



BRIEFING PAPER

Michael Bhatia, Kevin Lanigan & Philip Wilkinson

June 2004

Minimal Investments, Minimal Results: The Failure of Security Policy in Afghanistan

The Failure of Security Policy in Afghanistan

This briefing paper challenges policy makers to reconsider the flawed security policies and inadequate resources for addressing a deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan at a critical juncture in the country's political development.

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Overview

Prime Minister Tony Blair's 2003 declaration that the international community "will not walk away from" Afghanistan¹ missed the real question: When will the international community really walk *into* Afghanistan, and make the necessary commitments and investments that will give the Afghan people a reasonable chance at building a peaceful and stable country?

The March 2004 Berlin Conference report, *Securing Afghanistan's Future*, diplomatically understated this point by saying that "staying too close to minimal effort for too long will adversely affect expectations and commitments of the different segments of Afghan society." Nowhere is this more true than in the security sector where the minimal investments of the international community, despite the repeated calls by President Karzai, the UN, NGOs and the Afghan people to do more, has resulted in a security situation that is deteriorating daily, and markedly worse than it was at the start of the Bonn process in January 2002.

ISAF commander Lieutenant General Rick Hillier has noted that there is a limited period of time, or a finite "security window," when Afghans can be expected to support or even tolerate the continued presence of international military forces without seeing visible benefits from that presence.² At the level of the individual Afghan citizen, where a local commander or police officer arbitrarily jails a villager or forces a family's daughter into an unwanted marriage, where a corrupt local official extorts an unlawful tax, or where two families engage in a violent dispute over land or water rights, to date *no one* – Afghan or international – is likely to play a visible or effective role to redress the situation.

^{*} Michael Bhatia, a Marshall Scholar and doctoral candidate at St. Antony's College, University of Oxford, is the author of *War and Intervention: Issues for Contemporary Peace Operations* (2003). Kevin Lanigan, an attorney with the Washington, DC law firm, Hogan & Hartson, and a major in the US Army Reserve, served in Afghanistan with the Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force (CJCMOTF) during 2002-03, and later in 2003 as a civilian consultant with The Asia Foundation assisting with the Constitutional Loya Jirga. Colonel (ret.) Philip Wilkinson, OBE, a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Defense Studies, King's College, London, led the development of UK and NATO doctrine on peace support and civil-military operations.

¹ In October 2001, Blair declared, "To the Afghan people, we make this commitment. The conflict will not be the end. We will not walk away, as the outside world has done so many times before. We will assemble a humanitarian coalition alongside the military coalition." Reid, T.R., "Blair Denies Split with Bush over War," *The Washington Post* A26 (Nov. 22, 2001).

² Interview with Lieutenant General Rick Hillier, Kabul, 18 June 2004.

Where do we stand?

The international community's engagement in Afghanistan since September 11 has been characterized by two contradictory concepts. On the one hand, it is described as the first major front of a "global war on terror", suggesting a massive mobilisation of resources that has never really occurred. On the other hand, the concept of a "light footprint"³ was promoted by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General to Afghanistan, which unfortunately ended up more accurately reflecting the very modest resources – particularly for security – donor countries actually contributed.

The US-led Coalition forces in Afghanistan have focused their attention and resources on the defeat of the remnants of the Taliban and al-Qaeda, and to do this often have relied on, and thus supported, destabilising and abusive factional militias and their commanders. Addressing the broader security concerns of Afghans was left to a flawed and under-resourced Security Sector Reform (SSR) strategy and to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). ISAF, however, was never resourced to move outside of Kabul in more than a symbolic way, and when it finally did, has focused more on its own security than that of Afghans. Despite Afghanistan being widely proclaimed as NATO's highest priority, the unwillingness of NATO member states to adequately resource ISAF with troops and equipment has seriously undermined the ability of ISAF commanders to do their job effectively.

The price Afghans are paying for this light footprint in the security sector is high. One need only ask the following questions to illustrate the cost of the minimalist approach:

Warlords: Are the principal factional commanders less powerful, less abusive of their fellow citizens, or less brazen in their dealings with the central government now than they were in 2002?

Narcotics: Has the opium poppy crop been eliminated, reduced or even held constant since 2002?

Security: Is the physical security of Afghan citizens, government officials, NGO workers, or national and international troops better now than in January 2002?

Tellingly, and regrettably, the answer to all three questions is "no". The power and influence of warlords and factional commanders is much greater today than at the beginning of the Bonn process, the production of opium poppy is exponentially higher, and the security situation has deteriorated significantly. During the month of June 2004 alone, the following government officials were killed: one provincial minister was assassinated, one police chief blown up by a parcel bomb, one Afghan National Army (ANA) soldier and one translator beheaded by the Taliban, and twelve policemen and six members of the Afghan Militia Forces (AMF) killed in attacks. Attacks against NGOs and contractors have also increased – in June 2004, 14 international staff were killed compared to the 14 killed throughout all 12 months of 2003. Particularly troubling is the fact that all these attacks occurred in areas of northern Afghanistan previously considered safe.

There has also been a dramatic increase in violent attacks on election staff and facilities. During June, 16 Afghan civilians were killed by Taliban for carrying voter registration cards, two Joint Election Management Body (JEMB) female staff were killed and 11 injured when an explosive device detonated in their vehicle, one AMF guard was killed when an election vehicle was attacked, one JEMB convoy was ambushed, the homes of two election workers were attacked, and assorted IED and

³ In early 2002, SRSG Lakhdar Brahimi described the design of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) structure as "an integrated mission that will operate with a "light footprint," keeping the international UN presence to the minimum required, while our Afghan colleagues are given as much of a role as possible." Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan Briefing to the Security Council (Feb. 6, 2002).

RPG attacks were carried out on voter registration sites. If adequate security is not provided to protect the electoral process, and election-related attacks continue to increase, the government and UNAMA will need to make the difficult decision to postpone the elections. Putting the lives of electoral staff and voters at risk by not providing them with necessary protection would be highly irresponsible.

The challenge:

June 2004 is a good time to review progress in Afghanistan as it represents the end of the Bonn Agreement's original time-frame. While most of the "deliverables" of Bonn were achieved – most notably the Emergency Loya Jirga and the Constitutional Loya Jirga – we are still a long way from realizing Bonn's core overall objective, "To end the tragic conflict in Afghanistan and promote national reconciliation, lasting peace, stability and respect for human rights in the country." This objective cannot be achieved through minimalist strategies and resources, especially in the security sector. The key issues that will need to be addressed to move from a failing to a successful security policy are as follows:

Planning and Coordination: insufficient. The nature of policy-making in Afghanistan has too often suffered from "policy reductionism", where the nature and extent of the problem is simplified to make the problem appear more manageable. The security threats in Afghanistan are complex and multi-faceted, however, and simplistic solutions will fail. To ensure unity of effort and maximize the effective use of all assets, the Government of Afghanistan and its international partners must ensure that currently disconnected and conflicting security initiatives are more effectively coordinated as part of a *single*, shared, overall political strategy. Shared plans, in turn, will facilitate more effective coordination at the international, regional, national and provincial levels.

International investment: inadequate. The international community as a whole is failing to provide the necessary leadership, resources, programmes and military forces required to bring sustainable peace to Afghanistan. One indicator: Afghanistan has one of the lowest international-troop-to-population ratios – counting both the Coalition and ISAF – of any major recent international intervention over the past decade (e.g., Bosnia, Kosovo, and East Timor). It is time to move away from a minimalist approach designed to avoid failure, to a better-resourced strategy designed to achieve success.

Security sector reform: broken down. Progress in all SSR programmes has been limited – and in some, almost entirely absent. There are a variety of reasons for the lack of progress, including failure of the nations responsible for the various "pillars" to exercise effective leadership, commit the necessary resources or address closely related issues systemically, forcefully and imaginatively. Serious consideration should be given to moving away from the discrete pillars and lead donor approach as it narrows the scope of reform and is too dependent on the competence of the lead donor. SSR is the international military's ultimate exit strategy in Afghanistan; anything less than full commitment by all parties, national and international, should be unacceptable.

Institution-building and Government Ownership: mostly missing. Much more attention must be given to reforming, restructuring and strengthening the Afghan government institutions that are essential both to manage its security forces and to perform other critical government functions. It is important that the government demonstrate strong leadership in pushing a reform agenda and assert increasing responsibility over Afghanistan's security planning and institutions.

II. Security in Afghanistan: Fragile and Deteriorating

The question of security in Afghanistan is not that of any singular threat. A broad mix of state and non-state actors at the local, national, regional and trans-national levels are involved in sowing insecurity, and many threats are at least partially interlinked. Recent measurable security trends over the last year – and particularly in recent months – are markedly negative; not only are violent attacks on international military forces, UN and assistance community staff, and government officials increasing, but they are beginning to occur in regions long considered relatively secure.

Security concerns of Afghan citizens

Trying to define security and threat in Afghanistan raises some conceptual traps. Security is often defined in relation to the priorities of the Coalition, the Government or the civilian assistance community, and not in terms of the perceptions of security and sources of threat experienced by the vast majority of Afghan citizens. While there is some overlap, there also is substantial exclusion and omission, including in data collection at the ground level. The principal historical concern of the Coalition in particular, and ISAF to a lesser extent, has been the “war on terror,” whereas as a March 2004 report of the UN Secretary-General notes that:

*factional feuds, rivalries and, increasingly, drug-related incidents continue to affect the lives of the population. The weak or corrupt provincial and district administrations, the continued rule of local commanders, and the absence of effective national law enforcement are more common sources of insecurity for the population than terrorist violence.*⁴

A recent report by the Human Rights Consortium argues that most Afghans consider disarmament the primary priority, followed by strengthening the police/army, political reform and a reduction

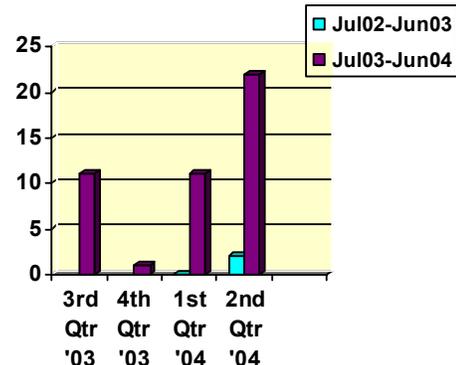
⁴ United Nations, “The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General,” A/58/742-S/2004/230 4 (pt. 8) (Mar. 19, 2004).

in factional tensions.⁵ Of course, whether over land, water, business or marriage, conflicts between individuals, families and communities become all the more violent because of the omnipresent stockpiles of mines, explosive ordinance and guns, and the absence of a competent police force and judicial system.

Current security trends

Reports and data reflecting attacks on international military forces, UN agencies, NGOs and Afghan government officials indicate a broadly negative security trend in recent months. In mid-June 2004, ISAF’s acting public information chief stated, “The security situation is far from being stable. It is deteriorating.”⁶

**Humanitarian Aid Staff Murdered in Afghanistan⁷
Most Recent Year (July 2003-June 2004) vs.
Prior Year**

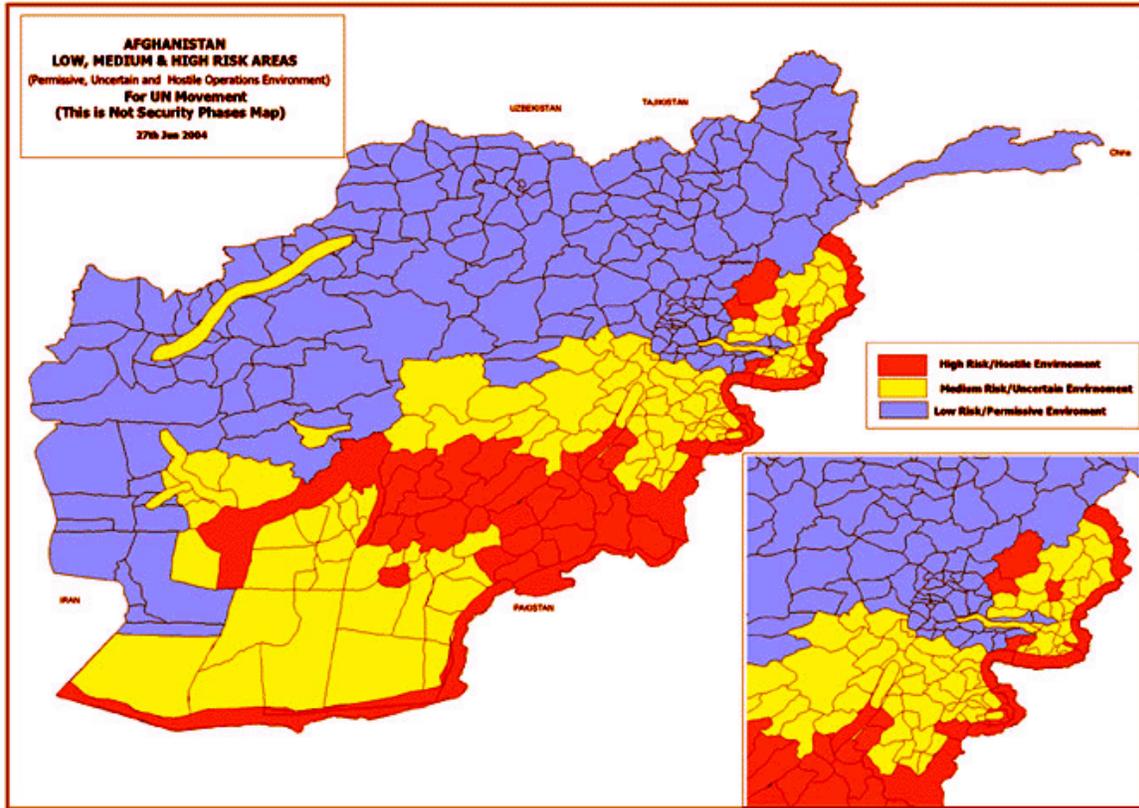


By mid-June, the murder of five Medicines Sans Frontieres staff in the northwestern province of Badghis and 11 Chinese construction workers in Kunduz Province in the northeast brought to 33 the number of assistance workers murdered during the first six months of 2004 compared to 14 in all of 2003. A week later four Afghan civilians were killed by an IED in Kunduz apparently targeting a NATO vehicle. What is

⁵ Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium, *Speaking Out: Afghan Opinions on Rights and Responsibilities* (Nov. 2003).

⁶ “AFGHANISTAN: Wave of Attacks Alarm International Forces,” IRIN (June 16, 2004).

⁷ ANSO Security Situation Summary, Weekly Report Number: 022/04 (Reporting Period: May 26-June 2, 2004). ANSO did not maintain this data prior to 2003, so no data is reflected on this chart for June-December 2002.



particularly troubling about these latest attacks is that they all occurred in regions that have long been thought to be among the most secure in the country, adding a strong element of uncertainty which makes security planning even more difficult.

For months, international and Afghan electoral registration staff have been subject to increasing numbers of attacks, particularly in the long-insecure south, southeast and east. In April, two British contractors and their Afghan interpreters, scoping possible voter registration sites in Nuristan Province, were murdered, with the Taliban claiming responsibility. On June 25, sixteen civilians were killed in Uruzgan Province, reportedly for possessing voter identification cards, with the Taliban again claiming responsibility.⁸ On June 26, two female electoral registration workers were killed and 11 others injured when a bomb went off in the van they were travelling in near the eastern city of Jalalabad. The increase in threats and election-related attacks raises serious questions about whether the lives of electoral staff and voters should be put at risk when the international

community has failed to provide adequate security resources for the electoral process.

The UN “risk areas” maps, commonly used by UN and assistance agencies, and described recently by a senior Coalition officer as the Coalition’s “report card,” indicate an increasing encroachment of yellow (medium risk)⁹ and red (high risk)¹⁰ into previously low risk areas, as seen on the map on the next page. By early June 2004, the number of districts (out of 361 in the country) considered high-risk (wholly or partly) by the UN totalled 89, while the number of districts considered *either* high- or medium-risk (wholly or partly) totalled 169 – up from 144 such districts in November 2003.¹¹ All but three of the 50 districts in the Southern Region are now considered wholly or partly high- or medium-risk, 41 of 43 districts in the Eastern Region and all 56 districts in the South Eastern Region. Heightened risk is also being assessed by the UN for the first time in the Western, Northern,

⁸ “Rebel Gunmen kill Afghan Voters,” BBC News online. 27 June 2004. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3844087.stm.

⁹ “Humanitarian assistance organisations can only have access to these areas with military/police-armed escort or specific security arrangements.” Afghanistan Low, Medium and High Risk Areas (Permissive, Uncertain and Hostile Operations Environment) for UN Movement (June 11, 2004).

¹⁰ “Humanitarian assistance organisations should not enter these areas.” Ibid.

¹¹ *Afghan Elections: The Great Gamble* 10-11 (AREU Briefing Paper, Nov. 2003).

North Western and Central Regions and even one district in Kabul Province, immediately outside the capital.

Sources of insecurity

Insecurity in Afghanistan has many sources and facets. One source of insecurity is common crime, or banditry, which can be the product of individuals or armed groups opportunistically taking advantage of the absence of effective Afghan security institutions. Other major sources of insecurity include: anti-Government and/or anti-Coalition groups, who are responsible for more than their fair share of crime against their fellow Afghan citizens; the illegal drug economy that provides financial support for both terrorist groups and factional commanders; and neighbouring and regional powers, many of whom support and wield influence through client insurgents or factional commanders.

These different sources of insecurity can either create multiple threats, or reinforce threats created by other sources. However, this does not mean that each threat is its own separate war, or can be dealt with in isolation. Fear of association with poppy eradication has led both the ISAF and the Coalition to distance themselves from eradication activities. However, the drug economy and the terrorist threat, for example, feed each other and it is unlikely that an anti-terrorist campaign that ignores the drugs problem can be fully successful. In order to devise effective strategies to deal with these threats, it is essential that the security challenge in Afghanistan be understood and analysed in its entirety, that strategy and policy flow from that analysis, and that the relevant security actors are not tempted to follow the path of policy “reductionism” – defining the problem down to make it appear more manageable.

Factional commanders. In Afghanistan a central government with only haphazard influence in most provinces is countered by factional militia commanders, many of whom have integrated networks of support (within district, provincial and national government), and diverse sources of funding and arms through regional and international linkages. Through the provision of arms, money and legitimacy, the Coalition campaign against the Taliban rejuvenated militia networks, and Northern Alliance commanders in particular re-emerged from near defeat at the hands of the Taliban to again become important players in the Afghan political scene. Short-term Coalition choices to employ these militias to achieve victory over the Taliban while committing fewer Coalition forces,

have increased security threats in the mid- to long-term. Factional commanders can now leverage their power and influence to gain control of customs posts, bazaars, and opium trafficking, further entrenching their power. Each region has a different set of resources that feed “warlord economics,” and reconstruction has spurred their diversification into areas such as the service economy, the formation of NGOs, construction, property and international contracts, with start-up capital from illicit activities that others cannot match.¹² One way in which local power is exercised is through influence over the choice of district and provincial officials, which in many cases has included forcibly preventing the deployment of new central government-appointed officials.¹³

Security in Southern Afghanistan

The South remains volatile and unstable and . . . insecure. . . Although local security forces seem to keep making arrests and seizing weapons and munitions, it does not appear that these operations have yet had an impact on the escalation of these activities in the region. These patterns clearly indicate strong presence of insurgents across the whole region.

Due to the very quickly evolving security situation, ANSO South very strongly recommends that all road missions should be suspended . . . and that movement within Kandahar city should be kept to a strict minimum . . . All agencies are strongly advised to increase their security posture around their compounds and while in transit . . .

Source: Afghanistan Non-Governmental Organisation Security Office (ANSO), ANSO Security Situation Summary, Weekly Report Number: 022/04 (Reporting Period: May 26-June 2, 2004).

Coalition commanders who continue to employ militia forces – or UN agencies and embassies that do the same to guard their compounds – presumably believe there are “good” and “bad” factional commanders. However, while there may indeed be “bad” and “worse” factional commanders, the very phenomenon of these factional militias is inherently destabilising and entirely inconsistent with supporting the extension of central government influence.

Anti-Coalition Forces (ACF). Large-scale combat in Afghanistan has generally been

¹² Lister, S. and Pain, A. *Trading in Power: The Politics of “Free” Markets in Afghanistan* (AREU Briefing Paper, June 2004).

¹³ For a more detailed discussion, see “The Politics of Appointments,” *A Guide to Government in Afghanistan* (AREU and the World Bank, 2004), pp. 97-100.

replaced by smaller-scale attacks designed to subvert the Karzai government. The ACF¹⁴ appear to have realized that Coalition air assets have made large-scale conventional military operations much more difficult, and they are expected to continue to pursue their objectives through classical insurgent means (subversion, propaganda, limited alternate administration, assassinations, terrorism and when possible, conventional assault). Operating in small numbers, they are able to shape the political environment through denial of access (by

targeting NGOs and government officials), subversion of initiatives by the Government and international community (through night-drop letters and rumour), and deployment into local communities of teams that can rapidly coalesce for attacks and then withdraw, maintaining a “balance of fear” in villages.

Narcotics. In 2003, Afghanistan produced an estimated 3,600 metric tons of opium, its second largest opium harvest after 1999. The harvest, with an estimated value of \$35 billion, accounted

| Partial List of June Security Incidents | | |
|---|--------------|--|
| Date | Province | Event |
| 1 June | Nangarhar | Assassination of municipal Police Chief in Jalalabad City |
| 1 June | Nangarhar | IED attack on JEMB vehicle, no injuries |
| 2 June | Badghis | MSF-Holland attacked by gunmen, two Afghan nationals and three international staff killed |
| 6 June | Logar | Three hour attack on government headquarters, one policeman killed |
| 6 June | Logar | Grenade thrown at NGO compound |
| 6 June | Khost/Paktia | Ambush on JEMB convoy |
| 6 June | Badghis | Hand grenade thrown over gate of INGO office |
| 6 June | Farah | Night letters threatening locals that cooperate with aid agencies |
| 7 June | Logar | Grenade thrown over wall of CoAR field office |
| 7 June | Zabul | Attack on police unit killing four officers |
| 8 June | Helmand | Government vehicle attacked |
| 9 June | Uruzgan | 40 insurgents enter district center, threaten local NGO, seize weapons, and kill one AMF soldier |
| 10 June | Kunduz | 11 staff of Chinese construction firm killed in compound attack |
| 16 June | Kabul | IED planted near INGO compound |
| 12 June | Kandahar | 15 insurgents attack District Commissioner's compound |
| 15 June | Paktya | IED targeting voter registration site at boy's school |
| 15 June | Ghazni | District office attacked by insurgents |
| 16 June | Kunduz | IED targeting PRT, killed driver and three children |
| 16 June | Badakhshan | IED explodes at front gate of an INGO compound injuring one Afghan national employee |
| 16 June | Kandahar | Provincial Minister for Repatriation (Hamid Agha) assassinated |
| 16-22 June | Wardak | Several IED, mine, and RPG attacks against poppy eradication, girls schools and registration sites |
| 17 June | Khost | Attack on homes of two election workers |
| 18 June | Kandahar | Small arms/RPG attack on UNHCR compound |
| 18 June | Kandahar | 60 gunmen attack district HQ, killed 2 AMF soldiers |
| 18 June | Paktika | Attack on AMF checkpost, one killed |
| 19 June | Kunduz | IED explodes targeting Fatima Girls' High School |
| 20 June | Logar | RPG fired at registration site |
| 20 June | Kandahar | District Governor's office attacked. |
| 21 June | Kandahar | Election security vehicle attacked, killing one AMF soldier |
| 21 June | Uruzgan | NGO vehicle robbed, staff threatened |
| 21 June | Kandahar | One ANA and one interpreter beheaded by Taliban |
| 22 June | Kandahar | A newly placed mine killed five AMF soldiers |
| 22 June | Khost | 10 missiles were fired at the Coalition base |
| 26 June | Nangarhar | IED in bus kills 2 female JEMB, injures 11 |

Source: ANSO Security Situation Summary, Weekly Report Numbers: 022/04, 023/04, 025/04 (Reporting Period: May 26-June 2, 2004; June 2 - June 9, 2004; June 16-June 23, 2004); UNAMA, *Afghanistan Country Security Situation Report For The Period Of 14 To 20 June 2004*

¹⁴ The ACF is generally considered to be comprised of the Taliban, Al Qaeda and Hezb-i-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG).



Cartoon from Tulu-e Afghanistan, 14 April 2004. "No comment," reads the caption.

for more than three-quarters of the world's opium supply. This marked a sharp rebound from the near eradication of poppy production during the last year of Taliban rule in 2001, when Afghanistan is believed to have produced less than 5% of this amount. A further production increase of 30% is projected by some sources this year. Poppy is now present in 28 out of the 32 provinces, expanding to areas with no history of previous involvement. Approximately 7% of the Afghan population is thought to economically benefit from poppies in some way, with farmers earning an estimated \$1.02 billion in 2003, and 15,000 opium traders and traffickers earning another \$1.3 billion the same year. Revenues from narcotics increasingly help bolster the authority of some factional commanders, as they and other local authorities make millions from the trade through their "taxes." Narco dollars are also having a corrupting influence on the central government as there are numerous reports of senior government officials being linked to narcotics trafficking. Even the Taliban and their allies are believed to have derived as much as \$150 million in opium revenue in 2003.¹⁵ The drugs trade thus presents a grave security dilemma. Dismantling the industry would help diminish the influence of factional commanders and the Taliban, and enhance the authority of the central government. At the same time, however, a substantial and increasing segment

of the Afghan population derives their livelihood from the trade, and most have no equivalent livelihood alternatives; dismantling the industry could impoverish these people. An incoherent, inconsistent and potentially counter-productive counter-narcotics strategy thus may further inflame the current security situation.

Regional actors. Afghanistan has long been the object and the victim of the strategic desires of neighbouring and regional states, and previously of Cold War and Great Game geopolitics. At a continental crossroads, the Afghan population includes a mixture of ethnicities and ideologies that provide convenient divisions for surrounding actors to exploit, and conduits to channel resources to their proxies. Many of these actors provide important forms of external support for factional commanders and Taliban forces in Afghanistan.

¹⁵ Chouvy, P.A., "Narco-Terrorism in Afghanistan," *Terrorism Monitor* 2, 6 (25 March 2004) (Jamestown Foundation): 8.

III. Security Resources: Too Close to Minimal Effort

The international community as a whole is failing to provide the necessary leadership, funds, programmes and forces required to enable the Government of Afghanistan to provide sustainable security throughout the country.

Who is involved?

The current mix and proliferation of national and international, uniformed and non-uniformed military actors has made the division of security responsibilities decidedly unclear. There are two separately mandated and tasked international military interventions (ISAF through the UN Security Council, the Coalition through NATO); the Government has several ministries and other institutions with security responsibilities, and a diverse and growing array of private security companies and contractors further complicates the picture.

While the number of actors is large, the number of international troops and their geographical distribution is not. Overall, Afghanistan has one of the lowest international-troop-to-population ratios (and one of the lowest international-aid-to-population ratios) of any major intervention in the past decade. Amounts spent to operate ISAF and Coalition forces in Afghanistan and to support reconstruction are but a small fraction of what the international community is now spending in Iraq.

The Government of Afghanistan has the following security agencies and personnel:

- The **Ministry of Defense (MoD)** operates the **Afghan Militia Force (AMF)**, which currently is in the early stages of demobilisation. Estimates of total AMF forces yet to go through the DDR process range from 50,000-70,000 – down from earlier estimates of 100,000 or higher. By the time of the elections planned for fall 2004, additional tens of thousands of these forces should be disarmed, though based on recent experience that is by no means assured. The new **Afghan National Army (ANA)** – currently numbering about 10,000 – also formally belongs to the MoD, although its embedded Coalition trainers retain substantial effective control over its activities. Reform and professionalisation of the MoD has begun, but still has far to go; the ministry is still considered overly dominated at some levels by former Northern Alliance factional commanders.
- The **Ministry of the Interior (Mol)** controls the approximately 12,000 **Afghan National Police**, the **Border Police** and all province- and district-level police agencies as well. Total police in the country are estimated at 50,000-60,000. Most of these are believed to have had no police training and little necessary equipment (including weapons and ammunition); although as many as 20,000 are expected to complete new multi-week police training programs by fall 2004. Many provincial and district police agencies are little different from factional, ethnic-based militias. Reform and professionalisation of the Mol has not meaningfully begun. Although the Interior Minister himself is Pashtun, the ministry is considered dominated by former Northern Alliance factional commanders.
- The **National Security Council (NSC)** and the **Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA)** were created in June 2002, in order to respectively serve as an inter-ministerial security coordinating body and a presidential advisory body. Ideally, the NSC and ONSA will further promote civilian and presidential control over security policy. So far, ONSA has drafted a national threat assessment, is developing a national security strategy, and will chair the Security Sector Reform Strategy Meetings, which will focus on one SSR pillar per week and will involve representatives from the relevant ministries, donor governments, UNAMA and the Coalition. Unlike the Ministry of Defence (MoD), Ministry of Interior (Mol) and National Directorate of Security (NDS), ONSA is perceived to be dominated by Pashtuns rather than Northern Alliance commanders. The ability of both ONSA and the NSC to affect security policy is restrained by its small staff and the strong power base of the other ministries (Defence, Interior, Finance). The possibility has been raised of recreating the CLJ-era National Security Task Force (composed of UNAMA,

Coalition, ISAF, MoD, MoI, NDS, NSC) to develop security strategies and facilitating security sector coordination. Clearly there is a need for the government to clarify roles and responsibilities between these institutions.

- The **National Directorate of Security (NDS)** is the Afghan “intelligence” police, which also has a network of several thousand officers throughout the country. Like the MoI, meaningful ministry reform has not yet begun, and the ministry is considered dominated by former Northern Alliance factional commanders.
- The **Counternarcotics Directorate (CND)** is one of the six directorates of the NSC, and is tasked with leading, monitoring, evaluating and coordinating all counter-narcotics activities in the Afghan government. Afghanistan’s first National Drug Control Strategy was released on 18 May 2003, with the National Drug Law released on 20 October 2003. The stated goal is to reduce poppy by 70% in five years. The CND’s role in shaping policy is limited due to the existence of the Central Poppy Eradication Cell, Counter-Narcotics Police Agency, and Poppy Eradication Teams in the Ministry of Interior.

The Coalition (Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan [CFC-A], Operation Enduring Freedom [OEF]) is the US-led international expeditionary force that initially focused (in September-November 2001) on the removal of the Taliban regime, in concert with the Northern Alliance and other anti-Taliban Afghan militia forces. After the December 2001 Bonn Agreement, Coalition operations focused primarily on “Phase 3 operations” – continuing combat operations in the south, southeast and east against Taliban and Al Qaeda forces. During 2003 the Coalition began shifting to “Phase 4,” focusing on sustained “stability operations” – i.e., operations designed to promote security and stability (which include continuing combat operations). During the first half of 2004 the Coalition’s tactics and orientation underwent a further transition to a counter-insurgency approach, reflecting a growing awareness of the need to design military operations with a view to their political impact. One important result of this shift has been the “Area Ownership” strategy, an approach that gives each regional commander authority over all Coalition units in their area of operation. Another significant development is that while the size of the Coalition ranged from

11,000 to 13,000 during 2002-03, its forces have grown to approximately 20,000 since late 2003.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) emerged from the Bonn Agreement, which requested the Security Council “to consider authorizing the early deployment to Afghanistan of a United Nations mandated force. This force will assist in the maintenance of security for Kabul and its surrounding areas. Such a force could, as appropriate, be progressively expanded to other urban centres

| Location | Peak number of int'l troops | Int'l troops per kilometer | Int'l troops per persons |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Kosovo | 40,000 | 1 per 0.3 km | 1 per 50 |
| Bosnia | 60,000 | 1 per 0.85 km | 1 per 66 |
| East Timor | 9,000 | 1 per 1.6 km | 1 per 111 |
| Iraq | 155,000 | 1 per 2.8 km | 1 per 161 |
| Somalia | 40,000 | 1 per 16.0 km | 1 per 200 |
| Liberia | 11,000; 2200 (MEF) | 1 per 8.0 km | 1 per 265 |
| Sierra Leone | 18000 | 1 per 4.0 km | 1 per 300 |
| Haiti | 20,000 | 1 per 1.5 km | 1 per 375 |
| Afghanistan | 20,000 (OEF); 6,000 (ISAF) | 1 per 25.0 km | 1 per 1,115 |

Sources: Rubin, B.R., Stoddard, A., Hamidzada, H., Farhadi, A., *Building a New Afghanistan: The Value of Success, the Cost of Failure*, (Center on International Cooperation, March 2004):15; CIA World Factbook (<http://www.cia.gov>); Dobbins, J., McGinn, J., Crane, K., Jones, S., Lal, R., Rathmell, A., Swanger, R., Timilsina, A., *America’s Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003).

and other areas.”¹⁶ Two weeks after Bonn, the Security Council authorized the establishment of ISAF to assist the Afghan government “in the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas, so that the Afghan Interim Authority as well as the personnel of the United Nations can operate in a secure environment.”¹⁷

ISAF transitioned to NATO control in August 2003, an event expected to mark the beginning of a substantial expansion and increased assertiveness and effectiveness of the force. In October 2003 the Security Council indeed expanded ISAF’s mandate.¹⁸ While the ISAF

¹⁶ Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions (Bonn Agreement), Annex I, para. 3 (Dec. 5, 2001).

¹⁷ UN Security Council Res. 1386 (Dec. 20, 2001).

¹⁸ The Security Council Resolution expanded ISAF’s mandate “to allow it, as resources permit, to support the Afghan Transitional Authority and its successors in the maintenance of security in areas of Afghanistan outside of

force has increased from less than 5,000 to just over 6,000 since last year, NATO nations have still not fulfilled their 2003 commitments for a substantial expansion of ISAF; the deployment of a 250-man German PRT to Kunduz remains ISAF’s only move outside Kabul. The table reflects current NATO nation “ISAF V”¹⁹ deployments to Afghanistan (as of the end of March 2004), which amounts to fewer than one of every 600 soldiers in the land forces of the 26 NATO nations.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) was established by the Security Council in March 2002 to integrate the activities of nearly two dozen UN agencies. All UN programs are intended to support the Afghan transition process and recognize the lead role played by the Afghan government. UNAMA’s mandate includes promoting national reconciliation; fulfilling the tasks and responsibilities entrusted to the United Nations in the Bonn Agreement, including those related to human rights, the rule of law and gender issues; verification of political rights; and managing all UN humanitarian, relief, recovery and reconstruction activities in coordination with the Afghan government. Pursuant to the Bonn Agreement’s request that the UN “conduct as soon as possible . . . a registration of voters in advance of the general elections that will be held upon the adoption of the new constitution by the constitutional Loya Jirga,”²⁰ UNAMA, through its Electoral Component, has assumed substantial direct responsibilities for voter registration and conducting national elections, in support of the Afghan-led Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB).

UNAMA has no mandated coordination authority outside of the UN, although it closely assists in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and other regional and national political/military disputes. While other UN missions have included substantial numbers of military observers and/or civilian police (CIVPOL) – for training or monitoring missions, and even sometimes with direct executive (law

Kabul and its environs, so that the Afghan Authorities as well as the personnel of the United Nations and other international civilian personnel... can operate in a secure environment, and to provide security assistance for the performance of other tasks in support of the Bonn Agreement”. UN Security Council Res. 1510 (Oct. 13, 2003).

¹⁹ The current ISAF deployment – ISAF V – represents the fifth six-month rotation of troops staffing the ISAF mission. ISAF VI, to be commanded by the EuroCorps, is expected to replace ISAF V during August 2004.

²⁰ Bonn Agreement, Annex III, para. 3.

enforcement and powers of arrest) authority – UNAMA’s police and military advisers have never numbered above single digits.

| ISAF V Breakdown of NATO Personnel Strength, by Nation ²¹ | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| NATO Nations | Total Land Forces (est.) | Current ISAF Deployment |
| Germany | 280,000 | 1,833 |
| Canada | 56,000 | 1,756 |
| France | 250,000 | 536 |
| Italy | 220,000 | 481 |
| United Kingdom | 210,000 | 354 |
| Belgium | 40,000 | 280 |
| Norway | 27,000 | 241 |
| Greece | 150,000 | 167 |
| Turkey | 510,000 | 151 |
| Spain | 140,000 | 118 |
| Denmark | 22,000 | 96 |
| United States | 1,400,000 | 60 |
| Bulgaria | 70,000 | 38 |
| Romania | 100,000 | 27 |
| Netherlands | 51,000 | 24 |
| Slovenia | 8,000 | 21 |
| Poland | 200,000 | 18 |
| Czech Republic | 52,000 | 17 |
| Hungary | 34,000 | 13 |
| Latvia | 6,000 | 11 |
| Estonia | 4,000 | 6 |
| Lithuania | 12,000 | 2 |
| Iceland | -- | 1 |
| Portugal | 42,000 | 1 |
| Luxembourg | 1,000 | 0 |
| Slovakia | 32,000 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 3,917,000 | 6,252 |

Private Security Companies (PSCs)

PSCs are a good example of the muddled and unclear security sector in Afghanistan. Granted contracts by governments, military contingents and construction companies, PSCs perform a wide variety of functions in Afghanistan, from providing security for embassies, road construction projects and the Presidential Palace, to the training of police and the reform of the Ministries of Defence and Interior. For example, the American PSC Dyncorp provides close protection bodyguards to President Karzai, police trainers for the Regional Training Centers, and security/logistical support to the Poppy Eradication Teams. There is a well-cited

²¹ Sources for total land forces: Strategy Page, Armed Forces of the World, www.strategypage.com; Global Security, www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/dod/idf.htm; U.S. Department of State, www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3182.htm. Source for NATO’s ISAF V deployment: NATO website, www.nato.int (as of March 29, 2004).

danger that these disparate groups are perceived by the Afghan population to belong to the Coalition and ISAF. As a result, the behaviour of one group often affects the perception of and popular response to the others. As a result, the MOI should follow its counterparts' lead in Iraq by beginning to develop criteria for the registration and regulation of these companies.

A tension exists between the longer-term process of reforming the various ministries and the immediate need to use the current security resources (police and militias) for counter-terrorism, elections and installation security. However, the more short-term needs are given precedence over longer-term priorities, the longer it will take for Afghanistan to achieve security self-sufficiency.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)

The PRT concept was formally announced in November 2002. Since then 16 PRTs have been established, mostly in the East, Southeast and South, but also in the major regional centers in the West, Central and Northern regions. The PRT concept has become the central focus for much of the security sector debate within and between the military, NGOs, policy-makers and academics.¹ The PRTs were never the primary way in which the Coalition engaged with local authorities, with most only covering the provincial center and those surrounding areas that could be visited in a day. Moreover, in both concept and name, the PRTs have repeatedly suffered from a lack of clarity. Apart from antagonising NGOs, the use of the word "reconstruction" created false expectations, as does their suggested renaming as Provincial Security Teams. Unless reconfigured and reinforced, PRTs do not have the integral combat capability to either provide security or operate without a minimum level of consent from factional commanders. The active solicitation of this consent risks enhancing the political legitimacy of commanders (the precise resource which they must be denied). The goal of the PRT should be to help guarantee a space within which the central government, the rule of law, national reformed security institutions and democratic participation can all emerge. Under this "stabilization" model, the PRT would facilitate conflict resolution (by serving as an intermediary), as well as support local security institutions and assist during security events (DDR, elections). In this case, the PRT is providing the outer-ring of support, or depth, to the emerging national security bodies, whether the Afghan National Army or Afghan National Police, serving as a force enabler/magnifier and as a deterrent from armed challenges.

In the end, it is difficult to generalize with regards to the PRTs. Behavior is not only dependent on the nationality of the military contingent, but also on the local security situation, the commander's experience, and the support and strength of the provincial governor and AMF corps commander. Still, most "successful" PRT commanders are developing remarkably similar institutions, distancing themselves from aid projects as time goes on (wells and schools), aligning whatever projects they do provide with provincial and national priority lists, forming provincial bodies for security coordination and gradually beginning to tread into stabilisation support issues such as police mentoring.

IV. Security Planning: Insufficiently Coordinated, Coherent or Strategic

"Hope is not a plan."

While the Government of Afghanistan and the international community assert a shared vision of a stable, peaceful and democratic Afghanistan, no clearly defined "road map" has been developed to achieve this end-state. Afghanistan urgently needs an overarching strategic plan that articulates a shared vision around which to coordinate activities, and guidance on how to prioritise and sequence the use of scarce human, financial and security resources. In terms of security, a

strategic plan should form the basis of determining what coordination mechanisms are needed, the number of troops and other security assets required, the tasks they should engage in and in what order, and the locations to which they should be deployed. This plan should ensure "strategic and structural coherence" as well as "vertical and horizontal linkage."

"Strategic and structural coherence" is the degree to which different actions support identified programmes, requiring each action to be assessed in relation to the over-arching

objectives. In this light, security is an issue that cuts across the policy and programme initiatives of all Government ministries, donors, UN agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international military forces. A coherent strategy requires effective coordination among all these actors in two dimensions – vertical and horizontal. “Vertical linkage” reflects the challenge of turning national policy (at the strategic-diplomatic-national level) into good local practice (at the provincial-district-tactical levels). “Horizontal linkage” refers to necessary connections and coordination between different actors within each level.

Positive developments

While there has been some progress in Afghanistan over the last year in improving coordination on security along these axes, far more is required.

First, although resources and actions have yet to fully follow this realisation, the international community appears to understand that state-building in Afghanistan is a long-term investment and not a short-term endeavour. Suggestions that there can be a quick international exit only serve to empower and embolden factional commanders and spoilers, who typically have longer attention spans and timelines than donor governments and UN missions.

Second, two years after the commencement of Operation Enduring Freedom, Coalition tactics are undergoing a notable transition. Through the “area ownership” and “regional development zone” concepts, and continued PRT expansion, the Coalition is now deploying its forces to implement a counter-insurgency strategy,²² which should allow it to address more effectively the political necessities and ramifications of its operations. However, it is not entirely clear whether there is a common understanding among Coalition nations of what is meant by this transition,²³ nor is it clear whether headquarters’ intent has filtered to all levels in the field.

²² Counter-insurgency doctrine traditionally treats security and social and economic development holistically.

²³ For example, British military doctrine states that “such operations were guided by such principles as respect for the law, civil-military cooperation, leadership and tactical initiative and flexibility.” *Tactical Handbook For Operations Other Than War A-1-1, D/Dgd&D 18/34/83, Army Code 71658* (Dec. 1998).

Third, the Government, ISAF and the Coalition are all focused on strategic planning and all, to greater and lesser extents, increasingly appreciate the need for additional coordination. Current planning among these actors and with UNAMA, however, is not entirely aligned, does not share the same timelines, and continues to leave certain needs inadequately or inconsistently addressed. In the absence of an effective national coordinating mechanism, MoI, ONSA, UNAMA, ISAF and the Coalition have developed a number of *ad hoc* formal and informal coordinating mechanisms that have demonstrated varying levels of effectiveness, at both the national and field levels.

Discontinuities, contradictions and deficiencies

While progress has been made, there remain a number of obvious deficiencies in current approaches. Among them:

- **Failure to consult relevant Afghan ministries:** Internecine battles for control over the security sector between various ministers, ministries and their security-related institutions are having a detrimental effect on both inter-Cabinet and broader coordination. When developing their plans, UNAMA, ISAF and the Coalition must work with as broad a range of interlocutors and institutions as possible, rather than only preferred individuals.
- **Distortion of long-term priorities by unrealistic time-scales:** While increasingly recognising the various areas in which action is required, substantial tensions exist between the immediacy of needs and the capacity to deliver and absorb in the short term (e.g., elections, DDR, and civil service reform).
- **Failure of NATO to resource ISAF:** There appears to be an increasing realisation that the question of future NATO expansion (whether outside of Kabul or in terms of PRTs) needs to be resolved as soon as possible. NATO’s minimalist approach is a major operational inhibitor and risk multiplier. In addition, with the transition of ISAF command from Canada to EuroCorps (a joint Franco-German headquarters), there is a danger that external political agendas may affect current trends towards closer coordination.

- **Unnecessary timidity:** In addressing one of the key sources of insecurity in Afghanistan – factional commanders – the Government of Afghanistan, the international community and even the international military forces appear plagued by timidity. The Government often shrinks from confrontation and instead engages in short-term deal-making that often undermines long-term policy objectives. International military commanders assert they can only stay in Afghanistan “with the consent” of the factional commanders, and thus cannot afford to be confrontational or assertive in their dealings with them. This attitude sells *short* the moral authority of the government and the military power of the Coalition and ISAF, and it sells *out* the people of Afghanistan for whom this may be the most pressing of all security issues.
- **Reluctance among stakeholders to coordinate:** Coordination between military forces and the assistance community is a controversial subject. Many NGOs have mandates dictating strict impartiality; for these, coordination with military forces (or even host nation authorities, for that matter) can be philosophically unacceptable. Some agencies express the concern that coordination with military forces is one of the activities that can “blur” the line between international military forces and the civilian assistance community. Some in the NGO community also perceive working with the military as “coordination by command.”²⁴ Inevitably, to the extent coordination between the assistance community and international military forces is incomplete – and it undoubtedly must continue to be – the effectiveness of horizontal linkage on security issues will be less than complete as well.
- **Effective donor participation in national coordinating bodies:** Attempts to create national coordinating bodies covering SSR

and other matters have fallen victim to donor competition, unilateralism and inter-ministerial disputes in the Afghan government. Many are *ad hoc*, meet irregularly, and are not integrated at either the international-strategic level or the provincial level. Many involve some variation of the same key actors, with neighbouring and regional states entirely neglected. The DDR Working Group (composed of Japan, the US, Germany, UNAMA, ANBP, ISAF and the Coalition) has slowly been able to gather some diplomatic support for its activities, and thus pressure AMF commanders to comply, though it has not appeared to have any influence on continued utilisation of militia forces by international actors in the country.

General Barno compares the PRTs to Christmas trees, upon which new tasks and demands (the “ornaments”) are repeatedly placed, from police monitoring to election support. This is a consequence not only of the limited manner in which most security sector programs have been developed, but more importantly of the lack of an overall strategic framework to provide the answers to how activities like police monitoring and election support should best be addressed. Unified strategic planning would go a long way to better rationalise the employment of the various forces in Afghanistan.

²⁴ During late 2002 and early 2003 the concept of “coordination” between military civil affairs personnel assigned to the first Coalition Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and assistance agencies became so controversial that both groups felt compelled to stop using the term. Donini, A., “The Policies of Mercy: UN Coordination in Afghanistan, Mozambique and Rwanda,” Occasional Paper 22, (Providence: Thomas J Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, Brown University).

V. Security Sector Reform: A Broken Exit Strategy

Security sector reform (SSR) is an umbrella term describing the five pillars through which the international community is supporting the Government of Afghanistan to create effective and accountable security institutions. Lead responsibility for each sector has been assigned to specific donor states (US – military reform; Germany – police reform; Italy – justice sector reform; UK – counter-narcotics; Japan – disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants into civil society). Difficulties in coordination occur at all levels. Some donors have displayed limited leadership in both the design of their programs and their attempts to solicit and shape the involvement of other states. All five SSR pillars have fallen far behind their original schedules. This diagnosis, however, understates the scope of the problem. In critical and sweeping respects, SSR is fundamentally broken.

SSR was intended to be a state-building exercise organised in five discrete pillars. These pillars have often operated as stovepipes – narrowly constraining each SSR initiative, isolating them from effective coordination with related SSR initiatives, and isolating these initiatives from other reconstruction programs.

The military and police reform pillars of SSR have largely been treated in terms of the training and “professionalisation” of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP). Still largely unaddressed are critical issues of good governance and the institutionalisation of civilian control over the use of force, over state resources, and over the appointment of senior government officials, as well as the strengthening of governmental and non-governmental oversight. Ending the impunity and anonymity of armed forces is critical, but donors need to fund, protect and support civil society oversight bodies, which has yet to occur in Afghanistan. Without a sustained commitment to ensure that the law assumes a dominant role in restricting government and security-force behaviour, government security forces may become one

of the core areas of insecurity for the Afghan public.²⁵

The question of SSR policy is also not simply one of structures and mechanisms (e.g., for linking goals and methods, for linking the village and national level, for harmonising disparate agendas and actors), but also of how to time specific policies. For example, Wardak Province is experiencing militia disarmament, poppy eradication and voter registration simultaneously. According to a Kabul-based UN official, there is a belief that this could “sharpen anti-government sentiment . . . because everything is taking place there at once, and it's putting a lot of pressure on people.”²⁶

1. Military reform: US lead donor

SSR's military reform pillar has come to be defined as the creation of a multi-ethnic, non-factional ANA that is fully accountable to civilian control and supports a democratic state. In March 2002 the US Defence Secretary announced that the US would take the lead in this effort. The ANA is ultimately planned to be as large as 70,000 troops. Its first *kandak* (battalion) completed training in July 2002. More than a third of the approximately 9,000 ANA soldiers in the current force are deployed forward to such places as Herat, Kandahar, Gardez and Mazar-i Sharif. These deployments focus on a broad range of tasks, from high-intensity combat operations to security and stability operations and military aid to civilian authorities. Concerns have been expressed over whether the ANA's current training truly encompasses all the challenges it is, and will continue to be, required to meet.

While early plans called for the ANA to be fully stood up by 30,000 troops by late 2004, various program delays, difficulties in recruiting and screening multi-ethnic soldier candidates and officers, high desertion rates (as high as 50%) in the early stages of the

²⁵ Hendrickson, D. *A Review of Security-Sector Reform*, CSDG Working Papers (London, UK: Conflict Security and Development Group, King's College, 1999):29.

²⁶ Constable, P. “Projects put strain on Afghan Province” *Washington Post* (24 May 2004).

program, and other factors greatly retarded progress. Current plans call for the ANA to be at a 16,000-troop level by the end of 2004, and to reach its full size – still projected at 70,000 – by 2007.

The major impediment to ANA development has been the modest pace of training new battalions and a multiplicity of obstacles emanating from the MoD, which the international community and Government often appear to tolerate. Such obstacles notably include the MoD's continued stalling on the implementation of effective internal reforms.

Notwithstanding continuing delays in reforming the MoD and standing up the ANA in numbers even approaching its targets, compared to other SSR pillars, this has been the most successful to date in a number of respects, including its positive impact on security conditions — at least in localities of deployment — and the extent to which the ANA is generally well received (though not always) by local populations.

2. Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR): Japan lead donor

The military reform pillar does not formally encompass the Afghan Militia Force (AMF); instead, a second pillar – disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) – is responsible for planning and executing the dismantling of the AMF. Some early (i.e., late 2002) estimates of AMF force totals requiring disarmament ranged as high as 200,000-250,000 combatants or more. In early 2003 the Afghan and Japanese governments and the Afghan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP)²⁷ set a ceiling of 100,000 combatants who would be processed through the program. The basic objective is to break the power of the second- and third-level commanders by reintegrating their soldiers into the civilian economy and giving them something better to do. By providing reintegration benefits and alternative livelihoods through its reintegration programs, the commanders' ability to mobilise their militias through the provision of economic incentives is expected to be reduced. The DDR program was not originally designed to be the vehicle through which most of the heavy weapons in the hands of militia forces would be removed – that was expected to happen as a result of political negotiations.

Initial plans in 2003 called for the militias to be fully disarmed and demobilised and to have at least begun reintegration into the civilian economy by the beginning of June 2004 – the original Bonn Agreement deadline for national elections. As DDR has proceeded, it has become clear that even the 100,000 estimate of active militia members proved too high. Current estimates are that the total will be more in the 60,000-80,000 range. A revised plan agreed to in March 2004 called for 40,000 soldiers to go through the process by the end of June, with an additional 20,000 by September. In fact, it is now estimated that the total number disarmed will stand at little more than 10,000 by the end of June. Another concern is the extent to which the current DDR programme will be able to reduce the ability of factional commanders to maintain mobilisation networks and to remobilise militia members in the future.

Delays in the DDR programme have been due to a variety of factors (again, mostly emanating from the only partly-reformed MoD) including inability to reach agreement on lists of units, the order in which units will be demobilised and, once agreement is reached, blatant deception and foot-dragging in turning in unit rosters, followed by invariably time consuming, name-by-name verification processes.

For these and other reasons, DDR is far behind schedule, which could have grave implications for the elections. The greater problem, however, is not delay in implementation, but rather aspects of the militias that the program will never touch. Thus, while the DDR pillar embraces the dismantling of the AMF, it has no real "jurisdiction" over those AMF units employed by the Coalition in its continuing war on terror. Nor does the military reform pillar. There also are informal militias, including various factional commanders' private militias, which operate autonomously, are not a part of the MoD or Mol and are not contemplated to be processed through the DDR program. A new militia force, the Afghan Guard Force (AGF), is also being developed, conceived in part to formalise the widespread use of AMF partners by the Coalition, and in part to create a 5-6,000-strong ethnic Pashtun rapid reaction force. It is not clear what impact the DDR program would have on the AGF. But these new militias – intended to fill real security voids – do not fall within the stovepipes of the SSR programs. Such continued development of new militia forces is inherently inconsistent with the SSR's fundamental purpose: to give

²⁷ The agency responsible for implementing DDR.

the central government a monopoly over military force in the country.

3. Police reform: Germany lead donor

The goal of the police reform pillar is to field a trained and equipped nation-wide police force totalling approximately 50,000, with an additional 12,000 border police, operating under the command and control of a reformed Ministry of the Interior (MoI). In contrast to the basic ground-up strategy for building the new Afghan National Army (which has relatively few soldiers from the existing militias, although more officers in that category), the SSR approach to police reform has been to work with existing police personnel, few of whom have ever had police training. The pillar does not touch the National Directorate of Security (NDS) – several thousand “intelligence” police with its own parallel national structure.

During 2002 the reform effort began with the reconstruction and reestablishment, under German sponsorship, of the Kabul Police Academy, designed to offer multi-year programs to turn out officer-level police leadership, later adding a multi-month program to train police sergeants. In 2003 US officials began designing multi-week patrol-officer training programs to augment the German program for officers and sergeants. The US program began turning out graduates in Kabul in mid-2003, and from regional training centres in 2004. It is expected that 25,000 Afghan police officers will have graduated from one of these programs by December 2004, the entire complement of 50,000 national police trained by 2005, and 12,500 highway police trained in the future.

While such training programs are good, there are still substantial gaps in the pillar. Once trained, the police generally return to their original police forces with no further monitoring, mentoring or training in the field. By analogy, the situation is as it would be if the military reform pillar were simply training and better equipping existing factional militias and sending them back to their current factional commanders, to be called the new Afghan National Army. Many local police agencies in Afghanistan are little different from the ethnic-based, factional militias. It is essential that this gap be addressed through effective MoI reform that permeates all levels, from its Kabul headquarters to the most remote district police agencies, to include an effective screening process for vetting police officers to determine whether they have previously committed abuses or are tied to militias.

Police reform in Afghanistan is undermined – perhaps even corrupted – by disconnected arrangements by UN agencies and others with MoI to obtain, and pay extra for, special levels of police protection. Arrangements such as these have the natural consequence of creating conflict with police in the same vicinity not receiving such special payments, and convincing some police commanders that they should be responsive to requests for police protection only if the requesting agency is willing to pay extra for it. This is a pernicious situation. There are real and chronic problems in Afghanistan with police salaries not set at adequate levels and often not paid. Police not being adequately equipped, and Afghan police are under-gunned, under-resourced, and under-paid. While an MoD general is paid US\$800 per month, a police general is only paid US\$90 per month. Slow payment means that “even an angel cannot be honest,” as one provincial governor has noted, with salary delays of four to ten months. These problems must be addressed uniformly by MoI with international support, and not by different agencies making their own private arrangements.

4. Counter-narcotics: UK lead donor

Considerable disagreement exists between donors within the counter-narcotics pillar over whom to target first – producers and farmers or processors and traders. Undoubtedly, growth in this illicit trade is a tremendously destabilising dynamic in Afghanistan, greatly promoting the wealth, power and influence of factional commanders and terrorist groups. The problem with narcotics is that there are no straightforward solutions, and the way in which the problem is attacked can have its own destabilising effects.

Thus far, there have been several approaches to the challenge. In the first year, the UK funded a buy-back programme that unintentionally created incentives for some farmers to actually increase production. The second year saw a shift towards a more symbolic than substantive governor-led provincial eradication programme, which – at least anecdotally – was viewed as a corrupted process; some governors and provincial officials themselves have been implicated in the narcotics trade, and reportedly used this as an opportunity to target their opponents’ fields for eradication.

In the past year, a variety of sometimes contradictory approaches have been adopted, reflecting the lack of consensus on strategy in

this critically important area. The UK appears to favour a 5-10 year scaled plan with the balance between incentives and enforcement slowly shifting. The US-led Coalition forces have been reluctant to be drawn into counter-narcotics activities, but the US State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) is now pushing for more substantial and aggressive early action against production. Thus the US State Department has sponsored the formation of an MoI-organized Central Poppy Eradication Force, with security and logistical support provided by a private security contractor (Dyncorp). The British continue to support an Afghan Narcotics Force supported by its own special forces, while enhancing the capacity of the Counter Narcotics Directorate, as well as the capacity of the Central Eradication Planning Cells to verify government-led eradication initiatives.

Through the Department for International Development (DFID), the UK is also supporting efforts to develop alternative livelihoods for poppy farmers. Given the exponential increase in poppy production in Afghanistan since 2001, with greater increases forecast for next year, the counter-narcotics efforts to date of the Government and the international community can only be seen as a failure.

5. Judicial sector reform: Italy lead donor

Judicial sector reform is arguably the most important pillar of SSR, and regrettably the one where the least has been achieved. The creation and enforcement of law provides the framework within which all other SSR activities need to take place. It is fundamental to ending the "culture of impunity" that currently exists, checking against any future abuse of power by the government or its opponents.²⁸ The fact that the Afghan government will be conducting security operations against sections of its population over the next several years further demands the creation of a legal structure capable of preventing abuses by the emerging security institutions (NDS, ANP, ANA). Founding future enforcement activities (counter-narcotics, counter-insurgency counter-terrorism) on law provides a basis for action in principle rather than politics, thus countering the past history of arbitrary and unaccountable use of force. So far, the continued progress of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission in gathering

information remains constrained by the absence of a judicial or policing partner that is able to investigate, prosecute and redress abuses.

Lamentably, this sector has suffered from weak leadership and lack of attention within the government, UNAMA and the donor community.²⁹ A strategy and sequence for judicial and legal reform remains undeveloped, with existing programs only beginning to scratch the surface of what is required.³⁰ Early inactivity and severe under-funding still have not been substantively redressed, with the existing process continually impeded by schisms at both the national and international levels. The international community has defined the issue in a limited manner, neglecting the fundamental importance of a holistic and staged approach. The government has also failed to provide leadership, or to take steps to integrate judicial reform issues into the MOI and police reform process.

Three different relevant national bodies exist — the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Attorney-General's Office — each driven by their own ideological and political agendas, hindered by corruption and engaged in turf battles. Functionally, problems include: untrained judges and other personnel, absent professional legal education, low salaries (\$36 per month), poor court infrastructure and administrative support, lack of courts outside of Kabul and urban provincial capitals, and the lack of support and authority given to the Judicial Reform Commission.³¹ Arrests and criminal cases continue to be hampered by a corrupt judiciary (where bribery is often a condition of release whether the accused is guilty or innocent), the use of intimidation and family connections to influence cases, and the lack of incarceration space.

Donors can point to only a select number of programs. The first step was the creation of a Judicial Reform Commission (JRC) at Bonn, which was disbanded after four months and reconvened in November 2002, but is expected to cease functioning in the next several months. Over the past 18 months, the

²⁸ See Mani, R., *Ending Impunity and Building Justice in Afghanistan* (AREU Issues Paper, December 2003).

²⁹ Chesterman, S. "Justice Under International Administration: Kosovo, East Timor and Afghanistan," (International Peace Academy, September 2002):

³⁰ Amnesty International, "Afghanistan: Re-establishing the rule of law," ASA 11/021/2003 (14 August 2003): 11.

³¹ Miller, L., and Perrito, R. "Establishing the Rule of Law in Afghanistan" (United States Institute of Peace, 12 May 2004): 9.

Commission has reviewed and rewritten certain laws, but most of these have yet to be formally adopted due to political obstructions and the lack of capacity at the MoJ. More practically, the JRC runs two training programs for *sharia* faculty graduates and MOJ prosecutors and judges, while the International Development Law Organisation (IDLO) has

trained 450 judges and prosecutors during the past 18 months. The attempt to extend judicial institutions to 20 districts, first through a Gardez “rule of law” pilot project, will have only a minimal impact in a country of 361 districts.

VI. So Far, So Good?

Vin: *Reminds me of that fellow back home that fell off a ten story building.*

Chris: *What about him?*

Vin: *Well, as he was falling people on each floor kept hearing him say, "So far, so good."*

-- *The Magnificent Seven (MGM/United Artists 1960)*

The March 2003 murder of ICRC engineer Ricardo Munguia is widely viewed by UNAMA, the civilian assistance community, and other observers to have marked the beginning of a broadened offensive by the Taliban and other groups opposed to the Government of Afghanistan. This trend has since accelerated at some times and flagged at others, but seems consistently to have worsened.

Since spring 2003, the Government of Afghanistan and its international supporters have struggled in this challenging and increasingly uncertain security climate to make headway with the political, economic and physical reconstruction of the country. Different security agencies, national and international, have fashioned in good faith their own strategies and applied resources to try to improve security. These efforts have allowed important political and reconstruction progress to be made, and key benchmarks met, including the adoption in January 2004 of a new national constitution.

So far, so good.

That some progress has been made is not, however, because there has ever been either the commitment of adequate resources or the development of a comprehensive, coordinated and effective security plan; it has been made *in spite of the absence of* such resources and plan. Even now, there is no comprehensive plan, with committed resources, for the following: to ensure adequate security for voter registration and

elections; to secure assistance community operations and the safety of staff; to extend central government authority to the provinces; to fill the security void left by disarmed Afghan militia forces; to effectively tackle the burgeoning narcotics industry; and to ensure the Afghan people are able to work and live reasonably free from crime.

There are indeed fervent hopes that all this can be done and much disconnected planning – but no comprehensive plan worthy of the name.³²

This is a risky and even dangerous basis on which to attempt to complete the military task begun by the Coalition and Afghan militia forces in September 2001, and the political task first shouldered by Afghan and international leaders at Bonn two months later. After September 11, the international community declared it among their highest priorities to rid Afghanistan of international terrorists and the Taliban regime that supported them, assist the Afghan people to rebuild their country on broadly democratic principles, and ensure that Afghans have the opportunity to live in stability and peace.³³ It is long past time for the international community to begin to act as if this really *is* a priority.

1. Develop a plan: UNAMA, ISAF and the Coalition must work with each other and with the Government to develop and implement a single, comprehensive and integrated security strategy for Afghanistan, closely

³² For example, testifying before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on International Relations in early June 2004 – just four months before scheduled national elections – Ambassador William Taylor, the US State Department Coordinator for Afghanistan, testified, “The Coalition and NATO have thirteen PRTs today, expect to have sixteen by the election, and *hope* NATO will come through with its promised five more” Hearing on U.S. Policy in Afghanistan, www.house.gov/international_relations/108/tay060204.htm (June 2, 2004) (emphasis added).

³³ See, e.g., UN Security Council Resolution 1383 (Dec. 6, 2001).

linked to a political strategy, with effective coordinating mechanisms at all levels. The strategic approaches of Government security agencies, Coalition Forces, ISAF and UNAMA must be rationalised and coordinated, and existing coordination mechanisms among these players both strengthened at all levels and streamlined, to eliminate confusing overlap among existing coordinating bodies and to provide common objectives around which all actors can unite. A commonly agreed political strategy is essential. Among the current security gaps, conflicts and other issues that should be more carefully addressed and resolved through unified strategic planning and coordination are:

- The respective *specific* roles and functions to be filled and performed by the various security agencies, both national and international, with regard to the assorted security challenges facing the country (terrorism, conflict between and abuses by factional militias, human rights violations, drugs, banditry), to better ensure the most effective and efficient use of these resources;
- The destabilising effect of the continued employment of factional militias (thus further promoting their power at the expense of the central government) by Coalition Forces and others – not to mention its fundamental inconsistency with the DDR programme and mission;
- Aggravation of localised security conditions resulting from inattention to the impact of the prioritisation and sequencing of various initiatives (e.g., DDR, counter-narcotics and elections);
- Specific measures to fill localised security vacuums created by the DDR programme;
- The lack of substantial field monitoring or mentoring of newly-trained Afghan police, and incomplete and inconsistent measures for compensating and equipping the police; and
- Lack of coordination on information operations among the Government, international military forces and the international community.

In order to accomplish this, the Government of Afghanistan should invite UNAMA and other key representatives of the international community, to include major donors, ISAF and the Coalition, to form a single policy steering group under Government leadership

to coordinate unified and comprehensive strategic planning, prioritisation and decision-making.

2. **Assert Government authority over security:**

The Government of Afghanistan must assert increasing authority over its own security destiny and plan gradually to lessen its reliance on international military forces. As they are more fully developed, Afghan institutions must assume increasing responsibility for national security. Initial steps toward this end should include the Government undertaking a comprehensive foreign, security and defence policy review; developing an integrated security policy able to be implemented by sustainable and well-equipped security forces once extraordinary levels of international aid to the security sector cease; and more formally integrating the roles of national security agencies. It is essential that the Government take responsibility and demonstrate strong leadership in, among many other things:

- Setting and driving the agenda to overhaul and push forward security sector reform;
- Aggressively reform and rebuild the MoI, MoD and NDS, as well as the newly created ONSA, into credible state institutions that will serve as effective and efficient mechanisms of civilian control over the security institutions of the nation; and
- Developing a rational and comprehensive political strategy for delegitimising the factional commanders, and a complementary security strategy that will effectuate that goal.

International community support must be rapid for building the capacity of these institutions to assume their security responsibilities, and for Afghan institutions operating in other spheres (e.g., reconstruction, development, and social services) to manage responsibilities necessary to underpin security.

3. **Fix security sector reform:**

Security sector reform is largely broken; urgent attention by the Government and international community is required to fix it. SSR is the Government's prescription for security self-sufficiency, and the international military's exit strategy – though the broader international community must remain closely and substantially engaged with Afghanistan long after the international military mission is accomplished. SSR today is plagued by an unacceptable level of chronic delay, deficient scope, lack of coordination and inadequate

donor resources. Most pillars require radical overhaul, not to mention expansion and acceleration. Regarding counter-narcotics, for example, the scale of the threat has only *increased* exponentially since inauguration of pillar initiatives. So long as national and international actors continue to take the approach that all that is required is “sharpened focus,” SSR can be expected to largely continue on its current course. Among other things, the Government and international community must fundamentally reconsider the continued efficacy of the discrete pillar approach to security sector reform as well as the lead donor mechanism, both of which operate to narrow the scope of reform and impede comprehensiveness and effective coordination.

4. Fulfil obligations to enlarge ISAF: NATO nations must fulfil their obligation to field a substantially larger ISAF force during 2004 and continuing thereafter. NATO took command of ISAF in August 2003; currently the European NATO nations and Canada are deploying only slightly more than 6,000 (less than 0.25%) of their 2.5 million active and reserve land forces to the ISAF mission. In March 2004 President Karzai formally requested NATO assistance in securing the proper environment for the conduct of free and fair elections. It is essential that this first mission outside the Euro-Atlantic area in NATO’s history be a successful one. NATO’s credibility is at stake in Afghanistan; failure could fatally damage the alliance’s credibility and its future.

5. Prioritise the security concerns of Afghans: Coalition Forces and ISAF must commit to supporting the establishment of a safe and secure environment in which the Afghan people can live and work, and give the highest priority to supporting voter registration and election security. Both the Coalition and ISAF should set aside excessive concern about “mission creep” and further enhance their contributions to filling security gaps in the country until Afghan institutions are able to take on those responsibilities:

- The Coalition should ensure that transition from “war fighting” to stability operations and counter-insurgency is in fact understood and implemented by all its subordinate commands; and
- The Coalition and ISAF should be prepared to make clear, unambiguous and substantial commitments to providing security support

for national elections and other critical nation-building activities, with security resources that the Government and international community can be confident will be available when needed and will not be subject to last-minute diversions to other missions.

The international community must increase substantially its commitment of resources and effort in order to address more effectively security challenges in Afghanistan, and resist the temptation to push Afghanistan to the side as pressure increases to focus on Iraq. However, security assets will always be a scarce resource in Afghanistan; it is therefore essential that they be tasked and rationed carefully and wisely through coordinated, coherent and *unified* planning. The effort to strengthen the Government’s capacity to assume responsibility for its own security, and build the capacity of the institutions necessary to execute this mission, must be redoubled.

In sum, Afghans are paying a heavy price for the minimalist approach being used to address their security concerns. Failure to deal with the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan urgently and comprehensively will result in a very hard landing.

The Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) is an independent research organisation that conducts and facilitates action-oriented research and learning that informs and influences policy and practice. AREU also actively promotes a culture of research and learning by strengthening analytical capacity in Afghanistan and by creating opportunities for analysis, thought and debate. Fundamental to AREU's vision is that its work should improve Afghan lives. AREU was established by the assistance community working in Afghanistan and has a board of directors with representation from donors, UN and multilateral agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Current core funding for AREU is provided by the European Commission (EC), United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the governments of Sweden and Switzerland. Funding for this briefing paper was provided by generous contributions from the governments of the Netherlands and Switzerland.

For more information and to order publications, contact AREU at:
Charahi Ansari (opposite the Insaf Hotel and Popolano's restaurant)
Shahr-e-Naw, Kabul, Afghanistan

Tel: +93 (0)70 276-637 **Web site:** www.areu.org.af **E-mail:** areu@areu.org.pk