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# Stability Operations: The Lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan

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- ◆ *The US is only a “superpower” through alliances. And, alliances are changing to become local, regional, and case specific.*
- ◆ *“Worst cases,” “asymmetric warfare,” and “wars of attrition” involve substantial risks.*
- ◆ *Uncertainty and the Law of Unintended Consequences are critical and unavoidable problems.*
- ◆ *History takes time, long wars are long wars, and no one can control the ultimate outcome.*
- ◆ *Winning means accepting and managing complexity.*
- ◆ *Wars will be won or lost through sustained domestic, Congressional, and allied support.*

# The Challenge of Afghanistan vs. Iraq

TOTAL US AND COALITION FORCES

~49,000

**AFGHANISTAN**

## AFGHANISTAN

- Land Mass – 647,500 sq km
- Population – 31,900,000 people; 28% literacy
- *Land locked, primarily agrarian economy: \$35.B GDP, \$1,000 PC*
- *Budget: \$2.6; \$8.9B in aid pledges*
- *Lacks both transportation and information infrastructure: 34,782 Km of roads, 8,229 KM paved*
- *Restrictive terrain dominates the country*

## IRAQ

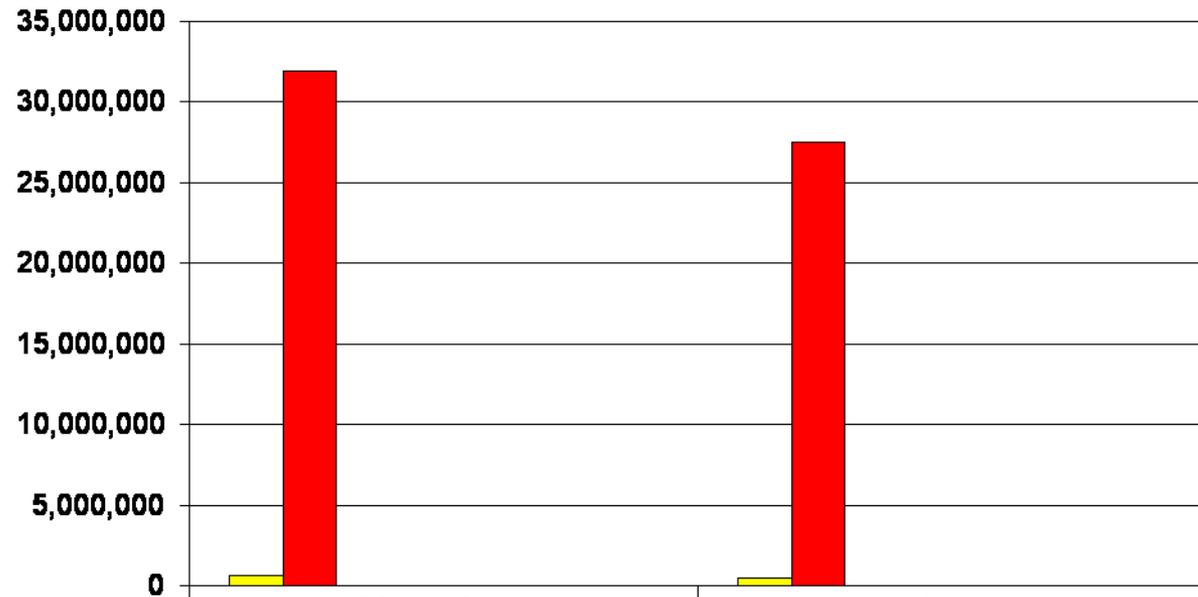
- Land Mass – 432,162 sq km
- Population – 27,500,000 people; 84% literacy
- *Economy dominated by the oil sector: \$100.0B GDP, \$3,600 PCI*
- *Budget \$48.4 billion; \$33B+ in aid pledges*
- *Comparatively developed transportation and information infrastructure; 45,5502 Km of roads, 38,399 Km paved*

**IRAQ**

TOTAL US AND COALITION FORCES

~176,000

# Iraq vs. Afghanistan



|                                      | Afghanistan | Iraq       |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| ■ Territory (Sq Km)                  | 647,500     | 437,072    |
| ■ Population                         | 31,889,923  | 27,499,638 |
| ■ GNP (\$USB)                        | 35          | 100        |
| ■ Oil Export Revenues - 2007 (\$USB) | 0           | 41         |
| ■ Per Captia Income (US\$)           | 1,000       | 3,600      |
| ■ Literacy Rate (%) 74.1             | 28.1        | 74.1       |
| ■ Median Age                         | 17.6        | 20         |
| ■ % 0-14 years                       | 44.6        | 39.4       |

# Strategic and Grand Strategic Lessons

# Key Lessons for the Future: The Most Critical Decision is to Decide Whether Military Engagement (War) Is the Answer?

- ◆ *Is war better than containment, deterrence, and diplomacy?*
- ◆ *What is the true cost of a military engagement?*
- ◆ *Are all the necessary civil-military resources available?*
- ◆ *What happens if the war escalates in cost, time, and impact?*
- ◆ *What is the realistic role of the host-country, allies, and neighboring powers?*
- ◆ *Is a realistic exit strategy possible and what is the cost of defeat?*

# Finding Honest Answers

- ◆ *Accept complexity and uncertainty*
- ◆ *Net assessment of the resulting risks and cost benefits.*
- ◆ *Use the Interagency process and demand a civil-military partnership.*
- ◆ *Ruthlessly demanding and objective intelligence analysis*
- ◆ *Make honest assessments of timelines and costs.*
- ◆ *Objective analysis of the ability to develop an adequate host country partner, neighbors, allies?*
- ◆ *Risk analysis: Model and game the full conflict, including exit strategies and possible defeats.*
- ◆ *Is it possible to commit adequate military, civilian, aid, and advisory resources from Day One?*
- ◆ *Will the American people and Congress support the operation? Is transparency and honesty possible?*

# Conducting the War

- ◆ *Keep the war limited; if the war goes sour, get out.*
- ◆ *Actually commit adequate military, civilian, aid, and advisory resources from Day One.*
- ◆ *Jointness means integrated civil-military operations.*
- ◆ *Building up the host country partner will be a constant priority.*
- ◆ *Focusing on the enemy will mean defeat if it means ignoring ethnic, sectarian, tribal and other internal fault lines and ignoring neighboring states.*

# **Redefining “Jointness:” The Civil-Military Challenge**

# Counterinsurgency vs. Armed Nation-Building?

- ◆ *“Stability operations” and “counterinsurgency” are misnomers.*
- ◆ *“Worst-case wars” impose special burdens.*
- ◆ *The non-military dimension is as critical, or more critical, than the military one.*
- ◆ *Only the host country can really win, and is must win politically as well as in security terms.*
- ◆ *There will probably never be the number and quality of civilian partners the military needs and wants.*
- ◆ *Most allies may not be able to sustain long wars.*

# The Four Elements of Victory in a Joint Campaign Plan

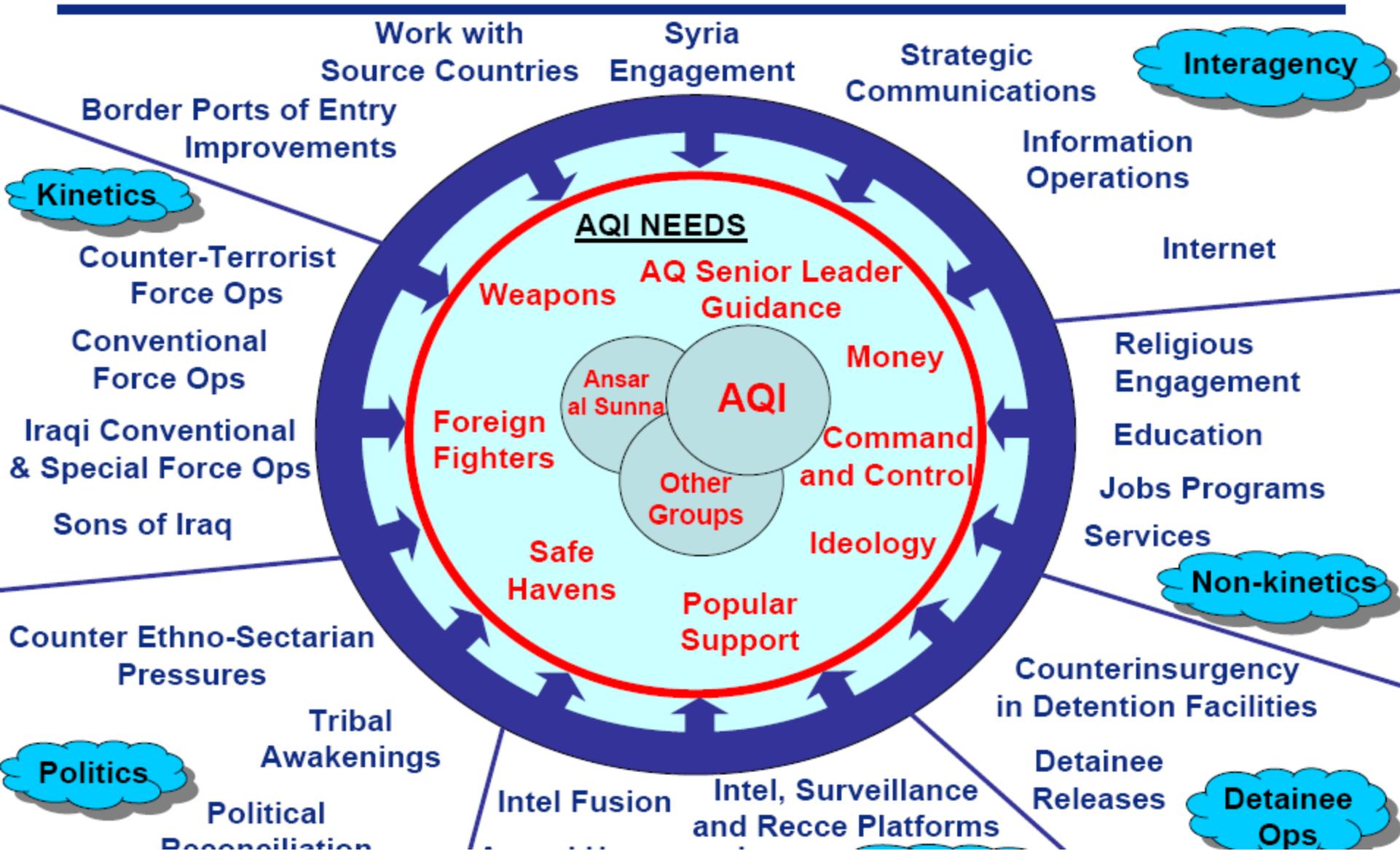
◆ *Political Accommodation*

◆ *Security*

◆ *Governance*

◆ *Development*

# Anaconda Strategy vs. AQI

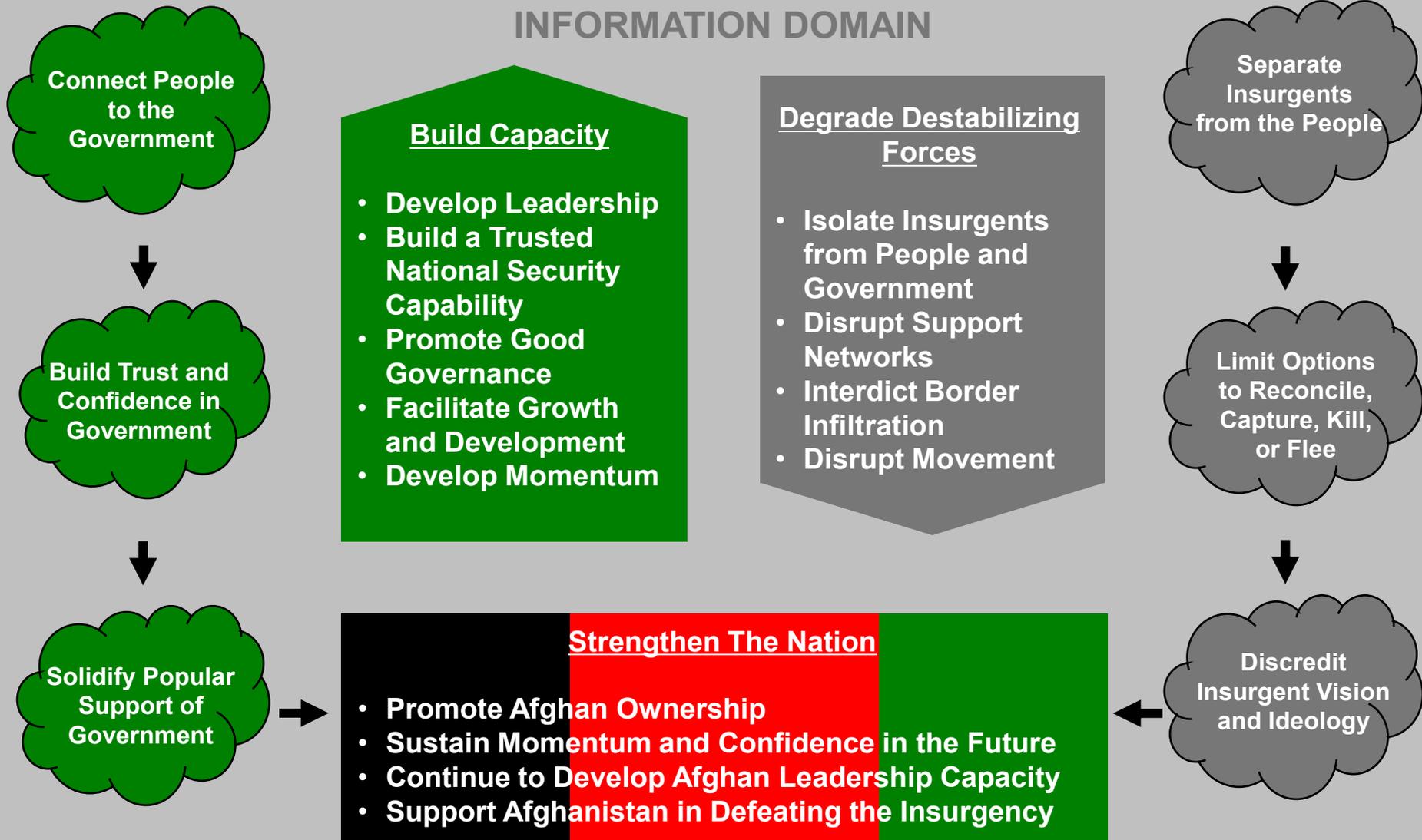


Source: MNF-I, April 9, 2008

# Counter-Insurgency Approach

“REPLACE FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY WITH TRUST AND CONFIDENCE”

INFORMATION DOMAIN



INFORMATION DOMAIN

# RC-East Assessment Summary

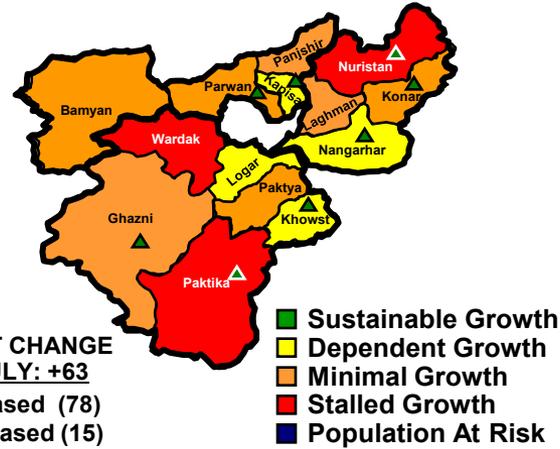
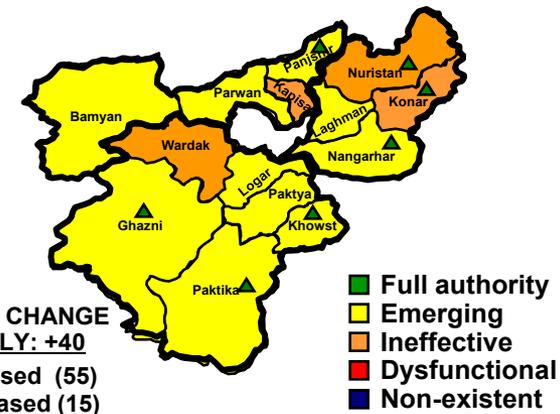


DISTRICT CHANGE SINCE JULY: +81

- ▲ Increased (88)
- ▼ Decreased (7)

## GOVERNANCE

- Government increasingly identifying major issues such as corruption but lacks accountability measures
- National and local government capacities are growing, but won't decentralize authorities and resources due to lack of trust
- Lack of Rule of Law and legal capacities impedes accountability and discourages international investment

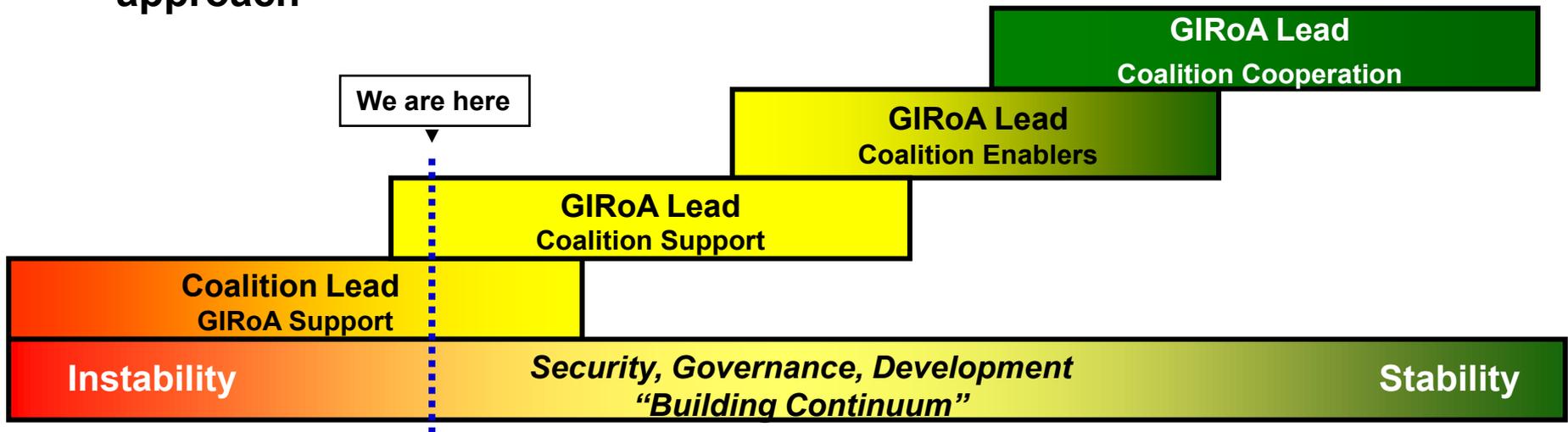


DISTRICT CHANGE SINCE JULY: +63

- ▲ Increased (78)
- ▼ Decreased (15)

# Building a Stable Afghanistan Way Ahead

- Integrated governance, development and security framework
- Province focused, deliberate, condition-based approach
- Cooperative partnership and support
- Sustain national and international comprehensive counterinsurgency approach



# History Takes Time

## United Nations Millennium Development Goals

### Afghan National Development Strategy

#### Security

Enemy  
Afghan National  
Security Forces  
Border

#### Governance

Government  
Population  
Legal Process

#### Development

Education  
Health Care  
Agriculture  
Roads

#### Security

#### Governance

Governance  
Rule of Law  
Human Rights

#### Econ & Social Development

Education  
Health  
Agriculture  
Rural Development  
Infrastructure  
Natural Resources  
Private Sector  
Social Protection

#### Security

#### Governance

Gender Equality

#### Development

Universal Primary Education  
Improve Maternal Health  
Reduce Child Mortality  
Control HIV/AIDS/Diseases  
Build Global Partnerships  
Environmental Stability  
Eradicate Extreme Poverty

2007

2008

2013

2020

# Lessons of Armed Nation Building

- **Conflict termination must treat the causes and not just the symptoms.**
- ***Tactical victories become meaningless without political , ideological, information, and media dominance.***
- **Operations must focus on stability operations, exercises in stability and “nation-building**
- **Success occurs where the fighting is: The local and regional level of operations is as important as the central government.**
  - **Political accommodation and ideological operations have critical priority.**
  - **Governance and provision of critical services in conflict and vulnerable areas become critical aspects of “security.”**
  - **So is personal security for the population and preserving/creating the rule of law.**
- **“Dollars are bullets:” Value of economic incentives and aid, CERP, immediate employment and career status.**
- **Need incentives to convert, disarm terrorists, insurgents, irregular opponents, not just force: “Carrots as well as sticks”**

# Political Accommodation

*(+Foreign Pressure &  
Threats)*

# Sectarian, Ethnic, and Tribal Challenges

## ◆ *Sectarian Challenges*

◆ *Afghanistan: 80% Sunni, 19% Shi'a. 1% Other*

◆ *Iraq: 60-65% Shi'a, 32-37% Sunni, 3% Christian or Other*

## ◆ *Ethnic Challenges*

◆ *Afghanistan: Pashtun 42%, Tajik 27%, Hazara 9%, Uzbek 9%, Aimak 4%, Turkmen 3%, Baloch 2%, Other 4%*

◆ *Iraq: Arab 75-80%, Kurdish 15-20%, Turcoman, Assyrian & Other 3%*

## ◆ *Tribal Challenges*

◆ *Afghanistan: Fragmented, rural, divided*

◆ *Iraq: Confederations, broad area, heavily urbanized.*

# Iraq “Case Study” Lessons

- ◆ *Work with and around central Government; move towards open lists and local representatives.*
- ◆ *Work in “Iraqi time,” but keep up pressure from behind scenes.*
- ◆ *Deal with ethnic and sectarian “fault lines*
- ◆ *Halt worst ethnic and sectarian violence & cleansing.*
- ◆ *Create parallel efforts to strength local and provincial governments, and hold elections.*
- ◆ *Give all elements role in government and security forces.*
- ◆ *Push government spending & fairly share money.*
- ◆ *Employment is critical, particularly young men.*
- ◆ *Address external pressures and threats.*

# The “Regional” Challenge

- ◆ *US operations will inevitably involve all neighboring states.*
- ◆ *Even friendly and allies states will have different priorities and agendas.*
- ◆ *Ethnic, sectarian, political/ideological and tribal “spillover” will be the rule and not the exception.*
- ◆ *Hostile neighbors can safely create partial sanctuaries and proxy forces*
- ◆ *Regional solutions are a noble, ideological, and normally unworkable goal.*

# Lessons for US (Allied) Forces:

*Fighting Wars for Political,  
Ideological, and Economic  
Space*

# Tactical Lessons

- ◆ *Adequate forces key to success.*
- ◆ *Need for forward deployment, and “win,” “hold,” and “build” efforts at local level.*
- ◆ *Create parallel efforts to strengthen local and provincial governments, and tribal leaders.*
- ◆ *Exploit enemy extremism, mistakes.*
- ◆ *Develop/encourage local forces, and integrate into security forces and employment programs.*
- ◆ *Encourage and capitalize on local HUMINT.*
- ◆ *Solve the detainee problem to the extent possible.*
- ◆ *Kill the cadres, not the low-level fighters.*
- ◆ *Exhibit great care in raids, air strikes, regarding civilian casualties collateral damage.*

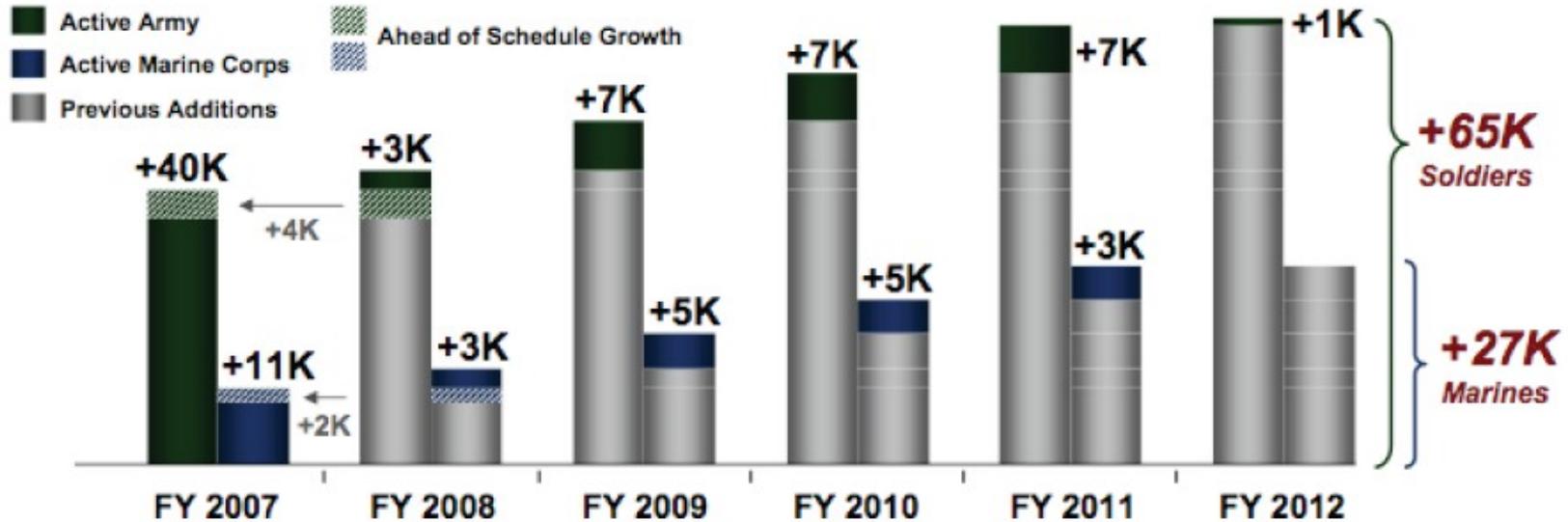
# Force Structure Lessons

- ◆ *Uparmoring (ATGM?)*
- ◆ *Counter IED, counter-suicide bombing: Defeat through action, not just technical means*
- ◆ *Forward operating bases (FOBs) versus main operating bases (MOBs)*
- ◆ *Risk of dividing forces and roles and missions by ally; Unity of command, purpose, ROEs*
- ◆ *Vital role of air support, helicopter gunships and mobility.*
- ◆ *Special Forces as critical as “win and hold.”*
- ◆ *Local forces an essential force multiplier.*
- ◆ *Advanced intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets critical.*
- ◆ *Value of operational awareness, “Blue Force Tracker.”*

# Increase Ground Capabilities

**+\$8.7B**  
FY08 - FY09

|                               |              |   |   |              |   |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---|---|--------------|---|
| <b>Army</b><br>Active         | <b>42</b>    | Brigade Combat Teams<br>(482.4K Soldiers)     | ➔ | <b>48</b>    | Brigade Combat Teams<br>(547.4K Soldiers)     |
|                               | <b>12/12</b> | Months Home Station /<br>Months Deployed      |   | <b>24/12</b> | Months Home Station /<br>Months Deployed      |
| <b>Marine Corps</b><br>Active | <b>2.5</b>   | Marine Expeditionary Forces<br>(175K Marines) | ➔ | <b>3</b>     | Marine Expeditionary Forces<br>(202K Marines) |
|                               | <b>7/7</b>   | Months Home Station /<br>Months Deployed      |   | <b>14/7</b>  | Months Home Station /<br>Months Deployed      |



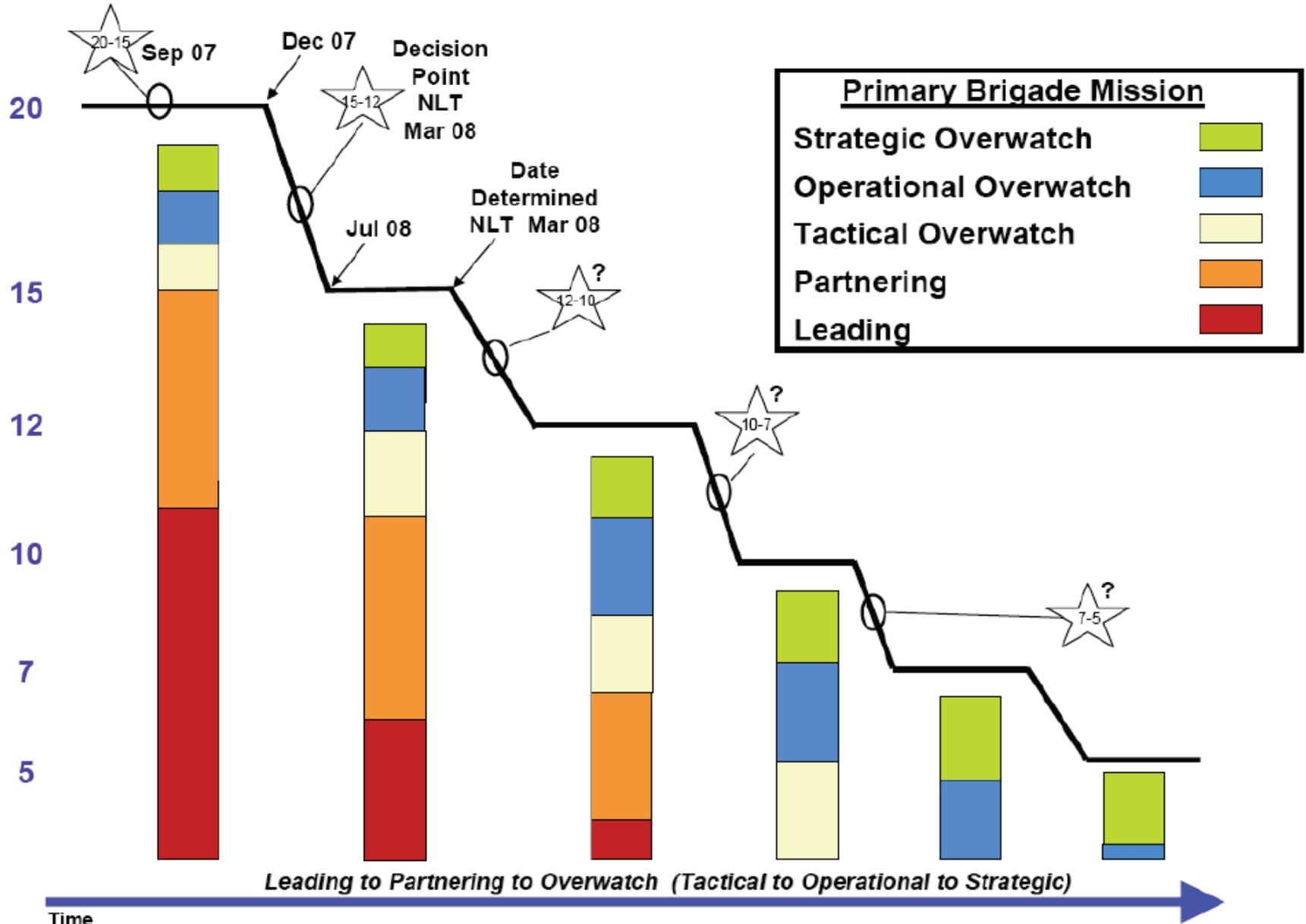
# AirLand Lessons

- ◆ *Fixed and rotary wing air critical component of success.*
- ◆ *Adequate force levels critical.*
- ◆ *Advanced IS&R again critical, but*
- ◆ *Air far more effective with forces on ground, HUMINT from host-country forces.*
- ◆ *Restraint in targeting and strike authorization critical, as is reducing civilian casualties and collateral damage.*
- ◆ *Land-air C4I/battle management interface critical to reducing friendly fire.*
- ◆ *Value of all-weather, all terrain capability*
- ◆ *Risk of dividing forces and roles and missions by ally; Unity of command, purpose, ROEs*

# Security Force Multipliers:

*Host Country Forces &  
Threat Fault Lines*

# Recommended Force Reductions/Mission Shift



# Army Lessons - I

- ◆ *Realistic timelines are critical components of success. Years longer than initially predicted.*
- ◆ *Fund an adequate force plan from Day 1: No plan and no resources = no force*
- ◆ *Training does not create effective indigenous forces, experience, embeds, and partner units do.*
- ◆ *Leadership key problem and takes time and experience.*
- ◆ *Unclear can transfer Western experience with NCOs.*
- ◆ *Retention is a key problem: Overmanning, pay and allowances, deployment locations and cycles.*
- ◆ *Pay, facilities, equipment and weapons, medical care, disability and payments if killed are critical.*
- ◆ *Land-air C4I/battle management interface critical to reducing friendly fire.*

# Army Lessons - II

- ◆ *Force expansion must take account of quality, not just quantity.*
- ◆ *Finding effective trainers and embeds a critical problem; training the trainers only part of the story.*
- ◆ *Use and improve the host country military culture; don't replace it.*
- ◆ *Deal realistically with ethnic, sectarian, and tribal problems; don't try to solve problems by denial.*
- ◆ *Move new units slowly into combat; don't rush or use them up.*
- ◆ *Build up from the battalion level, but have clear force goals.*
- ◆ *Equipment, weapons, and ammunition deliveries must match pace of force expansion.*
- ◆ *Maintenance, support, supply key problems in force building.*

# Police Lessons

- ◆ *MODs are bad enough; MOIs are a nightmare.*
- ◆ *May be mission impossible if seek a competent national and/or paramilitary force.*
- ◆ *Reality will be regional with national elements.*
- ◆ *Paramilitary mission will often simply be too difficult to add to task of creating effective army.*
- ◆ *Same need for embeds, partners, and win and hold forward presence. Training only small part of story.*
- ◆ *Police require courts and rule of law, governance, and services.*
- ◆ *Pay and allowances, facilities, weapons and equipment, medical care, disability, and death benefits again critical.*

# Governance

*Presence and Services =  
Legitimacy and Support*

# Military Lessons About Governance

- ◆ *Foreign military forces are the proxy and get the blame.*
- ◆ *Inevitably linked to success in political accommodation and security.*
- ◆ *Central governments are hardest to fix, and will always lack core competence.*
- ◆ *You win at the provincial and local level and you win where you fight*
- ◆ *Legitimacy and popular support are not the product of elections, but of the quality of representation and services that affect local populations.*
- ◆ *The rule of law, key utilities, education, and medical support are key tests.*
- ◆ *Local legitimacy and security cannot be separated from sectarian, ethnic, and tribal issues.*
- ◆ *Long time lines, limited outside competence in aid.*

# Development

*Dollars Can Be Bullets*

# Military Lessons About Development

- ◆ *Dollars = Bullets. No resources, no victory*
- ◆ *You win in the field and where you fight.*
- ◆ *Military must have substantial aid funds for own priorities: CERP or Commander's Emergency Relief Program*
- ◆ *Jobs, right now, are more critical than development and sustained employment.*
- ◆ *Military EPRT or EPRT is better than no civilian EPRT or PRT, and often as good or better than civilian PRT.*
- ◆ *Aid must visibly affect the entire area, and appear to meet common needs or be equitable.*
- ◆ *You can't develop and lose the war.*
- ◆ *Some NGOs and aid workers can't come to grips with war.*
- ◆ ***But**, military that doesn't protect NGOs and aid workers can't come to grips with victory.*

# “Victory” Will Be Relative

*The Law of Unintended  
Consequences is the Most  
Likely “Winner”*

# The Limits of Success

- ◆ *Cannot control the future after the US leaves -- or if it stays.*
- ◆ *Cannot transform an entire society, political system, or set of values.*
- ◆ *Partnership means taking risks and having a partner and not a client.*
- ◆ *Risk and uncertainty remain local, national, and regional.*