead of a vehicle move to the Ministry of the Interior in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Captain Sandi Williams, mentor to the female tolay (company) at the Afghan National Army Officer Academy is thanked by members of Kandak (battalion) 1 following the Academy's fifth graduation ceremony.

Focus Area 4:
ADF Culture

I don't care a damn for your loyal service when you think I am right; when I really want it most is when you think I am wrong.

General Sir John Monash GCMG, KCB, VD [61]

Humility engenders learning because it beats back the arrogance that puts blinders on. It leaves you open for truths to reveal themselves.

Wynton Marsalis, Pulitzer Prize Winner [62]

Introduction

For the purpose of this paper, *culture* generally applies to large organisations, like the Services or the ADF, and is defined as a shared collective identity based on beliefs, history and values. It is enduring and changes slowly.[63] *Climate* generally applies to specific teams or units and refers to the environment experienced within teams or units created by its people and personalities. It is more variable and can change relatively quickly.[64]

It's said that 'culture eats strategy for breakfast', a maxim frequently attributed to Peter Drucker.[65] Although, perhaps what would be more appropriate in a military context is that 'culture eats everything for breakfast'. People, teams and therefore the culture and ethics that inform individual and collective behaviour are central to military capability. As part of the intense human endeavour in which militaries are involved, culture and capability are inextricably linked.

The ADF has strong positive cultural attributes that guide routine behaviour in barracks and fuel extraordinary achievements under the pressure of operations. These same attributes are often highly sought after at times of national crisis, such as the recent bushfires or the COVID-19 response. The ADF should be rightly proud and confident of its culture, most of which is simply a reflection of the cultures and qualities that exist in broader Australian society.

But like many strengths, the ADF's culture also comes with inherent vulnerabilities. Examples include the strengths and vulnerabilities of Australian egalitarian culture or the exercising of authoritarian leadership. These vulnerabilities are not often discussed internally and generally do not feature in ADF doctrine, training or education. This may be due to a concern (conscious or otherwise) that acknowledging inherent vulnerabilities might undermine military capability or weaken esprit de corps. It may also be based on a misguided and insecure notion that to do so would be 'woke'.

Further evolving toward a more balanced ADF culture will enhance capability by fully harnessing the inherent qualities of ADF personnel and increase the ADF's effectiveness as part of a whole-of-government and/or coalition team.

Lesson 14:
The inherent complexity of warfare and its changing character demand an ongoing evolution of ADF culture and practice that retains existing strengths but appropriately acknowledges and mitigates vulnerabilities.

Like most militaries, the ADF's cultural attributes such as a tactical focus, can-do/mission primacy, strong hierarchy/chain of command, and unit pride, are significant and longstanding organisational strengths that are well suited to the demands of combat. They have contributed to success in many battles and operations throughout our history. These attributes must continue to be fostered in barracks and on operations. However, these same attributes also come with inherent vulnerabilities, and if applied narrowly or excessively can manifest in suboptimal outcomes at the strategic, operational and tactical levels.

Tactical focus: An overly tactical focus can inappropriately devalue the equal importance of the operational and strategic levels or blind leaders to actions and behaviours that appear positive tactically but have negative consequences at higher levels.

Can-do/mission primacy: This cultural attribute can lead to inadequate consideration of inherent risks, blind personnel to the downstream consequences of actions beyond the immediate mission and stifle the ability to learn from failure or intervene in impending failure.

Strong hierarchy/chain of command: When applied excessively or universally, strong hierarchy/chain of command can generate a sense of authoritarianism that can deny constructive challenge, risk flagging and more creative input into operational planning and execution. This can prevent the ADF from harnessing the full abilities of an increasingly intellectual, diverse and creative workforce.

Unit pride: Excessive or misguided unit pride can turn into arrogance that gets in the way of optimising broader combined arms, joint, whole-of-government or coalition teams. This can have more acute effects in ad hoc task groups formed from multiple units.

The complexity of warfare and a fear of 'paralysis by analysis' can also create an unconscious bias towards oversimplifying military doctrine and training. This can lead to binary mental framings and cultures that are not consistent with the real context of either barracks or operational environments. This can create an unintended lack of confidence in doctrine and training (because it does not match reality), reduce the cognitive ability to fully appreciate complex situations, and underprepare people to operate in increasingly ambiguous environments at the tactical, operational and strategic levels.

An evolved and balanced ADF culture will further leverage the diversity and intellectual capacity of ADF personnel. This will strengthen the ADF and ensure it can perform equally well at the tactical, operational and strategic levels within a broader whole-of-government and/or coalition team.

Recommendations

14.1 **Review doctrine, education and training to ensure the upsides of military culture are reinforced, while adequately acknowledging and mitigating associated vulnerabilities.**
Particular focus might be given to aspects of training in the 'formative years', which if unbalanced and excessive are difficult to alter as individuals progress beyond the tactical realm and to more senior levels. ADF education continuums should also provide personnel with an increased awareness and earlier exposure to the political context of military activity.[66]

14.2 **Review doctrine, education and training to identify areas of narrow, prescriptive or binary framings, which do not fully describe more complex realities, or are overly weighted to the tactical context.**
Where appropriate, consideration should also be given to more explicitly distinguishing the differing contexts and requirements of the tactical, operational and strategic levels.[67]

Commander of the Kabul Garrison Command, General Murad Ali Murad (left), enjoys a joke with Australian Army officer Lieutenant Colonel Alex Loo during the Advisory Team transfer of authority ceremony in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Lesson 15:
Australia's egalitarianism is a cultural strength of the ADF, but inherent vulnerabilities need to be appropriately acknowledged, balanced and mitigated.

Aspects of Australian history and culture, such as egalitarianism, can excessively flatten command relationships, encourage 'populist' leadership approaches, erode moral courage and weaken the necessary checks and balances traditionally overseen by senior non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and junior officers at the tactical level. From an institutional perspective, this culture can also contribute to an unbalanced emphasis on the tactical level and a general devaluing of the more cerebral requirements of the operational and strategic levels.

Conversely, there is no doubt that the promotion of joint and collaborative cultures under the 'One Defence' reform initiative has significantly strengthened the ADF. However, care must be taken to ensure collaborative culture is not unintentionally misinterpreted as the need to avoid constructive challenge. Such dynamics can lead to the type of group think that was central to the shortfalls identified in the UK's Chilcot Report and drove the development of the *UK's Good Operation Handbook*. This provides senior officers, senior officials and political leaders with a detailed guide to 'reasonable challenge' from the perspective of both those receiving and offering challenge.[68]

Recommendations

15.1 **Review ADF leadership doctrine, education and training to ensure the strengths and vulnerabilities of Australian egalitarian culture are appropriately acknowledged and mitigated.**

15.2 **Evolve and more explicitly articulate the balance of 'collaborative', 'enquiring' and 'respectful challenge' cultures aspired to under One Defence.**

Lesson 16:
Early Service emphasis on tribalism and unit pride can contribute to a sense of belonging and esprit de corps. Through time or if over emphasised, this can also generate individual and organisational overconfidence and a lack of humility. This can detract from behaviours that are required to integrate joint, whole-of-government and coalition effects and can contribute to 'identity fragility' on transition out of service.

Tribalism and unit pride are common features of military culture and are instilled early in military service. In the right measure, they contribute to esprit de corps and combat capability. However, in excess they can have negative consequences. They can create:

- overconfident leadership styles and unit cultures that lack humility and a willingness to learn from others
- barriers to diverse inputs and cooperation with 'outsiders'
- impediments to the sharing of lessons and information
- cultures of acting in unit-interests above institutional interests
- resistance to external checks and balances
- excessive loss of identify on transition out of service.

Recommendations

16.1 **Review recruit and officer training cultures to ensure there is no promotion of ideas that ADF personnel are 'better than others'.** Rather, the emphasis of Australian military tradition should be on ADF personnel being selfless, humble servants of the nation who do extraordinary things while remaining part of the community and society they serve.

Lesson 17:
Beyond the general trend of ADF tribalism and unit pride exist elite cultures that are vulnerable to 'exceptionalism'. When combined with geographic isolation, excessive compartmentalisation and inappropriate empowerment, this 'exceptionalism' can further exacerbate barriers to cooperation, sharing of information/learning and generate resistance to appropriate oversight and external checks and balances. This in turn can create institutional risk and deprive the broader force of opportunities for collective improvement and combined effect.

Most modern militaries have capabilities that address the special requirements of warfare. ADF examples include clearance divers, submariners, pilots, medical specialists etc. In fact, most uniformed members are specialists in a particular discipline, from infantry to armour to logistics. Specialists have 'special skills' but they are not necessarily 'special people'.

'Elitism' is a healthy aspiration and common in society (for example elite sport etc.). But 'elitism' that drifts into 'exceptionalism' can create risks. In the context of this study, 'exceptionalism' is defined as a view of being 'exempt' from broader institutional requirements or expectations. An example of this was the non-participation of some SOTG elements in task group Mission Rehearsal Exercises (MREs), which confirm training standards and enable task group integration prior to deployment. Another example was the lack of adherence by some SOTG elements to ADF rules relating to the consumption of alcohol whilst on operations and the fact that this exemption was condoned by some junior military leaders.

Geographic isolation can increase the risk of 'elitism' drifting towards 'exceptionalism'. These risks can be further exacerbated when elite force elements have a closed and bespoke training regime, do not have 'peers' for reference points and calibration, or when they have limited external connection or cross-posting with broader elements of their parent Service.[69] When these factors are combined with an excessive flattening of command structures or an over promotion of the power and influence of tactical field commanders, institutional and unit blind spots can be created that generate excessive risk.

Recommendations

17.1 **Reviewing the remit of independent bodies such as the Inspector General of the ADF to ensure they are enabled to routinely examine and pre-emptively scan for emerging risks in unit's vulnerable to exceptionalism.**[70]
This mandate should extend beyond discipline and legality to include low level indicators of impropriety that may be indicators of larger issues. This includes the scanning for 'shadow values' that do not align with 'above the line' organisational values.[71]

17.2 **Review specialist capabilities and objectively determine the need and extent of compartmentalisation and/or bespoke raise, train, sustain approaches.**

17.3 **Better integrate the learning and adaption systems housed in specialist capabilities with the broader ADF lessons enterprise.**
This will increase the opportunities to propagate learning and skills that have historically been resident in specialist domains to other more conventional elements of the broader ADF.[72]

17.4 **Identify opportunities to exercise and expose a wider audience to specialist capabilities (including intelligence capabilities) as part of joint and whole-of-government training and education regimes.**

Lesson 18:
The ADF would benefit from a simple, consistent and regularly applied tool for measuring and monitoring organisational culture. Such a tool could contribute to pre-emptively identifying risk or exploiting opportunity to optimise individual and team performance.

Over recent years, the ADF has made a significant effort to monitor poor behaviour and drive cultural reform. Among many other changes and initiatives, this has led to the increased use of cultural monitoring tools such as the Pulse (Profile of unit leadership, satisfaction, and effectiveness) Survey. For an organisation that operates in high-pressured environments and where people and culture are at the centre of capability, the ADF requires a consistent, easily applied/interpreted and iterative tool for monitoring and measuring culture and climate at all levels.[73]

Recommendations

18.1 **Consolidate existing cultural monitoring tools into a single ADF tool that is able to incorporate information from other databases and personnel reporting systems.**
This tool should provide usable data on culture that can be transparently monitored through levels of command and applied more regularly and consistently to enable longitudinal understanding. [74]

18.2 **Shift the ADF's cultural monitoring regime from a focus on climate, behaviour and governance to a system that provides leaders at all levels with a more holistic analytical tool, which can be used to optimise individual and team performance or identify and pre-emptively treat areas of emerging risk.**
In addition to warfighting benefits, this is also likely to appeal to the "self-betterment" aspirations of personnel and in turn have recruiting, retention, wellbeing and transition benefits.

Lesson 19:
The nature of warfare requires a well understood ethical and cultural basis to guide decisions and actions, and to support an increasingly educated and aware workforce to process their military experiences.

The nature of warfare has always required a deep understanding of the Laws of Armed Conflict (LOAC) and a strong ethical basis to guide decisions and actions. This requirement is likely to increase with the proliferation of grey-zone activity and the introduction of more remote, autonomous and lethal weapon systems. While the collateral damage associated with this increased lethality will always be actively managed, it will at times be unavoidable and continue to be a risk factor in relation to moral injury. The Afghanistan Campaign also highlighted other moral injury risk factors associated with cultural norms that are inconsistent with those experienced in Australia.

Military ethical frameworks must be clearly contextualised in the realities modern war. Some of these realities include:

- war is violent and involves killing
- civilian casualties occur in war despite extensive risk mitigations
- ethical conduct in war can at times increase personal risk

A grittier and more contextualised ethical framework is likely to provide a better reference point for decisions and actions and enable the 'red lines' of ethical behaviour to be more clearly expressed within a less general and more explicit military context. This is also likely to contribute to a better understanding of the realities of war by the general public, which in turn may reduce the prevalence of recruiting/reality dissonance that can lead to disenfranchisement in service and increase the risk of moral injury.

Recommendations

19.1 **Refine and further develop evidence-based ethics doctrine.**
This should be an ongoing process that strives to provide a more explicit articulation of the realities of military service, its associated risks and ethical boundaries. Given the centrality of ethics to most aspects of warfare, consideration should also be given to ensuring key aspects of ethics doctrine are embedded in all other aspects of doctrine and training including leadership, command, planning and risk management.

19.2 **Include 'regular and ongoing' LOAC, ethics and cultural training at all levels during deployments.**
This should be in addition to the training provided pre-deployment. Consideration should be given to ensuring this is complemented by regular command led but psychological, legal, and religious ministry supported 'debriefing' discussions that allow personnel at all levels to regularly process the more challenging aspects of warfare and local culture. It could also serve as a safe forum to identify any aspects of individual or collective concern.

19.3 **Ensure LOAC, ethics and cultural training remain part of any 'ready' certification for contingency forces.**
This should be tested in realistic and high-pressure training scenarios beyond the classroom.

Conclusion

Culture is an essential part of military capability. ADF culture has been forged in combat throughout our history and has many strengths. But like all strengths, it has vulnerabilities that need to be acknowledged and brought into the individual and collective military conscience. Doing so will harness positive demographic and social changes and continue to evolve the ADF into a more potent force for the future. Evolving the ADF's culture should include the need to evolve its learning culture. The cultures and systems that enable the ADF to learn and adapt faster than our adversaries will be central to future success in a rapidly changing world. The final section of this study captures the key lessons that seek to enable this requirement.

Australian Army soldier Corporal Meg Reeves uses a Ghost Robotics quadruped robot for a reconnaissance task at Mount Pleasant, Canberra.

Focus Area 5:
Learning, Adaption and Risk Management

... leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.

John F Kennedy, Former US President [75]

Introduction

As described in the introduction to this study, the Afghanistan Campaign drove an evolution of the ADF's warfighting capability in areas including intelligence fusion, rapid capability acquisition, force protection, detainee management, personnel support and overall combat mindset. Central to meeting the demands of our changing strategic environment is the ongoing requirement for Defence to adapt through continuous and purposeful transformational reform.[76] Transforming at the pace required will demand an increased tolerance of experimental failure. It will require an adaptive leadership approach that protects and embraces those who expose shortfalls, reduces the obstacles to change and maintains a disciplined attention to progress. [77] Without challenging some long-standing cultural assumptions, it is likely that any gains made will be short-lived.[78]

The ADF's ability to adapt and learn at a rapid pace will be essential to its future battlefield success or at least avoiding the cost of early failure. For this reason, learning and adaption must be prioritised and integrated into all aspects of ADF business, and reinforced with the right culture, systems and expertise.

Australian Army soldiers Warrant Officer Class One Craig Woodhall (left) and Bombadier Mitchell Yates look at a Wasp AE small unmanned aerial system at the Army Reserve Kogarah Depot, Sydney, New South Wales.

Lesson 20:
The ADF is unbalanced in its application of learning due to the current emphasis on capturing lessons by *Service at the tactical level,* rather than capturing and implementing lessons along domain/joint/enterprise/interagency lines at *all* levels.

In the case of the Afghanistan Campaign, many learning artefacts were contained within Post Activity Reports (PARs) and archived on different or redundant IT platforms. This made them difficult to find and use for future reference (such as this study). In some cases, important historical and learning records were permanently lost. This frustrated certain aspects of inquiry and learning work and the verification of Defence Veteran's Affairs claims.

Although the ADF has pockets of mature learning and adaption systems, it is has become apparent during this study that they are biased towards the tactical level, are generally organised on Service lines and are not well integrated into a broader joint and enterprise-wide endeavour. [79] Trends in future warfare will require mechanisms, cultures and processes that enable rapid learning beyond the tactical level. This includes learning at the operational and strategic/enterprise levels along domain, joint and interagency lines. Beyond capturing observations, these mechanisms will also need to drive and monitor implementation. The recent formation of a Defence Lessons capability is an important first step towards this.

Recommendations

20.1 **Further develop a Defence Lessons capability that integrates existing learning mechanisms (including those of specialist capabilities) into a single coherent Defence-wide system.**
This system should be equally weighted across the tactical, operational and strategic/enterprise levels and better enable joint and whole-of-government knowledge management and learning. To tighten learning loops and avoid re-learning lessons from the past, the future learning system might more actively record contemporary history and actively integrate it into the enterprise learning process. Consideration might also be given to creating an enterprise-level historian or knowledge manager to better enable this.

20.2 **Formally codify into planning doctrine a requirement to research and raise awareness of previous lessons in the early stages of any planning process.**
Over time, this will drive improved resourcing of records management and a better organisation of lesson repositories that enable streamlined cataloguing and access.

20.3 **Re-institute annual senior leader exercises that review and analyse organisational-level lessons from operations during a campaign.**[80]
This was the practice during the Vietnam War and provided senior leaders with 'time' to reflect, a 'safe space' to challenge, a 'whole of system view' beyond narrow lanes of responsibility. By doing so, this 'complimented' more formal military and whole-of-government planning mechanisms. The approach taken in this organisational-level study may also serve as a model for future organisational-level learning.

20.4 **Include learning and adaption outcomes in ADF leadership and reporting models to ensure learning, adaption and continuous improvement is incentivised and becomes a core part of leadership at all levels.**

Lesson 21:
The ADF would benefit from tools, education and practices that appropriately support identifying, registering and mitigating the risks (and exploiting the opportunities) that exist between the tactical-event and enterprise levels.

Risk management supports anticipatory learning in that it seeks to identify risks, pre-emptively learn/adapt and ultimately avoid 'learning the hard way'. The ADF risk assessment methodology is event focused, has a relatively immediate temporal horizon and is generally designed for specific training activities within a barracks context. It is mostly focused on avoiding risks (rather than mitigating or managing them), does not address the benefits of exploiting opportunities and lacks an appropriate mechanism to incorporate organisational capacity limitations. This makes it suboptimal for the more sophisticated analysis and risk management judgements that must be made at higher levels.

Recommendations

21.1 **Identify best practice methodologies for scanning, recording and managing risks/opportunities from the tactical to the enterprise levels.**
It is unlikely that a 'one size fits all' model will suit the differing requirements of each level.[81] As part of this endeavour, different models might be considered to more support the evaluation of risks/opportunities in operational environments.

Conclusion

The final section of this study has focused on the ADF's learning and risk management mechanisms and the vital role they will play in ensuring the ADF can learn and adapt faster than our adversaries. The Afghanistan Campaign has identified many lessons that are relevant to preparing the ADF for the future but translating these from 'lessons observed' to 'lessons learned' will require objective reflection and persistent effort. It is hoped that this study can play a small but ongoing part in this vital endeavour.

Australian and United States forces commemorate Remembrance Day at Australia's Main Air Operations Base in the Middle East.

Other General Observations

Pre-deployment Preparation

Observation 1:
ADF personnel and training remain of very high quality.

Despite the irreducible complexities of war and the compounding complexities of the Afghanistan Campaign outlined in this paper, ADF personnel at all levels were able to calmly adapt to their respective environments and perform at levels that earned the respect of both our coalition partners and our enemies. With few exceptions, ADF personnel consistently demonstrated the values of service, courage, respect, integrity and excellence. This is a testament to the quality of the people the ADF recruits and the tough, comprehensive and high-quality training they experience. This training not only contributed significantly to ADF operational outcomes, but it also substantially contributed to our alliance objectives with ADF personnel being highly sought after for key appointments across the coalition.

Observation 2:
Units dedicated to individual and collective force preparation had a positive and sustained effect.

The Afghanistan Campaign saw significant developments in the way the ADF prepares for operations. This included the formation of a Personnel Support Battalion that was dedicated to providing consistent individual force preparation from weapons qualifications and equipment issue through to operational and cultural briefings. Collective force preparation was also enabled by dedicated and tailored mission-specific training and mission rehearsal exercises provided by the Combat Training Centre. Formed groups were provided with the opportunity to confirm readiness and task group cohesion prior to deployment. This provided an objective and immersive environment to train and test deploying force elements in their individual and collective roles. It was also a means of propagating lessons between rotations. Given the ad hoc nature of some of the deployed HQs and task groups, this proved to be invaluable in terms of pre-deployment preparation and organisational-level risk management. It also developed mentoring and coaching techniques that improved ADF training more widely and was used as a basis for the ADF's approach to both its mentoring and its train, advise, assist missions.

It should be noted that on occasions, personnel were identified very late to fill Operational Manning Documents (OMDs). This eroded some of the above-mentioned force preparation benefits, created challenges for mounting units and exacerbated family stress and disruption.

Intelligence

Observation 3:
The ADF's intelligence capabilities have seen significant improvement.

Twenty years of disrupting terrorism and operating with our coalition partners on operations in Afghanistan has seen a significant evolution in the ADF's intelligence capability. This has included the establishment of the Chief of Defence Intelligence, which has led to better intelligence integration across the Defence Intelligence Group. Ensuring internal intelligence contestability will be important within this changed context.

At the tactical and operational level, the use of collated 'all source' teams from multiple agencies proved to be a highly effective way to fuse intelligence and support agile decision-making. The experience of the last 20 years catalysed improved intelligence integration with the US and other allies, including the layering of coalition intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR) assets to support tactical operations. Further work is required in some areas including information warfare.

Despite the significant evolution of our intelligence integration with the US and other partners, over reliance must be guarded against. Independent assessment will always be required on certain intelligence matters, and this will require ongoing investment in sovereign intelligence capabilities and deployment of embedded intelligence personnel across agencies and the globe with an increased weighting on Indo-Pacific issues.

Logistics and Capability Acquisition

Observation 4:
Rapid acquisition of capability and effective evolution of processes provided superior force protection and speed of adaption.

Rapid acquisition was an outstanding success story during the Afghanistan Campaign. Crew-served weapons, such as the MK19 and .50cal Browning, were acquired for vehicles very quickly. Body armour and soldier ensembles also evolved rapidly over a ten-year period. The relatively rapid acquisition of the Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicle (PMV) and its rapid in-stride evolution to increase its protection and lethality saved many Australian lives. Establishing dedicated entities, such as the Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (IED Task Force, Land Capability Battleboard and Diggerworks, intimately supported by the Defence Science and Technology Organisation/ Group were critical enablers. They provided the focus and expertise that contributed to rapidly understanding evolving requirements and subsequent acquisitions necessary to address them. The systems and processes to enable rapid spiral development of equipment and technology should be maintained as we confront more sophisticated adversaries in the future. Pre-emptively establishing dedicated entities, similar to the Counter-IED Task Force, to accelerate understanding and acquisition of evolving capabilities should be considered. The responsiveness of the Defence Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group's (CASG) acquisition processes and timelines should also be reviewed to ensure acquisition and capability risks can be balanced appropriately. The recently announced Independent Review into Defence Innovation is an important step in achieving the speed of acquisition our future environment will demand.[82]

Observation 5:
Global logistic capabilities need to be planned for to ensure they meet future requirements.

We must be careful not to learn the wrong lessons from the Afghanistan Campaign. From a logistics perspective, the Afghanistan Campaign was not a contested environment and we relied heavily on coalition supply chains and logistic support. We may not have that same luxury in the future. Similarly, the Afghanistan Campaign underscored the importance of secure, forward-operating bases for logistics. Bases in the Middle East afforded the Defence supply system with a secure forward agreed point where it could optimise the use of commercial solutions into theatre, increasing the responsiveness and resilience of force elements deployed further forward. The requirement and adequacy of Australia's regional access arrangements should be reviewed in the context of our future operating environment.

Observation 6:
Force Extraction Teams are an essential element of effective retrograde operations.

There were two large-scale retrograde (draw down) operations of Australian forces from Afghanistan: Tarin Kowt between 2012 and 2013 and Kandahar in 2015. Both retrogrades involved the deployment of a dedicated Force Extraction Team (FET) to plan and conduct movements, reverse supply-chain retrograde (including stores and equipment that had been in theatre for a decade), infrastructure and range clearances, disposals and quarantine pre-cleaning. The deployment of the FET allowed the deployed force that was drawing down to continue to focus on their core mission. Both Joint Logistics Command (JLC) and CASG were closely involved in the production and management of the Treatment Remediation Plans, with HQJOC and JTF633 directing priorities around gifting, destroying and redeploying stores and equipment. Retrograde operations from large-scale operational deployments will remain complex logistics activities that require deliberate planning and conduct through all phases, including the eventual reconstitution of force elements when they return to Australia. The establishment and deployment of a FET to coordinate multiple stakeholders (for example JOC, JLC, CASG, Services) and ensure mission closure or significant drawdown will ensure retrograde operations are conducted thoroughly and meet accountability and governance requirements. Additionally, effective and efficient retrograde operations from overseas deployments require close working relationships with relevant government departments, such as the Department of Agriculture Water and the Environment and the Australian Border Force.

Locally Employed Staff

Observation 7:
ADF policies on locally employed staff need to be carefully considered and evolved.

The employment of local civilians as interpreters (and other roles) is an important operational enabler. The often intense experiences shared with these staff leads to the formation of strong trusting relationships. Consideration should be given to reviewing locally employed staff policies to ensure they appropriately address expectations during and after military operations.

Detainee Management

Observation 8:
Detainee management and civilian casualty investigation processes saw significant development throughout the Campaign.

In the early phases of the Afghanistan Campaign, detainees were transitioned to Dutch or US-led formation HQ in Uruzgan. Detainees were then processed under their own national policies. There was very little continuity of detainee management or exploitation for either intelligence or evidentiary purposes. Many detainees were returned to the battlefield within a matter of days. Hard lessons of the past needed to be re-learned, in this regard. Sovereign detainee management policy and capability were developed towards the latter stages of the Afghanistan Campaign. The processes developed were eventually considered world class and included filming all aspects of detainee management and ADF-enabled close oversight by the International Committee for the Red Cross. Equally the ADF's processes for investigating civilian casualties developed significantly during the Afghanistan Campaign and the transparent publication of these investigations was considered unique in comparison to other partner nations.

Return to Australia

Observation 9:
Approaches to decompression evolved and demonstrated positive outcomes.

The process of conducting Return to Australia Decompression evolved throughout the Afghanistan Campaign. This eventually consisted of a three-to-five-day period to relax and conduct post-operational debriefing/administration within the MEAO but outside of Afghanistan before returning to Australia.[83] While this delayed timeframes for ADF personnel to be reunited with their families, it also ensured they arrived home in a more relaxed state, with less of their time being disrupted by post-operational administration. Given the ad hoc nature of HQs and task forces referred to earlier in this study, this period also provided many people with their last opportunity to process their experience and say goodbye to their mates before returning to their respective home locations. This was particularly important for part-time personnel who were successfully integrated into deployments throughout the campaign but often recommenced work the week after returning home, returning to work mates that had carried some extra load during their absence and who had little awareness of the Afghanistan Campaign and its objectives.

Observation 10:
Post-operational screening and support significantly improved across the 20-year campaign.

Return to Australia Psychological Screening (RtAPs) and Post-operational Psychological Screening (POPS) were important aspects of post-deployment support to ADF personnel. RtAPS helped individuals reflect on deployment experiences and identify those who may benefit from early intervention. It also provided unit leaders with a briefing on organisational stressors, overall deployment experiences and unit climate factors such as morale, cohesion, trauma exposures and satisfaction. These factors are also known to correlate with performance, retention, operational effectiveness and mental health conditions. During the 20-year campaign, great strides were also made in establishing state-of-the-art facilities to support wounded soldiers in their physical and psychological rehabilitation.

Health

Observation 11:
ADF understanding of the mental health impacts of military operations developed significantly throughout the campaign.

The impact of the Afghanistan Campaign on the health and wellbeing of ADF personnel is evident and immeasurable. It is known that for some ADF members there have been long-lasting impacts on their mental health and wellbeing (due to the research conducted by research programs such as the *Middle East Areas of Operations (MEAO) Prospective Health Study* and *Census Health Study* of the Military Health Outcomes Program (2010); and *The Impact of Combat Study* of the Transition and Wellbeing Research Programme (2015)).[84] The ADF operational psychological screening program demonstrated that higher rates of moderate psychological distress and higher rates of exposure to potentially traumatic events were experienced by those that deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq compared to many other operations. Despite this, it is also clear from the research that the vast majority (more than 80 per cent) of veterans returning from service in the MEAO, including Afghanistan, report very high level of physical and mental health.

Observation 12:
General health support innovations based on lessons from operations have further evolved Defence health systems.

The Afghanistan Campaign has provided the opportunity for the depth and breadth of the Defence health system to be further evolved to support ADF personnel and capability outcomes. The lessons are many from a health and wellbeing perspective, but the exemplar lessons learnt from the campaign in relation to ADF Health system have been:

- enhancements to interoperability across the casualty continuum
- the contemporisation of the military employment classification process to ensure force readiness is appropriately known to command
- health matériel, logistic and pharmacy systems and innovations
- ongoing development of clinical doctrine, not only in the military setting but also for trauma care writ large, for example, the use of tourniquets to control catastrophic haemorrhage, innovative blood products in damage control resuscitation and fentanyl lozenges for battlefield analgesia
- formal frameworks for clinical governance, enhancing the safety and quality of health care in the deployed environment
- the 'democratisation' of tactical combat casualty care, such that every person in theatre was competent to provide immediate, effective care under fire to self and buddies, then provide a structured handover to combat health personnel
- reporting structures for health information from tactical (nine-liner casualty evacuation reports) through to strategic systems were continuously improved
- transformation of mental health care and screening throughout the operational continuum.

Observation 13:
There has been significant effort in mental health understanding, but further work is required.

Despite significant progress, more work is still required to fully understand the mental health impacts of deployment and to further evolve the assistance provided, including identifying and mitigating risks associated with transition from the ADF. [85] The 2008 Dunt Review was an important step in improving our understanding of the mental health impacts of service, as was the work commissioned by DVA and conducted by Professor David Forbes. Since 2002, Defence has strived to lead in mental health reform. There have been continued improvements as a result of mental health strategies and the provision of services, mental health training and education, as well as resilience and performance-enhancement related programs. The ADF is actively engaged with other nations through the Technical Cooperation Program (known as TTCP), as well as through collaborations with other organisations (such as Phoenix Australia), and has access to national and international subject matter experts (through the Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group) to continue to support mental health initiatives and programs of work.

Further studies may also be warranted to understand the risks of over-valorising veterans. This is particularly relevant in the context of Australia's ANZAC culture and Vietnam experience.[86]

Personnel and Family Support

Observation 14:
Having welfare officers and family support for the total force has an important effect on sustaining capability.

The Afghanistan Campaign underscored the importance of supporting families of deployed personnel and the contribution this has to sustaining capability. There was significant evolution of the approach to family support, such as involving families in before, during and after deployment briefings, the conduct of facilitated social activities and the mandated appointment of Unit Welfare Officers (UWOs). These UWOs were responsible for providing family support and worked in partnership with the Defence Member and Family Support Branch. UWOs were also essential in supporting bereaved families and returned wounded personnel. That said, in some cases, the non-deployed elements of deployed units (known as rear details) were often stretched and had difficulty fulfilling welfare support roles while also maintaining the normal leadership, governance and training functions of non-deployed elements. As a general observation, there remains a lack of understanding of Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) entitlements and the support available, both by serving and ex-serving veterans and their families.

With the implementation of One Army and later, Total Workforce, it was desirable to provide high-performing service category (SERCAT) level 3 to 5 personnel (who are reserve members) with the opportunity to deploy. Their deployment was generally as part of a larger contingent, often drawn from a single unit or formation. In most cases, SERCAT 3/5 members were not of that parent unit/formation. The consequence was that unit-based welfare plans did not fully cater for families that were not part of the co-located and connected Defence families associated with the parent unit/formation.

Observation 15:
Unit Welfare Boards are continuing to evolve and improve the health and wellbeing support provided to ADF personnel.

The codification and practice of multidisciplinary Unit Welfare Boards significantly improved the coordination of health and wellbeing support to ADF personnel. Over time, this led to further evolution of multidisciplinary approaches to rehabilitation, which became the foundation of evolving human performance and resilience endeavours. These innovations continue to contribute to the health and wellbeing of veterans and the broader development of the most important input to military capability – people.

Observation 16:
Notification officer training and processes have profound impact and need to be sustained.

Sadly, throughout the Afghanistan Campaign, the ADF conducted many notifications to the families of personnel who had been wounded or killed. In most cases, the professional, sincere and empathetic notification approach had an enduring and profound effect on families. There were, however, a few instances towards the end of the campaign of organisational complacency and indifference towards notification officer training and responsibilities. This must be guarded against and nurtured/evolved/sustained between deployments and campaigns.

Observation 17:
Support for veterans and their families continues to improve and must be sustained.

Support for veterans has improved significantly over the past 20 years. This was largely thanks to the better understanding that has been achieved by focused research, direct engagement and external reviews and inquiries. Since 2002, Defence has developed a comprehensive mental health strategy and a suicide prevention program to promote positive mental health outcomes for ADF personnel. ADF personnel, veterans and their families are now offered a range of assistance to enable a lifetime of wellbeing. Identifying current and emerging issues facing veterans and their families has also enabled the DVA to effectively shape departmental policy, improve service delivery responses, and deliver new programs and pilots. Developing a strong evidence base has supported DVA to take a proactive risk-focused approach and respond to individual and population risk factors to deliver tailored support.

More broadly, the Australian public sector has learnt the value of co-design in public policy development to deliver effective, efficient and sustainable solutions to citizens. The DVA Veteran Centric Reform Program implemented a co-design framework to ensure active involvement of veterans, veteran's families and other key stakeholders at all stages of program delivery. Engaging with diverse cohorts is assisting the DVA to better support the changing ADF workforce profile, particularly as it relates to increased workforce diversity and the changing nature/impact of ADF service. A key element of the Veteran Centric Reform Program is strengthening DVA's partnership with Defence and the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation, as part of the broader trend towards whole-of-government integrated service delivery and the intelligent use of data.

An evidence-based approach has informed DVA's focus on:

- improved mental health support and trauma-informed care
- best practice, evidence-based tailored health care that responds to the unique nature of military service and its impacts on veterans and their families
- veteran wellbeing, including the full spectrum of personal life experiences and social health determinants contributing to an individual's quality of life
- transition as an individual journey of reintegration into civilian life and inclusive of the process of separation from the ADF
- recognising veterans' families as supporters of veterans and a client cohort in their own right
- improved service information, service accessibility and continuity of care.

Observation 18:
DVA claims processes are becoming more efficient and transparent and must be sustained.

Over the past 20 years, Australian government services have been influenced by global trends. The digital transformation of the Australian government has been driven by growing demand for digital service delivery, online service access and data-driven policy solutions. Community expectations around accountability and transparency of government have emphasised the importance of the Australian government pursuing efficiency, sustainability and evidence of performance through evaluation. The DVA has responded to these learnings by implementing a range of new initiatives and programs. Examples are listed below.

MyService: Veterans can register through this online channel, submit claims and manage their connections with DVA.

Early Engagement Model (EEM): The DVA is partnering with Defence to know veterans and their families well before they leave the ADF, allowing the DVA to better support their needs.

Non-liability health care: The DVA can pay for treatment for any mental health condition without the need for the condition to be accepted as related to service.

Expanded employment support: Employment support has been expanded to increase employment opportunities for veterans by raising awareness of the benefits veterans bring to the civilian workplace and providing support for veterans and their families who are interested in starting their own business.

Observation 19:
Honours and awards are emotive and can be unintentionally divisive.

Honours and awards remain an important means of recognising exemplary service. That said, they have also always been a point of contention. The duration of the Afghanistan Campaign and the way task groups were formed and rotated may have amplified this contention around the 'haves' and 'have nots'. This occasionally generated morale and cohesion issues. Anecdotally, in some cases this also created an unhealthy 'competition for medals' dynamic. Without being checked, this unintended dynamic can create other risks and is not consistent with either ADF values or the intended spirit of medallic recognition.

Observation 20:
More timely transition decisions and notifications are required.

There were a few occasions during the Afghanistan Campaign in which ADF personnel were notified of their impending retirement while deployed. While in most cases this could reasonably have been anticipated, it created stress and, for some personnel, a feeling of being devalued. Some ADF personnel also made the decision while deployed to transition out of full-time service. Transition dates were often soon after their return to Australia. This made it difficult to monitor and exercise a duty of care in a person's return from operations. Many ADF personnel also realised in hindsight that they were not in the right headspace to determine their future while deployed and in some cases they later regretted their decisions.

Annexes

Annex A
Key Appointments

Ministerial Leadership

Prime Ministers

11 March 1996–3 December 2007	PM John Howard
23 December 2007–24 June 2010	PM Kevin Rudd
24 June 2010–27 June 2013	PM Julia Gillard
27 June 2013–18 September 2013	PM Kevin Rudd
18 September 2013–15 September 2015	PM Tony Abbott
15 September 2015–24 August 2018	PM Malcolm Turnbull
24 August 2018–withdrawal	PM Scott Morrison

Ministers of Defence

30 January 2001–26 November 2001	Peter Reith MP
26 November 2001–20 January 2006	Senator Robert Hill
20 January 2006–3 December 2007	Brendan Nelson MP
3 December 2007–9 June 2009	Joel Fitzgibbon MP
9 June 2009–14 September 2010	Senator John Faulkner
14 September 2010–18 September 2013	Stephen Smith MP
18 September 2013–23 December 2014	Senator David Johnston
23 December 2014–21 September 2015	Kevin Andrews MP
21 September 2015–28 August 2018	Senator Marise Payne
28 August 2018–26 May 2019	Christopher Pyne MP
26 May 2019–30 March 2021	Senator Linda Reynolds, CSC
30 March 21–withdrawal	Peter Dutton MP

Department of Defence Leadership

Secretaries of the Department of Defence

21 October 1999–20 October 2002	Dr Allen Hawke
11 November 2002–3 December 2006	Ric Smith
4 December 2006–13 August 2009	Nick Warner
13 August 2009–5 September 2011	Dr Ian Watt
5 September 2011–18 October 2012	Duncan Lewis
18 October 2012–12 May 2017	Dennis Richardson
4 September 2017–withdrawal	Greg Moriarty

Chiefs of the Defence Force

4 July 1998–3 July 2002	ADM Chris Barrie
4 July 2002–3 July 2005	GEN Peter Cosgrove
4 July 2005–3 July 2011	AIRMSHL Angus Houston
4 July 2011–30 June 2014	GEN David Hurley
30 June 2014–6 July 2018	AIRMSHL Mark Binskin
07 July 2018–withdrawal	GEN Angus Campbell

Operational Leadership

Chief of Joint Operations (CJOPS)

VCDF: 5 June 2000–15 July 2002	LTGEN Des Mueller
VCDF: 15 July 2002–4 July 2005	RADM Russ Shalders
VCDF: 4 July 2005–3 July 2008	LTGEN Ken Gillespie
October 2007–4 July 2008	LTGEN David Hurley
4 July 2008–19 May 2011	LTGEN Mark Evans
19 May 2011–20 May 2014	LTGEN Ash Power
20 May 2014–24 May 2018	VADM David Johnston
24 May 2018–1 July 2019	AIRMSHL Mel Hupfeld
1 July 2019–withdrawal	LTGEN Greg Bilton

NB: CJOPS position created September 2008 (prior to this the responsibility lay with VCDF).

Chief Joint Taskforce (CJTF)

October 2001–March 2002	BRIG Ken Gillespie ANCE
March 2002–14 November 2002	BRIG Gary Bornholt ANCE
13 May 2002–25 May 2003	BRIG Maurie McNarn ANHQ–MEAO
26 May 2003–26 November 2003	AIRCDRE Graham Bentley
27 November 2003–28 May 2004	CDRE Campbell Darby
26 May 2004–28 November 2004	BRIG Peter Hutchinson
29 November 2004–16 May 2005	AIRCDRE Greg Evans
17 May 2005–16 November 2005	CDRE Geoff Ledger
14 November 2005–12 May 2006	BRIG Paul Simon
12 May 2006–12 November 2006	BRIG Michael Moon
12 November 2006–12 May 2007	BRIG Michael Crane
12 May 2007–17 June 2007	BRIG Gerard Fogarty
17 June 2007–1 March 2008	MAJGEN Mark Evans
1 March 2008–12 January 2009	MAJGEN Mike Hindmarsh
12 January 2009–14 January 2010	MAJGEN Mark Kelly
18 January 2010–17 January 2011	MAJGEN John Cantwell
17 January 2011–17 January 2012	MAJGEN Angus Campbell
17 January 2012–1 October 2012	MAJGEN Stuart Smith
17 October 2013–20 September 2013	MAJGEN Michael Crane
17 September 2013–10 December 2014	MAJGEN Craig Orme
30 November 2014–2 December 2015	RADM Trevor Jones
12 January 2016–26 January 2017	AVM Timothy Innes
10 January 2017–22 January 2018	MAJGEN John James Frewen
9 January 2018–17 January 2019	RADM Jaimie Hatcher
29 January 2019–30 June 2019	AVM Joe Iervasi
12 March 2019–19 January 2020	RADM Mark Hill
20 January 2020–5 December 2020	MAJGEN Susan Coyle
4 November 2020–30 July 2021	RADM Michael Rothwell

Annex B
Formed Units

Operation	Task Group	Acronym	From Date	To Date
Reconstruction Task Forces				
Operation SLIPPER	One	RTF-1	01-May-06	08-Apr-07
Operation SLIPPER	Two	RTF-2	08-Apr-07	12-Oct-07
Operation SLIPPER	Three	RTF-3	12-Oct-07	14-Apr-08
Operation SLIPPER	Four	RTF-4	14-Apr-08	16-Oct-08
Mentoring And Reconstruction Task Forces				
Operation SLIPPER	One	MRTF-1	16-Oct-08	15-Jun-09
Operation SLIPPER	Two	MRTF-2	15-Jun-09	11-Dec-09
Operation SLIPPER	Two	MRTF-2	11-Dec-09	14-Feb-10
Mentoring Task Forces				
Operation SLIPPER	One	MTF-1	14-Feb-10	20-Oct-10
Operation SLIPPER	One	MTF-1	01-Jun-10	21-Jun-10
Operation SLIPPER	Two	MTF-2	20-Oct-10	25-Jun-11
Operation SLIPPER	Three	MTF-3	25-Jun-11	24-Jan-12
Operation SLIPPER	Four	MTF-4	24-Jan-12	24-Jun-12
Operation SLIPPER	Five (3 RAR Task Group)	MTF-5 (3 RAR TG)	24-Jun-12	20-Nov-12
Advisory Task Forces				
Operation SLIPPER	One (7 RAR Task Group)	ATF-1 (7 RAR TG)	20-Nov-12	15-Jun-13
Operation SLIPPER	Two (2 CAV Task Group)	ATF-2 (2 CAV TG)	15-Jun-13	01-Feb-14

Operation	Task Group	Acronym	From Date	To Date
Special Forces Task Forces				
Operation SLIPPER 1	first contingent	SFTF-1	01-Oct-01	01-Mar-02
Operation SLIPPER 1	second contingent	SFTF-2	01-Mar-02	16-Jul-02
Operation SLIPPER 1	third contingent	SFTF-3	01-Aug-02	01-Nov-02
Special Forces Task Groups				
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation One	SFTG-1	25-Aug-05	08-Jan-06
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Two	SFTG-2	08-Jan-06	12-May-06
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Three	SFTG-3	12-May-06	12-Sep-06
Special Operations Task Groups				
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Four	SOTG-IV	01-May-07	01-Aug-07
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Five	SOTG-V	01-Aug-07	02-Feb-08
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Six	SOTG-VI	02-Feb-08	29-Jul-08
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Seven	SOTG-VII	29-Jul-08	18-Nov-08
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Eight	SOTG-VIII	18-Nov-08	08-Mar-09
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Nine	SOTG-IX	08-Mar-09	10-Jul-09
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Ten	SOTG-X	10-Jul-09	01-Nov-09
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Eleven	SOTG-XI	01-Nov-09	03-Mar-10
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Twelve	SOTG-XII	03-Mar-10	18-Jul-10
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Thirteen	SOTG-XIII	18-Jul-10	05-Dec-10
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Fourteen	SOTG-XIV	05-Dec-10	13-Mar-11
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Fifteen	SOTG-XV	13-Mar-11	27-Jun-11
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Sixteen	SOTG-XVI	27-Jun-11	02-Jan-12
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Seventeen	SOTG-XVII	02-Jan-12	08-Jul-12
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Eighteen	SOTG-XVIII	08-Jul-12	09-Feb-13
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Nineteen	SOTG-XIX	09-Feb-13	15-Aug-13
Operation SLIPPER 2	Rotation Twenty	SOTG-XX	15-Aug-13	26-Dec-13

Operation	Task Group	Acronym	From Date	To Date
205 Corps Coalition Advistory Teams				
Operation SLIPPER/HIGHROAD	Rotation One	205 CAT-1	01-May-10	01-Nov-10
Operation SLIPPER/HIGHROAD	Rotation Two	205 CAT-2	01-Nov-10	01-Jun-11
Operation SLIPPER/HIGHROAD	Rotation Three	205 CAT-3	01-Oct-11	01-Sep-12
Operation SLIPPER/HIGHROAD	Rotation Four	205 CAT-4	01-Sep-12	29-Aug-13
Operation SLIPPER/HIGHROAD	Rotation Five	205 CAT-5	29-Aug-13	26-Apr-14
Operation SLIPPER/HIGHROAD	Rotation Six	205 CAT-6	26-Apr-14	18-Dec-14
Operation SLIPPER/HIGHROAD	Rotation Seven	205 CAT-7	18-Dec-14	03-Oct-15
Artillery Training Teams				
Operation SLIPPER	Kabul - One	ATTK-1	06-Apr-10	10-Nov-10
Operation SLIPPER	Kabul - Two	ATTK-2	10-Nov-10	17-Jul-11
Operation SLIPPER	Team - Three	ATAT-3	17-Jul-11	01-Feb-12
Operation SLIPPER	Team - Four	ATAT-4	01-Feb-12	01-Oct-12
Operation SLIPPER	Team - Five	ATAT-5	01-Oct-12	11-Apr-13
Rotary Wing Groups				
Operation SLIPPER	Rotary Wing Group		25-Jul-06	01-Apr-07
Operation SLIPPER	Rotary Wing Group	RWG-3	01-Feb-08	01-Nov-08
Operation SLIPPER	Rotary Wing Group	RWG-4	05-Mar-09	07-Oct-09
Operation SLIPPER	Rotary Wing Group	RWG-5	01-Mar-10	01-Oct-10
Operation SLIPPER	Rotary Wing Group	RWG-6	01-Mar-11	01-Oct-11
Operation SLIPPER	Rotary Wing Group	RWG-7	01-Mar-12	01-Nov-12
Operation SLIPPER	Rotary Wing Group	RWG-8	01-Mar-13	14-Sep-13
Combined Team Uruzgan				
Operation SLIPPER	Combined Team Uruzgan	CTU-4	18-Oct-12	07-Aug-13
Operation SLIPPER	Combined Team Uruzgan	CTU-5	07-Aug-13	01-Dec-13

Operation	Task Group	Acronym	From Date	To Date
Force Communications Units				
Operation SLIPPER	FCU - One	FCU-1	01-Sep-08	24-May-09
Operation SLIPPER	FCU - - Two	FCU-2	24-May-09	24-Jan-10
Operation SLIPPER	FCU - - Three	FCU-3	24-Jan-10	01-Sep-10
Operation SLIPPER	FCU - - Four	FCU-4	01-Sep-10	01-May-11
Operation SLIPPER	FCU - - Five	FCU-5	01-May-11	13-Dec-11
Operation SLIPPER	FCU - - Six	FCU-6	13-Dec-11	01-May-12
Operation SLIPPER	FCU - - Seven	FCU-7	01-May-12	01-Sep-12
Operation SLIPPER	FCU - - Eight	FCU-8	01-Sep-12	13-May-13
Operation SLIPPER	FCU - - Nine	FCU-9	13-May-13	01-Oct-13
Operation SLIPPER	FCU - - Ten	FCU-10	01-Oct-13	08-Jul-14
Force Support Units				
Operation SLIPPER	FSU - One	FSU-1	23-Jan-09	11-Jul-09
Operation SLIPPER	FSU - Two	FSU-2	11-Jul-09	11-Apr-10
Operation SLIPPER	FSU - Three	FSU-3	11-Apr-10	01-Dec-10
Operation SLIPPER	FSU - Four	FSU-4	01-Dec-10	01-Aug-11
Operation SLIPPER	FSU - Five	FSU-5	01-Aug-11	01-Apr-12
Operation SLIPPER	FSU - Six	FSU-6	01-Apr-12	01-Sep-12
Operation SLIPPER	FSU - Seven	FSU-7	01-Sep-12	01-Apr-13
Operation SLIPPER	FSU - Eight	FSU-8	01-Apr-13	10-Feb-14
Operation SLIPPER	FSU - Nine	FSU-9	10-Feb-14	03-Aug-14

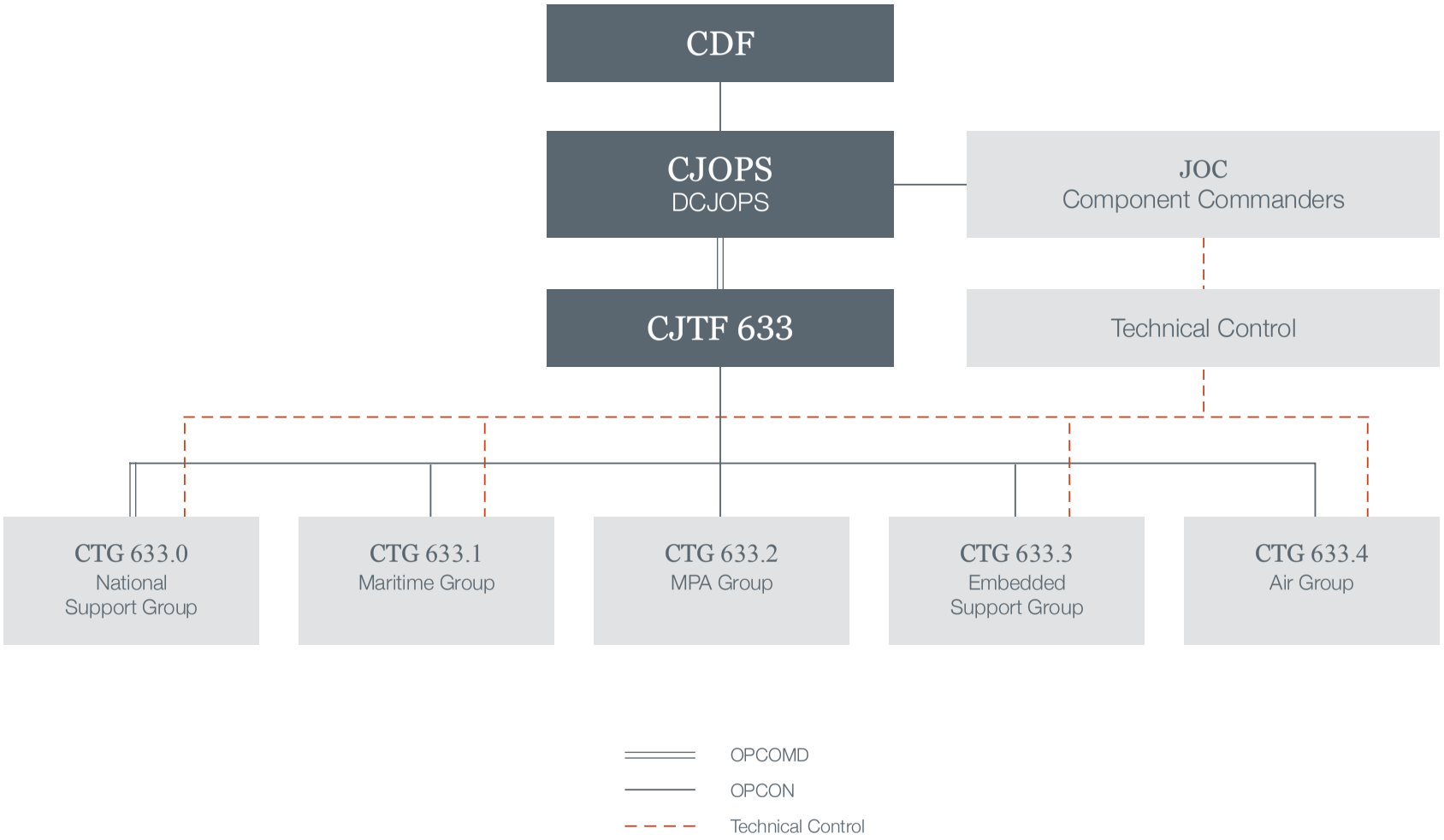
Operation	Task Group	Acronym	From Date	To Date
Combat Support Units				
Operation SLIPPER	One	CSU-1	01-Mar-09	01-Dec-09
Operation SLIPPER	Two	CSU-2	01-Dec-09	01-Jul-10
Operation SLIPPER	Three	CSU-3	01-Jul-10	01-Nov-10
Operation SLIPPER	Four	CSU-4	01-Nov-10	01-Mar-11
Operation SLIPPER	Five	CSU-5	01-Mar-11	28-Sep-11
Operation SLIPPER	Six	CSU-6	01-Sep-11	01-Mar-12
Operation SLIPPER	Seven	CSU-7	01-Mar-12	01-Sep-12
Operation SLIPPER	Eight	CSU-8	01-Sep-12	30-Mar-13
Operation SLIPPER	Nine	CSU-9	30-Mar-13	28-Sep-13
Operation SLIPPER	Ten	CSU-10	28-Sep-13	02-Apr-14
Maritime Patrol Aircraft Task Groups - Orion Detachments				
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	11-Jan-03	11-Apr-03
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	14-Apr-03	14-Jul-03
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	29-Jun-03	18-Sep-03
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	28-Oct-03	31-Jan-04
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	21-Jan-04	22-Apr-04
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	12-Apr-04	18-Jul-04
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	11-Jul-04	26-Oct-04
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	18-Oct-04	21-Jan-05
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	17-Mar-05	22-Jun-05
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	15-Jun-05	19-Oct-05
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	12-Oct-05	15-Feb-06
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	05-Feb-06	07-Jun-06
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	31-May-06	04-Oct-06
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	27-Sep-06	10-Jan-07
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	03-Jan-07	02-May-07
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	25-Apr-07	19-Sep-07
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	06-Sep-07	12-Mar-08

Operation	Task Group	Acronym	From Date	To Date
Maritime Patrol Aircraft Task Groups - Orion Detachments (continued)				
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	05-Mar-08	10-Sep-08
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	03-Sep-08	13-Mar-09
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TG633.2	04-Mar-09	04-Aug-09
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TU 633.2.4	13-Apr-09	24-Jun-09
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TU 633.2.4	22-Jun-09	16-Sep-09
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TU 633.2.4	09-Sep-09	03-Jan-10
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TU 633.2.4	30-Dec-09	12-May-10
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TU 633.2.4	28-Apr-10	07-Jul-10
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TU 633.2.4	30-Jun-10	06-Oct-10
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TU 633.2.4	29-Sep-10	12-Jan-11
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TU 633.2.4	05-Jan-11	06-Apr-11
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TU 633.2.4	30-Mar-11	02-Jun-11
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TU 633.2.4	25-May-11	28-Sep-11
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TU 633.2.4	16-Sep-11	06-Jan-12
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TU 633.2.4	21-Dec-11	04-Apr-12
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TU 633.2.4	21-Mar-12	04-Jul-12
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TU 633.2.4	20-Jun-12	30-Sep-12
Operation SLIPPER	MPATG (Orion Detachment)	TU 633.2.4	19-Sep-12	27-Nov-12
International Security Assistance Force Special Operations Forces				
Operation SLIPPER	ISAF-SOF	ISAF SOF	09-Jan-08	29-Jan-09
Operation SLIPPER	ISAF-SOF	ISAF SOF	07-May-09	14-Oct-10
Operation SLIPPER	ISAF-SOF	ISAF SOF	09-May-10	14-May-11
Operation SLIPPER	ISAF-SOF	ISAF SOF	05-Oct-11	24-Oct-12
Operation SLIPPER	ISAF-SOF	ISAF SOF	14-Nov-12	23-Dec-13
Interantional Security Assistance Force Plans				
Operation SLIPPER	International Security Assistance Force Plans	ISAF J5	Feb-11	Mar-12
Operation SLIPPER	International Security Assistance Force Plans	ISAF J5	Jan-12	Nov-12
Operation SLIPPER	International Security Assistance Force Plans	ISAF J5	Nov-12	Nov-13

Operation	Task Group	Acronym	From Date	To Date
Task Group Afghanistan				
Operation HIGHROAD	Task Group Afghanistan	TG 633.6	Jun-15	Jul-15
Operation HIGHROAD	Task Group Afghanistan	TG 633.6	Jul-15	Feb-16
Operation HIGHROAD	Task Group Afghanistan	TG 633.6	Feb-16	Nov-16
Operation HIGHROAD	Task Group Afghanistan	TG 633.6	Nov-16	Nov-17
Operation HIGHROAD	Task Group Afghanistan	TG 633.6	Nov-17	Aug-18
Operation HIGHROAD	Task Group Afghanistan	TG 633.6	Aug-18	Mar-19
Operation HIGHROAD	Task Group Afghanistan	TG 633.6	Mar-19	Nov-19
Operation HIGHROAD	Task Group Afghanistan	TG 633.6	Nov-19	Oct-20
Force Protection Elements				
Operation HIGHROAD	Force Protection Element One	FPE-1	Jan-14	Jul-14
Operation HIGHROAD	Force Protection Element Two	FPE-2	Jul-14	Dec-14
Operation HIGHROAD	Force Protection Element Three	FPE-3	Dec-14	Jul-15
Operation HIGHROAD	Force Protection Element Four	FPE-4	Jul-15	Dec-15
Operation HIGHROAD	Force Protection Element Five	FPE-5	Jan-16	Jul-16
Operation HIGHROAD	Force Protection Element Six	FPE-6	Jul-16	Jan-17
Operation HIGHROAD	Force Protection Element Seven	FPE-7	Jan-17	Aug-17
Operation HIGHROAD	Force Protection Element Eight	FPE-8	Aug-17	Feb-18
Operation HIGHROAD	Force Protection Element Nine	FPE-9	Feb-18	Aug-18
Operation HIGHROAD	Force Protection Element Ten	FPE-10	Aug-18	Feb-19
Operation HIGHROAD	Force Protection Element Eleven	FPE-11	Feb-19	Sep-19
Operation HIGHROAD	Force Protection Element Twelve	FPE-12	Sep-19	Feb-20
Operation HIGHROAD	Force Protection Element Thirteen	FPE-13	Feb-20	Sep-20
Operation HIGHROAD	Force Protection Element Fourteen	FPE-14	Sep-20	Jan-21
Operation HIGHROAD	Force Protection Element Fifteen	FPE-15	Jan-21	Jul-21
Operation ACCORDION	Force Protection Element Sixteen	FPE-16	May-21	Jun-21

Operation	Task Group	Acronym	From Date	To Date
Afghan National Army Officer Academy Tranches				
Operation HIGHROAD	Tranche 15	ANAOA 15	May-17	Dec-17
Operation HIGHROAD	Tranche 17	ANAOA 17	Oct-18	Apr-19
Operation HIGHROAD	Tranche 18	ANAOA 18	Nov-18	Aug-19
Operation HIGHROAD	Tranche 19	ANAOA 19	Feb-19	Mar-20
Kabul Garrison Command – Advisory Teams				
Operation HIGHROAD	Advisory Team One	KGC-AT 1	Feb-16	Sep-16
Operation HIGHROAD	Advisory Team Two	KGC-AT 2	Sep-16	Jun-17
Operation HIGHROAD	Advisory Team Three	KGC-AT 3	Jun-17	Mar-18
Nato Advisor Groups				
Operation HIGHROAD	1/17 (KGC-AT 4/CSA-SMA-AT1/ANAOA 17)	KGC-AT 4	Dec-17	Oct-18
Operation HIGHROAD	1/18 (KGC-AT 5/ CSA-SMA-AT2/ANAOA 18)	KGC-AT 5	Oct-18	Aug-19
Operation HIGHROAD	1/19 (KGC-AT 6/CSA-SMA-AT 3/ANAOA 19)	KGC-AT 6	Jul-19	Jun-20
Kabul Garrison Command – Advisory Team Seven				
Operation HIGHROAD	Kabul Garrison Command - Advisory Team Seven	KGC-AT 7	Nov-20	Dec-20
Kabul Joint Command – Advisor Team				
Operation HIGHROAD	KJC-AT 8 (Kabul Joint Command - Advisor Team)	KJC-AT 8	Nov-20	May-21
Non-Commatant Evacuation Operation				
Operation ACCORDION	(NEO) - August 2021	NEO	Aug-21	Sep-21

Annex C–1
Exemplar – Middle East Area of Operations
High Level National Command Arrangements (2004)



Annex C–2
Exemplar – ADF Command and Control Arrangements (2011)

Comments

1. CJTF633 will determine the role of Australian Commanders in the implementation of NATCOMD.
2. No CF Commander is permitted to further allocate OPCON/TACON without National Approval
3. TECHON/ADCON covered separately

FE	Force Element	**OPCON**	Operational Control
TCOMD	Tactical Command	**TACON**	Tactical Control
NATCOMD	National Command	**DS / IN SPT TO**	Direct Support / In Support To
OPCOMD	Operational Command	**TECHCON**	Technical Control
TACOMD	Tactical Command	**ADCON**	Administrative Control

Not applicable / Not to be delegated

To be determined/allocated by commander holding the appropriate C2 authority

FE		SUB-FE	TCOMD	NATCOMD (3)	OPCOMD	TACOMD	OPCON (2)	TACON (2)	DS / IN SPT TO	REMARKS / LIMITATIONS
COMD JTF633			CJOPS							
HQJTF633		ACOMD-A	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633					
		HQ JTF633			CJTF633					
		HQ JTF633-A			CJTF633	ACOMD-A				
	Spec Adviser/ FE	MTF PAO			CJTF633		JTF633	MTF		
		SOTG PAO	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		JTF633	SOTG		
		CJOPS SOLE			CJTF633					Includes SOLO and Sig
		SRO Planner			SOCAUST					
		DST			SOCAUST					

FE		SUB-FE	TCOMD	NATCOMD (3)	OPCOMD	TACOMD	OPCON (2)	TACON (2)	DS / IN SPT TO	REMARKS / LIMITATIONS
HQJTF633 (continued)	**JMCC**	COMD JMCC	CJOPS	CJTF633	COMD JMOVGP					
		JMCC DET AMAB			COMD JMCC				DS to all AS FE in location. IN SPT to CF as required.	
		JMCC DET MNBC-TK								
		JMCC DET KAF								
		JMCC DET KABUL								
	ADFIS	ADFIS AMAB DET	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633					
		ADFIS TK DET	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633					
	OA	OA-AMAB	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633					
		OA–TK	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD CT-U			OPCON assignment to COMD CT-U is to specify/ensure the required or minimum level of support to be provided to ADF FE.
		OA–CMF	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD CMF			OPCON assignment to COMD CT-U is to specify/ensure the required or minimum level of support to be provided to ADF FE.

FE		SUB-FE	TCOMD	NATCOMD (3)	OPCOMD	TACOMD	OPCON (2)	TACON (2)	DS / IN SPT TO	REMARKS / LIMITATIONS
HQJTF633 (continued)	**TCD**	Non-AFG based individuals	CJOPS	CJOPS	CJTF633		Host unit CO			- OPCON/TACON status to be determined on an individual basis. - IAW TCD authorisation.
		Op HERRICK Artillery Tp	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		CO UK Artillery Regt		DS to Task Force Helmand	- IAW TCD authorisation
		AFG based individuals	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		CF Unit Comd			- OPCON/TACON status to be determined by CJTF633 on an individual basis dependant on mission, role and/or task. - IAW TCD authorisation.
	Embeds	Non-AFG based individuals	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		Host unit COMD			Includes CAOC and MTO
		AFG Based Individuals	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633	ACOMD-A	Host unit COMD			Includes: HQ ISAF, NTM-A, HQ IJC, HQ RC(S), COIN Academy Excludes: HQ ISAF DCOS SP
		AFG Based Formed bodies	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633	ACOMD-A	Host unit COMD			Includes: ATT-K, 205 Corps Mentors,
		O6 Embed (ISAF DCOS SP)	CJOPS	CJTF633			COMD ISAF			DIRLAUTH with CDF and CJOPS
	UN	Op RIVERBANK	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		UNAMI			
		Op PALLETTE II	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633	ACOMD-A	UNAMA			
	FEXT	Field Explotation Team	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633	ACOMD-A			IN SPT CTU and SOTG	
	Detain	DMT	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633	ACOMD-A				

FE	SUB-FE	TCOMD	NATCOMD (3)	OPCOMD	TACOMD	OPCON (2)	TACON (2)	DS / IN SPT TO	REMARKS / LIMITATIONS
Maritime Group	Comd Maritime Group	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		CCMF			Currently Comd Maritime Gp is also CO of MFU#1
	Maritime Fleet Unit (MFU) #1	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		CCMF	CTF 150, 151 or 152 (*)		(*) Allocation between CTF 150, 151 or 152 to be determined by CJTF633 iccw CCMF
	MFU #2 (when assigned)	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		CCMF	CTF 150, 151 or 152 (*)		(*) Allocation between CTF 150, 151 or 152 to be determined by CJTF633 iccw CCMF
	Log Support Elm (Maritime)	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		JTF633		DS to MFU	
Air Component	Air Component Commander (ACC)	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633					
	HQ Air Component	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		ACC			
	Combat Spt Unit (CSU)	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		ACC			
	Air Mob Unit C-130	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		ACC	CFACC		
	AP-3C	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		ACC (*)	CTF57 (#)	IN SPT to CMF (#)	(*) OPCON to be further delegated to COMNAVCENT (#) For maritime ISR tasking
				CJTF633		ACC	CFACC (**)	IN SPT to ISAF (**)	(**) For overland ISR tasking.
	C-17 (when in theatre)	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		ACC	CFACC		
	HERON	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		ACC (##)		IN SPT SOTG	(##) OPCON to be further delegated to COMD CT-U. OPCON assignment to COMD CT-U is to specify/ ensure the required/minimum level of support to be provided to ADF FE.

FE	SUB-FE	TCOMD	NATCOMD (3)	OPCOMD	TACOMD	OPCON (2)	TACON (2)	DS / IN SPT TO	REMARKS / LIMITATIONS
SECDET	Includes organic sub-FE: HQ SECDET, Mobility Tm and Log Spt	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633				DS to HOM Baghdad (*)	(*) Includes the coordination and monitoring of all mobile security tasks conducted by DFAT contractors by proxy.
HQ CT-U	DCOMD CT-U	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD CT-U			- DCOMD CT-U is the Senior AS National Representative in URZ. DCOMD CT-U has no NATCOMD command authority. - CJTF633 will define the role of DCOMD CT-U in the exercising of CJTF633›s NATCOMD responsibilities within URZ.
	AS Embedded in HQ CT-U (less 3 x pers in TK Role 2)	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD CT-U			
	ADF Staff Embedded in URZ PRT HQ	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD CT-U	COMD PRT (*)		(*) Snr CF Military comander of the PRT. Note: The Snr CF (US) Mil Comd of the PRT is OPCON to COMD RC(S) and NATO TACON to COMD CT-U.
	PRT Managed Works Section	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD CT-U	COMD PRT (*)		
	PRT Trade Training School	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD CT-U	COMD PRT (*)		

FE	SUB-FE	TCOMD	NATCOMD (3)	OPCOMD	TACOMD	OPCON (2)	TACON (2)	DS / IN SPT TO	REMARKS / LIMITATIONS
HQ CT-U (continued)	MNB-TK (when AS lead)	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD CT-U (#)			(#) When MNB-TK lead by another CF TCN, the ADF personnel will be OPCON of the CO MNB-TK, while the CF CO MNB-TK will remain OPCON of COMD CT-U.
	EWT	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD CT-U		DS MTF	
	WIT	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD CT-U		IN SPT SOTG	OPCON assignment to COMD CT-U is to specify/ensure the required or minimum level of support to be provided to ADF FE.
	Scan Eagle	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD CT-U		IN SPT SOTG	
	FHT	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD CT-U	Det A to MTF Det B to SOTG		
	PDU	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD CT-U			
	CRAM	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD CT-U(**)		Each S&W Det: DS to Base/ FOB Comd collocated with IN SPT to All CF/ANSF personnel in loc	(**) National caveat - CRAM sense and warn capabilities are only to be empoyed in Bases/ FOBs/COPs with AS presence. - DS requires that the CRAM Elm / Det Comd liaises with the Base/FOB Comd for local defence coordination and real estate
	AS Med Staff Embedded in TK Role 2	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		CO TK Role 2			To deploy in 2011. Will include Radiographer and Med Tech for CASPEAN

FE	SUB-FE	TCOMD	NATCOMD (3)	OPCOMD	TACOMD	OPCON (2)	TACON (2)	DS / IN SPT TO	REMARKS / LIMITATIONS
CTF150 (when AS lead)	COMD CTF150	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		CCMF			
	CTF150 AS ELM (AS FLEET BTL STAFF)	CJOPS	CJTF634	CJTF633					
MTF	Includes organic sub-FE: MTF HQ, MT-A, MT-B, MT-C, MT-D, MT-E, Log Spt Coy, and ETU (*)	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD CT-U		DS to ANA 4 Bde	* EWT has been moved to OPCON CT-U, DS MTF.
	FECT (when deployed)	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633			CO MTF		Can only be employed for AS & AS Partnered ANA FOB/PB maint/construction.
	PRT FP SPT ELM	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633	CO MTF		COMD PRT (*)		* Snr CF Military Comander of the PRT
RWG	Includes organic sub-FE: HQ RWG, flying troop and log element.	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMD RC(S) US CAB		IN SPT to RC(S)	
FSU	Includes organic sub-FE: HQ FSU and Coy/Pl/ Tp in AMAB, TK and KAF.	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633				DS to all ADF FE IN SPT to CTU (*)	* IN SPT arrangments TBC by CJTF 633
SOTG	Includes organic sub-FE: FCE, FE-A, FE-B, FE-C, FE-E and CSST	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633		COMISAF SOF		IN SPT to BSO (#)	# Battle Space Owner (COM RC[S], COMD CT-U or COMD TF-K)

FE	SUB-FE	TCOMD	NATCOMD (3)	OPCOMD	TACOMD	OPCON (2)	TACON (2)	DS / IN SPT TO	REMARKS / LIMITATIONS
FCU	Includes organic sub-FE: FCU HQ and HQ/ nodes in AMAB, KAF, KABUL, TK	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633				DS to All AS FE in location	
	AUAB Node	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633			Snr CAOC Embed	DS to CAOC embeds and JTF633 air component	
	BAGDAD Node	CJOPS	CJTF633	CJTF633			SECDET	DS to SECDET	
WOG	AFP	HOM	HOM						
	AUSAID	HOM	HOM						.
	IDMT (Interagency Detention Monitoring Team)	HOM	HOM						Excludes Military Subject Matter Experts

Annex D–1
Exemplar – Afghanistan ISAF RC and PRT Locations (2009)

Source: NATO SITCEN Geo Branch, ISAF Maps and Logos (Brussels: NATO), Valid as of 07 April 2009, Webpage last updated 29 October 2009, https://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/maps/index.html

ISAF Total Strength: approx 58,390

Disclaimer

Troop Contributing Nations (TCN):

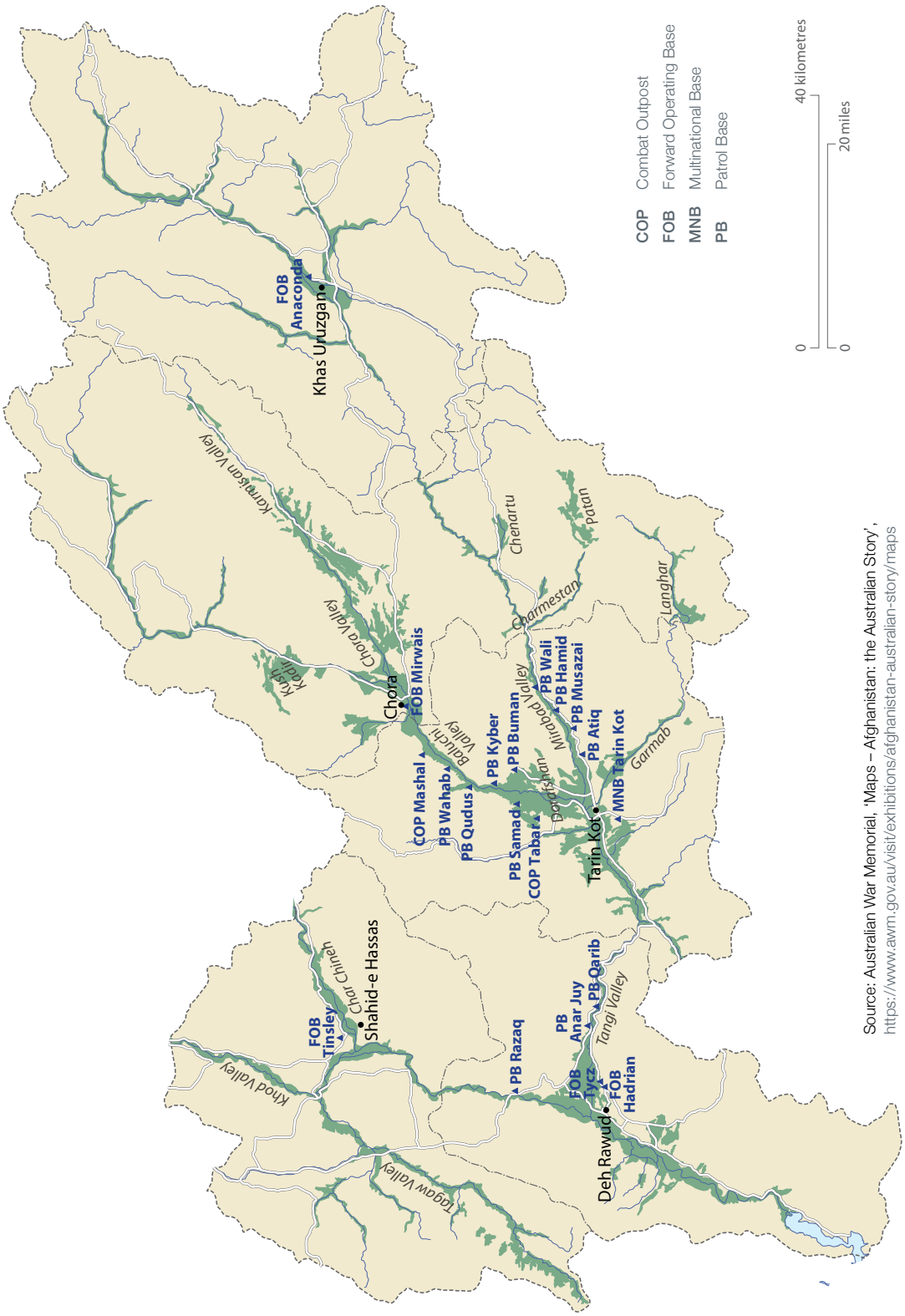
The ISAF mission consists of 42 Nations. The figures next to each country are based on global contributions to the entire ISAF Mission and do not reflect exact numbers on the ground at any one time.

The boundaries representation on this map must not be considered authoritative.

The names shown on this map or chart do not necessarily indicate official recognition of the political status of the territories concerned.

140	160
1090	200
2	9
90	1770
450	150
2	490
820	1590
2830	30
280	860
580	20
700	230
140	70
110	780
2780	290
1	170
3465	660
140	10
370	25
8	8300
7	26215
2350	
7	

Annex D–2
Exemplar – Map of Uruzgan Province and Patrol Bases (2010)



Source: Australian War Memorial, 'Maps – Afghanistan: the Australian Story', https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/afghanistan-australian-story/maps

Glossary of Terms

ADF's warfighting capability. ADF's ability to engage and rely on available resources to achieve government directed use of military force to pursue specific national objectives.

air worthiness. A concept, the application of which defines the condition of an aircraft and supplies the basis for judgement of the suitability for flight of that aircraft, in that it has been designed, constructed, maintained and operated to approved standards and limitations, by competent and authorised individuals, who are acting as members of an approved organisation and whose work is both certified as correct and accepted on behalf of Defence.

alternate futures methodology. A methodology to consider probable options and their overall impact on future planning while managing uncertainty and improving decision-making.

campaign. A set of military operations planned and conducted to achieve a strategic objective within a given time and geographical area.

campaign design. The manner in which the operational commander expresses a vision of how the campaign may unfold and how desired objectives will be sequenced and synchronised.

capability. The power to achieve a desired operational effect in a nominated environment within a specified time, and to sustain that effect for a designated period.

capability brick. A group of personnel equipped and trained to perform a specific collective function.

coalition. Forces of two or more nations, which may not be allies, acting together for the accomplishment of a single mission.

coalition environment. An environment or arrangement where forces of two or more nations, which may not be allies, act together for the accomplishment of a single mission.

coalition operation. An operation conducted by forces of two or more nations, which may not be allies, that act together for the accomplishment of a single mission.

command. The authority which a commander in the military service lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment.

command and control (C2). The process and means for the exercise of authority over, and lawful direction of, assigned forces.

conflict. A politico-military situation between peace and war, distinguished from peace by the introduction of organised political violence and from war by its reliance on political methods.

control. The authority exercised by a commander over part of the activities of subordinate organisations, or other organisations not normally under their command, which encompasses the responsibility for implementing orders or directives.

conventional forces. Those forces capable of conducting operations using nonnuclear weapons.

disruption. A direct attack that neutralises or selectively destroys key elements of the adversary's capabilities.

domain. Within the operational environment, a medium with discrete characteristics in which, or through which, military activity takes place.

effect. The adverse physical, physiological, psychological or functional impact on the adversary as a result, or consequence, of own military or non-military actions.

ends, ways and means. The most effective 'ways' to apply military 'means' to achieve strategic 'ends'.

Five Eyes alliance. An alliance between five nations – Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States – for intelligence and other purposes.

force assignment. The assigning of forces to a commander under a state of command, an operational authority, an administrative authority or support arrangement for the purpose of carrying out a specified mission or task.

force element. A component of a unit, a unit or an association of units that has common prime objectives and activities.

force generation. The process of providing suitably trained and equipped forces, and their means of deployment, recovery and sustainment to meet all current and potential future tasks, within required readiness and preparation times.

force protection. All measures to counter threats and hazards to, and minimise vulnerabilities of, the joint force in order to preserve freedom of action and operational effectiveness.

force sustainability. The theoretical ability of the workforce, including the numbers, ranks/levels and skills/qualifications, to provide for specified Defence requirements.

grey zone. Activities by a state that are harmful to another state and are sometimes considered to be acts of war but are not legally acts of war.

hybrid warfare. The use of a range of different methods to attack an enemy – for example, the spreading of false information or attacking important computer systems – as well as, or instead of, traditional military action.

in support of. Assisting another formation, unit or organisation while remaining under the initial command.

insight. An understanding of a single observation or number of related observations.

interoperability. The ability of systems, units or forces to act together to provide services to or from, or exchange information with partner systems, units and forces.

leadership. The art of positively influencing others to achieve an outcome.

military end state. The set of desired conditions beyond which the use of military force is no longer required to achieve national objectives.

military strategic ends. Military objectives, effects and options that link the means available to the ADF to the ways Defence will achieve the strategic ends designated by government.

military strategy. That component of national or multinational strategy, presenting the manner in which military power should be developed and applied to achieve national objectives or those of a group of nations.

military strategic plan. A plan that identifies national objectives, strategic risks and force options to address a strategic problem.

mission command. A philosophy of command and a system for conducting operations in which subordinates are given a clear indication by a superior of their intentions.

national command. The authority, conferred upon an appointed Australian commander, to safeguard Australian national interests during multinational operations.

national interests. The general and continuing ends for which a nation state acts.

national objectives. The aims, derived from national goals and interests, toward which a national policy or strategy is directed, and efforts and resources of the nation are applied.

national strategy. The art and science of developing and using the diplomatic, economic, cultural and informational powers of a nation, together with its armed forces, during peace and war, to secure national objectives.

NATO. North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

operation. A series of tactical actions with a common unifying purpose, planned and conducted to achieve a strategic or campaign end state or objective within a given time and geographical area.

operational command. The authority granted to a commander to specify missions or tasks to subordinate commanders, to deploy units, to re-assign forces and to retain or delegate operational control, tactical command and/or control as may be deemed necessary.

operational environment. All the elements, conditions and circumstances which may influence the employment of capabilities and the decisions of the commander during campaigns and operations.

organisational learning. The collection, analysis and distribution of the knowledge gained from experience for the benefit of the wider organisation.

organisational level. For the purpose of this study, this term is a level that has ADF/Defence-wide relevance.

risk management. The systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to the tasks of identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating and monitoring risk.

Shape, Clear, Hold, Build. The doctrinal phases used in counterinsurgency. Shape refers to setting the conditions to occupy an area with military force. Clear refers to clearing that area of insurgent forces. Hold refers to having the military capacity to maintain security. Build refers to enabling development of economy, governance etc.

SOTG. Special Operations Task Group

special operations. Military activities conducted by specially designated, organised, trained and equipped forces using operational techniques and modes of employment not standard to conventional forces.

strategic objective. A desired end state for military operations which is communicated from the strategic to the operational level and forms the basis for operational planning.

technical control (techcon). The provision of specialist and technical advice by designated authorities for the management and operation of forces.

technological disruption. New technology that substantially changes the way things are done or provides a marked advantage to those who possess it.

tempo. The rate or rhythm of activity relative to the enemy and incorporating the capacity of the force to transition from one operational posture to another.

terrorism. The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence against individuals or property in an attempt to coerce or intimidate governments or societies to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives.

theatre. A designated geographic area for which an operational-level joint or combined commander is appointed and in which a campaign or series of major operations is conducted.

training. A planned process to inculcate and modify knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours through a learning experience to achieve effective performance in a specified activity or range of activities.

transition. Leaving the permanent employment of the ADF.

tribalism. A cultural norm in the military culture where shared identity, clear norms and role requirements, and social stratification are exercised.

unity of command. A method of command where one commander is vested with the authority to plan and direct operations and is solely responsible for success or failure.

warfighting. Government directed use of military force to pursue specific national objectives.

Western nation. Refers generically to the US and other liberal democratic NATO member or partner nations.

whole of government. Denotes government departments and agencies working across portfolio boundaries to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response.

Endnotes

1 NPR, 'A Watchdog Group Had Been Sounding the Warning About Afghanistan's Meltdown for Years' [interview transcript of Mary Louise Kelly [interviewer] with John Sopko, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction], NPR Transcripts created by Verb8tm, NPR, last updated 16 August 2021, https://www.npr.org/transcripts/1027951992.

2 North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), 'ISAF's Mission in Afghanistan (2001–2014) (Archived)', NATO, last updated 19 August 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69366.htm.

3 For the purpose of this study, the term 'Western' refers generically to the US and other liberal democratic NATO member or partner nations (see glossary).

4 General Angus J. Campbell, in discussion with the author, September 2021.

5 Describing Australia as a 'nation at war' in the context of the Afghanistan Campaign would be misleading and underplay the level of national commitment required of such circumstances.

6 For definitions of grey zone and hybrid warfare see the glossary. It is worth noting here, however, that the term grey zone, or conflict in the grey zone, has no single agreed upon definition. See Cambridge Dictionary Online, s.v. 'grey zone (*n.)'.* https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/grey-zone. Also, Cambridge Dictionary Online, s.v. 'hybrid warfare (*n.)',* https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/hybrid-warfare.

7 For the purpose of this paper, 'organisational-level' is considered to be a level that has ADF/Defence/Service wide relevance.

8 Department of Defence, *Lead the Way: Defence Transformation Strategy* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2020): 8, https://www.defence.gov.au/about/publications/lead-way-defence-transformation-strategy.

9 General James N Mattis email to colleague on 20 November 2003, as published by businessinsider.com.au. Paul Szoldra, 'This Viral Email from General James 'Mad Dog' Mattis About Being 'Too Busy to Read' is a Must-Read', *Business Insider Australia,* 22 November 2016 3.45AM, https://www.businessinsider.com.au/general-james-mattis-email-viral-2016-11.

10 Participant response provided to the author. Participants are not named due to ethics framework restrictions.

11 Given this paper provides a very broad campaign overview, it is worth stressing at this juncture the importance of official histories. They not only enable Australian citizens to understand the full and balanced facts of their nation's commitment but also, they are equally important for ADF personnel and their families to ensure they feel that the nation they served understands their significant sacrifice and achievements. Finding timely ways to publish these official histories, or potentially abbreviated forms of them, is likely to have broader national benefits. Beyond the operational focus of the Afghanistan Campaign official history, consideration may also be given to a broader 'strategic history' of the concurrent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

12 Relationships with the Dutch and NATO more broadly proved beneficial in the MH-17 disaster response and have enabled access to NATO supply chains in some parts of the world.

13 Rhys Crawley, 'Australia's Lessons', *Parameters* 49, no. 4 (Winter 2019–20): 56, United States Army War College Press, https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol49/iss4/8/.

14 Department of Defence, *Afghanistan Withdrawal (Operation HIGHROAD)* [Talking Points] (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2021).

15 Christopher Pyne, 'Afghanistan war was a big success', *The Advertiser,* 19 July 2021.

16 General Angus Campbell, *Chief of the Defence Force, Order of the Day – A Message of Reflection on Afghanistan, Australian Defence Force Intranet* [internal document], 27 August 2021.

17 Uruzgan is spelt differently in Afghanistan and around the world, for instance it is sometimes spelt Oruzagon. The recognised term used in NATO, Australia and in government media is Uruzgan.

18 General Mark Milley at the Association of the U.S. Army Convention, 2017, quoted in Robert H Scales, 'Forecasting the Future', War on the Rocks, 9 April 2018, https://warontherocks.com/2018/04/forecasting-the-future-of-warfare/.

19 Quote Stats, 'Quotes About Adaptive Learning: Famous Quotes and Sayings About Adaptive Learning', https://quotestats.com/topic/quotes-about-adaptive-learning/.

20 Department of Defence (DoD), *2020 Defence Strategic Update* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2020): 33, https://www.defence.gov.au/about/publications/2020-defence-strategic-update.

21 DoD, *2020 Defence Strategic Update,* 33.

22 Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (Chichester: England, Capstone Publishing Ltd (A Wiley Company), 2010).

23 *Cambridge Dictionary Online,* s.v. 'strategy (n.)', accessed 27 January 2021, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/strategy.

24 Henry Kissinger, 'Why America Failed in Afghanistan', *The Economist,* 25 August 2021, https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2021/08/25/henry-kissinger-on-why-america-failed-in-afghanistan.

25 For the purpose of this paper the strategic level is considered to be the senior parts of Defence that interface with government (the political level) and develop military strategy. The operational level is considered principally to be HQ Joint Operations Command, which is responsible for campaign design. The tactical level is considered to be 'on the ground' or 'in theatre' where military operations are executed.

26 The argument for going to war must withstand scrutiny both at the time of making it, throughout the conflict and afterwards. This means Defence has a responsibility for continuous review of how and why a war is being fought (*jus ex bello*), and for updating the advice it has provided to government on the continued participation of the ADF. See Department of Defence, *ADF-P-0 – Military Ethics* (Draft First Addition as at 18 June 2021): 21.

27 While SCNS is the immediate subordinate committee to NSC, SCNS is considered to be largely a transactional (not exploratory) clearing house for Cabinet Submissions. It does not necessarily enable time for exploration and strategy making.

28 'It took months of critical debate in theatre, as the fighting intensified and coalition casualties mounted, for the generals to agree on the character of the war that was unfolding around them. And they did so in the knowledge that this was not a judgement that would be welcomed by the political leadership, which is principally why it took them so long to reach a decision. In 2003, it became apparent that an insurgency was developing, but the political leadership in Washington eschewed the term. It would revive the ghost of Vietnam and mean a commitment measured in years; this was not the war they had signed up to fight. In 2004, the generals obtained reluctant political concurrence that they were fighting an insurgency and prepared the campaign plan accordingly.' Stephen Day, *Thoughts on Generalship: Lessons from Two Wars*, Army Research Paper, no. 5 (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2015): 11. https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/occasional-papers/ thoughts-generalship-lessons-two-wars.

29 The US National Security Council Secretariat (which sits below the National Security Agency) is a model that may be worth reviewing. Other options for consideration might include re-invigoration of Secretaries Retreats, where historically time was made available for whole of government/nation strategic thinking. Or, alternatively there could be a reinvigoration of a Deputy Secretaries Committee (previously known as the Strategic Planning Coordination Group). Time for whole of government exploration will be key and could be complemented by existing informal non-partisan fora, including those convened by government sponsored think tanks.

30 The Royal College of Defence Studies model, which includes broad whole-of-government and political leadership involvement as part of the student body, may offer a starting point for consideration.

31 Heléne Clark and Dana Taplin, *Theory of Change Basics: A Primer on Theory of Change* (New York: ActKnowledge, 2012), https://www.theoryofchange.org/wp-content/uploads/toco_library/pdf/ToCBasics.pdf.

32 Alternate Futures Methodology: A methodology to consider probable options and their overall impact on future planning whilst managing uncertainty and improving decision-making. See Nadia Alaily-Mattar, Alain Thierstein and Agnes Förster, 'Alternative Futures: A Methodology for Integrated Sustainability Considerations, the Case of Nuremberg West, Germany', *Local Environment –The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability* 19, no. 16 (2014), accessed on 28 October 2021, https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2013.841135.

33 United Kingdom Ministry of Defence (UK MOD), *The Good Operation: A Handbook For Those Involved in Operational Policy and Its Implementation,* (UK MOD, 18 January 2018), https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674545/TheGoodOperation_WEB.PDF.

34 This is important in the Australian context where parliamentary debate is not required to commit forces to war.

35 Force option assessments were not conducted in 2005.

36 Kevin Rudd, 'Press Conference Parliament House Canberra', Speech Transcript ID:16519, 29 April 2009, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-16519.

37 Alan Beyerchen, 'Clausewitz, Nonlinearity, and the Unpredictability of War,' *International Security* 17, no.3 (Winter 1992–1993): 69.

38 Day, *Thoughts on Generalship: Lessons from Two Wars*, 9. 'Generals may not agree with the vision for success, but they must never depart for war without a clear understanding of what it is.'

39 For the purpose of this study, the term 'Western' refers generically to the US and other liberal democratic NATO member or partner nations.

40 This is of most relevance in counterinsurgency operations that involve capacity building but may be less relevant in other forms of conflict or wide-scale war.

41 Admiral James Stavridis, 'I Was Deeply Involved in War in Afghanistan for More Than a Decade: Here's What We Must Learn', *Time,* 16 August 2021 11.50am EDT, https://time.com/6090623/afghanistan-us-military-lessons/?fbclid=IwAR2TU2NYr8KbGZvybwo9nqpvhU9q_SVTXKmXS6PQTohNaJjgzNyA6iTLdjY.

42 Gender perspectives are a critical part of long-term success on operations. The first Australian Gender Advisor (GENAD) was deployed during the Afghanistan Campaign. This improved the lives of many Afghan women and contributed to human terrain analysis that is crucial to effective planning and the achievement of sustainable outcomes.

43 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War,* ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, with commentary by Bernard Brodie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

44 'If you are to win the war you need a clear concept of what winning is; so you need to start with the end. You need to understand with unambiguous clarity what it is you are striving to achieve. And your explanation must be both compelling and simple. If you do not have a clear understanding of what winning or success looks like, you risk defeat or a lazy meander. And a lazy meander will cost blood, which a general has a duty to minimise'. Day, *Thoughts on Generalship: Lessons from Two Wars*, 9.

45 'The Australian Army has largely been characterised by tactical and small unit approaches for its entire history'. Australian Army, *Land Warfare Doctrine 1 – The Fundamentals of Land Power 2017* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2017): 22, https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/sites/default/files/lwd_1_the_fundamentals_of_land_power_full_july_2017.pdf.

46 Exceptions to this include Australia's leadership in East Timor and the Solomon Islands.

47 It is important to stress that these risks are well short of any threshold that might contribute to unlawful behaviour.

48 'The view that Special Forces were misused in Afghanistan is not new. Indeed, a 2008 article in the *Australian Army Journal* complained that rather than reserving Special Forces for missions of strategic importance, the ADF was using them in conventional infantry missions with tactical outcomes'. Crawley, 'Australia's Lessons', 61.

49 External force sustainability reviews may be a way of mitigating the vulnerabilities of this ADF 'can-do' culture, particularly in geographically isolated elite units.

50 Andrew Milburn, **'**Learning All the Wrong Lessons: Why an Over-the-Horizon Approach to Counterterrorism Won't Work', Modern War Institute, 26 October 2021, https://mwi.usma.edu/learning-all-the-wrong-lessons-why-an-over-the-horizon-approach-to-counterterrorism-wont-work/.

51 AusAid was an executive agency within DFAT, established in 2010. It was reintegrated into the department in 2013.

52 In Crawley's view, 'The lessons to be learned from Australia's experience, as well as those of the coalition in general, are numerous. First, if Canberra really wants to make a difference on the ground, it needs a greater interagency commitment as soon as the security situation permits. Moreover, it needs to be willing to take outright responsibility for more than the security pillar of a counterinsurgency campaign. It should ensure better multiagency cooperation and the integration of the whole-of-government efforts with those of coalition partners, and it needs to resource the commitment appropriately'. Crawley, 'Australia's Lessons', 60.

53 Lieutenant Colonel C. Field, ADF Liaison Officer to 3rd United States (US) Army: 'Planning in Operation Iraqi Freedom: Observations of an Australian Liaison Officer', *Australian Army Journal* 1*,* no.2 (December 2003): 35–44.

54 Department of Defence, *ADF-P-0 - Command and Control* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2021).

55 This complexity was further exacerbated by the fact that ISAF was organised by both a geographic and a component approach. (1) Regional Commands (under ISAF) were responsible for the conduct of counter-insurgency operations and train, advise, assist of ANA, ANP and Afghan SOF Components. (2) ISAF SOF (under ISAF) was responsible for counterleadership, counternarcotics operations that involved train, advise, assist aspects with ANP Special Police Units (General Command of Police Special Units – GCPSU) and National Directorate of Security Wakunish Units (NDS Wakunish). (3) CJSOTF-A (under the OEF mandate) was responsible for counterinsurgency in remote areas, mentoring Afghan Local Police (ALP) and train, advise, assist and partnering of ANA SOF units (i.e., ANA Commandos and ANA SF detachments). (4) JSOC-TF (under OEF mandate) was responsible for counterterrorism.

56 Roslyn Connor and Vicki Wilson, *Predictive Factors of Organisational Deviance* (Canberra: Department of Defence, May 2020). This Navy sponsored paper identified common C2 factors that are predictive of risk. These include: mission not clearly communicated; a culture of producing results without regard to how results are achieved; stove-piped and compartmented structures; no clear hierarchy of command; lack of or unworkable policies; inadequate or unclear accountabilities; policy not requiring holistic risk assessments; lack of integrated information systems; short posting of personnel in key positions; inadequate staffing levels or competencies; repeated postings of select people to the same unit; organisations that don't appreciate the input of deep specialists; filtered formal and informal reporting mechanisms; information about why decisions are made are not communicated; leaders that reinforce skewed priorities such as an excessive focus on tasks rather than their people; learning from successes and failures absent; individuals punished for reporting incidents rather than rewarded; organisational structures, responsibilities and reporting lines are complex, overlap, broken, not readily understood or not transparent; primary and auxiliary roles of individuals have conflicting responsibilities and obligations; assessment and management of risk is considered of lesser importance than achieving operational tasks and outcomes; no or incomplete feedback loops to confirm that messages have been heard, understood and acted on; fear of repercussions for honest reporting of 'what is not wanted to be heard'; 'bad news' not being readily shared or deliberately withheld from those who should know it; impenetrable jargon and the density of the lexicon used, which tends to exclude those without subject matter expertise; social networks are more important than leadership hierarchies; sometimes abetted by a 'closed' workforce and in-house promotions; some officers and supervisors place loyalty to

the department or group above loyalty to Command and the ship; personnel in leadership positions being observed participating in or condoning inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours.

57 Crawley, 'Australia's Lessons', 57.

58 Department of Defence, *ADF-P-0 - Command and Control,* 25.

59 Department of Defence, *ADF-P-0 - Command and Control,* 25.

60 A side effect of this was that it also kept ADF personnel away from their families for extended periods of time prior to deployment.

61 Geoffrey Serle, *John Monash: A Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press,1982).

62 Wynton Marsalis, *To a Young Jazz Musician: Letters from the Road* (Random House Trade Paperback, 8 November 2005).

63 UK Ministry of Defence, *Army Leadership Doctrine* [AC 72029] (Sandhurst: UK MoD, 2016): 1–8. https://www.army.mod.uk/media/14177/21-07-267-army-leadership-doctrine-web.pdf.

64 UK Ministry of Defence, *Army Leadership Doctrine* (AC72029), 1-8.

65 Peter Drucker, *Peter F. Drucker Quotes*, https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/12008.Peter_F_Drucker.

66 Nicholas Jans, Stephen Mugford, Jamie Cullens and Judy Frazer-Jans, *The Chiefs: A Study of Strategic Leadership* (Canberra: Australian Defence College, 2013), https://defence.gov.au/ADC/publications/documents/Chiefs/TheChiefs.pdf. *The Chiefs* was a good starting point to further expose ADF personnel to higher and more political contexts. It is considered that there would be benefits in continuing with a similar approach but with an increased degree of candid insight.

67 The recently published ADF leadership doctrine is an important exemplar in providing a more comprehensive and balanced framing of the full range of ADF leadership contexts from tactical to strategic levels, and the differing leadership requirements and expectations of each. Importantly, this includes a more developed and open description of the leadership skills and qualities required to provide military advice to government at the political/military interface.

68 UK MOD, *The Good Operation.*

69 The majority of serving personnel have a very limited understanding or visibility of special forces culture and capabilities. This may be appropriate for some compartmented capabilities but not all. While significant effort is being made to address this, it remains that, in general terms, the broader Army do not feel that some special forces elements are part of it.

70 In the 1980s, statutory external oversight of the Australian Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security was established for intelligence agencies where similar vulnerabilities were extant.

71 John Neil, 'Shadow Values: What Really Lies Beneath?', The Ethics Centre, 6 July 2019, https://ethics.org.au/shadow-values-what-lies-beneath/.

72 Recent examples of some early progress in this regard include introduction of specialist combatives, combat shooting and human performance training into broader ADF training regimes.

73 This has particular importance in the context of the Australian National Audit Office's Performance Audit Report, *Defence's Implementation of Cultural Reform,* released on 20 May 2021, which found 'Defence is unable to provide assurance of the effectiveness of its implementation to date of its *Pathway to Change — Evolving Defence Culture 2017–2022* cultural reform strategy'. See http://www.anao.gov.au/work/performance-audit/defence-implementation-cultural-reform.

74 Navy leverages the *Human Synergistics* 'circumplex model' for measuring both personal and group/team thinking and behavioural styles, including constructive, passive/defensive, and aggressive/defensive styles. It is a well-developed and simple tool that may be worth considering for broader and more consistent ADF adoption.

75 A quote from the speech that John F. Kennedy prepared for delivery in Dallas, on the day he was shot in Dallas on 22 November 1963. John F Kennedy, 'Remarks Prepared for Delivery at the Trade Mart in Dallas, TX, November 22, 1963 [Undelivered]', John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/dallas-tx-trade-mart-undelivered-19631122.

76 Department of Defence, *2020 Defence Strategic Update,* 3.

77 Ronald Heifitz and Donald Laurie, 'The Work of Leadership', *Harvard Business Review* (December 2001): 38–47, https://hbr.org/2001/12/the-work-of-leadership.

78 Connor and Wilson, *Predictive Factors of Organisational Deviance,* 249.

79 'Army has generally adapted and learnt at the tactical and operational levels as these operations presented fresh challenges. Land forces often learn tactical and operational lessons from the wars they fight but struggle to incorporate the broader strategic lessons that require them to think outside of the box and beyond immediate past experiences'. Department of Defence, *Army Institutional Lessons (1999–2014) – Interim Report* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2014): 2.

80 Five of the annual Chief of the General Staff Exercises between 1966 and 1971 were focused on organisational lessons from operations in Vietnam.

81 Air worthiness models that scan for and proactively address risk may be worth consideration for their broader utility in different contexts at different levels. This broad approach has been adopted in Army's evolving land worthiness system.

82 Melissa Price MP, 'Defence Innovation System Goes Under the Microscope', media release, 13 September 2021, The Hon Melissa Price MP, Minister for Defence Industry, Department of Defence Ministers, https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/melissa-price/media-releases/defence-innovation-system-goes-under-microscope.

83 Many other nations conduct Third Location Decompression (TLD). This involves spending time in a 'neutral' location or third country away from the area of operation. Research on TLD indicates the process has perceived benefits to individuals, particularly around organisational support, however there are no long-term mental health gains.

84 A Dobson, S Treloar, W Zheng, R Anderson, K Bredhauer, J Kanesarajah, C Loos, K Pasmore, M Waller, *The Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO) Health Study: Census Study Summary Report* (Brisbane, Australia: The University of Queensland, Centre for Military and Veterans Health, 2012), accessed on 28 October 2021, https://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/health-well-being/programs-initiatives/military-health-outcomes-program; C Davy, A Dobson, E Lawrence-Wood, M Lorimer, K Moores, A Lawrence, K Horsley, A Crockett, A McFarlane, *Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO) Health Study: Prospective Study Summary Report* (Adelaide: The University of Adelaide, Centre for Military and Veterans Health, 2012), https://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/health-well-being/programs-initiatives/military-health-outcomes-program; E Lawrence-Wood, et.al., *Impact of Combat Study – Transition and Wellbeing Research Program* (Brisbane: Department of Veterans' Affairs, 2019). Accessed on 28 October 2021, https://www.dva.gov.au/documents-and-publications/impact-combat-report.

85 The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide will further contribute to this important endeavour. See https://defenceveteransuicide.royalcommission.gov.au/.

86 Adam Lineham, 'Sebastian Junger: Over-valorizing Vets Does More Harm Than Good', Task and Purpose, 27 September 20211:40PM, https://taskandpurpose.com/news/sebastian-junger-we-need-to-stop-over-valorizing-veterans/.

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Evacuees disembark a Royal Australian Air Force C-17A Globemaster at Australia's main operating base in the Middle East, following their evacuation from Kabul, Afghanistan - 19 August 2021. (This image has been digitally manipulated).

About the Author

Major General Andrew Hocking, CSC

Major General Andrew Hocking is a graduate of the Australian Defence Force Academy and the Royal Military College Duntroon. As an infantry officer he has served in regimental appointments in 1, 3 and 7 Brigades. This includes command of the 1st Battalion and the 7th Combat Brigade.

Major General Hocking's operational service includes two tours of East Timor as an Adjutant/Battle Captain and as a Company Commander, and two tours of Afghanistan as a planner in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Headquarters and as a Battle Group Commander of Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force - Two. Overseas postings include as an instructor at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, as Plans Branch Chief at United States Pacific Command and as a student at the Royal College of Defence Studies in the United Kingdom.

Other notable postings include a twelve month secondment to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, six months as a Visiting Military Fellow at the University of NSW where he researched and published a paper on optimizing Australia's veteran support system, and eighteen months as the Deputy Coordinator of the National Bushfire Recovery Agency.

Major General Hocking has a Bachelor of Science (Maths and History), a Masters of Management (Defence Studies) and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

While the ADF's strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures, contributions and lapses were on occasion magnified or exacerbated by the conflict environment in Afghanistan, none of them were created there. As for generations of military forces going back to antiquity, we fought essentially as we trained. Reflecting thoughtfully on our Afghanistan experience provides a lens through which to strengthen our training and preparation for the challenges of the future.

General Angus J. Campbell,
Chief of the Defence Force, September 2021

With the conclusion of the Afghanistan War in 2021, the Australian Defence Force is now in a position to reflect on what the campaign may teach us that will help prepare it for the future. As the lead of the *Preparing for the Future: Key Organisational Lessons from the Afghanistan Campaign* research project, Major General Andrew Hocking has identified 21 key lessons and proposes 50 recommendations across five focus areas – strategy making, campaign design, command and control, ADF culture and ADF learning, adaption and risk management. This study is not a history of the campaign; rather, it is a reflection of the ADF's commitment to continuous learning and preparing itself and its people for the future. As such, it provides an opportunity for objective reflection and debate on how the ADF may further evolve and contribute to whole-of-government actions to achieve national strategic objectives.

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