

Lieutenant General John Lorimer, Deputy Commander of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

'I think this operation has had a huge effect on the British Army, the British military as a whole. I think we're a lot more professional. I think that we work much better together in terms of the Air Force and the Army and the Marines - we're much better in that respect. I think we've got a lot of combat experienced young men and women who are terrific. They've proven every time how good they are. I think that's one of the lasting takeaways that I'll have from this operation, having commanded young men and women. It's just how good they are. How good our people are. In terms of, personally, what I've got out of this operation, I think I've learnt four main things about our counter-insurgency campaign. First of all, the importance of, in this case, the Afghans owning the problem. If we try and impose any solution on them it won't work. Secondly, the importance of all the lines of development as we would say. So, ensuring that governance as well as economic development is looked after and it's not just security. They work in tandem. Thirdly, is understanding the operational environment. It's so complex out here, far more complex than other areas in which I've served and trying to understand that. If you understand that, or have a good understanding of that, it's easier to try and succeed. Finally, and I think this is something that we've all learnt is, is the concept of time. How long these things take. There is never a solution that is going to provide a miracle overnight. It's about working hard. It's about understanding what the aims are and achieving them through hard work and working closely with the Afghans.'