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The Military Mind at War: A PSYOPS Commander's Strategies for the Post-Afghan Battlefield



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In 2010 in Afghanistan, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is undergoing a second surge and at least a third change in strategy since its involvement to battle an evolving insurgency that is spreading and increasingly taking hold. At the same time support for the mission from populations in Afghanistan and in coalition nations is waning. While a greater sense of realism appears to be settling in NATO members' capitals for what can be accomplished in Afghanistan, the wider search for more relevant and adaptive strategies to deal with Islamist terrorism continues.

Leaders and practitioners, both military and civilian, need to better understand the implications of the multiple strategies that have been used, proposed and sought for stabilising Afghanistan. Also, in the political context of indigenous and international populations involved, they need to learn to craft adapted strategies and related narratives to better communicate with key target audiences at home and abroad.

This webinar, with Lieutenant-Colonel Bruno Vanasse, Former Deputy Director for Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) in the Canadian Army, focuses on the interaction between strategy and communications in light of lessons observed from the mission in Afghanistan. More specifically, the requirements for support at home and abroad will be highlighted, and how both military and civilian leaders can more effectively in the future deal with the political and psychological dimensions of conflict emanating from foreign asymmetric threats. For this, several military operational and strategic approaches currently being pursued or proposed for the conflict in Afghanistan will be exposed and analysed, in relation with the threat posed by the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Finally, LtCol Vanasse will present his own views on what a realistic stabilisation strategy for Afghanistan should look like.

Participants will benefit from leading-edge thinking on the interface of strategy and communications in modern warfare learned from the Afghan conflict.

Additionally, key takeaways of this seminar are that you will:

- Gain knowledge on the multiple strategies that have been used, proposed and sought for stabilising Afghanistan
- Increase your understanding of the implications of different approaches in the context of the Afghan political culture
- Identify the strategic and communication requirements for support both at home and abroad
- Discover key ideas to deal more effectively in the future with the political and psychological



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Presenter:



Bruno Vanasse (http://www.defenceiq.com/contributors/15782-bruno-vanasse)

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Lt-Col Vanasse joined the Canadian Army Reserves in Feb 1986, as an infantry soldier at Régiment Fusiliers Mont-Royal and was commissioned there in 1988 as an infantry officer. In 1990, he joined the Intelligence Branch. He was the Canadian Battalion intelligence officer in Visoko, Bosnia, from Oct 1993 to May 1994, in UNPROFOR. A year later, he went back to Bosnia, at the UNPROFOR HQ in Sarajevo, as the senior intelligence operations officer, from June to December 1995. Upon his return he took up key responsibilities at 4th Intelligence Company in Montreal, as Trg O, Ops O and DCO. From May 1999 to Aug 2002, he was the first Reserve Commanding Officer (CO) of 4th Int Coy, while the unit received the "Sir William Stephenson" trophy for best intelligence unit in Canada three years in a row.

After completing his command of 4th Int Coy, he concentrated his efforts to create a new Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) capability for the Canadian Forces (CF). He officially stood up the Canadian PSYOPS Capability in January 2004 and was its first CO. In November 2006, he deployed to ISAF HQ in Kabul, Afghanistan. He initiated the mission's first counter-propaganda plan and developed an unconventional counterinsurgency (COIN) approach presented to COMISAF, and thereafter deployed to Kandahar to lead Information Operations plans for Regional Command South, supporting ISAF's main effort. He was also Deputy Director PSYOPS from January 2004 until August 2009. He currently is a senior staff officer for Land Forces Western Area Headquarters in Edmonton, Alberta.

His expertise on PSYOPS, Info Ops and COIN has been sought for international military conferences, as an invited guest speaker by US Joint Special Operations University, NATO (SHAPE), the Royal Military College of Canada, the Information Operations Europe Conference, the Canadian Forces College, Defence Research & Development Canada, the Canadian Special Operations Regiment, the Institute for Military Operations of the Royal Danish Defence College and CityForum's Supporting Land Operations 2009 roundtable in London UK.

In civilian life, prior to working full-time in developing PSYOPS for the CF, he worked as a consultant for the HayGroup, an international management-consulting firm, and later as a full-time lecturer in Psychology and Leadership at the Royal Military College of Canada. He graduated with a B.Sc in Psychology and is presently completing his Ph.D thesis in Industrial & Organizational Psychology. He has a passion for travel, foreign cultures and languages, and has visited over 50 countries.

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