
***HUNGARY'S WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO
CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND POST-CONFLICT STABILISATION***
(Panel 2)

Dr. György Molnár
Director General for Security Policy and Non-Proliferation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Hungary

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to be on this distinguished panel and to speak to you about Hungarian experiences and perspectives on whole-of-government approach to crisis management and post-conflict stabilisation.

Even though Hungary and the rest of Central-European states went through a peaceful, bloodless transition in 1989-1990, we have experienced the complexity of rapid political, economic and social transformation. We are well aware of how difficult it is to construct a new politico-economic model with parallel reforms in all sectors of society. The task is immensely more difficult in countries devastated by violence, insurgency and war.

Based on this recognition we decided to lend a helping hand to less fortunate countries even before our membership in the European Union. Hungary has been a donor state since 2003, and Afghanistan was among the very first recipients of our international development assistance.

That said I intend to give you a short overview of Hungary's diverse roles and activities in a wide range of international missions, then focus on the Hungarian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan, pointing out why comprehensive approach to stabilisation-efforts is necessary in the 21st century's global security environment.

Taking part in NATO, EU, Coalition, as well as UN and OSCE missions, Hungarian soldiers have been contributing to stabilisation and reconstruction in various ways: building bridges in Bosnia-Herzegovina, providing medical support to ISAF-troops, training Iraqi soldiers in Baghdad, ensuring food supply to African Union troops serving in Sudan, advising on security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo and furnishing UNIFIL forces with accurate maps of Lebanon.

Involving police experts and contingents is a relatively new trend in international peace-support missions. Hungary deployed police trainers to Kabul, sent police officers to Sarajevo and the Sinai Peninsula. Hungarian officers play a leading role in the ongoing EU Border Assistance Mission in Moldova, and there is a Hungarian correction officer in the EU JustLex mission in Baghdad.

Leading a PRT in Afghanistan

Coordinating our participation in the afore-mentioned operations called for a close co-operation between the relevant governmental bodies and agencies. Taking over the lead nation role of the Baghlan Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan, however, necessitated a new concept for running a complex stabilisation and reconstruction mission. Effective operation of our PRT is a test case for civil-military-police cooperation in the capital and on the ground. Both require a common understanding of the situation, unity of goals, and a consensus-based approach open to out-of-the-box initiatives.

Planning and coordinating in the capital can be quite challenging, since the various actors involved have sometimes diverging perspectives and expertise, and need different pieces of information. They are also competing for funds. To alleviate this problem, the Government established an Inter-Ministerial Committee chaired by the Prime Minister's Office and composed of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Economy, Finance, Justice and Law Enforcement. The Committee adopted a procedure on training and certifying civil servants and NGO's to be deployed in the field. In the MFA an "Afghanistan Task Force" headed by the Political Director coordinates among departments.

The whole of government approach is reflected in the field, as well. The 200-strong military contingent is not only ensuring security, but carrying out CIMIC programs as well. The political advisor of the PRT, who is not subordinated to the commander, is a diplomat at ambassadorial rank. He is delegated by the MFA, and is in charge of maintaining political contacts with local authorities, power brokers, and international organisations that are active in the province and is also responsible for harmonising development projects with actual needs.

In accordance with international efforts, aimed at creating self-sustaining stability through capacity building, our PRT intends to lay a heavy emphasis on police training. Based on our previous experience in Kabul, police trainers will be deployed in the coming months. We therefore fully support EU's planned ESDP mission in the field of police and rule of law.

Since we do not have a Development Agency like the Canadian CIDA, or USAID, a Hungarian non-governmental organisation with a long experience in Afghanistan has been chosen through a bidding process as a facilitating partner managing reconstruction projects developed and implemented by Hungarian field ministries and other NGOs. Our goal is to ensure that the PRT operates and is seen by the local population as one entity that assists stabilisation and reconstruction efforts in several ways. We consider development projects with a tangible impact on the local population as the best "insurance policy" for our soldiers. Therefore in addition to the sum spent by the MoD, we earmarked 2.5 million USD per year for that purpose.

The Hungarian-led PRT also strives to be an international enterprise both in terms of military and civilian projects. In addition to allied officers from Bulgaria and Slovakia, Croatian military personnel also contribute with their skills proving that aspirant NATO-members are ready and able to combine their forces to execute a complex operation. A USAID development officer has also joined the PRT, and consultations are underway with several NATO partner countries on their potential contribution to the PRT's development projects. Hungary intends to take advantage of the EU Commission's Provincial Reconstruction Facility programme, as well.

Cooperation is essential not only at national but at international level, as well. It is especially true in Afghanistan where many international actors are present and active. We do not see the

need for creating new coordinating bodies. However, the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, established by the Afghanistan Compact, must be further strengthened.

The need for a “Comprehensive Approach”

Our experience shows that the four pillars of post-conflict reconstruction – (1) security; (2) social and economic well being; (3) justice and reconciliation; and (4) governance and participation – are all indivisibly linked, and a positive outcome in each area depends on successful interaction among them.

All this brings us to the conclusion that the complex challenges in today’s security environment require integrated responses. It has become evident that crises cannot be solved by military means alone. The need for combining civil and military elements is essential. We must adapt our national and international responses to these changing circumstances. This is where NATO’s ongoing efforts to develop a Comprehensive Approach would provide a conceptual blueprint.

We are not talking about a fundamentally novel concept. In planning and conducting its operations, the Alliance has already tried to link the provision of security to the pursuit of reconstruction and development, but in an ad hoc fashion. These practices, however, have shown their limits, and what is required now is to ensure a greater degree of coordination within NATO at all levels, and better cooperation with other actors, especially with the EU.

As one of the co-sponsors of the initiative we hope that on the basis of the decision taken at the Riga Summit NATO will be able to develop an action plan by April when the informal meeting of Foreign Ministers is held.