

Operational Analysis in Afghanistan

(The ramblings of an analyst in Afghanistan)

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INTRODUCTION

During the period from May 2005 to February 2006 the author had provided Operational Analysis support to the British lead Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) based in the North of Afghanistan at Masar-el-Sharif. This is an account of that work.

BACKGROUND

Several press articles had queried the effectiveness of the PRT concept. In December 2004 the author was invited to travel to Masar-el-Sharif to see if it was possible to measure the effectiveness the PRT was having. In addition to the briefing on the PRT its *modus operandi* the author was taken out on patrol to see first hand the work being conducted by the Military Observation Teams (MOT).

PRT STRUCTURE

The role of the PRT is little understood and is interpreted in different ways by different nations as well as being determined by the local situation. The UK had in December 2004 the leadership of a PRT centred on Maser-el-Sharif in Northern Afghanistan. The UK PRT is commanded by a Colonel who at the time of the author's recce in December 2004 had a Military deputy Commander and deputy commanders from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for International Aid (DfID), Police advisor and a representative from USAid.

In addition to the life support functions the PRT had G2 (Intelligence) branch and a G3 (Operations) branch. The PRT then had about 12 (the number varied over the period in question) Military Observation Teams (MOT). Each MOT consisted of a Captain in command of 6 soldiers and an interpreter using 2 Four by Four vehicles. The MOT had up to 8 districts to patrol, the number of districts depended on the size and accessibility of the district. Each Afghan province was broken down into approximately 12 districts the PRT Masar-el-Sharif PRT covered the 4 provinces of Balkh, Jawzjan, Sari-Pul and Samagan.

It should be noted that while the PRT is often referred to as a UK PRT, it consisted of MOT from Sweden, Norway, and Estonia as well the UK. The MOT patrolled extensively in their areas of operation and was well acquainted with the local situation and personalities.

TRIAL

Having visited Mazar-el-Sharif in December 2004 after the exchange of a number of e-mail it was agreed to conduct a Trail in February 2005, the objective of the trail was:

To establish the credibility and feasibility of the methodology built up over exchanges between COS PRT Mazar-el-Sharif and DACOS J5(OA), PJHQ (during the authors post was re-titled from DACOS J5(OA) to Scientific Advisor (SCIAD).

The assessments areas were agreed as:

- Police
- Traffic Police
- Border Police
- Customs
- Army
- Governance
- Judiciary
- Narcotics
- Disarmament

While the author has often been a strong supporter of having quantitative values, the almost complete paucity of data and the lack of education within local government institutions and the Police precluded a numerate approach.

The approach adopted was to use the UK measurement of Fighting Power, with a qualitative assessment based upon criteria built up into an effects tree. Key to the approach was to obtain the local knowledge of the MOT leaders, who were happy to provide an assessment of:

- Police
- Border Police
- Governance

While some MOT leaders did have knowledge outside these areas the majority did not, and thus the trial concentrated on the above 3 topics.

EFFECTS TREE

In order to assess Police effectiveness we would normally look at statistics collected by the police themselves. As was explained to the author, not only was data not routinely collect but also several of the District Chiefs of Police had programmes to teach their policemen to read.

The effectiveness of any military unit is not just about numbers as the following quote from Field Marshal Montgomery explains:

“I have always held the view that an army is not just a collection of individuals, with so many tanks, guns, machine-guns, etc., and that the strength of the army is not just the total of all these things added together. The real strength of an army is, and must be, far greater than the sum total of its parts; that extra strength is provided by moral, fighting spirit, mutual confidence between leaders and the led and especially with the high command, the quality of comradeship, and many other intangible spiritual qualities.”

Current British Military doctrine considers capability to be broken down into three components, physical, moral and conceptual. Adapting this for the Afghan Police three components were identified, physical, moral and training. Taking the three components each can be further broken down to form a tree as in Figure 1.

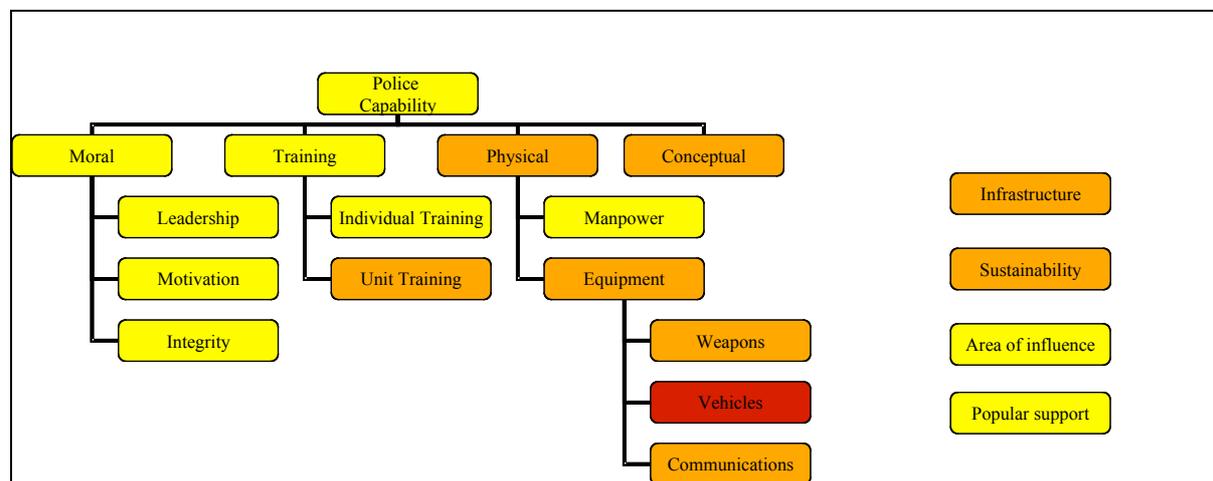


Figure 1: Police effectiveness tree.

Thus the moral component is broken down into leadership, motivation and integrity, the breakdown of the other components is given in figure 1.

- *Leadership* is an assessment of the leadership capabilities of the district chief of Police.

- *Motivation* is an assessment of the District chief of Police motivation for the good of Afghanistan.
- *Integrity* is about the integrity of the District Chief of Police.
- *Individual training* is an assessment of the individual policeman's capability, not the training courses he may have been on.
- *Unit training* is the police capability to operate at squad level.
- *Manpower* is an assessment of the level of manpower relative to that needed to effectively police the district.
- *Weapons* are about effectiveness in using weapons so encompasses the type of weapon ammunition and weapon handling skills relative to the tasks.
- *Vehicles* is about transportation for the police relative to their needs.
- *Communications* are about the capability of the police to effectively communicate.

The four side assessed issues are:

- *Infrastructure* is an assessment of the support infrastructure including buildings the district police have.
- *Sustainability* is an assessment of the capability of the police to sustain themselves.
- *Area of influence* assesses the coverage the district police have of the population of the district.
- *Popular support* is an assessment of the support from the local population.

While the initial concept was three components a fourth was added during the trial to assess if the police had a workable concept of operation. A set of criteria was developed for each of the lower level branches of the tree those for leadership are given in Table 1.

	Criteria
1	Unofficially appointed, under influence of patron, totally ineffective
2	Unofficially/Officially appointed, under influence of patron, biased, ineffective
3	Officially appointed, impartial, limited effectiveness
4	Official Appointed, Impartial, Effective

Table 1: Leadership criteria.

The MOT leader assigned a score (with an associated colour) for each of the lower level functions in the tree; the example in table 1 is for the leadership in each police district. Using the criteria developed the tree could be coloured for each police district, as shown in the fictitious example in Figure 1. The numbers are used to combine the score at a lower level, thus in this example equipment is an average of weapons, vehicles and communication (2, 1, 2). Police capability is the average of Moral, Training, Physical and Conceptual, except in this case the Moral component is given a weighting of three with the other components being 1. (i.e. Moral is equal to the other three components combined).

There are four assessed items not linked to the tree, but assessed against criteria in the same way. The difference with these items is that they were not aggregated up in to the over all effectiveness.

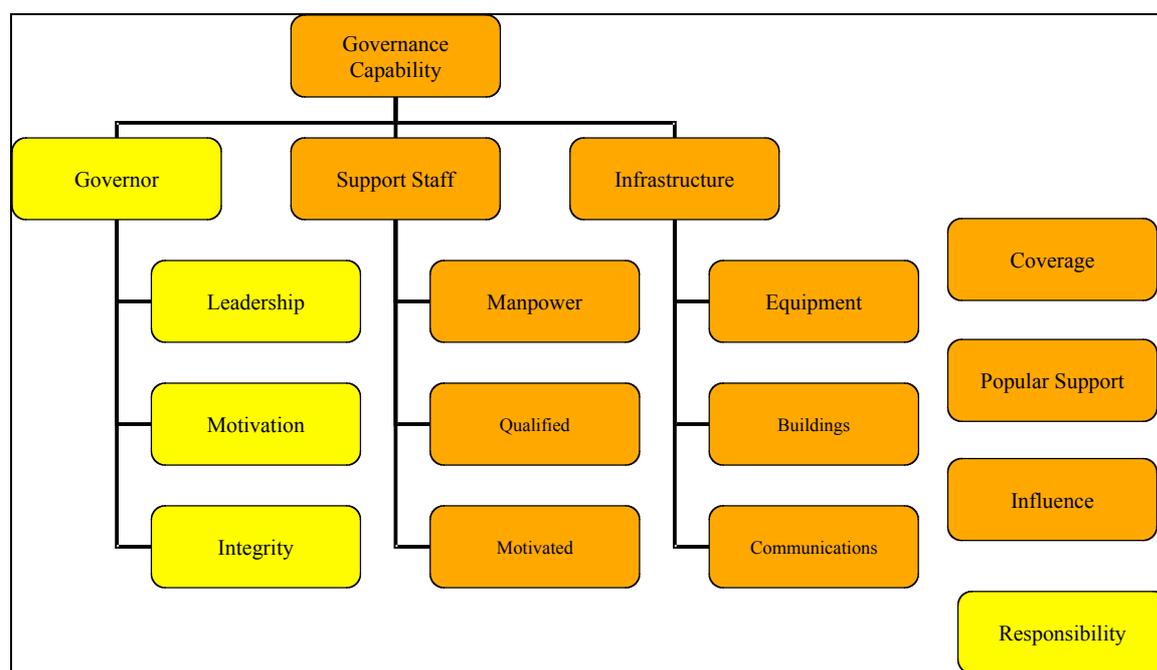


Figure 2. An example Governance effectiveness tree.

The discussions above have centred around the Police an identical approach was undertaken for governance, with different elements and criteria to the effects tree, an example is given below in Figure 2.

The tree for governance is similar to that for the police, with once again a weighting applied for the Governor, his score being half that of the total capability. The side assessments of coverage, popular support influence and responsibility are slightly different.

- *Coverage* assesses the coverage the district governance has of the population of the district.
- *Popular support* is an assessment of the support from the local population.
- *Influence* is the level of influence the District Governor has with the Provincial Governor.

RESULTS

The actual results were classified so any examples shown below have been made up and have no relationship to actual results. Assessment trees for each district were compiled; these could be presented in a number of ways. The results for each element of the tree were presented on a map as shown below.

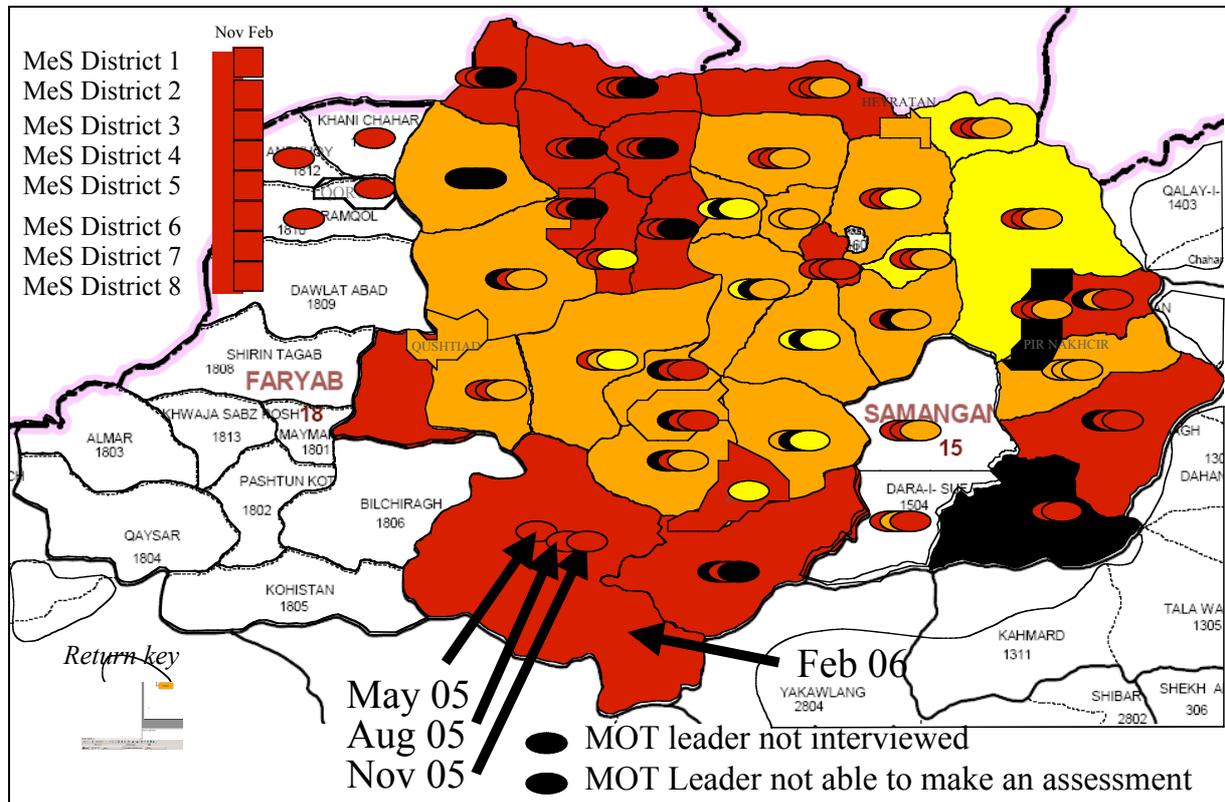


Figure 4: Example assessment results.

Figure 4 shows how one element of the assessment tree can be shown, for instance communications. These maps not only showed the current assessment, the base colours but in the egg shaped on each district the previous assessments. (Note the city of Maser-el-Sharif districts are shown in the top left). Maps for each element were prepared, for each element in the tree. In this way not only progress against time can be identified as well spread throughout the area of responsibility (AOA) of the PRT.

In addition to the maps, the trees can be summed across element to provide an average tree as below. The average tree is used to show problem areas; in this fictitious example Communication has improved from red in May 05 to amber. Figure 5 has all 4 average trees superimposed on top of each other with the latest on top.

The method of presenting the results was to hyper link each element of the tree to its associated map, thus by pressing clicking on an element from either the bottom of the tree i.e. weapons we can see the geographic distribution in graphical form as in Figure 3. This same linkage can be done at the top of the tree police capability and by getting the graphical distribution we can see any weak districts.

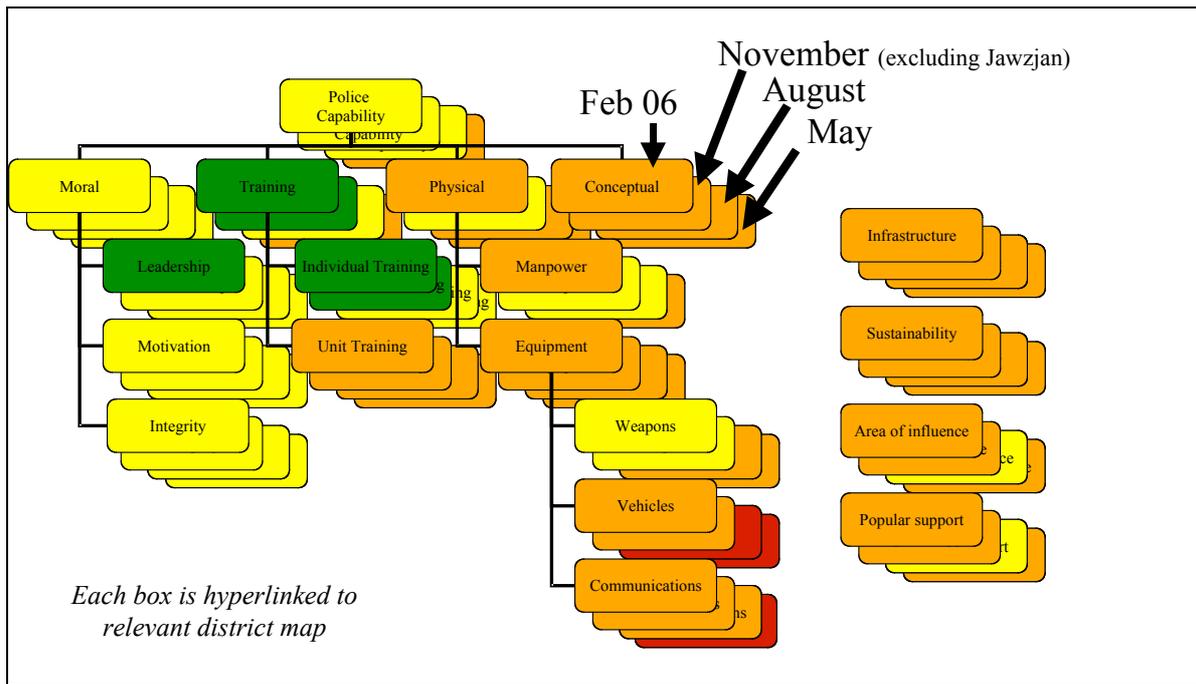


Figure 5: Average tree.

The final method of showing the results was to take the top level score (or indeed any element) and showing the score at the top level this is non integer on a vertical scale as in Figure 6.

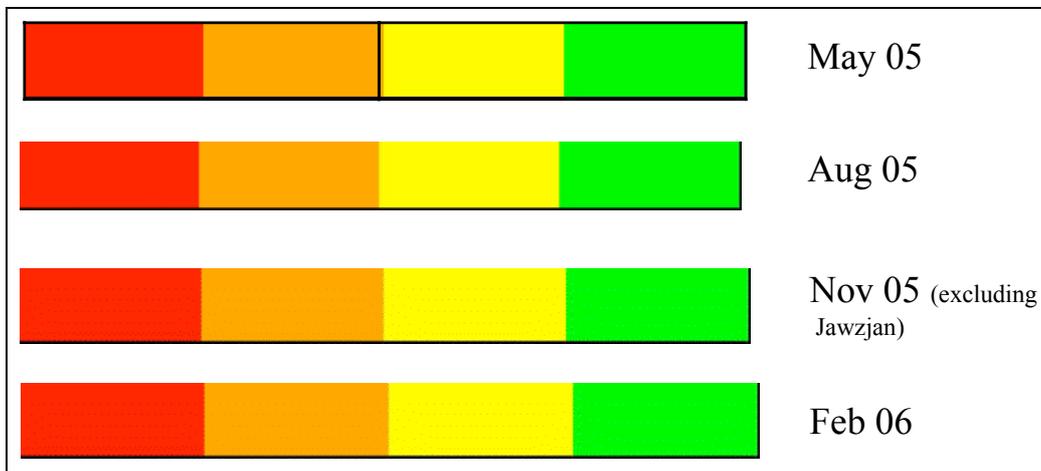


Figure 6: Top level effectiveness score.

In the fictitious example above the score in May 05 was aggregated over all districts for all elements to 2.45 (only just in amber) improving to 2.6, to 2.95 and finally to 3.1. (When scores are aggregated 1 to 1.49 is red, amber 1.5 to 2.49, yellow 2.5 to 3.49, and green 3.5 to 4). This representation gives an indication of overall progress (or in some cases lack of progress)

CONCLUSIONS

The methodology provided an auditable, repeatable, assessment of police and governance capabilities. The results proved of value to the PRT in capturing the knowledge of the patrols on the ground and as a resource to focus effort and engagement with local authorities. The results have proved of value to the PRT particularly when used with intelligence information.