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Analyzing International Stabilization and Canada's Mission in Afghanistan

By
Liam F Jeffers

A Thesis Submitted to
Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Political Science.

April, 2020, Halifax, Nova Scotia

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Approved:

Marc G. Doucet, PhD
Professor

Date: 13 April 2020

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Abstract

This essay analyses international stabilization missions as contemporary forms of crisis management in conflict and post-conflict environments. While maintaining some similarities and differences, 'stabilization has emerged as an alternative approach to 'peacebuilding' and 'statebuilding' for certain governments engaged in international military operations. Drawing from Philipp Rotmann's 'stabilization-as-crisis-management', the essay proceeds with an analysis of Canada's mission in Afghanistan and its three primary chronological phases of operation. Rotmann's concept serves as an analytical framework to evaluate successes and failures of Canada's twelve-and-a-half-year mission which ended in 2014. This essay concludes that Canada's application of stabilization was broader than the crisis management' approach and with its broad scope and was therefore unable to accomplish many of the goals to stabilize Afghanistan.

Keywords: Peacebuilding; Statebuilding; Stabilization; Canadian Armed Forces; Afghanistan

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Table of Contents

Abbreviations – 4

Introduction - 5

Conceptualizing Stabilization - 7

Canada's Mission in Afghanistan: A Chronology - 23

Analysis - 37

Conclusion - 46

Works Cited - 51

Abbreviations

ANA - Afghan National Army

CAF - Canadian Armed Forces

FOB - Forward Operating Base

IED - Improvised Explosive Device

ISAF - International Security Assistance Force

KAF - Kandahar Airfield

KPRT - Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team

JTF2 - Joint Task Force 2

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

PM - Prime Minister

PRT - Provincial Reconstruction Team

Recce - Reconnaissance

RC South - Regional Command South

UNSC - United Nations Security Council

Analysing Stabilization and Canada's Mission in Afghanistan

Introduction

At the end of February 2020, the United States began historic political talks with the Taliban leadership in Afghanistan aimed at reducing violence over a seven-day period with an end goal of withdrawing all US and coalition forces from the country within 14 months (What's in Blue, 2020). These historic talks occurring at time of great turmoil in Afghanistan signify the ongoing complexity and challenges faced by the United States and its allies within the country. For the United States' northern neighbour, Canada, their chapter in Afghanistan ended in 2014 after a twelve-and-a-half-year mission beginning in 2001 (Boucher & Nossal, 2017). Though comparatively smaller in terms of its military size and capability in the early 2000s, Canada and its armed forces provided military personnel, financial aid and guidance to Afghanistan and bore more than their fair share weight of the operation for a country of its size (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 14). It is here where the interest in Canada's involvement in Afghanistan stems from and why it has been chosen as subject for this study.

The concept of stabilization has become a common term used to describe international involvement missions like Afghanistan. This essay will use the term *involvement* throughout as opposed to similar terms such as *intervention* or *assistance*. While all three are relatively interchangeable and have overlapping definitions, 'international involvement' appears more often in the literature that has examined international stabilization missions which is a central focus of this essay. An examination of how stabilization has been conceptualized will be integral to studying Canada's mission, from start to finish. This essay will first unpack stabilization and similar concepts such as 'peacebuilding' and 'statebuilding' to situate stabilization in a broader analytical context. Beginning with the work of Charles Call and Elizabeth Cousens (2008), peacebuilding and statebuilding will be fleshed out to lay the

groundwork for an exploration of how stabilization is described in its contemporary form by Philipp Rotmann (2016) and likeminded scholars. Of interest in Rotmann's analysis is the manner in which he begins by explaining stabilization's early history more closely associated with peacebuilding. He then transitions to its contemporary form, centred around crisis management. With this, his concluding explanation of stabilization will provide a lens to be used to evaluate Canada's mission in Afghanistan. The mission will be examined thereafter beginning in 2001 with Operation Apollo followed by part two with Operation Athena, both with the initial phase in Kabul and the follow-up period in Kandahar Province where the bulk of Canada's mission took place. It is here where the integral report by the *Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan* (2008) chaired by John Manley, former Canadian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs will be investigated to showcase the shift in priority for the Canadian Government in Afghanistan from a broad to a narrowed and more focused mission finishing up with the final stages of Canada's participation in the conflict.

The reality of Canada's Afghan commitment was different than that which was presented to the public and even in the years after Canada's departure from the country, the way in which Canada chooses to remember its role in the conflict is often blurred (Boucher & Nassal, 2017 and Brewster, 2019). Canada began its mission in Afghanistan with a broad, all-encompassing approach to the stabilization of the country and upon recommendations from the independent panel, Canada began to narrow down its approach to the mission. However, due to an inability to control the security situation within Kandahar Province and Afghanistan as a whole, Canada ended its mission without having successfully stabilized the country to a point where they could withstand political shock independent of foreign assistance. Afghanistan's situation will continue to be precarious even after decades of foreign involvement however, Canada's mission as it has officially been concluded since 2014, can

continue to be subject to intense examination to further understand if the blood, sweat and dollars were worth it.

This essay will begin by conceptualizing stabilization. It will examine stabilization as a broad form of peacebuilding followed by a brief exploration of how the term relates to statebuilding. Following this initial overview, the essay will describe how stabilization was used in a narrowed down form to fit a model of crisis management. This model was less encompassing than the original conceptualization of stabilization as peacebuilding. A second section following the conceptualization of stabilization will provide a chronology of Canadian involvement in Afghanistan beginning with Operation Apollo for the early stages of the mission transitioning to the more cumbersome part two with Operation Athena in 2003. Within Operation Athena, key events such as government transitions, the equipment situation and the ever-important Manley Report will be explored in depth to better understand this phase of Canada's mission. The last portion of this section will focus on Canada's final phase, Operation Attention between 2011 and 2014. The final section of this essay will combine both the conceptualization of stabilization and the chronology of Canada's mission in Afghanistan. The stabilization mission will be broken apart to indicate whether it fits the mould of stabilization as a form of crisis management. This will provide a lens through which an assessment of the successes and failures of Canada's involvement is offered.

Conceptualizing Stabilization

In order to understand the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) stabilization mission in Afghanistan, Canada's role in the country and in Kandahar Province more specifically, it is essential to first understand what is generally meant by the concept of 'stabilization' as it pertains to contemporary forms of international involvement. An examination of the key components of what constitutes stabilization in a contemporary

context will be required to fully engage in an analysis of Canada's participation in the development and stabilization of Afghanistan as a whole and, in particular, their leading role in Kandahar Province. As will be unpacked further, early forms of stabilization shared commonalities with 'peacebuilding' and 'statebuilding'. Beginning with the work of Charles Call and Elizabeth Cousens (2008), both peacebuilding and statebuilding will be fleshed out to display the international involvement family tree and further understand how stabilization resembles and differs from these two terms. The work of Philipp Rotmann (2016) and others will be used to sharpen the distinction between older versions of stabilization as it related to peacebuilding to show how its contemporary usage has narrowed its scope. As a critique of this approach, Roger Mac Ginty's *Against Stabilisation* (2012) will be examined to consider the arguments marshalled against the contemporary understanding of stabilization and its new narrowed version. Conclusively however for this paper, stabilization's narrow approach, though less encompassing and focusing on security action over supporting overall humanitarian aid and development, allows for a more practical version of stabilization in that its margin for success is less expansive and encompassing.

Peacebuilding and Statebuilding

The order of agenda for breaking down stabilization will require an examination of comparable terms of international involvement. Beginning with 'peacebuilding', Call and Cousens trace the roots of this term back to the 1990s as a post-conflict term focused primarily on preventative measures for potential conflict (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 3). Peacebuilding emerged during this time as one of the dominant terms encompassing a broad range of actions taken by international actors to institutionalize peace (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 3). Through its wide range and varying levels of application, peacebuilding itself has taken many forms and with this as Call and Cousens have posited, there exists no universally

agreed upon definition of the term (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 4). Placed in this context, their own understanding of the term focuses on the institutionalization of peace leading to eventual absence of armed conflict (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 4). As it developed and the complexity of post-conflict arenas expanded, the term itself, in turn became more encompassing of the varying forms conflict prevention would take in a post-conflict society (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 3). Because of the broad scope of the term, what Call and Cousens describes as the “no-agency-left-behind” approach, peacebuilding became all-encompassing with organizations and states bringing everything to the table to try and accomplish long lists of strategies and goals to institutionalize peace (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 3). With this, priorities and direction were often blurred and the road to lasting peace became increasingly unattainable (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 3).

Achieving the absence of armed conflict requires, as Call and Cousens remark, an effort to reinstitutionalize peace by both the international community and domestic parties (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 4). To ‘reinstitutionalize peace’ is meant to create an ability to maintain the absence of armed conflict even after the departure of international involvement (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 4). What Call and Cousens note as a challenge for peacebuilding is the wide range of indicators to be considered making a measurement or evaluation of success rather difficult (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 5). The authors note that peacebuilding can be seen as falling into one of three categories: maximalist, moderate and minimalist (Call & Cousens, 2008, pp. 6, 7). Firstly, with the maximalist standard, outlined as the standard often adopted by the United Nations Security Council, the root causes of conflict are the priority and with that, developmental, humanitarian, and political goals at the core of the society in conflict are prioritized (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 6).

Call and Cousens subsequently present the opposite standard from maximalist, the minimalist approach which sets minimal criteria for peace, and a very basic standard for success, as simply the absence of conflict (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 7). The minimalist approach is marked by Call and Cousens as less manageable as there is no focus on structural or institutional development to ensure peace remains following the departure of international parties (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 7). Between the minimalist and maximalist categories, Call and Cousens identify a third 'moderate' approach to peacebuilding. In contrast to the minimalist model, the moderate approach has a more "demanding definition of success" (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 7). As a hybrid between the minimalist and maximalist standards for success, the moderate version incorporates both immediate measures to stem the reoccurrence of conflict as well as policy practices aimed at addressing root causes of conflict (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 8). Both the institutional and structural development elements of the maximalist approach are carried over to pursue lasting peace, however the less-encompassing aspect of the minimalist approach are also added as part of the focus of the moderate approach to peacebuilding. The moderate approach is seen as a more appropriate measure of success in evaluating peacebuilding efforts though still remains relatively untested (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 8).

The three divergent models for measuring the success of peacebuilding as laid out by Call and Cousens show the complexity and wide range of ways in which peacebuilding can be applied making it a complex topic to unpack (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 8). However, a key takeaway from Call and Cousens' examination of peacebuilding is the role of domestic state institutions and establishing an atmosphere of self-sufficiency. They state that "rebuilding or establishing at least minimally functioning state institutions is essential to peacebuilding" (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 9). This rebuilding process, referred to as statebuilding attempts to establish nationally recognized and legitimate institutions so that

when foreign security forces depart, the state will be able to prevent a relapse into armed conflict (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 9). Call and Cousens remark that for some scholars, institutions like a judicial system, a police force, a parliamentary assembly, or economic agencies are key institutions that a state needs to prevent this relapse. They maintain however, that the core requirement for statebuilding and capacity building lies with institutions capable of adjudicating disputes between conflicting parties (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 9). This takes the form of the state institutions being able to bring together conflicting parties to solve their problems without the use of violence. Whether it be done in the judiciary or a government assembly, this requirement is to ensure disputes are settled off the battlefield. This, as they point out, has not always been the focus of peacebuilding actors (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 9).

Historically, building the capacity of the state was not always the priority. State capacity was treated more as something assumed to be already present (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 9). Any reshuffling or altering of the state's domestic institutions was often left unaddressed by the international community (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 9). However, international bodies and foreign states involving themselves in statebuilding efforts have at times taken on a more hands-on approach by taking the lead in governance reforms and building state capacity (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 9). If successful these domestic institutions, which have received guidance and the tools for an increased capacity from international actors, are to contribute to the absence of armed conflict. The argument they advance is that with increased security capacity, state authorities are able to respond to disputes either in a more hands on way with police or military forces or in a more institutionalized manner by providing non-violent conflict resolution processes such as those offered by legitimate judiciaries (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 9). All of these actions aimed at building self-sufficiency and capacity within a state complement the central goal of

peacebuilding, which is to pursue the absence of armed conflict and institutionalize peace as mentioned by Call and Cousens (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 10).

Shifting Stabilization

To examine more closely how notions of statebuilding evolved into other competing terms in recent decades, this section will turn to the work of Philipp Rotmann.¹ Rotmann endeavours to make the distinction between two competing doctrines which he defines as ‘stabilization-as-peacebuilding’ and ‘stabilization-as-crisis-management’ (Rotmann, 2016). Rotmann’s distinction draws from work he co-authored in 2013 with Lea Steinacker in a policy evaluation for the German Federal Foreign office which outlined stabilization policies from key NATO countries. The manner in which these countries identify fragility, stability and stabilization informs Rotmann’s conclusive definition of ‘stabilization’ as stabilization-as-crisis-management. In defining these terms, Rotmann begins by noting that ‘stabilization’ has become a new “mainstream catch phrase for what to do when high levels of political volatility and violence lead to humanitarian and political crises in ‘some place,’” (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 1). This new ‘catch phrase’ occupies a unique place in recent discussions on forms of international involvement as its implementation has begun a sort of mitosis to present two versions of itself (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 1). As detailed below, the first is considered to be the broader application of stabilization while the second is viewed as its narrower counterpart (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 7). Rotmann’s road to conceptualizing these concepts with Steinacker will later be examined to view how Rotmann and many key international actors have come to

¹ Rotmann’s piece not only provides a useful overview of the concept of stabilization, his work also offers a look into five NATO members, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, and how they perceive stabilization. As will be discussed in this essay, Rotmann examines how these states navigated recent decades by moving from a ‘stabilization-as-peacebuilding lens’ to ‘stabilization’ as it relates to crisis management (Rotmann 2016).

the conclusion that the narrow, stabilization-as-crisis-management is the form stabilization should embody.

As a broad approach to international involvement, stabilization-as-peacebuilding is described as an all-out effort to combat what is identified as elements of ‘fragility’ in a state (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 5). State fragility is often seen as associated with political instability, violence, and an inability for the state to provide effective services to its people (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 5). Characteristics of this fragility are often social and economic inequality, poor governance and the presence of actors, ranging from street gangs to terrorists, who seek to foster violence (Muggah, 2010, pg. 34). From this perspective, the international involvement centred on stabilization aims to guide a state from its form of fragility to a stable political order. Rotmann presents this as a process of creating political systems that are legitimate and representative of the local population (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 5). Central to the goal of fostering greater legitimacy and representative forms of government is creating an environment in which the rule of law and human rights are held to the highest standard (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 5). This broad approach, in an attempt to encompass a complete and total reconstruction of state institutions, aims to improve and increase the state’s capacity to govern itself, provide security for its population and foster economic development (Siegle, 2011, pp. 21-33). This process towards stability, referred to typically as stabilization is, as Rotmann explains an all-encompassing ‘whole-of-government’ effort incorporating every level of bureaucracy, military and police, and uninterrupted over a period of time (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 5). Rotmann’s critique of this broad approach to stabilization lies in what he describes as a near-idealistic end state. Its limitlessness prevents full-scale success when trying to accomplish an overwhelming number of tasks (Rotmann, 2016, pp. 4, 5). From this perspective, Call and Cousens’ description of peacebuilding shares many commonalities with the broad ‘whole-of-government’ application of stabilization presented by Rotmann. For Rotmann, the counter to

this broad approach however, is the narrow application of stabilization in the form of ‘stabilization-as-crisis-management’.

Stabilization-as-crisis-management, Rotmann’s second version of stabilization, one that has been adopted by key members of the international community (Belloni & Moro, 2019, pg. 447) is meant to describe a more limited attempt to accomplish a large list of constructive and idealized goals. This is as Rotmann argues, more about defusing crises and creating “resilience to political shock” than complete institutional reconstruction (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 5). Essentially, the end goal with this narrower approach is to provide the state in need with the basic tools such as a legitimate justice system, an effective military and police, as well as basic tools for bilateral diplomacy (Rotmann, 2016, pp. 5-6). These tools are not designed to directly remove a country from its fragile state but are to give the state the ability to stabilize a situation by preventing emergencies of political volatility and violence (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 6). The pursuit of a more shock resistant state where the national or international security forces can react to and withstand emergencies are line with Robert Muggah’s presentation of the reality that with this narrow, more recent approach, the humanitarian element to stabilisation is often excluded to make room for security institutions to end and prevent conflict (Muggah, 2010, pg. 47). Rotmann posits that this narrow approach is the more realistic and beneficial model for stabilization in that it avoids biting off more than intervening states can chew and leading to what he refers to as ‘intervention fatigue’. Intervention fatigue is meant to describe how foreign states and their security forces can overextend themselves and become bogged down in the continuation of military and peace operations as was experienced by American and coalition forces in their drawn out conflicts in the middle east in the 2000s (Belloni & Moro, 2019, pg. 452 and Rotmann, 2016, pg. 11, as quoted in O’Toole, 2014).

Rotmann argues that where the broad and narrow approaches to stabilization intertwine is in overstating or overvaluing the knowledge and power of the donor or what he refers to as the ‘international stabilizer’ (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 6). With this overvaluing, Rotmann argues, the local actors on either side of the conflict who often appear to hold the real power in conflict scenarios and thereby have the ability to dictate success do not often have a seat at the table (Rotmann, 2016, p. 6). This insensitivity toward local inclusion and knowledge leads often to even increased levels of destabilization and fragility. Rotmann cites an example of holding democratic elections in areas where the intensity of political elections or military presence has led to economic and social instability in some regions unaccustomed to these practices (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 6). Every relationship between local actors and ‘international stabilizers’ can vary and therefore there remains no prescriptive guide on how to manage these relationships, though there remains consensus among scholars who investigate stabilization that the relationship and incorporation of local actors must be valued and maintained (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 7, Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 26, & Siegle, 2011, pg. 27).

According to Rotmann, the importance of including local actors in stabilization efforts, regardless of the approach, stems from the fact that these actors often include the people that stabilization will affect the most (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 7) Traditionally excluded from discussion, the local actor is an important facet to Rotmann’s conceptualization of stabilization. Quoting his previously published co-authored work with Steinacker, Rotmann concludes by stating that a salvaged definition of stabilization could be summarized as follows:

“A possible, still ambitious way to frame [stabilization] may be as an ‘intervention in an acute crisis to support local partners in restoring a legitimate and effective political

order as part of the long-term promotion of peace and development’” (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 12).

How Rotmann arrived at this conclusion can serve as a guide to the further examination of stabilization-as-crisis-management. In Rotmann and Steinacker’s 2013 policy submission to the German Government, they reviewed four countries and how they conceptualized three terms in order to establish a baseline to gauge Germany’s potential stabilization direction. The United Kingdom, Canada, the United States and the Netherlands were the states studied. Fragility, stability and stabilization were the concepts examined. Rotmann and Steinacker mention that ‘fragility’ is the problem, ‘stability’ is the solution and ‘stabilization’ is the path to get there (Rotmann & Steinacker, 2013, pg. 36). How each of these states make use of these concepts showcases how they arrived at their contemporary stabilization doctrine, which in turn allows Rotmann to describe his route for settling on a definition of stabilization that is ‘stabilization-as-crisis-management.

Rotmann and Steinacker present their findings beginning with the United Kingdom. They remark that with its policy *Building Stability Overseas Strategy*, adopted in 2011, the UK sought to promote a doctrine centred on quick reaction to political shock as well as more institutional expansion to aim for long-term peace and security (Rotmann & Steinacker, 2013, pg. 11). This British version of stability required the increasing capacity of political systems so that these systems could become legitimate and representative while upholding the rule of law, which is considered central to managing conflict effectively (Rotmann & Steinacker, 2013, pg. 36). This approach, though attempting to employ both a wide structural scope with narrow expectations of building resiliency to political shock, is seen as too ‘utopian’ for Rotmann and Steinacker (Rotmann & Steinacker, 2013, pg. 15). This relates similarly to the American approach in that for the US, institutional capacity remains key, however, the

military and security actors with the United States model hold the reins unlike the civilian-led approach of the UK. Where the US splits again from the UK is their fragmented organizational structure for conducting stabilization operations for which Rotmann and Steinacker remark often falls to regional leaders. Due to the US reliance on military organization, operational responsibility falls on regional military commanders, a characteristic unsuitable for Germany (Rotmann & Steinacker, 2013, pg. 28 and Gilder, 2019, pg. 51).

For the Netherlands and Canada however, Rotmann and Steinacker see their ‘modest’ approach to stability more appealing (Rotmann & Steinacker, 2013, pg. 36). The understanding that the ability to withstand shock should occur first before structural or institutional development as a sort of ‘prerequisite’ is essential to stability for both (Rotmann & Steinacker, 2013, pg. 36). The Dutch, however, are critiqued as their definition of operations fitting the stabilization mould are quite broad. Their activities can range from basic services to more extensive peace operations (Rotmann & Steinacker, 2013, pg. 34). For Canada, understanding stability as a short-term goal as it pertains to crisis management is key. It is presented by Rotmann and Steinacker that Canada is the only of the four countries examined that recognized that the international actors should play a support-only role with primary responsibility resting with the host country (Rotmann & Steinacker, 2013, pg. 21). It is this more modest application that they favour. The narrowed crisis management model is the more appropriate conception of stabilization as they settle on a definition that “refers to intervention in an acute crisis to support local partners in restoring legitimate and effective political order as part of the long-term promotion of peace and development” (Rotmann & Steinacker, 2013, pg. 38).

For them, stabilization must be preventative and reactive. It does not require whole-of-government approaches to completely rebuild institutions within a fragile state however it must ensure these states can be supported in restoring order to eventually promote long-lasting peace and development (Rotmann & Steinacker, 2013, pg. 38). Their road to stabilization-as-crisis-management showcases the direction that key world powers have taken to promote a form of stabilization that emphasizes shock resilience and managing crises. In recent years, states that often engage in ‘stabilization’ have moved to define the term itself with a more robust focus. With this, previous ‘whole-of-government’ models engaged with broad strokes of development have been sidelined. Consensus among many developed states who are taking part in these international involvement missions are focusing on handling violence and unrest from spoiler groups (Belloni & Moro, 2019, pg. 447). Their recognition of the complexity and broad application of peacebuilding has driven them to a more narrowed application of the concept (Belloni & Moro, 2019, pg. 452).

A Critique of ‘stabilization-as-crisis-management’

Although Rotmann makes the split between stabilization-as-peacebuilding and stabilization-as-crisis-management, it is the narrower form of stabilization that is argued to be the more practical and feasible form. However, even in this limited version, stabilization efforts led by international actors are not exempt from critique.

Roger Mac Ginty pursues a counter to this form of stabilization arguing that it has lost its way as a means of achieving peace. In pursuing stabilization, international actors have prioritized their own political interests over those of the state in need (Mac Ginty, 2012). Mac Ginty critiques stabilization-as-crisis-management by remarking that the core elements of stabilization-as-peacebuilding outlined by Rotmann including the all-encompassing institutional reformation are side-lined to make room for securitization and a focus on

military action to quell instability (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 24). Much of Mac Ginty's concern with contemporary stabilization comes from the narrower form it has taken in recent years. Contrary to Rotmann who sees in this narrower form a more focused and prioritized approach to stabilization which has broken away from the all-encompassing stabilization-as-peacebuilding, Mac Ginty sees contemporary stabilization as a watered down, less enthusiastic approach to counter state fragility where international actors lose interest in and are content with limited results.

Mac Ginty posits that states in recent years have come to the realization that lasting peace is complex with unpredictable outcomes. With this, international actors have become much less optimistic with the success of their missions aimed at bringing an end to conflict (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 21). Even with peace-support and governance interventions occurring at substantial rates, intervenors are continuing to observe a lack of progress in many of their areas of operations (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 21). Citing examples such as Rwanda, South Sudan, Iraq and notably for this essay, in Afghanistan, Mac Ginty remarks that even with many years of continued foreign aid and international effort poured into these countries, they are still marked by Freedom House as "not free" even in 2012 (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 21). His point with this is that despite the overwhelming expenditure of resources, both financial and militarily, success in the pursuit of peace in some of these hotspots has been "patchy at best" (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 21).

Mac Ginty critiques this newer form of stabilization as he indicates that states have started taking a 'good enough' approach (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 21). States are guilty as Mac Ginty remarks of providing a watered-down version of stabilization as opposed to a narrowed one. Mac Ginty refers to this as 'liberal internationalism-lite' or a 'stripped-down budget version of intervention' (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 22). Mac Ginty's main critique is that peace

itself has been side-lined to make room for counterterrorism efforts and combat action post 9/11, showing a stark shift from the peace efforts of the 1990s which are seen as aspiring to more optimistic agendas (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 22).

The above critiques from Mac Ginty centre on international intervention and its contemporary focus. However, Mac Ginty remarks that a number of previous definitions have also shown their complexity in defining stabilization itself (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 24). Although comforting that the term 'peace' is indeed present throughout many official definitions of stabilization by governments and other international bodies, Mac Ginty describes contemporary explanations of the term as a 'hodge-podge' of words transferable to definitions of peacebuilding, security, and development (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 24). He argues that stabilization, as described by Rotmann, is a new 'catch-phrase' that needs to be examined within the realm of 'securitization' as it relates to aid and peace-support (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 24). By securitization, Mac Ginty refers to the prioritization of security and the security lens especially in areas such as humanitarian aid and development (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 24). The increased presence of securitization in conceptualizing stabilization makes the role of the military more prominent in stabilization missions, for Mac Ginty, this is problematic as he describes the main role of the military is 'to fight' making their presence a potential hindrance towards peace itself (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 27).

As Mac Ginty indicates clearly both in his introduction and conclusion, he is not against the practice of stability. However he believes the reality of contemporary stabilization has backed away too far from the elements that would make up Rotmann's stabilization-as-peacebuilding and pushed more into a narrow direction centring on minimal standards of progress and emphasizing securitization with a reduced focus on peace, humanitarian aid and development (Mac Ginty, 2012, pp. 26-28). As definitions of stabilization continue to be

vague, Mac Ginty points out a need to hone in on a definition that practices what it preaches such as consistent usages of the term 'peace' to ensure the international community stays on course and does not forget reasons for its involvement in the first place (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 27). He remarks that the role of the security forces has taken over, and with that, the peace element needs to regain focus (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 28). As Mac Ginty remarks, success has not been a signature feature of contemporary stabilization missions (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 21). However, a closer examination of whether or not 'stabilization' as a central focus of international involvement is to be dismissed out of hand will follow below.

Stabilization Moving Forward

Rotmann unpacked the concept of stabilization firstly with the broad form of peacebuilding followed by its narrower contemporary form with crisis management and resistance to political shock as key priorities. As Rotmann and other scholars indicate, the original conception of stabilization, which mirrored to some extent the conceptual breath of peacebuilding adopted an all-encompassing approach to removing a fragile country from its state of instability. This wide-reaching action of stabilization is criticized by Rotmann as taking on more than international stabilizers can handle. This is consistent with Call and Cousens' analysis of the 'no-agency-left-behind' notion of peacebuilding which saw large 'laundry lists' of goals and strategies making the pursuit of a narrow, achievable endstate more difficult (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg 3). With this, peacebuilding in its standalone form as well as the all-encompassing stabilization-as-peacebuilding approach are too broad to be practical models for stabilization.

What remains then is stabilization-as-crisis-management as the dominant approach. The more tapered lens makes it more practical for contemporary international involvement.

Rotmann's exploration of four NATO members; namely Canada, the Netherlands, the United

Kingdom and the United States, showcased the direction each of these states took to move towards a more narrow application of stabilization. Rotmann gives the example of the US State Department which until 2015 maintained a “soaring picture of building sustainable peace” with an all-encompassing approach to increase state capacity and further develop state institutions (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 5). In 2015 the US shifted gears with resistance to political shock being the primary concern in developing the capacity of domestic institutions to be more resilient and flexible (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 5). As Rotmann remarks, this new direction was common-place for the other states he examined with the exception of the Netherlands (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 6). This essay is in agreement with the direction taken in recent years by the international community to pursue a more robust, narrow approach to stabilization. Those who have adopted this approach share a focus on countering spoilers by increasing shock resistance for legitimate authority (Gilder, 2019, pg. 51). This in turn, though more a common occurrence within the past decade than prior, provides an effective lens to measure success when examining future stabilization missions as well as those of the past.

Concluding Stabilization

As has been shown, the concept of stabilization, along with terms like peacebuilding can take numerous forms and have a wide range of interpretations. With both, there exists no universally accepted term to fully understand everything they encompass. Beginning with Call and Cousens, understanding peacebuilding was integral to developing an understanding of the context in which ‘stabilization’ emerged as a manner of framing certain international missions in conflict and post-conflict environments. As an all-encompassing approach, the institutionalization of peace was a critical component to peacebuilding. It was also central to the varying measurements of success that could be used to evaluate the success of peacebuilding efforts (Call & Cousens, 2008). Also critical was a focus on measures to

rebuild the state, or statebuilding which emphasized the institutional development and capacity building of the state (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 9, 10). This facet involving state capacity was present throughout Rotmann's expansion of stabilization-as-peacebuilding and its all-encompassing approach to stabilization (Rotmann, 2016, pp. 4, 5). Rotmann among others however, prefers the conceptualization of stabilization taking the form of stabilization-as-crisis-management. With this approach, the scope of stabilization missions contracted in order to focus on key elements such as increasing the shock resilience of the state which is to be offered assistance (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 6). Mac Ginty however, criticizes this new form of stabilization, stating it focuses too much on the securitization of the state with notions of peace put in the back seat (Mac Ginty, 2012). As stabilization missions have and will continue to take a number of different forms, universal consensus of what stabilization is precisely will be unlikely. However, the lens of stabilization can be used to further evaluate past international involvement missions with the goal of assessing what form they have taken and in what way they may have failed. As it pertains to Canada's mission in Afghanistan, Canada underwent nearly 13 years of armed conflict in an attempt to stabilize parts of a fragile country. Where the Canadian Government and its allies succeeded and failed will be presented in the next section of this essay.

Canada's Mission in Afghanistan: A Chronology

Operation Apollo 2001- 2002

The story of Canada's involvement in the war in Afghanistan begins on September 11th, 2001 with the attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. The following day, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1368 condemning the attacks and calling for states to work together to counter acts of terrorism and foster international peace and security (United Nations, 2001). In concert with the Security Council

on September 12th, NATO Secretary General, Lord George Robertson invoked NATO Article 5 of the Alliance's charter indicating that an attack on one member would be considered an attack on all (Boucher & Nossal, 2017, pg. 15).² Twenty five days later on October 7th, 2001, coalition forces led by the United States would enter Afghanistan under the operational name, Operation Enduring Freedom (Government of Canada, 2014). Canada would begin an almost thirteen-year engagement initially ousting the Taliban, followed by providing security assistance, governing guidance and development aid to the Afghan government first in the country's capital, Kabul, followed by Canada's leadership role in Kandahar Province. In March of 2014, the last CAF members would leave Afghanistan bringing their third and final phase in the country to an end and concluding Canada's chapter in Afghanistan.

On October 7th, 2001 at the time when American air and ground forces began operations in Afghanistan, Canada officially pledged its support and commitment to the United States and promised air, naval and ground forces of its own to the mission (Government of Canada, 2014). Two days later, Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Halifax would depart its NATO fleet tasking and sail for the Arabian Sea (Government of Canada, 2014). Over the coming months to finish off the year, HMCS Charlottetown, Vancouver, Preserver and Iroquois would join HMCS Halifax in the Arabian Sea (Boucher & Nossal, 2017, pg. 16). Transport and surveillance aircraft would also deploy to the region and by the end of 2001 so would 40 members of one of Canada's special forces units, Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2) (Saideman, 2017, pg. 132). The presence of the latter, however, was not being publicly acknowledged at the time (Boucher & Nossal, 2016, pg. 16). This acknowledgement

² Canada's on-the-ground mission in Afghanistan is examined at close range in Jean-Christophe Boucher et Kim Richard Nossal's book, *The Politics of War* (2017). Their chapter, *The Away Game* (pp. 15-43) offers insight into Canada's increasingly challenging roles on the ground in Afghanistan from 2001-2014.

would not come until the early months of 2002 before the bulk of Canada's pledged commitment would arrive in Afghanistan.

With the exception of the five aforementioned ships, a few support aircraft and the JTF2 members operating on the ground, the beginning of Canada's expansive commitment wouldn't begin until early 2002. In February 2002, Canada's battlegroup deployed with an infantry battalion and an armoured reconnaissance element along with the pertinent support assets to complement the combat units (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 16). This battlegroup would operate within a Brigade Combat Team under the American 101st Airborne Division (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 16).

This first stage of Canada's Afghan mission took the name of Operation Apollo (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 16). Throughout Operation Apollo, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) had a handful of primary responsibilities. Principally, the CAF was engaged in numerous combat operations to root out the Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces in the country (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 17). In addition to combat action, Canada was responsible for the security and defence of Kandahar Airfield (KAF) in Southern Afghanistan which the coalition used as a staging facility for many of its offensive operations (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 17). Humanitarian aid played a minor role for CAF personnel on the ground in the early days. However, as the dust began to settle with the Taliban and Al-Qaeda shrinking considerably in size and strength, the question of what Afghanistan was going to look like in the absence of the insurgent groups began to gain traction (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 17). The Taliban government and their rule over Afghanistan collapsed in December of 2001 and the details of their replacement began to unfold (Ibrahimi, 2017, pg. 956).

In December of 2001, Hamid Karzai was appointed as an interim leader of Afghanistan, however six months later, it was expected that a new interim government would

be chosen by a Loya Jirga (Government of Canada, 2014). The Loya Jirga was a form of council whose membership varied with Afghan males from all over Afghanistan drawn from different tribes, communities and backgrounds (Government of Canada, 2014). In June of 2002, this Loya Jirga selected Karzai as President until free and fair elections could be held in the country (Government of Canada, 2014). Karzai's role as head of state was guided heavily by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) which was established in December of 2001 with UNSC resolution 1386 (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 18). With a 'stabilization' objective in mind, ISAF developed its reach expansively and in 2003 Canada would take command of the assistance force in its move to Kabul, Afghanistan's capital (Boucher & Nassal, 2017 pp. 18, 19). This would be the beginning of the second stage of Canada's involvement in the conflict under the operational name Operation Athena (Boucher & Nassal, pg. 18).

Operation Athena 2002-2005

The CAF and members of the Federal Government deployed en-masse in July of 2003 in Kabul to begin working in the capital city and building up elements of the Afghan Government (Boucher & Nassal, pg. 18). Similar to Operation Apollo, a reinforced battlegroup was deployed to Kabul along with an integrated team of military and civilian personnel titled the Strategic Advisory Team - Afghanistan (Boucher & Nassal, pp. 18, 19). This team's mission was to support the government of Afghanistan in the formulation of policies, management and developing other national strategies to aid in its development (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 19). The CAF would also take on a new role with some of its members engaged in the training of troops of the Afghan National Army (ANA). This along with the other initiatives were aimed at transitioning Afghanistan to be more autonomous and self-sufficient (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 19). The second phase of the mission in Kabul

would last until 2006 when Canada agreed to take over Regional Command South (RC South) temporarily while also agreeing to take a leadership role in the management and development of Kandahar Province (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pp. 20, 21).

Operation Athena (II) 2006-2011

During the period of 2003 to 2006 there were several political shifts both in Ottawa and Kabul involving Canada's mission in Afghanistan. Canada's independent leadership of ISAF ended with NATO taking full responsibility of the force as well as efforts in Afghanistan (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 20 and Murray & McCoy, 2010, pg. 178). Back home however, Prime Minister (PM) Jean Chrétien under whose leadership Canada became involved in Afghanistan in the first place (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 16), was succeeded as head of government by Paul Martin (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 20). Prior to the turnover, PM Chrétien committed Canada to providing a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) somewhere in Afghanistan as part of NATO's goal of having complete outreach for stabilization in Afghanistan (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 20). PM Martin inherited this decision and was quite critical and unenthusiastic about Canada's role in the mission (Boucher & Nassal, pg. 20). PM Martin himself wanted Canada out of Afghanistan and had hoped to solidify Canada's commitment to only one additional year at the beginning of his premiership, however due to increased pressure from NATO Allies and Chief of Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier, PM Martin agreed for Canada to take responsibility for Regional Command South (RC South) which included the Afghan provinces of Nimruz, Helmand, Zabul, Oruzgan, Day Kundi and notably Kandahar (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pp. 20, 21). In addition to the temporary command of RC South, Canada's primary role in Afghanistan was to manage and administer the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (KPRT) (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 21).

The PRTs were part of the American plan to stabilize and build Afghanistan. They were established in 25 of Afghanistan's 34 Provinces (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 21). The Canadian application of this plan in Kandahar was to take the form of the "3-Ds"; defence, diplomacy and development (Tremblay & Pahlavi, 2013, pg. 70 and Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 21). This "3-D" approach was referred to alternatively and more commonly as the "whole-of-government" approach and was designed to incorporate various government departments and agencies to complement the CAF in Kandahar Province (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 21 and Tremblay & Pahlavi, 2013, pg. 69). These agencies included the Treasury Board, Corrections Canada, Canadian Border Services Agency, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Canadian International Development Agency (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 21). The big move began in August of 2005 and the CAF was able to begin combat operations out of their new home at KAF in early 2006 (Boucher & Nassal, pg. 22). Government agencies began working with their Kandahar counterparts and the training of military and police forces continued within the province (Boucher & Nasal, pg. 22).

With Canada's premier role in Kandahar taking on this 'whole-of-government' effort, increased presence and resources from the CAF would be needed to provide security and support to these agencies and individuals working within the province as fighting would intensify in the early months of their deployment there (Boucher & Nassal. 2017, pg. 23). The CAF began this new up-scaled part of their mission, codenamed Operation Athena (Phase II) (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 23). In keeping with the effort to stabilize and develop Kandahar Province, the CAF and other elements of the KPRT could not operate exclusively from KAF. Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) had to be established to have more outreach to the communities that were not adjacent to Kandahar City or the airfield (Boucher & Nassal, 2017. pg. 23). Some of these FOBs had been over 100 kilometres from the

Canadian stronghold at KAF (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 23). The first of the military's supply and outreach challenges would become present in these opening moves in Kandahar Province.

Canada had gone to Afghanistan without large helicopters as they had sold all of their CH-147 Chinooks to the Netherlands the decade prior (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 23). As the CAF hoped to provide their assistance to the varying areas around the province through the presence of their FOBs, they needed to be able to supply and remain connected with them from KAF. As Canada did not have the means for large scale aerial transport and supply to these forward positions, much of this support had to come by road which left them more vulnerable to improvised explosive devices (IEDs) or ambush (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 23). With exceptionally risky travel, a ramped up 'fighting season' from the Taliban and consistent offensive operations targeting the Taliban insurgency, the CAF would struggle in 2006 as between January and October, 36 CAF members would be killed (Boucher & Nassal, 2016, pg. 23).

Near the beginning of this cycle in February of 2006, Conservative Party Leader Stephen Harper would defeat PM Paul Martin electorally to be the new Prime Minister and in turn, inherit the mission in Afghanistan (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 23). As opposition leader, PM Harper consistently supported Canada's involvement in stark contrast to PM Martin who as Stephen Saideman remarks "quickly ran away from the mission" (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 23 and Saideman, 2017, pg. 136). PM Harper dismantled PM Martin's pledge to leave Afghanistan in 2007 stating that Canada would remain in Afghanistan "for the long haul" (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 24). Harper moved quickly to address some of the core problems the CAF was experiencing in terms of equipment. Purchasing tanks and other necessary equipment as Boucher and Nassal cite from J.L. Granatstein "After 2006,

there was nothing that the troops needed that wasn't provided" (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 24). For example, in 2003, the Canadian Government had been examining replacing its fleet of Main Battle Tanks and was only able to send 16 to Afghanistan by 2006 (Spearin, 2014, pg. 528). However, in April of 2007, Canada was able to procure over 100 Leopard 2A6 Main Battle Tanks from Germany and the Netherlands (Spearin, 2014, pg. 528). This did not fix all of the problems. Even with a supportive Prime Minister and upgraded and more numerous equipment, the CAF continued to face challenges in Kandahar when engaged in combating the Taliban. The Canadian battlegroup numbered only a few thousand soldiers, many of whom were supporting troops with only around 1000 soldiers whose role was to go 'outside the wire' and fight (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 24). Kandahar is one of Afghanistan's largest provinces and with this, Canada's small battlegroup and their allies also operating within the province were not able to appropriately deal with the Taliban insurgency threat on a scale sufficient to its requirement (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 23). The CAF found often that they would conduct effective combat operations in one community or district then come to find the Taliban had replanted themselves once the troops had returned to base. (Marten, 2010, pg. 229). This problem was not isolated to Kandahar. The ISAF mission as a whole was experiencing troop shortages as they pertained to the larger mission at hand (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 25 & Marten, 2010, pg. 229).

Even with the troops appearing to see a partial increase in equipment and support from Ottawa, support for the mission itself began to deteriorate as there lacked tangible success stories and progress to be presented to the public about Canada's engagement in Kandahar Province (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 25). Additionally, the Harper government sought recommendations on what the future would hold for Canada in Kandahar after 2009. In October of 2007, PM Harper set up the *Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan* (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 25). Chaired by former Liberal Deputy Prime

Minister, John Manley, the 'Manley Report' was to work independently to analyse Canada's current mission in Afghanistan and provide recommendations for the coming years while also displaying bipartisanship between the Liberal and Conservative Parties (Marten, 2010, pg. 226).

The panel conducted their research over a number of months engaging with domestic scholars, diplomats, Members of Parliament, bureaucrats, foreign equivalents from the UK, US and NATO, Canadian and coalition military personnel, Afghan government officials, military commanders, local citizens and members of Afghanistan's civil society (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 9). The results compiled allowed the panel to assess the first six years of Canada's engagement in Afghanistan and attempt to identify some of the core issues and provide a series of recommendations to the Harper Government in the years going forward (Manley et al., 2008). The report identified the key objective for Canada and its partners as contributing "to a better governed, stable and developing Afghanistan whose government can protect the security of the country and its people" (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 33). Throughout the report, consistent issues were highlighted across the board ranging from the aforementioned troop count discrepancies and helicopter deficiencies as well as organizational troubles both in Kandahar and in Ottawa.

The report also describes the reality and precariousness of Afghanistan's situation. Citing Afghanistan's 2007 placement on the UN's Human Development Index as 174th of 178 States, they mark the situation for many Afghans as "grim" (Manley et al., 2008, pp. 10, 18). With this, the report references three areas of importance integral to Canada's and the coalition's mission as a whole in Afghanistan and specifically Kandahar Province. Firstly, security and the development of Afghanistan's ability to provide security to their own people is emphasized. Secondly, governance and the ability for Afghan institutions to provide

services to their population is highlighted. Lastly, the report mentions the role that development had to play in improving the quality of life of the Afghan people (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 11).

Beginning with security, a primary challenge identified for ISAF within Kandahar Province which posed a particular problem for Canada once it took the lead in this area was the insufficient number of coalition troops and insufficiency in the capacity available from the ANA (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 14). Firstly, with the troop count, the report called on a need for increased troop surges from coalition allies to increase troop numbers in Kandahar Province and for states to have less reservations about troop activities such as fighting at night or aerial combat (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 14). The US, UK and Canada have as the report states “borne more than a proportionate share of war-fighting in Afghanistan (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 14). In addition to this, the report called on an improvement and increase in the training and capacity of the ANA with an end-goal of having them be capable of providing their own security without assistance from those three key players as well as the rest of ISAF (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 14).

For governance, Afghanistan at this stage in 2007 had an elected Parliament and President, institutionally however, the report highlights an exceptionally weak status existing among Afghanistan’s government institutions (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 16). As a transitional government, the Afghan Government as the report states lacked experience and knowledge on how to actually govern a state (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 16). Additionally, there existed high levels of corruption within state institutions and employees from bureaucrats to judges to police officers who are generally underpaid and poorly trained (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 16). This is highlighted as a key deficiency in Afghanistan progression with government institutions lagging behind in improvement and is indicated by the report as one of the “most

valuable and urgent contributions that Canadians and others can make to the well-being of Afghans and their families” (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 17).

The report’s third highlighted area of action centred around development. At the time of the report’s release, 6.6 million Afghan’s did not meet minimum food standards, gender inequality continued to be rampant throughout Afghanistan and illiteracy rates sat increasingly high with 57 percent for males and 87 percent for women (Manley et al., 2008, pg.18). Economically, Afghanistan still remained exceptionally poor however in terms of its resources, it had untapped resources that should they be given the right tools, Afghan’s economy could see stark improvement (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 18). This includes appropriate infrastructure and knowledge base to maximize economic potential. Additionally, the report highlighted as it does throughout, the importance of measurable goals and a more efficient planning route to identify progress and development (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 19).

The three sectors, security, governance and development highlighted by the report were seen as interconnected in the general improvement of Afghanistan and each one was understood to have the potential to positively impact the other (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 11). The report itself said this about interconnectivity:

“Each dimension of course, affects the others in dynamic interaction. Security enables development; effective governance enhances security; development creates opportunities, and multiplies the rewards of improved security and good governance” (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 11).

These three symbiotic facets of improvement for Afghanistan (i.e., to pursue a more self-sufficient way of security, governance and development) showcased key concerns for the Canadian mission. The panel’s mandate, however, was to provide recommendations on what Canada’s future role and actions should be within Afghanistan while identifying key issues

pertaining to the mission. The evaluation of the mission up until 2007 marks certain progressions made by the CAF and the Federal Government agencies working in Afghanistan such as improved infrastructure, education development and supporting local government structures (Manley et al., pg. 25). However, many of the issues highlighted previously continued to stall progress. In response, the panel provided, five key recommendations based on their observations.

The first on the list of recommendations was for a push to begin the systematic organization of clear and comprehensive strategies for not only Canada but for the alliance collectively and to include all relevant bodies in these plans (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 34). Communication was highlighted as a problem between working bodies and inclusion of Afghan authorities was identified as a key element for further efforts. Additionally, the first recommendation called for more involvement from the Prime Minister and cabinet to allow for increased oversight (Manley et al., 2008., pg. 34).

Secondly, the report heavily underscored troop shortages and security deficiencies both within the alliance and the Afghan security sector. It called for an expansion to the Canadian-led battlegroup in Kandahar as well as even specifically noting the request for medium-lift helicopters to replace the aforementioned CH-147s sold to the Dutch in the 1990s (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 35 & Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 23). The report even went as far as to mention threatening the withdrawal of the CAF in its combat role in Afghanistan if the Federal Government refused to acquire medium-lift helicopters for the military (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 35). Additionally, as the report highlighted, increased coalition troop numbers would allow for the battlegroup to begin transitioning out of Kandahar sooner as the training level and capacity of the ANA would increase faster with more coalition troops present to support these domestic security forces (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 35).

Thirdly, the report called on the civilian wing of Canada's mission in Afghanistan to develop and create more strategies that would be beneficial and inclusive of all Afghans (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 36). They refer to a "signature project" led by Canadians to have a more meaningful impact on the Afghan people (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 36).

Fourthly, a more systematic and organized manner of tracking progress had to be established to allow future planning to be conducted and discussed effectively (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 36). With this, the Panel called for a review of the effort for security, governance and development in the year 2011 (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 36).

The last point of the Report centred around communication to Canadians so there was clear direction to the public as to where the mission was heading and what Canada's priorities were (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 36). With this, more transparency could be used by the public with respect to the Federal Government's involvement in Afghanistan to allow for more discussion and debate surrounding the mission (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 36).

It did not take long for PM Harper's Government to act on a number of the key recommendations of the Manley Report. In March of 2008, the mission in Kandahar was quickly extended to at least July of 2011 (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 27). 1000 American troops would transfer from elsewhere in Afghanistan to Kandahar to help the troop shortage and the Federal Government indicated that six CH-147s would be purchased for use in Afghanistan (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 28). Three signature projects were announced, these being the redevelopment of the Dahla Dam, the construction effort of 50 schools as well as medical aid to treat polio in hopes of eradicating it entirely in the province by 2010 (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 28). The Federal Government's reaction to the Manley Report did not answer all of its suggestions. Many of the clear aims and goals of the report were responded to in hopes of making Canada's remaining years in Afghanistan more successful

and effective (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pp. 28, 29) in tackling the three pillars of need for Afghanistan: security, governance, and development.

Even with the recommendations of the Manley Report, Canada's remaining years in Kandahar continued to face numerous challenges. The Taliban were simply getting better fighting the coalition and they began taking more territory from the control of Afghanistan and ISAF (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 36). Many aid agencies had begun to withdraw as the security situation continued to deteriorate (Murray & McCoy, 2010, pg. 183). The Taliban's regeneration continued and support for the coalition began to decline as the end of the decade approached (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pp. 38). Attacks seemed to increase and during 2008 and 2009, 64 Canadian's were killed in Kandahar Province (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 38). The election of American President Barack Obama would usher in a surge of troops to Afghanistan benefiting Kandahar Province in particular (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 39). With this, Canada began their transition phase out of the province to be completed by mid-2011 hereby ending Operation Athena (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pp. 39, 40). Because of the precarious security situation with Canada's final few years in Kandahar, their established signature projects surrounding the Dahla Dam, education development and the eradication of polio were seen as incomplete by the time Operation Athena came to a close in 2011 (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 40).

Operation Attention 2011-2014

Although Canada's combat mission with Operation Athena in Kandahar had come to an end, the CAF was not to leave Afghanistan until 2014 (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 42). For three more years the CAF would work with their ANA partners increasing their security capacity in a training mission in Kabul as other NATO allies began to suggest plans for a drawdown of forces and eventual withdrawal from Afghanistan (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pp.

40, 41). The hope was not to simply abandon Afghanistan as a lost cause as the security situation continued to worsen but to hope that the Afghan Government could rapidly reach a point of self-sufficiency and be able to handle their security situation on their own without the assistance of the ISAF coalition (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pp. 40, 41). During this three-year period, Canada was to deploy around one thousand troops to train the ANA and continue to provide a very reduced humanitarian assistance role supporting youth and human rights (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 41). In March of 2014, Canada's mission in Afghanistan came to an end with a short flag-lowering ceremony in Kabul, the last Canadian troops boarded an aircraft and headed back to Canada. 4539 days after PM Chrétien's initial commitment in solidarity with the United States in October of 2001, Canada's twelve-and-a-half-year stabilization mission came to an end (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 41).

Analysis

Canada's role in Afghanistan as was laid out above, was organized into four sections spanning twelve and a half years beginning with Operation Apollo in 2001 and finishing Operation Attention in 2014 (Government of Canada, 2014). Dictating the success or the failure of a mission would require us to know what the goal of the mission was and what the planned outcome would be. For NATO and its allies who participated in the mission in varying ways, the end goal was to stabilize one of the poorest and most fragile states in the world following the removal of the Taliban Government (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 15 and Manley et al, 2008, pg. 3). In agreement with Rotmann, stabilization-as-crisis-management presents itself as the more appropriate and less idealistic form of stabilization which will be used for the overall assessment of Canada's mission in Afghanistan. However, as Canada's mission took many forms over four different phases, the mission cannot immediately be analysed as a whole. The first half of Canada's mission in Afghanistan

resembled Rotmann's stabilization-as-peacebuilding, however, following the recommendations of the independent panel, Canada's mission began to form closer to stabilization-as-crisis-management.

In the opening stages of the mission, Operation Apollo was a military intervention, plain and simple. Canada's mixed battlegroup of infantry, reconnaissance and support units were integrated with an American light infantry division whose primary role in the opening phase of the Afghan mission was to root out Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pp. 16, 17). Although very much a military operation, Operation Apollo in concert with the American Operation Enduring Freedom began to lay the groundwork for part two of the mission in Afghanistan.

Canada's move to Kabul for Operation Athena in 2002 did not relieve the CAF from a combat role. However, it did shift Canada's priority from a military to a statebuilding one. The interim leadership of Hamid Karzai was decided upon in late 2001 before Kabul was even on the table for Canada (Government of Canada, 2014 and Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 18). Canada's leading role in the Afghan capital was to help this transitional government, later locally appointed and eventually elected government of Karzai in the management of the new Afghanistan (Boucher & Nassal, pp. 18, 19). While in Kabul, the Canadian Government and their Strategic Advisory Team worked closely with the Afghan Government to increase their governing capacity (Boucher & Nassal, pg. 19). Additionally, the CAF's role in Kabul was principally to provide security to the city and surrounding region while also working and training up their ANA partners to increase their own security reach and capability (Tchantouridze, 2013, pg. 337). With the final move of Canada's forces to Kandahar in 2006, these actions of increasing state capacity both in the governance and security sectors were

ramped up extensively as Canada took over responsibility for the province and their PRT (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 20).

It is here where the Canadian Government pushed further their “3-D” (Defence, Diplomacy and Development) approach to the province and as was explained above, the “whole-of-government” approach was the common term for this, encompassing many Canadian civilian departments to complement the CAF in increasing the capacity of the Afghan Government firstly in the capital, Kabul, and later in Kandahar Province (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 21). ‘Whole-of-Government’ approaches are integral to Rotmann’s application of stabilization-as-peacebuilding and many of Canada’s actions to aid and assist the Afghan Government both at the state level initially in Kabul and locally after the move to Kandahar outline key features that Rotmann associates with this initial form of stabilization. He describes this as the uninterrupted encompassing practice of bringing bureaucrats, military personnel and police to increase the capacity of the fragile state which was the goal and the approach taken by the Canadians during these two stages (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 5).

For stabilization-as-peacebuilding, the Federal Government’s “3-D” approach and its relation to ‘whole of government’ as Call and Cousens explain showcase the incorporation of many branches of government to build capacity in three areas, diplomacy, development and defence (Call & Cousens, 2008, pg. 9). For Kandahar province in particular, this all-encompassing approach required increased range and outreach which was described by Boucher and Nassal as not always a given for the Canadians and the KPRT as the initial small number of coalition troops in the province and the limited equipment capacity topped off with the range in which the Canadian’s chose to operate with their forward operating bases, meant that the Canadian Government and the CAF were spread too thin in their effort to reach for everything (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pp. 23-25). This continues to coincide with

Rotmann's critique of stabilization-as-peacebuilding as too idealized and with its 'limitlessness' it is an impractical approach. These limitations explain why Rotmann concludes that the crisis management direction has increasingly been taken by a handful of Western governments as the more feasible approach to international involvement (Rotmann, 2016, pp. 4, 5). It would not be until PM Harper chose to act on the Manley Report that many of the problem areas such as troop numbers, helicopters or priority focus were identified and acted upon (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 25).

Because of this, this essay contends that between 2002 and 2008, Canada's 'stabilization' mission in Afghanistan took the form of stabilization-as-peacebuilding in a whole-of-government approach with the aim of heavily increasing the capacity of the Afghan Government and their security forces. Until this point however, the Canadian Government and CAF were to provide these services to the Afghan people by taking the lead with security and infrastructure development. Many of Rotmann's critiques of stabilization-as-peacebuilding line up with the Manley Report and its five principal recommendations. For the Manley Report, the three principal areas of security, governance and development are highlighted as key sectors to be enhanced for the future of Afghanistan (Manley et al., 2008, pp. 14-18). However, in their recommendations to the Harper Government on the future of Canada's mission in Afghanistan, a less broad lens with stark improvements in the procedural planning in these three sectors was forcefully suggested with the report stating that should Canada not acquire medium-lift helicopters or should its allies in the region fail to meet their responsibilities, they should put forward their notice to withdrawal from Afghanistan (Manley et al., 2008, pp. 34-36).

One of the Panel's recommendations addressed needs to fill the security gap and move the alliance and in particular, the CAF Battlegroup's ability to conduct security

operations. Addressing troop shortages and equipment deficiencies was key for the Panel and making sure that the troops had not only enough numbers to fight the Taliban but also adequate motorized, armoured and aerial vehicles to support them was also stressed (Manley et al. 2008, pg. 35, Boucher & Nassal, 2016, pp. 24 and Tchantouridze, 2013, pg. 339). Though one of Mac Ginty's critiques of contemporary stabilization centres on a heavy-handed role of military forces (Mac Ginty, 2012, pg. 24), the change in focus of the Canadian government's approach to its involvement in Afghanistan suggests that government leaders may come to side with a more limited 'stabilization-as-crisis-management' which in turn means that the humanitarian sector may be sidestepped in favour of military action. More robust military actions may need to occur to stabilize a situation leaving the development or humanitarian areas a bit behind (Muggah, 2010, pg. 47).

For Canada, although the security situation in Kandahar Province in the years following the implementation of the Manley Report did not improve, the CAF's attempt at remedying it did. By this, Canada actively continued to attempt to make gains against the Taliban and lobbied their allies for an increased troop presence in the region with Prime Minister Harper doing so at a NATO meeting in April of 2008 (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 28). President Obama's implementation of an additional twenty thousand troops to Kandahar Province in December, 2009 (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 39) showcased increased shifts to keep the security lens at the forefront of the stabilization mission and though the Afghan government was not at the point in which they could resist 'political shock' (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 5), the increasing presence of coalition troops was beginning to make the appearance that the coalition could be capable of supporting Afghanistan in this respect more effectively than before when troop counts were limited. The Canadian contingent would not surpass the 3,000-troop mark at any one time and it would not be until the arrival of American troops in

2009 that Kandahar would see an overwhelming increase in troop presence (Saideman, 2017, pg. 132-133).

The Manley Report had the potential to be viewed as a sort of ‘hail-mary’ (football play) for the Canadian Government. The Canadian Government had been approaching Afghanistan in a more ‘stabilization-as-peacebuilding’ direction however with the Manley Report’s recommendations, a last-ditch attempt to salvage the success of the mission seemed possible. The *Independent Panel on the Future of Canada’s Role in Afghanistan* (2008) shifted Canada’s direction in Afghanistan. However, even with a more narrowed, focused and prioritized mandate in Kandahar Province until 2011 and Kabul until 2014, many analysts maintain that Canada’s stabilization mission had a mixed record. Some contend that Canada’s inability to ensure Afghanistan could withstand political shock in the form of Taliban aggression led to a lack of success in this narrow approach to bringing stability to the country.

Canada’s more focused approach did place a heavy value on the security sector by addressing troop shortages. With this, the increased security capacity in Kandahar Province, it was hoped, would be able to suppress the Taliban threat in order to be able to address the three key signature projects. However, this would prove futile. The Dahla Dam project under Canadian leadership experienced a number of problems in the height of Harper’s praise for the project (Boucher & Nassal, 2017. Pg 36). Continued fighting and a continuation of unsuccessful combat operations for the coalition led to a Taliban resurgence in the Arghandab District of Kandahar Province in which the dam was located (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 36) turning an area with a major development project into a battleground. Work on the dam remained unfinished by the time of Canada’s withdrawal (Boucher & Nassa, 2017, pg. 40). At the time, it was not expected to be completed until 2017 and was failing to

provide water to at least 30% of the canals on the stretch of area it covers (Breede, 2014, pg. 492). Additionally, when after American forces took over the project in 2011, progress on its reconstruction has stalled to an insufficient state of operation (Fisher, 2020).

In a similar fashion, the aspirational goal of improving the educational sector within Kandahar Province was met with limited success. By 2010, 30 of the 50 planned schools were constructed or completed within the province (Breede, 2014, pg. 492). It was estimated as well that at that time, only half of children in Kandahar Province went to school (Breede, 2014, pg. 492). However, as education remains a challenging political and increasingly gendered issue within the country, schools have become targets from more conservative groups (Tchantouridze, 2013, pg. 342). The Taliban in particular are common perpetrators of school bombings and shootings targeting teachers and sometimes children (Tchantouridze, 2013, pg. 343). As highlighted in the Manley Report, education is a critical element to Afghanistan's development and with low literacy rates even more so amongst girls (Manley et al., 2008, pg. 18), this was a facet the CAF really needed to get right. However, like the Dahla Dam, when they withdrew from Kandahar Province, this signature project remained unfinished (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 40).

Canada's third signature project, polio eradication, was met with similar results. Polio was a large problem in Afghanistan. However, Canada's mission in the country also included a public health component which led to the eventual vaccination of over 400,000 Afghans in Kandahar Province alone by 2012 (Tchantouridze, 2013, pg. 343). This was a sizable accomplishment. However, with a province whose population surpasses over one million Afghans, Canada's third signature project would be incomplete by the end of its mission (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 40). With this incompleteness of the three signature projects, Canada's mission in Afghanistan did not end on a positive note. Although the Canadian

Government and its military were able to accomplish a number of positive things to generally improve the lives of many Afghans, the end result of their signature projects presented their war in Afghanistan as one of exhaustion and defeat. A key attribution of the failure in this area is that the CAF was unable to get a grasp on the security situation to effectively complete the projects. The American troop surge of 20,000 would be too late and insufficient to control the Taliban insurgency in Kandahar (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 39).

Final Assessment

Evaluating Canada's mission in Afghanistan through a stabilization lens took many forms. Initially with Canada's engagement in Kabul and the first half of their mission in Kandahar from 2006, the stabilization mission was one of peacebuilding. Canada outright attempted an all-encompassing whole-of-government approach to a massive hotspot and quickly became overwhelmed and under-resourced for such an undertaking. With the *Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan* (2008), the challenges were addressed with key areas being marked such as CAF equipment capacity, alliance priorities, and government transparency. With this, PM Harper's Conservative Government made a number of adaptations to switch Canada's stabilization-as-peacebuilding mission to a narrower one (Boucher & Nassa, 2017, pg. 24) resembling Rotmann's stabilization-as-crisis-management (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 6). This allowed for a more honed in, narrow application to the mission with increased cognition of the security situation, but with an additional focus on three signature development projects. These projects though funded and pursued intensely experienced a number of problems that would result in their incompleteness by the time the Canadian effort would come to a close in 2014 (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 40).

From an analytical standpoint, Canada's stabilization mission in Afghanistan was an incredible feat of commitment ultimately resulting in failure from a coalition perspective.

Twelve and a half years had passed, \$18 billion CAD was spent, and most importantly 159 Canadian military personnel had been killed during the conflict as a result (Canadian Encyclopaedia, 2019). Although their enemy was largely defeated in the opening stages of the conflict, the progressive resurgence of the Taliban throughout Afghanistan provided a sizable challenge to the coalition in the years following the Taliban government collapse in 2001. Canada in particular was understrength in terms of personnel, insufficiently equipped as it pertained to vehicles and capacity and finally ill-prepared (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 23) to take on a 'peacebuilding' approach to Afghanistan involving all levels of government. Even with a narrower approach with increased priorities and an increased focus on security force capability, Canada and its coalition allies were unable to defeat the Taliban and put an end to armed conflict or stabilize the country. Canada ended their leading role in Kandahar Province in 2011. Even with what Rotmann would describe as stabilization-as-crisis-management as a benchmark for the stabilization mission, it was too little, too late.

How the mission has been presented to the public since its termination by the Canadian Government is also of interest. For this essay, acquiring public documentation was not impossible, however it did require more in-depth effort to dig deep into Federal Government websites and archives. To acquire a copy of the Manley report for example, an ocean of "404 - Page Not Found" errors flood government website links claiming to lead to the report. It was only after professional research assistance and a deep dive inside the Library and Archives Canada website, that the report was found. Additionally, through government and department changes since the end of the mission, websites have not been kept up and consistently dead ends of information would halt research. With this, there also existed inconsistency of information, most notably with the early stages. As Boucher and Nassal along with others emphasize, JTF2 members were on the ground from the start of the mission in Fall of 2001 however, for some Government of Canada accounts of the mission,

there is no mention of their involvement in the opening stages of the mission (Boucher & Nassal, 2017, pg. 16 and Government of Canada, 2014). Recently as well, the Canadian Government was criticized for not including the families of the fallen Canadian soldiers in the conflict for the unveiling of the Afghan War Memorial in Ottawa (Brewster, 2019). The initial unveiling was kept under the radar until what had happened became public, and a second unveiling was to be planned to include the families (Brewster, 2019). Unlike some of Canada's other armed conflicts, Canada's involvement in Afghanistan does not appear to be something the Federal Government or the CAF wants in the public eye.

Canada's lack of transparency with the mission in Afghanistan is in-line with Rotmann's position that states who engage in stabilization efforts often "have evaded the pressure to define and explain their work" (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 2). As Rotmann underscores, Canada's official stabilization document appears as more of a public relations piece than a form of operating procedure (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 2). He even cites Canada's challenges with communication during the conflict in Afghanistan which provided a challenge for political actors from both political parties during Canada's mission. Rotmann concludes that in order to be successful, stabilization missions must include an effective communication strategy (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 8) and the Canadian Government's lack of transparency with the mission appears to be in stark contrast to what Rotmann argues should be the case.

Conclusion

On October 7th, 2001 when Prime Minister Jean Chrétien committed Canadian air, naval and ground forces to the American Operation Enduring Freedom, it would begin an involvement in an armed conflict for which Canada would unknowingly be committed for a further twelve years. Initially as a response to the September 11th attacks, Canada's multifaceted and complex mission concluded with three main Operations, Apollo, Athena

and Attention (Government of Canada, 2014). Canada's mission in Afghanistan would be the country's longest military engagement in its history and would withstand casualties unseen since the Korean War (Tremblay & Pahlavi, 2013, pg. 72). This 'stabilization' mission led heavily by the United States and NATO encompassed almost the entirety of Afghanistan in an effort to rid the country of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda and to then develop Afghanistan and rid it of its economic and developmental strife.

For this essay, it was critical to understand the concept of stabilization and position it in a way that could allow Canada's mission in Afghanistan from start to finish to be evaluated and determine what went well and what went wrong. Firstly, with Call and Cousens, the traditional, broad concept of peacebuilding was unpacked to observe its main principles toward institutionalizing peace and increasing state capacity. As a sub-term to this, statebuilding was introduced to view the all-encompassing practice of a full-scale development of the state with an end goal of moving it toward a point of self-sufficiency (Call & Cousens, 2008). Rotmann's first presentation of stabilization-as-peacebuilding drew parallels with these earlier concepts of 'statebuilding' and 'peacebuilding'. However, his analysis was critical of these concepts for what he referred to as a 'limitlessness' approach to international involvement. The peacebuilding form of stabilization aimed at incorporating 'whole-of-government' practices sought to bring in numerous groups of experts and drew from a broad range of knowledge. For some governments, this became too impractical as it was aimed at being all-encompassing. There existed seldom clear priorities and direction to accomplish the end goal of institutionalizing peace (Rotmann, 2016).

Rotmann highlighted how some governments moved to a stabilization-as-crisis-management model. This more narrowed approach seeks to bring an end to armed conflict and support lasting peace by increasing state capacity to be resilient to political shock. With

this, the role of the security forces is heavily valued as the main tool to counter dangerous threats to political stability. Military and police forces play a larger role than the government and development actors (Rotmann, 2016). Mac Ginty, as was highlighted, criticized this narrow approach as the humanitarian and development sectors were often left behind. Additionally, Mac Ginty contended that the narrow application of stabilization often has less to do with achieving certain outcomes than it does with waning enthusiasm from the international stabilizers. In this essay however, this narrow lens was chosen to examine Canada's mission in Afghanistan, not because the Canadian Government followed what would resemble stabilization-as-crisis-management but because in the end they neglected to follow this approach directly enough.

For Canada's mission in Afghanistan, its first phase, Operation Apollo, Canadian units intermixed with American ones and fought to quickly oust the Taliban from Afghanistan. Once the threat had been minimized, the interim government established in Kabul under Karzai was guided and aided heavily by coalition forces including Canada. The CAF continued security efforts to secure Kabul and the surrounding area while the Federal Government applied their 'whole-of-government' approach to building up Afghanistan's capacity. With their switch to Kandahar Province and the implementation of the KPRT, the Federal Government and the CAF continued this model of stabilization. Both the Federal Government and the CAF experienced challenges when using this model. The expansive reach of the Federal Government departments operating within Afghanistan required the security role of the CAF to be on point to provide protection to not only their workers but to the Afghan people in an effort to show that the Afghan government was effective in protecting its citizens and stabilizing its country.

Challenges to the success of Canada's mission in Afghanistan were also tied to the domestic political situation with a less-than-enthused Prime Minister, Paul Martin. However, the election of the Conservative government in 2006 led by PM Harper led to a renewed commitment. Evidence of this renewed commitment came in the form of the *Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan* (2008) chaired by John Manley.

The Panel presented a number of recommendations to the Canadian Government to which sought to address some of the challenges faced by the mission in Afghanistan, such as a lack of concrete priorities and direction along with security issues such as troop shortages and equipment discrepancies. The Harper Government addressed many of the recommendations and with this Canada's mission began to focus a bit more on what its goals were and how they were to accomplish them with the help of their allies. In 2011, Canada's more narrowed down mission in Kandahar Province came to an end with a number of focused projects incomplete and the Taliban threat still rampant. Canada would remain in Afghanistan, now in Kabul until 2014 in order to provide training to the ANA and police forces and increase their capacity. However Canadian forces did not conduct combat operations in the same manner as before (Boucher & Nassal, 2017).

Examining this mission through Rotmann's narrow lens on stabilization allowed this essay to underline many of the key failures of the mission. Although commendable that it was realized by the independent panel that the mission in Afghanistan needed to be more focused, it chose to centre around many development projects with the Dahla Dam, education, and countering the polio problem in the country. The security threat in Afghanistan never went away and became worse as the years went on. This slowed progress on these projects and by the time the Canadians pulled out of Kandahar, they remained unfinished. Because of this, the Canadian Government has not been active in trying to present

Afghanistan as a proud moment in Canadian history like it does for say Vimy Ridge or Juno Beach.

A dark chapter in Canada's contemporary history, Afghanistan continues to be a reminder of the complexity of foreign intervention in a contemporary setting. Stabilization has been, as the quotation from Rotmann used previously stated, a "mainstream catch phrase -for what to do when high levels of political volatility and violence lead to humanitarian and political crises in 'some place'" (Rotmann, 2016, pg. 1). With this, stabilization has been chosen as a manner used to analyse and evaluate foreign involvement missions. This essay examined Canada's mission in Afghanistan with Rotmann's two concepts of stabilization: stabilization- as-peacebuilding and then stabilization-as-crisis-management. Canada's mission was found to have embodied the first concept and the challenges that arose were in line with Rotmann's critique of this approach. Following the Manley Report, the narrowed approach still appeared to be a challenge for the Canadian mission and that of its allies.

Canada's mission in Afghanistan was one that occupied much of Canada's foreign policy conversation for the first decade of the 21st century. Canada's mission was a defining one for the CAF and the Canadian Government not in its success but in its failures. As the Taliban and coalition allies consider ongoing talks of peace and a cessation of conflict (Global New, 2020 & What's in Blue 2020) Canada's twelve-and-a-half-year mission will continue to be one worth reflecting on and examining.

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