



Swedish Committee for Afghanistan

Concerning the Swedish and International Operations in Afghanistan 2001–2014: An SCA Perspective

- Perspective of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan to the Inquiry on Sweden's engagement in Afghanistan.

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List of Contents

Introduction.....	1
SCA's Development Aid – Programmes, Projects, Budget and Orientation.....	2
Contacts and Cooperation with Authorities – Civilian and Military – in Sweden and Afghanistan	4
Contacts and Cooperation with Other Organizations	7
SCA and the International Military Presence in Afghanistan	7
The Civilian-Military Issue – On Cooperation, Collaboration, Costs and Areas of Conflict	11
What Has Been SCA's Contribution?	14
Lessons and Reflections.....	15
Table. SCA's Budget and Activities During 2001–2014.....	16

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Introduction

Concerning the Swedish and International Operations in Afghanistan 2001–2014: An SCA Perspective

This year [2015] witnessed major changes in national mood, reflecting rising concern over insecurity and a struggling economy. [...] as well as unemployment and economic shocks caused by the reduced foreign military footprint and declining development funding by the international community. (The Asia Foundation: A Survey of the Afghan People. Afghanistan in 2015.)

2015 was the year when the Afghan security forces were to effectively take on the full responsibility for security. However, the development has gone in the wrong direction since NATO officially ended its fighting mission in Afghanistan. The economy is in free fall and the Taliban control more territory than at any time since they were overthrown in 2001. As people's belief in the future decreases, an increasing number of Afghans leave their country. (DN/TT January 2, 2016).

In 2016, the year of the U.S. presidential election, the international community will mark another milestone in its 15-year engagement in Afghanistan. Despite billions of dollars spent by the international community to stabilize the country, Afghanistan has seen little improvement in terms of overall stability and human security. The situation on the ground for Afghans continues to be grave, and while the international coalition suffered the least number of casualties in 2015, casualty levels have greatly increased for Afghan security forces. Security for the Afghan people has also deteriorated in large swaths of the country, further complicating humanitarian response. Afghan civilians are at greater risk today than at any time since Taliban rule, with a dramatic increase in the numbers of mostly young Afghans fleeing their country. Afghanistan's economic situation also remains poor, and major political challenges lie ahead in 2016. (Brookings Institute – introduction to a symposium held on January 4, 2016).

The period of 2015–16 is the year of evaluation in a number of European countries; evaluation of the operations carried out in Afghanistan since September 11, 2001 up until 2014. Few people, if any, would argue that the operations carried out by the international community and the West in Afghanistan have been “successful” – in other words, that the stated objectives (democracy, peace and development) have been achieved – in spite of huge investments in terms of money, effort, material and human lives.

Already prior to al-Qaeda's attack in the United States, the Taliban regime was internationally notorious, but not recognized as legitimate by the UN. The US invasion following September 11, 2001 was welcomed by large and important population groups in Afghanistan, where many people hated the Taliban due to their extreme form of Islam (banning music, the increased subjugation of women, barriers to education for girls, etc.). Wahhabism, which differs from the traditional Afghan form of Islam, became more influential during the influence of al-Qaeda. The enthusiasm following the fall of the Taliban was plain for everyone to see. The people wanted to see a different regime, followed by peace and development. Indeed, a regime shift took place, and a war that has been ongoing for almost 15 years.

This war began with the United States and its allies introducing ground troops and bombing campaigns in order to put an end to Taliban rule and destroy the leadership and followers of al-Qaeda, who had been harboured in the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. This military operation was referred to as Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). All the way from the beginning, it was a purely offensive combat operation, and it remained so. Following a decision by the United Nations Security Council and with a mandate from the UN,

but not under its direct rule, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was created for peace-building activities and for supporting the development of the security situation.

There has been clear progress in a number of areas; for example, with regard to education – a massive increase in the number of students, not least girls – infrastructure, improved health care with reduced maternal and child mortality, communications, IT, civil society development as well as work concerning human rights and peaceful conflict management. The question, however, is whether these advances will remain in light of the precarious situation at hand.

Through this report, SCA wants to provide a summary of the contributions made by both the organization and the state of Sweden with regard to these operations – in other words, a kind of evaluation in the multinational context in which these operations were carried out. The descriptions, reasoning and possible analyses presented in this report are mainly based on written documentation, such as statements, interviews, protocols, press releases and articles from the following types of SCA sources from the period of 2002–2014:

1. Statements from
 - Annual Meetings
 - The Board of SCA
 - The leadership of SCA (Chairperson and/or Secretary-General)
2. SCA Annual Reports
3. Editorials in Afghanistan-Nytt
4. Debate articles in the media written by SCA's Chairperson or Secretary-General
5. Debates, articles and op-eds in Afghanistan-Nytt
6. Travel letters from Afghanistan written by SCA's Secretary-General
7. Texts published in SCA's series of five international seminars 2003–2008¹

In addition to printed sources, interviews with senior staff within the organization have also been carried out. This in particular concerns incidents and contacts with various armed forces, Swedish and foreign, in addition to discussions on the perception of civilian-military cooperation and the possible “synergy effects” of such cooperation.

SCA's Development Aid – Programmes, Projects, Budget and Orientation

For an overview, see the table.

Following September 11, 2001, aid and military resources flowed into Afghanistan from a large number of countries and the international community. These efforts focused on objectives such as reconstruction, security, development and democracy. Other countries experiencing ongoing conflict (such as former Yugoslavia, East Timor and Cambodia) had received significantly more resources from the international community than Afghanistan for peacekeeping and reconstruction. SCA noted that “Afghanistan still receives significantly less economic resources than many other comparable countries in their post-conflict phase.”² Already at an early stage, the Swedish government announced its desire to contribute to the declared objectives. The aid budget increased. The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan focused on its areas

¹ 2003: “Two years after Bonn”, 2005: “Militancy in Islamism and its relevance for Afghanistan”, 2005: “Afghanistan – a developing democracy?”, 2007: “The conflict in Afghanistan”, 2008: “Peace building in Afghanistan”.

² SCA's Annual Report 2004, p. 8.

of competence: education, health care and support for people with disabilities. The new regime in Kabul adopted national strategies that closely corresponded to the programmes run by SCA. At the beginning of 2003, SCA moved its field office from Peshawar (Pakistan) to Kabul.

Through its Health Programme, SCA became the first NGO to be appointed responsible for implementing the new national health programme BPHS (Basic Package of Health Services), which was funded by the EU, the World Bank (WB) and USAID in various provinces. A constraint arose early on as a result of SCA's refusal to work with direct American aid funds as long as the United States was involved in warfare in Afghanistan.³ Over the years, SCA has managed the entire or parts of BPHS (including EPHS in some areas, meaning operating hospitals) in Kunduz, Nuristan, Wardak, Laghman, Paktia, Sar-e Pul and Samangan. In addition to the BPHS programmes, SCA has mostly focused its Sida funded activities to maternal and children's health, including extensive training of midwives.

Within the field of education, SCA has operated a large number of schools, developed various types of schools (nomad schools, model schools, girls' annexes, etc.) and also trained teachers at both the local and national levels. During this period, SCA developed an academic level in its teacher training through collaborations with Swedish universities.

The programme for people with disabilities (RAD) includes physiotherapy and orthopaedic workshops, special education, day centres, CBR (community based rehabilitation), advocacy and working toward rights, as well as organizing and building capacity for people with disabilities.

The agricultural activities were significant and extensive at the beginning of the period, and centred around processing and distribution of seeds. In 2007, however, these activities were handed over to an Afghan NGO (CoAR). This was a part of SCA's increased commitment towards strengthening of the civil society, an ambition that has been developed ever since 2004. SCA has cooperated with, and provided support for, the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), the Afghanistan Civil Society Forum (ACSF), the Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium (HRRAC), the Afghan Midwives Association (AMA), etc. SCA's support for civil society has been expanded gradually.

The Rural Development Programme was gradually expanded and consisted of pre-existing activities, such as drilling wells, hygiene and building schools and clinics. It later came to include one of the large national programmes established by the new regime, the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) in Wardak, and subsequently followed by partial implementation in Balkh, Samangan and Ghazni.

Initially during this period, programme support was given to units working with rural development, information and planning. 2004 saw the addition of a gender coordinator and a social mobilization unit. Starting in 2005, there has been a separate unit for gender and human rights. At an international seminar in 2005, the Secretary-General, based on SCA's policy, explained that "besides traditional service delivery, both capacity building and advocacy shall constitute essential parts of its future operations, and that future operations shall be targeted towards the rural poor and promote democracy. Important fundamental principles to be considered [...] are those of human rights, gender and empowerment of the local community and civil society."⁴

At the request of Sida, SCA ran a project (Northern Development Project – NDP) in three provinces in northern Afghanistan during 2008–2010 aiming to "increase access to good quality education, support people with disabilities, increase access to water and sanitation in rural areas, educate and capacity development."⁵ The project's goal was coherent with Swedish aid policy in general and SCA's established

³ This policy was established in SCA's strategy for long-term financing and was adopted at the Annual Meeting in 2008, although it had been applied consistently ever since 2001.

⁴ Bengt Kristiansson, "SCA and its future role in Afghanistan", in *Afghanistan - a developing democracy?*, SCA 2005, p. 189

⁵ Rafiq Sarkar, "Northern Rural Project. Final Evaluation", Sida/SCA, March 2014, p. 7

activities. Subsequently, SCA came to increase its presence in the provinces of Balkh, Samangan and Sar-e Pul. (Also see page 15-16.) Under the allocation line of NRP (Northern Rural Project), however, Sida made special allocations for a number of years after that, targeted toward activities in these provinces concerning midwife training, building clinics, activities concerning people with disabilities, income support and NSP-related activities in other areas. NRP was externally evaluated in 2014 and it was found that “the goal of NRP has been mostly achieved (high degree of achievement). [...] outcomes had been successfully accomplished and the output activities have been completed as per plan.”⁶ NDP received special funding from Sida in the amount of 29.1 MSEK. For the continuation of NRP, a total of 34.3 MSEK was allocated, after which no specific resources were allocated for the northern provinces where Sweden had a military presence. The remaining activities were integrated into SCA’s programmes as part of the regular budget.

SCA’s budget increased by a bit more than 100 percent¹ during the period of 2002–2014 with the support of Sida, the EU, the UN, the World Bank and the organization’s own fundraising efforts. SCA’s activities have been carried out in accordance with its policy, which has been developed and re-written on a couple of occasions during the period. The last time this happened was in 2012. SCA’s first strategic plan was formulated for the period of 2010–2013 and was followed by the second strategic plan for the period of 2014–2017.

Two reorganizations have taken place during the period, in 2007–2008 and 2014–2015, in order to find the optimal organizational form in relation to the changed conditions faced by SCA, as well as in relation to changes in strategies and policies adopted at the annual meetings of SCA.

The geographical distribution of SCA’s activities has focused on the eastern, south-eastern, north-eastern and northern provinces of Afghanistan, as well as the centre of the country. There have only been marginal changes in geographic focus during the period, and SCA has worked in more or less half of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces. In the areas where Sweden had a military presence, SCA was already active in three out of the four provinces.

A consistent aspect of SCA’s activities during these years is that the target groups for these activities have been people living in rural areas, poor people, women and children (particularly girls) and people with disabilities. Contributing to the eradication of poverty has been a leading principle and this has been very clearly formulated in the annual reports of 2002–2014, as well as in policy documents such as annual plans, policies and strategies. When the Swedish government decided to focus on the business sector and building companies in its aid to Afghanistan in 2013, SCA highlighted the risk that this approach could easily be designed in such a way that the poorest people are excluded. The Secretary-General also stressed that it was crucial that future economic development also benefits the poor.⁷

Contacts and Cooperation with Authorities – Civilian and Military – in Sweden and Afghanistan

Contacts with Sida have been frequent and intense, both in Stockholm and in Kabul. They have mostly worked well, with a few exceptions, which nevertheless could be said to fall within what may be regarded as normal, professional variation.

SCA has also maintained continuous contacts, albeit less frequent, with the Swedish Foreign and Defence Ministries, as well as with the Defence Headquarters and the Military Intelligence and Security Service. SCA has contributed with country-specific knowledge of Afghanistan and participated in the training of staff in preparation for their service in Afghanistan. SCA has also been involved in the preparatory work with regard

⁶ SCA’s Annual Report 2008, p. 57.

⁷ A-K Johansson, “Vanskelig satsning på näringsliv i Afghanistan”, *Omvärlden*, December 3, 2013.

to the drafting of strategies concerning aid to Afghanistan carried out by Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Through SCA's key role in the European Network of NGOs in Afghanistan (ENNA), SCA maintained regular contact with NATO headquarters in Brussels for several years in the form of talks and discussions concerning ISAF and civilian-military cooperation.

Sometimes by itself and sometimes together with ENNA, SCA has on several occasions appeared before the European Parliament by presenting speeches and organizing seminars, where SCA has expressed its views on the development of Afghanistan as well as possible desirable strategies. SCA has also maintained similar contacts with the Swedish Parliament. Periodically, there has been a special group in Parliament consisting of MPs from different parties with an interest in Afghanistan. Presentations have been given to the parliamentary committees on defence and foreign affairs. SCA has also organized special seminars for the members of parliament.

In Afghanistan, SCA's contacts with authorities have basically consisted of the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, for issues related to people with disabilities. Periodically, SCA has also had frequent contacts with the Ministry of Women's Affairs. SCA not only maintained these contacts for its programme activities, but also for pure policy development purposes. SCA's has also lent out its staff to the ministries for work on development issues. During large parts of the period, SCA has been involved in central working groups, whose responsibilities have included policy and strategy issues.

In addition, SCA has maintained continuous contacts with both provincial and district authorities in its areas of operation. Furthermore, some form of local council (shura) is also linked to a large number of SCA projects. These councils are involved in decisions concerning the implementation and operation of schools, clinics, hospitals, village projects, etc.

Over the years, SCA has also had infrequent, but relatively regular contacts, with both Swedish personnel at ISAF headquarters in Kabul and with the Swedish PRT stationed in Mazar-e Sharif. Various military commanders have made requests for cooperation. However, for reasons explained below, SCA did not accept these invitations.

Once the PRT system had been established, the military often had funds available for projects meant to result in "quick results" (quick fixes, quick impact, etc.). In this respect, the Swedish PRT differed from others in that it did not have its own "aid money", but rather a Sida-employed aid coordinator on location in Mazar-e Sharif. The various regional offices of SCA produced reports concerning many types of activities, due to the fact that the PRTs of different countries developed different methods with varying approaches. Some were joint projects between a PRT and frequently newly formed local NGOs, whereas others were pure PRT activities. According to the reports, one thing these activities had in common was that they were not coordinated with district, provincial or government plans, nor with SCA in its areas of operation. In the northern provinces where there was a Swedish PRT, the Swedish military requested that they be invited to attend inaugurations and openings in order to demonstrate Sweden's presence. The military emphasized that their presence could be justified through their role in "securing" the area for SCA's aid work. However, SCA found it unwise to be seen together with military personnel and therefore refused these requests. When the later "synergy" concept⁸ was developed within the Swedish government, Sida also exerted more pressure, in combination with the PRT's desire for a common Swedish "visibility." The wording of contracts between Sida and SCA led to some debate and controversy. SCA wanted to ensure that it would not be bound by wording that could force the organization to appear together with the military, nor give any

⁸ Benefits from cooperation between civilian and military activities based on a presumed interdependence between development and security.

impression of collaboration through funding or communication (Also see page 14-15 below on civilian-military cooperation.) SCA has never received funds directly from a PRT, Swedish or otherwise. Furthermore, SCA has never requested or received military protection for its operations.

SCA's approach with regard to civilian-military cooperation is discussed further below under a separate heading. Here is a small sample of the large number of incidents and involuntary contacts between SCA and international military forces in Afghanistan.

- In 2007, through the use of threats, British ISAF troops made their way into SCA's office compound in Kabul just after midnight. The reason was said to be "suspicions about something." The commanding officer did not specify further, even though the SCA country manager kept telephone contact while the operation was in progress. Soldiers and dogs searched the guest house where male staff members were located, and they were "examined" while wearing nothing but underwear. SCA's country manager wrote a letter to the commander of ISAF at the time, General McNeill, who did not reply in spite of a subsequent letter.
- In 2012, ISAF/NATO airdropped troops by helicopter and, along with Afghan military forces, broke into SCA's clinic in Sewak/Chark (Wardak) after having tied up the security guards. They broke into the clinic in search of supposed Taliban fighters. However, they did not find any. They then used the clinic and the rest of the property as a military base for the next three days. SCA issued a press release concerning the incident, which received a great deal of international attention,⁹ as the intrusion was a clear violation of the Geneva Convention. ISAF headquarters later issued a formal apology. This incident resulted in advocacy work where the Ministry of Health and an alliance of NGOs that participated in the BPHS together with the ICRC (the International Red Cross) met with ISAF/PRT/NATO to remind them of the Geneva Declarations and how they apply.
- During 2007–2009, Swedish military intelligence personnel based in Afghanistan made repeated requests for getting access to SCA's Afghan staff in the field in order to obtain information. SCA has consistently refused such requests.
- In 2006, an American PRT (with a military objective to carry out) courted village elders in a district in Laghman and offered them to build a school. Just before, following careful preparations, SCA had reached an agreement with the district to build a school and to be responsible for its operation. In the face of this duplicate project, SCA extricated itself from the project and moved it to another district. The PRT subcontracted a company that started building the school. However, once the PRT had achieved its military objective, the military left and lost interest in the project. The district government appealed to SCA to resume the original project, which was not possible.
- In 2007, another ISAF/PRT decided to build a clinic in Wardak, located in-between two of SCA's existing clinics that were operated within the framework of the Ministry of Health's programmes in the province. This initiative was not coordinated with SCA nor with the health authority in the province, and it was entirely outside of the plans of the authorities. Once the clinic was finished, there was neither staff nor medicine nor anything else available for operating the clinic. The people living nearby appealed to SCA and the authorities for support. However, no one had the means for providing any support. After amending its budget, SCA was nevertheless able to provide support for some minimal activities.

⁹ <http://on.rt.com/mzxft> and www.globalresearch.ca

- With regard to at least two kidnappings of SCA staff (Wardak in 2012), the Taliban stressed that one reason was that Swedish military forces were stationed in the north.ⁱⁱ

Contacts and Cooperation with Other Organizations

Both the World Bank and the EU have been important donors for SCA's activities during the period (however, not comparable to Sida), and in particular when it comes to the health programme. The United Nations, as well as Finnish, Canadian and Dutch authorities, have also contributed with funds for SCA to run programmes and projects.

Two British NGOs, Sandy Gall Afghanistan Appeal (SGAA) and Afghan Connection, have contributed with support for things like RAD and building schools. SGAA was handed over to SCA and incorporated into the organization, but continued to provide financial and technical support until the organization ceased to exist. SCA has played an important role in ACBAR – the body for the coordination of NGOs in Afghanistan – through financial support and participation on its board and in a number of working groups. Likewise, SCA has also been one of the initiators of ENNA and has held the position of chair for a number of years.

SCA and the International Military Presence in Afghanistan

In the first issue of the SCA magazine *Afghanistan-Nytt* following September 11, 2001, there was a plea on the cover saying: "Stop the bombing! The people of Afghanistan need food, medicines and education." The editorial called for assistance using a quote from Folke Bernadotte: "Let mercy speak instead of weapons."¹⁰ Barnett Rubin was also quoted: "Bin Laden and the Taliban think that they can trick the United States into the same trap that swallowed the Soviet Union, and if we go in without a political and strategic plan for the region, they might be right."¹¹

The following issue included the position of two experts on international law with regard to the question "Is bombing Afghanistan legal?"¹² They were in agreement as to the United States' right to self-defence, but also that this right had by then (the article went to press on November 30, 2001) expired and that the bombing should stop. Warnings were also raised in January 2002 with regard to the newly established government's difficulties in getting people's trust and being seen as legitimate as a result of the American bombings and the return of the old warlords to power and influence.¹³ Many of SCA's members argued against the war. Some saw it as an expression of a traditional imperialist game: "The pot in this great game is massive. It consists of Inner Asia and West Asia. Oil and power. In order to win, the United States is prepared to blast the entire region and throw it into new wars."¹⁴ Already at a very early stage, *Afghanistan-Nytt* reproduced the report *Paying for the Taliban's Crimes* from Human Rights Watch on how the Northern Alliance, an ally of the United States, committed what *Afghanistan-Nytt* referred to as "ethnic cleansing in the north."¹⁵ The varying views seen in the membership-based organization concerning the Afghan regime and the legitimacy of the American war of aggression were reflected in both *Afghanistan-Nytt* and in the public discussion, and eventually also on the SCA website, which for a long time included a debate forum. A small group of members left SCA and founded the Afghanistan Solidarity Association [Föreningen Afghanistansolidaritet] as a protest against the SCA leadership's initial silence (and later, according to them, incorrect position) with regard to the American war in Afghanistan.

The leadership of SCA waited for some time before issuing a statement and positioning the organization following the fall of the Taliban. It was not until after the annual meeting in May 2002, when the newly elected Chairperson of SCA was interviewed in *Afghanistan-Nytt*, that someone in the organization's

¹⁰ *Afghanistan-Nytt* no. 2, 2001, p. 3. Dated September 23, 2001.

¹¹ *Afghanistan-Nytt* no. 2, 2001, Ahmed Rashid, p. 22–25.

¹² *Afghanistan-Nytt* no. 3, 2001, p. 17–19, Ove Bring and Said Mahmoodi.

¹³ *Afghanistan-Nytt* no. 4, 2001, Ahmed Rashid, "Krigsherrarnas gamla monster", p. 89. January 12, 2002.

¹⁴ *Afghanistan-Nytt* no. 3, 2001, Jan Myrdal, "Afghanistan i våra hjärtan", p. 20–23.

¹⁵ *Afghanistan-Nytt* no. 1, 2002, Peter Hjukström, "Etnisk rensning i norr", p. 20.

leadership expressed her views on the war and the security issues. The Chairperson then said that the time had not yet come for the United States to leave Afghanistan and argued that “they [the Afghan Government] want even more foreign military presence”¹⁶ and that “the United States has a right to self-defence according to the UN, even though it has interpreted the right to self-defence in a new way.”

The SCA leadership saw ISAF as a UN-mandated peacekeeping force. The resolutions and mandates of the Security Council provided support and legitimacy, even though the ISAF force was not an operation created, financed or led by the UN.

In an editorial in *Afghanistan-Nytt* (went to the press on October 7, 2002), the SCA Chairperson wrote: “The different views concerning the situation in Afghanistan in particular apply to the perception of the foreign military presence. UN security troops are probably accepted by most people both within and outside of Afghanistan. The American military presence, with its focus on objectives such as hunting down terrorists, is more controversial. As far as my own view is concerned, I note that the Afghan government wants this presence – a view that I accept. Meanwhile, I hope that the military hunt for terrorists will be over as soon as possible.”¹⁷ Influential contributions in the same issue of *Afghanistan-Nytt* illustrated the membership-based organization’s wide spectrum concerning the perception of the US-led war, international law, the legitimacy of the transitional government, national independence, etc.

In September 2002, the SCA Board stated that “it is crucial that the American hunt for terrorists in Afghanistan is brought to an end as soon as possible. SCA recognizes the need for an international military presence, but this should take the form of a UN-led force. Preferably with significant participation from Muslim countries. Afghanistan has had enough of bombs – the country now needs water, food, schools and healthcare!”¹⁸

In February 2003, the Secretary-General wrote in an editorial that SCA would be involved in two major programmes: NSP (the National Solidarity Programme) and in the consultation groups of the national development plans for both health and education. However, he also warned of a new initiative launched by the US-led coalition forces – to condition the international aid given to Afghanistan. Together with ACBAR, SCA had stopped this with a demand that the “activities of the coalition forces are clearly separated from aid activities.”¹⁹ This was the first time that the US military introduced the PRT model.²⁰ In the same issue of *Afghanistan-Nytt*, the debate on international law, occupation, imperialism and legitimacy ended – for the time being.

In the beginning of 2003, SCA’s Board and the Secretary-General protested against the use of the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay and the American redefinition of prisoners of war as “unlawful combatants”, and called for the United States and the coalition forces to deal with prisoners of war in accordance with international laws and conventions.²¹

Beginning in 2003, SCA arranged a series of seminars in order to illustrate the development of Afghanistan in an international perspective.²² The Secretary-General asked: “Is Afghanistan going towards democracy [...] or is it on the decline towards a disaster led by warlords, drug lords and extreme fundamentalists?”²³ He then continued: “The question is whether the Afghan transitional government can bring the process forwards and win the citizens’ confidence while its closest ally, the US, has rendered these ambitions more

¹⁶ *Afghanistan-Nytt* no. 2, 2002, Anders Sundelin’s interview with Lena Hjelm-Wallen, p. 18–20.

¹⁷ *Afghanistan-Nytt* no. 3, 2002, Lena Hjelm-Wallen in the editorial “Nystart för SAK i höst”, p. 3.

¹⁸ Statement from the Board on September 25, 2002. Published in *Afghanistan-Nytt* no. 3, 2002, p. 13.

¹⁹ *Afghanistan-Nytt* no. 1, 2003. Editorial by the Secretary-General, p. 3.

²⁰ Provincial Reconstruction Teams, originally referred to as Joint Regional Teams.

²¹ Statement from the Board on April 7, 2003 and statement from the Secretary-General on October 16, 2003.

²² 2003: “Two years after Bonn”, 2005: “Militancy in Islamism and its relevance for Afghanistan”, 2005: “Afghanistan – a developing democracy?”, 2007: “The conflict in Afghanistan”, 2008: “Peace building in Afghanistan”.

²³ *Afghanistan two years after Bonn*, Aschenbrenner M & Kristiansson B. (Eds.), 2003, p. 7.

difficult to fulfil because of its choice of one single strategy, the military, towards the problem.” Topics such as human rights, freedom of expression, civil society and the political development were discussed by leading experts from all around the world together with Afghan and Swedish politicians.

In Afghanistan, the bombing campaign continued. A transitional government was installed in June 2002. Aid was flowing into the country. In the autumn of 2003, SCA’s Board demanded²⁴ that the UN mandate for the multinational peacekeeping force ISAF should be expanded to also apply outside of Kabul in the absence of Afghan national armed forces, in order to give further emphasis to the demand that there should be no American involvement in Afghanistan. In a statement two months later, SCA condemned the American bombings that “have an unacceptable effect on the civilian population, violate international law and constitute a threat to Afghanistan’s national independence.” The Chairperson and the Secretary-General wrote²⁵ that “the actions of the US-led coalition result in the death of innocent civilians, which in turn leads to outrage, sorrow and anger among the affected population.” It was furthermore said that the war “increases the support of the neo-Taliban movement and prevents a democratic and peaceful development of the country.” The American bombings “illustrate the impossible task of fighting terrorism with warfare.”

A motion to the Annual Meeting in 2004 resulted in three fundamental positions concerning the current situation in Afghanistan. These have generally been referred to as “the compromise”, as they gathered the membership-based organization around a common platform, which then formed the basis of a series of subsequent positions. The compromise says that SCA (1) opposes any foreign interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, (2) supports Afghanistan’s right to national independence and right to self-determination and (3) believes that the best way for ensuring security in Afghanistan would be UN troops built on the participation of Muslim countries.

In a travel letter from Afghanistan to the members of SCA published in 2004, the Secretary-General wrote: “The number of innocent victims of the American war, the number of abuses against the civilian population carried out by American soldiers and their officers, the number of violations of human rights in the name of combating terrorism are now not only incalculable in Afghanistan, but are also a reason behind an increasing resistance against the American presence as well as an increasingly important factor with regard to the lack of security in Afghanistan. For its own purposes, the United States has aligned itself with the worst and most evil warlords in the country, who have not only let the drug trade grow, but also undermined the chances of the transitional government [...] with regard to a democratic [...] and progressive development. [...] The United States stubbornly and flagrantly continues to do the wrong thing.”²⁶

In the spring of 2005, SCA in a statement pointed out that the efforts concerning the “underprivileged, subordinate and discriminated” women of Afghanistan were inadequate and demanded that the Swedish government and Swedish aid agencies commit to substantially increase their efforts.²⁷ SCA also expressed a growing concern with regard to how human rights were being violated by both the warlords that have assumed power and by the American treatment of prisoners of war.²⁸ On the fourth anniversary of the opening of Guantanamo Bay, SCA said that “the Swedish government should demand that the United States cease its unlawful treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay and in Afghanistan.”²⁹

²⁴ Statement by the Board on September 28, 2003.

²⁵ Statement by the Chairperson and Secretary-General on December 8, 2003.

²⁶ Travel letter from the Secretary-General from September 2004. SCA website: www.sak.se.

²⁷ Statement by the Chairperson and the Secretary-General: “Världen sviker Afghanistans kvinnor och deras rätt till överlevnad”, March 8, 2005.

²⁸ Statement by the Chairperson and the Secretary-General: “Krigsförbrytare kvar vid makten i Afghanistan”, April 20, 2005. Statement from SCA’s Annual Meeting concerning the treatment of prisoners, May 12, 2005.

²⁹ Statement by the Chairperson and the Secretary-General: “Fyra år sedan den första fången spärrades in på Guantanamo”, January 12, 2006.

In 2005, the situation deteriorated further. President Karzai publically criticized the military actions of the US-led coalition and demanded that it cease its bombings and village raids. At the same time, there were still discussions as to whether ISAF and OEF should have a joint operational command. SCA strongly opposed putting ISAF under American command and allowing it to take part in offensive activities.³⁰ SCA argued that “this must then result in Swedish troops leaving Afghanistan”. In SAK international seminar series in the autumn of 2005, president Karzai’s repeated appeal saying that the US-led coalition should be more careful when bombing civilian areas and also be more cautious with regard to intelligence information, which has often turned out to be incorrect was repeated and documented. “There is a feeling that the United States is creating a situation with continuing sovereignty intrusion of Afghanistan as an independent state.”³¹ There is a feeling that the United States is creating a situation with continuing sovereignty intrusion of Afghanistan as an independent state.”³² With regard to the risk that ISAF could be put under a joint operational command together with OEF, the Secretary-General addressing both Swedish and Afghan ministers stated that: “Whereas SCA has felt convinced that peace-keeping, security stabilizing troops on a UN mandate in Afghanistan may make a constructive contribution, we do not think it is acceptable to bring them under the same command as the troops that are in Afghanistan to pursue a war.”³³

The spiral of violence increased in severity and the level of security for both citizens and aid workers deteriorated. “But the root of the protests and anger expressed by Afghans is [...] that the military strategy, the war, which has characterized the activities of the US-led coalition to such a high degree, is in itself a crime against humanity. You cannot win a fight for social, economic, political and human rights by waging war.”³⁴ And SCA therefore called for “the United States to cease its offensive activities.” When ISAF, which was originally a peacekeeping force, later “without any apparent change in OEF’s unilateral military strategy has taken over the waging of the war” and “the distinction between the warring US coalition and the UN peacekeeping operation [...] is blurred”, SCA demanded that Swedish troops should not be allowed to participate in OEF-led operations or under American NATO command.³⁵ The security situation deteriorated further. “There is nothing suggesting that the military dominance in the operations carried out by the West has been reduced in favour of civilian reconstruction and successful political support. [...] Nor are demands from the Afghan government that it be the deciding party concerning military actions respected [...] It is clear that the destruction carried out by foreign military units constitutes a winning argument in the Taliban recruitment of supporters, soldiers and suicide bombers.”³⁶ SCA demanded that the Swedish government should offer strong support to the UN in Afghanistan and also contribute to a more reasonable balance between the military and civilian operations in Afghanistan undertaken by the West.

At the Annual Meeting in 2011, a statement³⁷ mentioned that it had been ten years since the United States attacked the Taliban regime and that the international community’s objectives concerning reconstruction and democratization were far from having been achieved. “Instead, in particular governance and the security situation have steadily gotten worse over the past five to six years. Most commentators now argue that the war in Afghanistan could not be won by military means.” SCA then suggested that: “A phasing out

³⁰ Statement by the Chairperson and the Secretary-General concerning Swedish troops in Afghanistan on October 8, 2005.

³¹ Ove Bring, “Afghanistan and the international law – Occupation or independence?”, in *Afghanistan – a developing democracy?*, SCA 2005, p. 33

³² Ove Bring, “Afghanistan and the international law – Occupation or independence?”, in *Afghanistan – a developing democracy?*, SCA 2005, p. 33

³³ Bengt Kristiansson, “SCA and its future role in Afghanistan”, in *Afghanistan – a developing democracy?*, SCA 2005, p. 193.

³⁴ Statement by the Chairperson and the Secretary-General: “Våldet trappas upp”, May 30, 2006.

³⁵ Statement by the SCA Board: “Svensk trupp under amerikanskt befäl oacceptabelt!”, October 7, 2006.

³⁶ Statement by the Chairperson, the Secretary-General and a former Secretary-General: “Det militära våldet ökar i Afghanistan”, July 10, 2008.

³⁷ Statement from SCA’s Annual Meeting in 2011: “Internationellt stöd skall utgå från befolkningens behov”.

of the military involvement should be accompanied by aid that is more efficient and better coordinated with Afghan authorities and local communities.” And that “the Swedish government should base its forthcoming evaluation of the aid strategy for Afghanistan on an in-depth analysis of Afghan needs. [...] Even if security and aid are linked on a fundamental level when it comes creating stability and better conditions for the Afghan people, it is important to maintain a strict distinction between military and civilian aid in the field.”

Once the parties involved had decided to significantly reduce the international military presence in 2014, SCA emphasized the need to direct the continued promised Swedish efforts to areas where they have the most impact. SCA in particular highlighted anti-corruption and civil rights as important objectives, in addition to involving women in decision-making.³⁸ A new international operation in Afghanistan was discussed and SCA, together with the European network ENNA and the organization Kvinna till Kvinna, argued that the new international operation must be led by the United Nations. It would be unfortunate if NATO was put in command once more. “The NATO-led ISAF operation has not succeeded in what it set out to do; not when it comes to creating security in the country, nor when it comes to protecting the civilian population.”³⁹ The continuing Swedish activities “must be based on promoting respect for human rights, fighting poverty, a clear work against corruption and sustainable peace for all groups.” The continued support that had been announced for the Afghan police and military must be preceded by “an independent evaluation of the largest military operation in modern Swedish history.”⁴⁰

In hindsight, SCA’s assessment of the development of ISAF from a peacekeeping operation to an offensive operation proved right. The Swedish Defence Research Agency, which has studied the Swedish military operation, bases its analysis on the ability to wage war and says⁴¹ that: “The picture presented of the operation in Afghanistan during the initial phase, for example through proposals made by the government and the reporting made by the Swedish Armed Forces, is far from how it came to be described in later stages of the operation. *The fact that operations may change over time and do not necessarily go from intensive to less intensive should therefore be taken into account.*” The operation provided the military with lessons within its core area of *armed combat* and “has therefore contributed to shaping Sweden’s ability to wage war.” The evaluation also found that Sweden has “a low capacity when it comes to contributing to a comprehensive approach using civilian and/or military means.” And the analysis demonstrates “major challenges concerning real and tactical coordination between aid activities and military operations, not least within the framework of a Swedish national operation.” A moral impact of the operation that is brought forward is “the taking of lives of opponents by Swedes.”

SCA phased out its initial verbal support for ISAF in its role for building peace when the unit *de facto* merged with OEF in 2008 and the COIN strategy (counterinsurgency) became a joint strategy for the entire operation.

The Civilian-Military Issue – On Cooperation, Collaboration, Costs and Areas of Conflict

PRTs were introduced by the American military at an early stage in order to “extend the legitimacy and authority of the central government beyond Kabul” by combining civilian and military operations.⁴² The goal was to “win the hearts and minds” of the population. In its 2003 Annual Report, SCA noted that it “realized the importance of troops for peacekeeping [...] but did not view aid workers and military

³⁸ Lotta Hedström and Anna Karin Johansson, “Rikta insatserna dit de gör störst nytta”, *SVT Debatt*, August 8, 2013.

³⁹ Anna Karin Johansson, Peter Brune and Lena Ag, “FN bör leda en ny insats i Afghanistan”, SCA, ENNA and Kvinna till Kvinna, *Svenska Dagbladet*, May 14, 2014.

⁴⁰ Anna Ek and Anna-Karin Johansson (SCA and the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society), “Utvärdera den svenska insatsen i Afghanistan”, *Göteborgsposten*, April 6, 2014.

⁴¹ Henric Roosberg and Anna Weibull, “Försvarsmakten efter ISAF. Lärdomar och påverkan på militärstrategisk nivå”, FOI-R-3914-SE.

⁴² Stapleton B, “A means to what end? Why PRTs are peripheral to the bigger political challenges in Afghanistan”, *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, vol. 10, 2007.

personnel as suitable partners.”⁴³ The report went on to say: “SCA has made its view on PRTs clear for both the EU and the Swedish government, and it has stressed the importance of PRTs being a part of the ISAF mandate issued by the United Nations Security Council” as a condition for considering any possible cooperation.

From an early stage, SCA sought to acquire a knowledge-based approach with regard to the question of the different functions and effects of PRTs, as well as the benefits and risks involved in civilian-military cooperation. Within SCA, there was an understanding of the intended support from PRTs when it came to consolidating and extending the power and authority of the Kabul government, contributing to safe environments at the regional and local levels and supporting the security reforms for reconstruction, which was the key purpose of the civilian-military cooperation. What did this mean and to what extent was that possible for an NGO with a core mission based on aid and solidarity? From an early point, SCA got involved in studies aiming to clarify this question. Past experiences were scrutinized together with mainly Dutch and British NGOs.⁴⁴ In ACBAR, SCA argued that the network should monitor and report on this question.⁴⁵ The British Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG) and ENNA (where SCA acted as chair at the time) initiated studies on how Afghans perceived civilian-military cooperation.^{46,47,48} None of these studies provided any support for the notion that civilian-military cooperation would be beneficial for development activities. On the contrary, the risks upon which SCA based its rejection were made clear. For a number of years, SCA participated in discussions and the drafting of the “guidelines” related to this question that were drafted jointly by UNAMA, ACBAR ISAF, etc.⁴⁹

According to the Swedish government’s communication 2007/08:51, the political objectives of Swedish participation in international operations for promoting peace and security were “to improve the conditions for joint civilian and military actions in the areas of operation where Sweden is present.”⁵⁰ The leading concepts of the time – “the comprehensive approach”, COIN and civilian-military cooperation – remained unclear with regard to how civilian and military actors relate to one another. Lackenbauer asked: “Do civilian actors contribute to military objectives concerning security on the tactical level, or does the military support overall objectives concerning sustainable development and good governance?” So did SCA, which had consistently chosen not to be a partner in the military’s “civilian” operations, regardless of whether these were Swedish or carried out by another PRT. The reason was mainly that the foreign military forces in Afghanistan were seen as a part of an ongoing conflict. SCA’s credibility in Afghan society (above all in the Afghan rural population) would be seriously hurt if the organization were to become a partner of one of the fighting parties. Any possible cooperation would constitute an increased risk for the organization’s employees. But another important part of SCA’s assessment was also a purely professional consideration, which was highly topical during a phase where the military was keen to pursue its own aid activities. “Development and reconstruction are responsibilities with clear professional demands and merits. Insight and knowledge into what measures to take that will yield the expected outcomes are needed. Key issues include participation, ownership, sustainability, and so forth. Such skills are not part of what military staff have been trained in, and it is not reasonable to assume they possess these skills by chance.”⁵¹

⁴³ SCA’s Annual Report 2003, p. 5.

⁴⁴ George Frerks et al., “Principles and Pragmatism: Civil-Military Action in Afghanistan and Liberia”, Utrecht University 2006.

⁴⁵ Barbara J Stapleton, “Briefing paper on the development of Joint Regional Teams”, BAAG 2003.

⁴⁶ Sippi Azarbaijan-Moghaddam et al., “NGOs, PRTs, Government and Communities in Afghanistan: A discussion of interactions and spaces in civil-military relations”, Research conducted for BAAG/ENNA 2007.

⁴⁷ Sippi Azarbaijan-Moghaddam et al., “Afghan Hearts, Afghan Minds: Exploring Afghan perceptions of civil-military relations”, BAAG 2007.

⁴⁸ “Quick Impact, quick collapse: The danger of militarized aid in Afghanistan”, Actionaid, Afghanistan et al. 2010.

⁴⁹ Guidelines for the Interaction and Coordination of Humanitarian Actors and Military Actors in Afghanistan. Version 1.0 (May 20, 2008)

⁵⁰ Quoted from Helene Lackenbauer, “Reflektioner kring civil-militär samverkan i Afghanistan”, FOI Memo 3793, 2011.

⁵¹ Bengt Kristiansson, “Afghanistan: Neither security nor reconciliation”, *New Routes*, vol. 12, 2007, p. 11–13.

This attitude was met with understanding from Sida, while the Swedish government looked forward to a clear and closer link between the military and aid-related operations in the four provinces in which the Swedish PRT was operating. SCA refused to become a “partner”, but agreed to expand activities that formed a part of the organization’s areas of competence. However, there was no politically formulated demand for mandatory civilian-military cooperation with regard to individual organizations.⁵² At the request of Sida, however, SCA initiated a project in three provinces in northern Afghanistan (NDP, see above) in the middle of 2008.

SCA continued to warn for the military dominance in the operations, which were not only unreasonably expensive, but also reduced the scope for activities characterized by civilian development work. The Secretary-General proposed an altered balance between civilian and military cost items and showed that the EU’s contribution to the civilian reconstruction was far smaller than the cost of the military operations in Afghanistan conducted by EU countries.⁵³ For every euro spent by the EU on civilian reconstruction in Afghanistan, five euros were spent on military operations. This proportion looked better when it came to Sweden, but more money was still given to military support than to civilian reconstruction.

In 2009–2010, SCA focused on the insights and principles that the activities in Afghanistan should clearly aim to improve the living conditions of the population, that the overall objective of promoting peace and development should play a greater role when balancing funds between activities and to also aim for building a legitimate state. SCA continued to argue that aid should not be channelled through military structures and that the military operations must be kept separate from the work carried out by humanitarian actors.⁵⁴ In a debate article, the Secretary-General pointed out that current research showed that aid projects guided by military objectives have led to an increased level of conflict in many parts of Afghanistan.⁵⁵

SCA has been consistent when it comes to not cooperate with the military, as well as not receiving direct funding. The organization has also been consistent in not working according to the notion that development results in security as defined in military terms. The basic notion has been that resources should be used efficiently and be directed toward areas where they are the most useful. SCA was also unable to find any experience- or research-based support for the notion that aid activities could be optimized by means of civilian-military cooperation. Provided that SCA independently carries out its own analyses concerning needs and efficiency in activities, it is obviously possible that SCA could carry out projects that have also been defined as important by other actors. When Swedish politicians, as well as American politicians, put increasing emphasis on the so-called “synergy effect”, the pressure increased on Sida to carry out aid activities in areas of particular interest to the Swedish armed forces in the northern provinces. When the NDP ended in 2010, it was followed by the Northern Rural Project (NRP, sometimes referred to as the Northern Fund), where, in addition to the continuation of the previous activities, NSP-like activities were also initiated in the districts of Chahar Bolak and Chimtal, where SCA used to be active. For the next few years, these districts received a large share of the allocation toward rural activities. These two districts were the most well-documented trouble spots of the Swedish PRT and formed parts of the so-called “Pashtun pocket”, where “the conflict topography of the Swedish area of responsibility took on [...] a special position.”⁵⁶ It is clear that this expansion of SCA’s activities (as opposed to the continuation of the other parts of NDP) reflected pressure from Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. “The Swedish military force has worked on security stabilization projects in the same area [Chahar Bolak and Chimtal] and has identified a need for subsequent development projects. Sida, in turn, has worked on identifying organizations that are prepared to work in these types of unsafe areas and, through SCA, has ensured that

⁵² Helene Lackenbauer, “Reflektioner kring civil-militär samverkan i Afghanistan”, FOI Memo 3793, 2011.

⁵³ Afghanistan-Nytt no. 3, 2009, Torbjörn Pettersson, “1 soldat eller 1400 elever?”

⁵⁴ Statement from the Swedish Afghanistan Committee on January 8, 2010.

⁵⁵ Torbjörn Pettersson, “Bistånd avgörande för fred”, Svenska Dagbladet, February 10, 2010.

⁵⁶ Wilhelm Agrell, *Ett krig här och nu. Sveriges väg till väpnad konflikt i Afghanistan*, Atlantis. 2013. p. 253.

such projects are carried out.”⁵⁷ At the same time, SCA received additional funds from Sida for expanding other activities in the northern region.⁵⁸ Regardless of the motives behind NDP, the project was carried out successfully without any military involvement. The project was said to be a clear success in the subsequent evaluation in 2014.⁵⁹

One of SCA’s defined target groups throughout the period has been women. The organization has increasingly emphasized the power, competence and unused resource base represented by women; both with regard to conflict resolution and for building society. The report *Missing the Target*⁶⁰ followed up the question of women’s involvement in conflict resolution and security operations in relation to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. The report concluded that both the Swedish military and civilian operations had failed in fully realizing the objectives and calls of the resolution, in spite of good ambitions.

As the international presence in Afghanistan was drawing to a close, SCA emphasized the importance of carrying out an independent and broad evaluation of the entire Swedish operation. SCA also acted as a reminder of how one of the ruling political parties had expressed a need for a white paper on the combined Swedish involvement in Afghanistan during the period of 2002–2014.⁶¹ “In 2014, SCA demanded an evaluation of the entire Swedish operation in Afghanistan during 2002–2014, the civilian as well as the military. SCA in particular emphasized the importance of evaluating the grey area between civilian and military operations in order to draw lessons so as to not jeopardize the safety of humanitarian and development personnel or to ensure that inefficient and short-term development activities are not carried out.”⁶²

What Has Been SCA’s Contribution?

SCA’s special and relatively unique brand in Afghanistan, which is also held in high regard, is based on its long presence and the perseverance in its activities. SCA’s focus on rural areas and the people who live there also constitutes a part of this, as does the fact that the poorest and people with disabilities have been clear target groups. The organization’s investments in schools and health care in the form of demanded and needed services have created legitimacy and goodwill. In addition to this basic aid, there have been further efforts concerning women’s reproductive health and the education of girls. Over the years, there has also been an increased focus on human rights and the strengthening of civil society.

The latest Sida evaluation provides relevant information with regard to SCA’s contributions:⁶³

“The evaluation found that the Strategic Objectives of the SCA Strategic Plans [...] were highly relevant with regard to the Swedish Development Cooperation strategies [...]. Areas of particular synergy were found in education, health, rural development and gender equality. Aside from these thematic areas, the SCA plans comply with the Swedish intent to enable disadvantaged people, particularly women, girls and young people, to enjoy better living conditions based on an increased respect for human rights. The SCA approach has also been fully aligned with the Government of Afghanistan’s National Priority Programmes (NPP).

The effectiveness and efficiency of the SCA approach is seen as more than satisfactory. The ability of the organisation to engage in useful development operations in highly isolated and marginalised communities is notable. [...]

⁵⁷ Magdalena Tham Lindell and Cecilia Hull Wiklund, “Jakten på synergien. Erfarenheter av civil-militär samverkan i PRT Mazar-e Sharif”, FOIR 3356 SE.

⁵⁸ SCA’s Annual Report 2011, p. 23.

⁵⁹ Rafiq Sarkar. “Northern Rural Project: Final Evaluation”, Sida/SCA, March 2014.

⁶⁰ “Missing the Target. A report on the Swedish commitment to women, peace and security in Afghanistan”, SCA, Kvinna till Kvinna, Operation 1325, 2012.

⁶¹ Anna-Karin Johansson, “Utvärdera den svenska insatsen i Afghanistan”, Svenska Dagbladet, November 28, 2014.

⁶² SCA’s Annual Report 2014, p. 31.

⁶³ “Organisational evaluation of the Swedish committee for Afghanistan: Final Report”, 2014:66, p. 6–7

“SCA has been the leader in advocating for the rights of people with disabilities and has had significant success in engaging communities, businesses and government in ensuring their productive inclusion in society. The SCA focus on enlarging the cadre of midwives has had a double impact by opening health services to women who otherwise would not be allowed to see a male doctor, and by creating an enabling environment wherein communities could visualise the benefit of a women’s engagement in work outside the home. Similarly, the SCA focus on girls’ education has, over time, modified long standing attitudes regarding the value of allowing a girl to attend school. [...] community-based education classes [...] [of] the SCA education programme contributed to 33.85% of the country’s students in community-based education [...] at the end of 2013.”

Lessons and Reflections

The most fundamental lesson concerns the basic dilemma that in spite of ambitions and good intentions, the combined efforts of West have not been able to create, or even contribute to, what were the universal objectives at the beginning of the intervention – development and security. Undeniable progress has been seen in the development sectors. However, it is difficult to let go of the notion that the potential of the civilian aid activities was undermined as a result of the polarization of Afghan society caused by the war, in particular among the rural population. The US government (with the assistance of ISAF and NATO) answered by increasing its military involvement, when all signs pointed to the foreign military presence in fact strengthening the armed opposition groups. The economic funding for activities was great and “generous”, but the majority of these funds were consumed by the military. On the civilian side, only a fraction of the declared funds reached Afghanistan – significant flows of money went back to the donor countries through a system of subcontracting. The distribution of cash from the international military forces to the old warlords who returned to service paved the way for runaway corruption and inflation, which was made even worse by the aid society, especially in the larger cities. The war economy came out ahead at the expense of a healthy local economy.

The lack of support for state building at the initial stage was also devastating, and the resulting damage could never really be offset once the operations eventually altered their focus. A fragile state such as Afghanistan requires a strong coordination of activities, which also have to be long-term in nature.

To some extent, the Swedish operation sets itself apart in a positive way, but the context in which it has been implemented has undermined its possible effects and results.

SCA’s conclusion is that there are no indications that the model of civilian-military cooperation has resulted in an increased potential for development in Afghanistan. The concepts and conditions were not coherent and were for the most part inadequately defined. The uncoordinated model for PRTs allowed for a large variation among the contributing countries and impeded cooperation with key Afghan authorities. Many PRTs *de facto* established projects and activities that were outside the control and planning of the Afghan government. Future attempts to establish civilian-military cooperation must be done with great care. Lessons from Afghanistan in fact serve to discourage such attempts. Similar conclusions should be drawn with regard to the relationship between development and security when the hypothesis is that civilian-military cooperation is the solution. The experiences of SCA continue to support the distinction between the implementation of development aid, on the one hand, and military objectives and operations on the other. SCA is of the opinion that the Afghanistan operation as a whole had a military slant and that the government tended to listen more to military considerations. Even though the Swedish military operation sets itself apart from many of the other participating countries in a positive way, it has not been able to distinguish itself from the general footprint created by ISAF, OEF and NATO. Nor has it resulted in increased security or development. It is SCA’s view that the entire international operation could have been much more successful had it been under the control of the UN.

The political and military belief in the notion of synergy between military and developmental operations has resulted in pressure – and concessions – both generally and specifically in the Swedish context. Research and the future will tell whether there are actually any civilian reasons at all for accepting this model. Regardless, it is recommended that future missions are very cautious. Respect for the professional areas of competence and the organizational integrity of one another must be maintained. SCA’s conclusion is that the priorities of aid work almost never coincide with those of the military.

However, during this period, it has been possible to contribute to change: education, health care and civil society (in addition to infrastructure and IT) have seen concrete improvements that may last long after the international operation has been terminated. The absolutely most important factor for maintaining this progress in the future – in addition to peace and security – is the phasing out of aid dependence and the mobilization of domestic funding. Unfortunately, expectations and demands of the Afghan people have been affected by the experiences of the period of 2002–2014, and it remains to be seen who the population will look to for providing support when it comes to having a better life in the future. And there are still far too many Afghans who live lives that are anything but tolerable.

Table. SCA’s Budget and Activities During 2001–2014.

YEAR	BUDGET MSEK	Sida funds	EU/UN/ WB/MoH	Main programmes	Number of members
2001	116	55	34	Health Clinics. Maternal and children’s health. Water and sanitation Schools/education Agriculture Disaster relief	3,777
2002	132	75	61	Health Clinics. Maternal and children’s health. Water and sanitation Programme for people with disabilities Schools/education Agriculture Disaster relief	
2003	121	60	12	Health Clinics. Maternal and children’s health. Water and sanitation Programme for people with disabilities Schools/education Agriculture Disaster relief	3,088

YEAR	BUDGET MSEK	Sida funds	EU/UN/ WB/MoH	Main programmes	Number of members
2004	172	85	38	<p>BPHS. Maternal and children's health. HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Water and sanitation</p> <p>Programme for people with disabilities</p> <p>Schools/education</p> <p>Agriculture. NSP</p> <p>Disaster relief</p>	
2005	169	89	45	<p>BPHS. Maternal and children's health. HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Programme for people with disabilities</p> <p>Water and sanitation</p> <p>Schools/education</p> <p>Agriculture. NSP</p> <p>Disaster relief</p> <p>Unit for popular participation and ownership.</p> <p>Unit for gender issues.</p>	3,597
2006	164	97	40	<p>BPHS. Maternal and children's health. HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Programme for people with disabilities</p> <p>Schools/education, twin schools.</p> <p>Water and sanitation.</p> <p>NSP</p> <p>Unit for popular participation and ownership.</p> <p>Unit for gender issues and human rights.</p> <p>Civil society</p>	
2007	198	114	57	<p>BPHS. Maternal and children's health. HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Programme for people with disabilities</p> <p>Schools/education, twin schools.</p> <p>NSP</p> <p>Unit for popular participation and ownership</p> <p>Unit for gender issues and human rights</p> <p>Civil society</p> <p>Rural development</p>	4,337

YEAR	BUDGET MSEK	Sida funds	EU/UN/ WB/MoH	Main programmes	Number of members
2008	163	115	14	<p>BPHS. Maternal and children's health. HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Programme for people with disabilities</p> <p>Schools/education, twin schools.</p> <p>NSP</p> <p>Unit for popular participation and ownership</p> <p>Unit for gender issues and human rights</p> <p>Civil society</p> <p>Rural development</p> <p>Northern Development Project (NDP)</p>	
2009	159	121	14	<p>BPHS. Maternal and children's health. HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Programme for people with disabilities</p> <p>Schools/education</p> <p>NSP</p> <p>Unit for popular participation and ownership</p> <p>Unit for gender issues and human rights</p> <p>Civil society</p> <p>Rural development</p> <p>Northern Development Project (NDP)</p>	4,572
2010	200	135	45	<p>BPHS. Maternal and children's health.</p> <p>Programme for people with disabilities</p> <p>Schools/education</p> <p>NSP</p> <p>Unit for gender issues and human rights.</p> <p>Civil society.</p> <p>Rural development</p> <p>Northern Development Project (NDP)</p>	
2011	203	114	51	<p>BPHS. Maternal and children's health.</p> <p>Programme for people with disabilities</p> <p>Schools/education</p> <p>NSP</p>	4,099

YEAR	BUDGET MSEK	Sida funds	EU/UN/ WB/MoH	Main programmes	Number of members
				Unit for gender issues and human rights Civil society Rural development Northern Rural Project (NRP)	
2012	273	170	62	BPHS. Maternal and children's health. Programme for people with disabilities Schools/education NSP Unit for gender issues and human rights Civil society Rural development Northern Rural Project (NRP)	
2013	283	185	40	BPHS. Maternal and children's health. Programme for people with disabilities Schools/education NSP Unit for gender issues and human rights Civil society Rural development Northern Rural Project (NRP)	
2014	270	181	49	BPHS. Maternal and children's health. Programme for people with disabilities Schools/education NSP Unit for gender issues and human rights Civil society Rural development Northern Rural Project (NRP)	3,681

ⁱ In the version approved of the Board, it said “tripled”. However, at the request of the author, this has been changed to “increased by a bit more than 100 percent” as this is more accurate.

ⁱⁱ In the version approved by the Board, it said that: “With regard to at least one kidnapping of SCA staff (Wardak in 2012), the Taliban stressed that one reason was that Swedish military forces were stationed in the north.” However, at the request of the author, this has been changed.