

Panel: Insurgency and Stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan after bin Laden (Violet/Cosmos)

Date/Time: April 25, 2012 / 15:45-17:00

Organizing Institution: FOI – Swedish Defence Research Agency

Talking Points for: Thomas Ruttig
Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN)

The US-led Counter-Insurgency strategy in Afghanistan has suffered from a lack of differentiation between the internationalist/jihadist agenda of al-Qaeda and the purely national one of the Afghan Taleban from the very beginning. This has precluded an early political involvement of the Taleban in the post-2001 political set-up and, instead, led to a military escalation that had undermined reconstruction and stabilisation in Afghanistan. Only since 2011, there are meaningful channels for achieving a political settlement.

Although the Afghan Taleban (as separate from Pakistan's Taleban) see themselves in a favourable situation, given the Western 2014 exit date, and have suspended the Qatar channel early this year, they have not closed the door for a political solution for good.

A sustainable political solution, though, does not only need the inclusion of the Taleban. It needs to include all relevant political and social groups in Afghanistan. To achieve this, will be a long process without success guarantee. But it is the only viable alternative to the failed attempt of a military 'solution'. The process will likely last well beyond 2014, and needs an ongoing strong political attention of Western governments who, facing a quagmire they have contributed to, show signs of Afghanistan fatigue.

* The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.
